

Dear Commission,

I write on behalf of the business community of the Greater High Desert. I was notified of some discussion that wanted to join the communities of the Antelope Valley and Victor Valley into districts. We wanted to give our perspective on this matter.

Our chamber was formed when several smaller chambers from the Victor Valley and High Desert realized that our communities were strongly economically tied together. Our members also noticed that our businesses served not just the incorporated cities of the Victor Valley, but many smaller communities in the San Bernardino County High Desert, which is why we formed the Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce.

We feel strongly that drawing the Antelope Valley and Victor Valley together into one district would unfairly disenfranchise our community and other rural communities in the San Bernardino County High Desert. And we have historical precedent for this. Currently the Victor Valley is cracked at the state senate level. While the incorporated cities and towns of Adelanto, Apple Valley, Hesperia, and Victorville are currently in a district with the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita, our High Desert neighbors in Barstow, Lucerne Valley, Helendale, the Morongo Basin and even unincorporated Apple Valley are in a district based in Kern County. Since the creation of these senate districts our community has never had a state senator from our geographic area, but rather from the areas of greater population (Los Angeles County and Kern County). In addition, our High Desert neighbors in Phelan and Pinon Hills are split off into a state senate district based in Redlands. This means our voices have been weakened and we feel this has hurt our community.

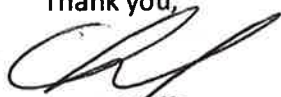
Drawing our community into the Antelope Valley would inevitably lead to one county having greater population, and therefore representation and disenfranchise the smaller rural communities around the Victor Valley, which make up the greater San Bernardino County High Desert.

We strongly feel that the San Bernardino County High Desert should be kept together, and not split up, to best represent our interests. This includes the Victor Valley, the unincorporated communities around it, the Morongo Basin and other Mojave Desert Communities like Needles and Barstow. Should the commission need to find more communities to add to any potential districts we request you consider other rural San Bernardino County communities such as the mountain communities like Wrightwood, Lake Arrowhead, Crestline, Running Springs, and Big Bear, or even some other rural foothill communities like Yucaipa, San Antonio Heights, Alta Loma, or Highland.

These communities all have more in common with each other, than they do with Los Angeles County or Kern County. For example, many of these areas share concerns over the management of natural resources and public lands. In the desert, much of our tourism is dependent on the Off Highway Vehicle Areas in El Mirage and Johnson Valley, as well as the Joshua Tree National Park and Mojave National Preserve. The Mountain and foothill communities also share our concerns with public lands both for tourism, but also because of the threats of wildfire.

In closing, please consider not breaking apart the greater San Bernardino County High Desert, but rather give rural San Bernardino County the strong representation we deserve.

Thank you,



Mark Creffield
President/CEO

Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce