

September 22, 2021

RE: The Foothill Cities Community of Interest South of the Angeles and West San Bernardino National Forests

Dear California Citizens Redistricting Commission:

My name is Roberto Morales and I am a Senior Organizing Representative for the National Sierra Club working on protecting and creating greater and equal access for the San Gabriel Mountains. Through my work I have realized how valuable of a recreational resource the San Gabriel Mountains are to all of the residents in Los Angeles County, especially foothill communities that are the gateway cities to two thirds of LA's open space and share similar concerns for the forest.

I am very concerned about how the Angeles National and Western San Bernardino National Forests are incorporated into congressional districts. Current districts 27 and 28 generally do an excellent job of empowering the foothill communities from Pacoima to Rancho Cucamonga. This is accomplished by placing the foothill communities in the same congressional districts as the San Gabriel Mountains. I urge the same approach in 2021.

The Western San Bernardino Mountains north of Rancho Cucamonga are located in the wrong district, which needs to be corrected in 2021. This area of national forest should be in the same congressional district as Upland, San Antonio Heights and Rancho Cucamonga. These cities form a Community of Interest that has concerns about how the national forest to its north is managed. Climate change and drought continue to exacerbate wildfire risk, a major shared concern of the three communities.

Azusa, a gateway city to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, should be in the new 27th district. The 27th is designed well with the national forest and many cities in the Foothill Cities Community of Interest joined together in the district. This area is logically connected to a

large Asian population in the district's southwest. This area needs to be in one district to meet Voting Right Act requirements. Some of these communities are park poor and benefit from having natural areas in the national forest nearby. They would surely want a member of Congress who could argue on their behalf for transit to trails.

The foothill cities from Pacoima to Claremont form a powerful Community of Interest based on their shared traits and their relationship with the San Gabriel Mountains. This Community of Interest of Foothill cities needs to be in the same congressional districts as the object of this interest: the San Gabriel Mountains. The foothill communities share many common concerns about the management of their federal public lands: Fire and fuels management and wildfire suppression; sections of high severity fire zones; zoning and fire safe structures; tourism; watershed management and flood control; recreational quality and availability; parking near trailheads; and high forest visitation. They are united by common traits, including historic ties, homes adjacent or near the forest, ecology (chaparral ecosystems), steepening slope, wildlife management, a major visual feature/scenic backdrop, and more. People who live immediately south of the Angeles National Forest are the highest propensity users based on Forest Service statistics.

I ask the commission to recognize that the current 27th and 28th districts serve their voters well. We recommend no changes in the 28th and only one change to the 27th, which is the addition of Azusa. We ask that the Western San Bernardino National Forest be placed in the same congressional district as the Foothill Cities Community of Interest section that includes Upland, San Antonio Heights, and Rancho Cucamonga.

Thanks,
Roberto Morales
Senior Organizing Representative
San Gabriel Mountains Campaign