

From: **Bryan Matsumoto**

Date: Tue, Sep 21, 2021 at 5:55 PM

Subject: RE: The Foothill Cities Community of Interest Should Be in The Same Congressional Districts as the San Gabriel Mountains

To: <[votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov](mailto:votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov)>

September 21, 2021

RE: The Foothill Cities Community of Interest Should Be in The Same Congressional Districts as the San Gabriel Mountains

Dear California Citizens Redistricting Commission:

I live in Temple City, CA (CD 27) and know first-hand why a properly-drawn district should **include public lands with the people who use them**. My CD 27 includes a large swath of the Angeles National Forest, plus our communities, which makes sense. It ensures that our Congressman can direct federal resources to the Forest which I and my friends use all the time for hiking, camping, exercise, mental wellness, family gatherings, community environmental education and volunteering.

I see this in my work as well. I work for an environmental justice non-profit organization named *Nature for All*, and I am currently working with many governmental and transportation agencies to create Los Angeles County's first "Transit to Trails" shuttle system to the San Gabriel Mountains. Our Congressman is an important partner because of their access to the federal agencies.

**I am very concerned about how the Angeles National Forest is 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 was accomplished by **placing the foothill communities in the same congressional districts as the San Gabriel Mountains**. We urge the same approach in 2021.

Since the Angeles National Forest is federal land, local officials, state assembly and state senate members do not have much influence. Foothill residents who have a strong interest in how the forests are managed need to have a member of Congress who has the influence to put their views forward. Their member of Congress can also help obtain federal resources and influence the federal agency that manages the federal public land, the United States Forest Service.

The foothill cities from Pacoima to Rancho Cucamonga form a powerful Community of Interest based on their shared traits and their relationship with the San Gabriel Mountains. These "Community of Interest Foothill Communities" need 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.

**Areas that need improved district boundaries in 2021** include the Western San Bernardino Mountains north of Rancho Cucamonga. This section 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 adjacent national forest is managed. Climate change and drought continue to exacerbate wildfire risk, a major shared concern.

Azusa, a gateway city to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, should be in the 27<sup>th</sup> district.

The 27<sup>th</sup> is designed well with the national forest and many cities in the Foothill Community of Interest joined together in the district. This area is logically connected to a large Asian population in the district's southwest that needs to be in one district to meet Voting Rights 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.

I ask the commission to recognize that the current 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> districts serve their voters well. The only changes recommended are the addition of Azusa to the 27<sup>th</sup>, and having the Western San Bernardino National Forest be the northern section of the district that includes Rancho Cucamonga. We recommend no changes in the 28<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks for your consideration in making sure our federal public lands in the Angeles National Forest are placed into correct congressional districts that are also home to the Foothill Cities Community of Interest.

Thank you,

Bryan Matsumoto