

OFFICE of the MAYOR



CITY OF HURON

August 31, 2021

**California Citizens Redistricting Commission
721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260
Sacramento, CA 95814**

Re: August 25th Zone F Public Input – South Valley Latinos

Dear California Citizens Redistricting Commission:

My name is Rey Leon and I was speaker number 45 at the August 25th Central Valley COI Input hearing. I had to wish the Commission an early “Adios!” because my three minutes finished before I could fully describe my communities of interest. Commissioner Turner suggested I submit written input to better inform this body of my community’s redistricting priorities.

I proudly serve as the Mayor of the city of Huron in Fresno County and I am also the CEO of The LEAP Institute. LEAP stands for Latino Equity Advocacy and Policy, and we are an environmental nonprofit focused on advancing climate, environmental and economic justice in farmworker communities.

I urge The Commission when drawing lines to respect the vast Latino majority population in the South Valley between Fresno and Bakersfield as a single community of interest. As best you can, please create as many Latino majority districts in the South Valley because, as Census data shows, the numbers are there – we are the majority.

The South Valley is comprised of western Fresno County and the southern half of the City of Fresno, down to northwestern Kern County and the eastern half of Bakersfield, along with all the small Latino communities dotting their way up Interstate 5 and State Route 99. In some of these cities and towns Latinos are more than a simple majority. Communities like Mendota, Firebaugh, Selma, Delano, McFarland, Wasco, and Arvin Latinos are all over 80 percent of the population. My city of Huron is 96% Latino! Our communities all face the same challenges and will be stronger together when advocating for resources and change. We face air and drinking water pollution, a lack of greenspace, and associated negative health outcomes. Additionally, we struggle with outdated infrastructure, including a lack of broadband access and safe, affordable housing.

Evident in the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 maps below, you can see the clear differences between north and south Fresno, east and west Bakersfield, and the impacts facing Westside communities from Fresno County to Kern County between Interstate 5 and Highway 99. The bright orange and red colors indicate Census tracts that are overburdened with negative socioeconomic disparities and environmental impacts.

“Unidos Se Puede!”

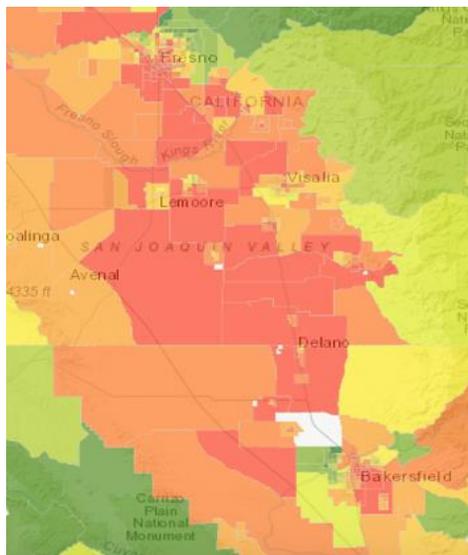
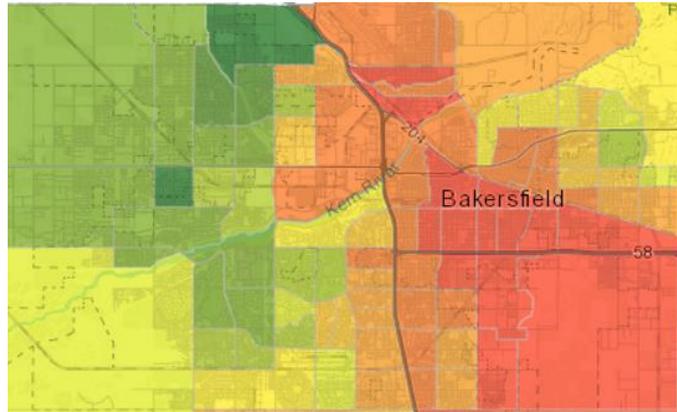
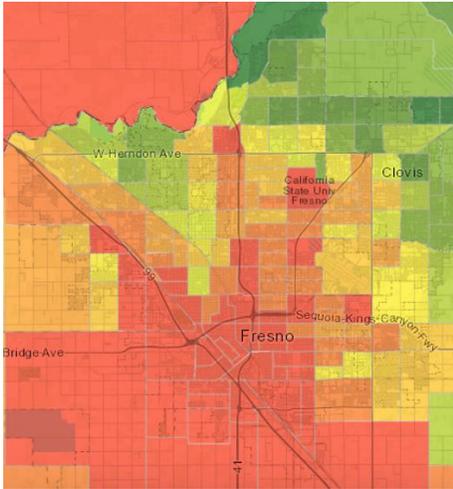
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(Source: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/5764b91c4c8a461693487c17b8859976/page/page_0/?views=view_17)

As a local Latino elected official, I have created partnerships with many other Latino elected officials across the region. As an environmental advocate, I have seen first-hand the impacts of environmental injustice on Latino farmworker communities and historic lack of investment in these communities. Over the last several years us local elected officials have been making a lot of progress tackling our issues together with our state and federal representatives by organizing among our various Council of Governments and within the League of Cities. Yet, we have more work to do and we can only do the work together when we have one strong voice.

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So again, Commission, respect our Latino majority communities by creating as many Latino majority districts as possible from Fresno to Bakersfield at the state and federal levels.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rey Leon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rey" being more prominent than the last name "Leon".

Mayor Rey Leon
City of Huron, CA

“Unidos Se Puede!”

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