October 11, 2021
California Redistricting Commission
721 Capitol Mall Suite 260
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Proposed District Maps for Central Coast (Zone E)

Dear Redistricting Commissioners,

The Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE) submits the following Assembly, Senate, and Congressional District maps for your consideration. We are a longstanding community organization representing working-class and immigrant communities in the Central Coast region. Since our founding in 2001, we have been committed to voting rights for our communities and have engaged in city, county, state, and federal redistricting. We are deeply grateful to the work of the California Citizens Redistricting Commission ten years ago in correcting longstanding injustices and racial gerrymandering that limited the voices of people of color in the Central Coast and know there is more work to be done.

Our highest priority in these proposed maps is to enhance the political representation of three major historically underrepresented hubs of immigrant farmworker communities across our region that we identified in our Community of Interest letter dated July 22nd. In addition to one Latino majority CVAP VRA district in the Central Coast, we identify one other additional Latino majority total population assembly district, one senate district, and one congressional district, which we believe are important for representation of our communities.

We hope that our local knowledge of the unique geography of the Central Coast region can help in drawing fair maps that meet all requirements for population balance, VRA compliance, contiguity, communities of interest, compactness and nesting. We have worked closely with local grassroots partners to represent key communities of interest in the Central Coast, while communicating with advocates in neighboring regions like the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and the Central Valley about how our districts may overlap, overall partnering with over two dozen organizations.

If you have any questions about the attached maps, please feel free to contact CAUSE Policy Director Lucas Zucker at ___________________.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Maricela Morales, Executive Director, CAUSE
CAUSE proposes a Western Ventura County Assembly District (dark blue) which would concentrate the more racially diverse, agricultural, and working-class communities west of the Conejo Grade.

The district would include Oxnard, Port Hueneme, El Rio, Ventura, Saticoy, Ojai, Mira Monte, Meiners Oaks, Oak View, Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru, Camarillo west of the 34 highway (Lewis Rd), Somis, and CSU Channel Islands. While not a Latino majority CVAP Voting Rights Act district, this district would be majority Latino in total population (57%) and predominantly
people of color (69%). It would also be majority people of color CVAP (55%) with 44% Latino CVAP, 3% Black, 7% Asian, and 1% Native American CVAP, making it a “Coalition District”.

The Oxnard Plain communities of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, and El Rio are historically farmworker communities with a large Latino population that emerged from the turn-of-the-century sugarbeet industry and shifted over time to citrus and ultimately strawberries and vegetable row crops as farmworker populations shifted from Asian to Latino. Oxnard hosts the California Strawberry Festival and is known as the strawberry capital of the world, headquarters to Reiter Affiliated Companies, the world’s largest berry grower (and largest supplier of the Driscoll’s brand). Oxnard was home to the nation’s first multiracial farmworker union, the Japanese Mexican Labor Alliance in 1903, and was a home base for Cesar Chavez in the 1950’s as he worked to end the Bracero Program. The area also has two large naval bases and an industrial port, with significant heavy industry and all of the region’s power plants. It is considered an environmental justice community, with disproportionate pollution burdens from high levels of agricultural pesticides, port-related diesel trucking, oil and gas facilities, and contaminated groundwater. As well as being predominantly Latino, the Oxnard area has a large share of residents from indigenous communities who speak languages like Mixteco and Zapoteco predating Spanish colonization in what is now Southern Mexico.

The Oxnard Plain shares significant community of interest with the Santa Clara Valley communities of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru, which are also historically farmworker communities with predominantly Latino populations. The Santa Clara Valley is considered the citrus capital of the world and is home to Limoneira, the world’s largest lemon grower and was the original founding site of the Union Oil Company, California’s largest oil producer. Residents of the Santa Clara Valley share similar issues with the Oxnard Plain of immigrant rights, poverty, farmworker rights, and environmental and health inequities.

