

From: **Mark Creffield**
Date: Mon, Oct 11, 2021 at 2:52 PM
Subject: Redistricting Comments
To: VotersFirstAct@crc.ca.gov <VotersFirstAct@crc.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners,

In an email sent on 9/17/21 we sent we expressed our opposition to being placed into a legislative district with the Los Angeles County Antelope Valley, and we also predicted that doing this would lead to smaller San Bernardino County High Desert Communities being disenfranchised and districted away from areas they are connected to, and the visualizations, unfortunately, proved us correct.

All the visualizations that were presented to the redistricting commission showed that there is no way to join the Antelope Valley and Victor Valley into one State Assembly or Congressional district, unless you disenfranchise the unincorporated communities around the incorporated cities or split some cities. Both options would dilute the voice of our region and negatively affect our representation.

Visualizations 10, 11 and 62 included the incorporated cities of the Victor Valley, however these renderings left out the unincorporated communities around it. Communities like Helendale (Silver Lakes), Lucerne Valley, or even unincorporated Apple Valley. All these communities have limited amenities and their residents travel to the Victor Valley for many needs, including hospital visits, job opportunities, grocery stores, home improvement stores, restaurants, or even to see a movie.

Additionally, the visualizations did not include Barstow with the rest of the San Bernardino County High Desert. Barstow is a city that is deeply connected to the Victor Valley. Barstow is also home to the only veteran's home in the Inland Empire – many of the retired military members who served at the former George Air Force Base in Victorville, now call Barstow home. Additionally, several Victor Valley residents travel to Barstow for work at the Marin Corps Logistics Base, Barstow Community College, and the BNSF rail yard. Lastly, the local governments work closely together on issues of economic development, public safety, transportation, housing, and homelessness. These communities are part of our Greater High Desert community, and it would not make sense to have them be part of a different district from where they are connected.

Visualization 12 corrects the mistake of leaving out Barstow and Helendale from the Victor Valley, but similarly it leaves the unincorporated communities around the Victor Valley like Lucerne Valley and unincorporated Apple Valley forgotten. However, it also leaves the unincorporated communities around Barstow disenfranchised. Communities like Yermo, Dagget and Newberry Springs all rely on Barstow to provide critical services. The closest hospital for these communities is Barstow Community Hospital and the closest grocery stores are in Barstow. If residents of these communities want to see a movie, eat at a restaurant, have family stay at a hotel, go to court, or file a police report they must travel to Barstow. Lastly the Barstow Fire Protection District serves some of the unincorporated communities around it as well. Again, it makes no sense to have them be part of a different district from where they are so clearly connected.

However, we believe that one thing the visualizations made clear is that the Victor Valley could, and we believe should, be the

population base for a San Bernardino County High Desert Assembly and Congressional district.

We believe this is clear for several reasons. First the communities of the Greater San Bernardino County High Desert are joined by a desire for a more rural lifestyle and a more affordable cost of living. In numerous surveys we see that residents relocate to the Victor Valley and Greater High Desert to get away from the more urban areas to our south and west, to enjoy the big open sky, and to be closer the natural environment with amenities such as national parks, forests, and Off Highway Vehicles Areas.

Additionally, the San Bernardino County High Desert has important concerns when it comes to Federal and State issues. With Federal issues much of the land that surrounds the incorporated and unincorporated communities in the San Bernardino County High Desert is owned by the Federal Government, either through the Department of Defense, Bureau of Land Management, or the National Park Service. Much of the economic activity for our region comes from these lands and it is important our communities have a representative that can advocate for our community and that our voice is not diluted or that our representative come from an area that does not understand this importance.

Another important federal issue is our transit corridors that we rely on for economic and recreational needs. The 15 Freeway is the most important in this regard. Not only does it connect many of the communities, but in a study done by the City of Hesperia in 2016, it was found that of the 115,808 active labor workers in the Victor Valley, 71% (82,251) are travelling down the Cajon Pass (I-15) for employment.[\[1\]](#)

Additionally, millions of people travel the I-15 Freeway through our region every year, bringing resources to the San Bernardino High Desert. The I-15 also connects to Highway 395, 18, 247 and I-40. These transit corridors bring together the rural communities in the San Bernardino County High Desert and connect to the vast swaths of federal lands that surround our communities. These vital lifelines are key to the San Bernardino County High Desert region, and we deserve a representative who understands this and is not distracted with corridors that benefit other regions.

At the State level we have several important issues. One major concern is housing and homelessness. Recently we have seen the cost of housing increase dramatically, as well as an uptick in the homeless population. It is critical to our region that we have effective representation focused on our needs so we can get the resources necessary to address these issues. If we are put into districts with other counties, we will be forced to compete with our own representative's attention to get our fair share of State revenues to address these community problems.

We have attached two maps that we believe would keep our region united and provide for fair representation for rural San Bernardino County and the Greater San Bernardino County High Desert. These maps also keep communities whole and are supported by public comments we have found on the Commissions' website. The only city lines that are touched are in Highland and Rancho Cucamonga for the Congressional map. In Highland the city is split by the 210 Freeway and is also split into 2 different school districts. West Highland is carved into the City of San Bernardin and is part of the San Bernardino Unified School District. West Highland is also more demographically like the City of San Bernardino. East Highland, on the other hand, abuts the San Bernardino National Forest and has more in common with

other rural communities that are bordered by federal lands such as lower density housing and more rural lifestyle. In Rancho Cucamonga, the community of Alta Loma is split from the remainder of the city. This community has its own school district, post office, zip codes, and a rural culture and heritage. It also touches a national forest and a concern with how the federal lands around it are managed. Both east Highland and Alta Loma connect to the I-15 Freeway via the I-210 Freeway.

[1] 2016 High Desert Workforce Report, City of Hesperia Economic Development Department

We appreciate the commission taking the time to hear from our community and for your diligence in this process. We also look forward to continuing the conversation with you about the future of our community.

Assembly District Communities: Wrightwood, Phelan, Pinon Hills, Oak Hills, Hesperia, Victorville, Apple Valley, Adelanto, Spring Valley Lakes, Silver Lakes, Lucerne Valley, Barstow, Trona, Kramer Junction, Red Mountain, Newberry Springs, Yermo, Daggett, Baker, Needles, Big River, Big Bear Lake, Big Bear City, Fawnskin.

Congressional District Communities: Assembly District Communities: Wrightwood, Phelan, Pinon Hills, Oak Hills, Hesperia, Victorville, Apple Valley, Adelanto, Spring Valley Lakes, Silver Lakes, Lucerne Valley, Barstow, Trona, Kramer Junction, Red Mountain, Newberry Springs, Yermo, Daggett, Baker, Needles, Big River, Johnson Valley, Homestead Valley, Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree, Twentynine Palms, Morongo Valley, Big Bear Lake, Big Bear City, Fawnskin, Running Springs, Lake

Arrowhead, Crestline, Lytle Creek, Yucaipa, Oak Glen, east Highland, Alta Loma, San Antonio Heights.

Thank you!

PLEASE NOTE NEW EMAIL ADDRESS

Sincerely,

Mark

MARK CREFFIELD | PRESIDENT / CEO
Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce
The Desert is Greater with you in it!