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SOLANO COUNTY

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September 14, 2021

Jane Andersen, Chair
California Citizens Redistricting Commission
721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Communities of Interest Input/Solano County

Dear Chair Andersen,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the State's redistricting process. The Solano County Board of Supervisors is pleased to submit communities of interest to the Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) for consideration when redrawing the State and Congressional district boundaries. Solano County's adjacent four neighboring counties share several similarities but vary from waterside Bay Area to the west/southwest, agricultural regions to the north, east and northwest and the Central Valley/Delta to the east/southeast. Recognizing Solano County's unique geographic location at the convergence of several distinct geographic regions. Solano County has identified the following communities of interest that relate to those regions and for which is important to maintain strong ties:

1. Yolo-Bypass/Cache Sough Delta Region

The Yolo-Bypass/Cache Sough Delta Region is a major collection point for water that serves more than 25 million people, two-thirds of our State's population. The Delta also serves as a prominent water supply through the North Bay Aqueduct that serves a population 500,000 in several communities in Solano and Napa Counties. The Yolo Bypass/Cache Slough Delta Region (Delta Region) situated mostly in Solano County, is an important geographic area for several land uses that include flood risk reduction, ecosystem restoration, water supply, and agriculture. Agriculture is the predominant existing land use in the Delta Region and in the larger landscape, constituting an essential component of the rural economy and culture.

In addition, Solano County serves as one of the five counties on the Delta Counties Coalition (DCC) representing the rural water, residential, recreation, agricultural and habitat interests in the region. The DCC is an alliance made up of the California Counties of Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo. These counties work collaboratively to give one voice on behalf of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and its 4 million area-wide residents. The DCC advocates to achieve three goals: improve the Delta ecosystem, provide a more reliable water supply for the State, and protect and enhance Delta communities and advocate for a statewide water solution that includes water system operation improvements/conveyance, regional self-reliance, levee improvements, storage and restoration to the Delta.

The Delta Region is a community of interest that has benefitted from shared congressional and state boundaries that include all or in part of the various counties with similar agriculture, water, and ecosystems. Therefore the representation by these legislative members that understand and appreciate the agricultural, environmental, flood protections, and recreational interests and the complex interrelationships is critical to convey an understanding of the complexity of the Delta and its significance to the people of California.

2. Agriculture

Solano County agriculture is one of the larger economic sectors in the county which includes workers/producers, processors, suppliers and distributors with over 80 different commodities including fruit, wine grapes, nuts, vegetables, grains, seed, nursery stock and livestock (sheep and cattle) ag products from Solano export to 41 counties. Statewide, Solano County ranked 27th out of 58 counties in agricultural production.

Solano County has several distinct agricultural regions dispersed throughout the County and benefits from multi-representation where State and Congressional district borders encompass multi-counties with similar agricultural industry significance.

3. Military/Veterans Coordination

Solano is the home to Travis Air Force Base (TAFB), which serves as the largest air mobility organization in the Air Force in terms of personnel with a versatile fleet of C-5 Galaxy, C-17 Globemaster III cargo and KC-10 Extender refueling aircraft. TAFB is responsible for global strategic airlift and air refueling missions in support of national defense.

TAFB workforce consists of 14,353 military members and civilian employees. There are approximately 7,393 Active-Duty personnel stationed at TAFB: There are also 3,257 Air Force Reserve personnel and 11 Army Reserve personnel stationed at TAFB. Travis also employs approximately 3,692 civilian personnel, including personnel from the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security and Department of Veterans Affairs. TAFB includes a large air force medical facility, the David Grant USAF Medical Center that serves active military, reserves, and veterans at the facility.

Solano County provides veterans services and has a veteran's health clinic to serve the 34,800 veterans that reside in the seven cities and the county as well as the countless number of veterans in the region that seek services in Solano County.

Solano County is well represented and benefits from the Congressional district perspective and the community of interest that encompasses a large Northern California community of veterans, active military and two Northern California installations, Travis AFB and Beal AFB in Yuba County.

4. Greater Bay Area/North Bay Communities/ North Bay Counties

Solano County is situated geographically with two cities located on the northern edge of the greater San Francisco Bay estuary/region. The Cities of Benicia and Vallejo directly front the San Pablo Bay and Carquinez Strait waterfront. While portions of the unincorporated portion of Solano County are not as urbanized as most of the East Bay and South East Bay, there is a community of interest that shares climate, culture, a workshed, and logistics/goods production and movement. The area is connected by several bridges, a public transportation network, and regional transportation corridors that move goods into, through and around the bay waters. In particular, with State Route 37 which connects Solano County and Napa County in the same Congressional district, the two counties have established long-term relationships and developed strong ties in collaborating on the improvement of this transportation corridor to address sea level rise and adding lanes for the continued flow of goods in the North Bay.

In addition to the two cities mentioned, Solano County has other waterfront communities that share concerns over sea level rising that impact all the Greater Bay Area communities surrounding the western border of Solano County.

The Greater Bay Area/North Bay Communities/ North Bay Counties is a community of interest that has benefitted from shared congressional boundaries that include portions of Solano and Napa counties which share similar climate, culture, and the infrastructure to facilitate the movement of goods using these shared transportation corridors.

5. Collaboration on Tribal Matters

Solano County serves as one of three counties on the Northern California Counties Tribal Matters Consortium (“Consortium”), which was formed to develop a coordinated, regional approach on land use and other policy issues. Solano, Napa, and Sonoma Counties are members of the Consortium. Many tribal development initiatives, particularly gaming are regional beyond any specific jurisdiction and have both potential benefits and impacts.

County coordination along with State and Congressional leaders is especially critical in Northern California where a growing number of tribal entities are attempting to acquire land, seek trust status, and advance development proposals for casinos and other uses in locations based solely upon proximity to market. The County has been responsive in working with tribes with established land grants to ensure their rights are fully respected to enable them to retain their sovereignty. Being conjoined to other counties experiencing these same issues within the same congressional district has been effective in facilitating shared knowledge and coordinated representation at the federal level.

In summary, with the variation of the County’s land uses, climate and geography contribute to our distinctive mix of communities of interest including suburban, rural/agriculture, delta, Bay Area, Sacramento, military, and research/biotech with various connections to adjoining regions. Overall, Solano County is well-served by the existing State and Congressional district boundaries within the county. The County’s preference is to substantially retain boundary configurations that retain and reflect these relationships.

For these reasons, we strongly encourage and respectfully request that the Commission give careful consideration of the above communities of interest when redrawing the State and Congressional district boundaries in and around Solano County to best serve the communities of interest identified and retain the key linkages that exist with adjoining counties.

Sincerely,



John M. Vasquez, Chair
Solano County Board of Supervisors

cc: Solano County Board of Supervisors