While the Ventura and Ojai Valley areas as well as Camarillo are predominantly white and more middle-class, they share some connection with the Oxnard Plain and Santa Clara Valley. Oxnard and Camarillo share the same Oxnard Union High School District and the St. John’s hospital system and are connected through the agricultural fields between the cities. Ventura and Oxnard are both part of the Gold Coast Transit District and have several connecting major streets through both cities. They border each other along the Santa Clara River watershed. Oxnard youth often attend Ventura College and Oxnard residents often shop in downtown Ventura or the Ventura Mall. Many Ventura and Camarillo residents commute to the naval bases in Oxnard, which are the region’s largest employer. The Westside of Ventura is also predominantly Latino and shares socioeconomic characteristics with the Oxnard Plain and Santa Clara Valley, as well as environmental challenges with its proximity to the Ventura Oilfield and mix of residential
and industrial neighborhoods. This Assembly District would combine the Central Coast’s highest ranked “Disadvantaged Community” census tracts in Cal Enviroscreen, the state of California’s official ranking tool for pollution burden and environmental justice by uniting the Westside of Ventura with Oxnard.

CAUSE also considered the possibility of connecting the Oxnard Plain and Santa Clara Valleys through the backcountry of the Los Padres National Forest to the Santa Maria Valley and Lompoc Valley. This would create an additional majority Latino CVAP Voting Rights Act seat that has never been drawn before. However, it would also come at the expense of compactness, population deviations, and communities of interest. We believe that instead drawing a Coalition District in West Ventura County where Latino, Asian, and Black voters constitute a majority and a Santa Barbara County district where Latino voters have a significant influence would represent the diversity of our communities in a fair way.

**CAUSE proposes an Eastern Ventura County Assembly District (light blue) consisting of more affluent suburban communities to the east of the Conejo Grade as well as some outlying exurbs of Los Angeles County.**

The district would include Thousand Oaks, Oak Park, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Agoura Hills, Westlake Village, Calabasas, Woodland Hills, West Hills, Malibu, and part of Camarillo west of the 34 highway (Lewis Rd.)

Eastern Ventura County is more connected to the Los Angeles metropolitan area than Western Ventura County, with many affluent bedroom communities for commuters into white-collar Los Angeles jobs, as well as a regional biotech industry cluster including major employers like Amgen and Baxter and private universities like Cal Lutheran and Pepperdine. Most of these communities were primarily developed after the 1960’s with the arrival of the freeway system and state water project and the outward sprawl of the San Fernando Valley with suburban homebuyers leaving the urban core of Los Angeles. Many residents feel a strong separation from urban Los Angeles, but also feel separate from the rural agricultural Central Coast. They are among the wealthiest communities in the state and are predominantly white, with small but growing Latino and Asian populations.
Santa Barbara County Assembly Districts

CAUSE proposes one united Santa Barbara County Assembly District (green) including both Southern and Northern Santa Barbara County as well as some small southern San Luis Obispo County communities.

The district would include Carpinteria, Summerland, Montecito, Santa Barbara, Goleta, Isla Vista, Santa Ynez, Buellton, Solvang, Lompoc, Vandenberg Village, Cuyama, Sisquoc, Orcutt, Santa Maria, Guadalupe, Nipomo, Oceano, and Grover Beach. At 46% Latino total population and 30% Latino CVAP, Latino voters would be able to significantly influence the outcome of elections in this district.

Southern Santa Barbara County is predominantly white and has an economy rooted in tourism, but has significant Latino communities of interest including Eastside Santa Barbara, Westside Santa Barbara, Old Town Goleta, and Carpinteria. Many working-class immigrant families in Southern Santa Barbara County work in the hospitality industry in hotels and restaurants as well as domestic work in housekeeping and landscaping in the region. Santa Barbara city itself, while often seen as a monolithic of white affluence, has had a large Chicano/Mexican population since
the 1800’s. Santa Barbara played a historic role in the Chicano movement in the 1970’s, as the location where the Plan de Santa Barbara, was developed, which became the foundation for MEChA and the Chicano movement in higher education. CAUSE works with residents in the Latino enclaves of the Eastside and Westside of Santa Barbara, where there have been Latino majority CVAP city council districts that were adjudicated by a voting rights lawsuit in 2015.

