

From: **Ernest Lee**
Date: Thu, Sep 30, 2021 at 10:39 PM
Subject: Re: San Gabriel Valley Community of Interest
To: <VotersFirstAct@crc.ca.gov>

My name is Ernest Lee. I'm a resident of El Monte. I've lived in the community for 30 years.

I believe the San Gabriel Valley is an integral part of Los Angeles County. The SGV is the largest majority Latino and Asian American region in the country. Residents speak languages such as Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Vietnamese. We need to keep our Latino and Asian communities together in the San Gabriel Valley, to advance environmental and social justice.

I am very deeply connected with the SGV. Many have gone their entire lives living here not knowing what's in the next city over because they only ever venture out to the west side. For me, the SGV as a whole perfectly captures the heart and soul of the entire state of CA. There is a large diversity of ethnicities that can coexist. While I lived in El Monte, I went to school in Monterey Park. My grandmother resided in Monterey Park, so growing up, my family would often frequent businesses in, around, and in between cities like Rosemead, San Gabriel, Temple City, etc. To me, these cities, El Monte in particular, represent the true heart of the SGV.

I recognize El Monte's crucial role as part of the Western San Gabriel Valley, east of the 710 to the 605, and between the 210 and the 60. El Monte is an important Latino and API community, sharing a community of interest with cities such as Alhambra, San Gabriel, Temple City, Rosemead, and Monterey Park. I would not like this community of interest to be grouped with cities like Sierra Madre, Bradbury, Walnut, and Diamond Bar because they are higher-income, and do not share similar economic and social interests with working class communities in the San Gabriel Valley.

At the assembly level, I would like AD 49 to remain as an Asian majority district. I prefer the cities of El Monte and South El Monte to be kept whole, but understand if the majority Asian district requires the splitting of El Monte. More API residents live in the northern portions of El Monte, north of Garvey Avenue.

At the congressional level, I encourage the commission to keep the Western San Gabriel Valley together in the same congressional district, while maintaining a connection to the San Gabriel Mountains. Current districts 27 and 28 generally do a good job of empowering the foothill communities. This is accomplished by placing the foothill communities in the same congressional districts as the San Gabriel Mountains.

It is important that the San Gabriel Valley remains united because we care about many common issues, including the climate crisis, the housing crisis & homelessness, healthcare, education, immigrant rights, civil rights, and divestment from policing and incarceration.

Our cities are park-poor, suffer from polluted air due to freeways, experience extreme heat, and live with higher than average rates of diabetes, asthma, heart disease and other chronic health issues. Residents struggle to have their basic needs met, including housing, with many multi-generational families renting rather than owning. Major corridors such as Garvey Avenue and Valley Boulevard contain region-defining mom-and-pop businesses, restaurants (ie: pho, taco, boba, ramen shops), and Metro bus lines, many of which run through the El Monte Bus Station, the largest bus station west of the Mississippi. Families utilize the few green spaces we have to recreate in, such as the San Gabriel Mountains to the north, the Rio Hondo River, the San Gabriel River, and Whittier Narrows Park.

By keeping the San Gabriel Valley region together, our representatives can be champions for progressive policies to protect our unique Latino and Asian community, our health, and our planet for years to come. Thank you.

Ernest Lee

ActiveSGV Staff member