Northern Santa Barbara County is majority Latino and includes working-class immigrant and farmworker communities like Santa Maria, Lompoc, and Guadalupe. These three cities are a high priority community of interest for CAUSE in this area of the Central Coast. They have historically been underrepresented in an assembly district with all of San Luis Obispo County, which is very different demographically and socioeconomically. We believe the large Latino population in Northern Santa Barbara County would be best represented by connecting it with the smaller Latino communities in Santa Barbara County and Southern San Luis Obispo County. Like the Oxnard and Salinas areas, the Santa Maria area became an enclave of immigrant farmworker communities with the rise of the sugarbeet industry at the turn of the century and continues to be heavily Latino and agricultural as the region has shifted to labor-intensive row crops like strawberries and lettuce. As the Santa Barbara area gentrifies, many families have been displaced from Southern Santa Barbara County to Northern Santa Barbara County but continue to keep family and community ties stretching across the county. Northern Santa Barbara County also shares oil issues with South County, as both have historically been major oil producing regions, and much of the oil pipeline infrastructure and impacts of spills and other disasters is shared across the county.

To population balance this district, we added the southernmost cities of San Luis Obispo County to the district. Nipomo in particular is tightly connected to Santa Maria and is often considered part of the same community. Oceano and Nipomo are the only two Latino majority communities in San Luis Obispo County and so share key demographic similarities to Santa Maria. The southern tip of San Luis Obispo County stretching up to Nipomo is part of the Santa Maria Valley and shares the same groundwater basin that many communities depend on for drinking water and is threatened by oil drilling and agricultural runoff. The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dune Complex is an important environmental asset that crosses from Northern Santa Barbara County to Southern San Luis Obispo County and has long been the subject of significant controversy over its preservation, including a decades-long oil chemical leak under the dunes in Guadalupe and off-road vehicle recreational uses in Oceano. Grover Beach is also included as it is more racially diverse and working-class than whiter and more affluent parts of Southern San Luis Obispo County like Pismo Beach and Avila Beach.
San Luis Obispo County Assembly Districts

CAUSE proposes to connect the majority of San Luis Obispo County to Western Kern County in an Assembly District (yellow). This would include the cities of Arroyo Grande, Pismo Beach, Avila Beach, Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo, Atascadero, Paso Robles, Taft, Buttonwillow, Oildale, and western portions of Bakersfield.

San Luis Obispo County and West Kern County are predominantly middle-class white homeowner parts of rural Central California with traditionalist values that are connected across the mountains by the 46 and 58 freeways. Many residents of West Bakersfield travel to Pismo Beach for recreation on the weekends and attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo for college, particularly the university’s renowned agriculture program. Like West Kern County, San Luis Obispo County is rural in character, but is a region where residents are more likely to be farm owners than farm workers. Between the oil industry and tourism, this region has a stronger economic base than poorer farmworker communities like the Salinas Valley or Santa Maria Valley. Although Kern and San Luis Obispo Counties are not currently connected in districts, they have been historically.

San Luis Obispo County is a difficult community to place in district maps. It is starkly different demographically and economically from the farmworker communities of the Salinas Valley to its north or the Santa Maria Valley to its south. Parts of San Luis Obispo County, like San Luis Obispo city or Avila Beach, share similarities to Santa Barbara city, Monterey city, or Santa Cruz.
city, as more environmentally-minded affluent communities connected to universities and coastal tourism. Other parts, like Paso Robles and Atascadero, feel more connected to inland conservative communities like Kern County. While San Luis Obispo County and Western Kern County may have some differences, they share significant commonalities in demographics and socioeconomic factors. While CAUSE experimented with another configuration connecting San Luis Obispo County to the coastal towns of the Monterey Bay, we ultimately found that the best way to protect the voting rights and representation of farmworker communities like the Santa Maria Valley, Salinas Valley, and East Bakersfield was to put San Luis Obispo County with West Bakersfield.
Monterey and Santa Cruz County Assembly Districts

CAUSE proposes to keep the Latino Voting Rights Act Assembly District (red) spanning Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Santa Clara roughly the same as its current configuration, with small variations for population balancing.

Our proposed Assembly District would include Cayucos, Cambria, San Miguel, King City, Greenfield, Soledad, Gonzales, Salinas, Watsonville, Hollister, Gilroy, and San Martin. This district is majority Latino (52%) CVAP and strong majority people of color (62%) CVAP and thus is a Voting Rights Act protected Latino district. We have proposed only minor tweaks to population balance by removing Morgan Hill, which is a relatively white affluent community more connected to the suburbs of South San Jose, and adding some rural pockets of Northern San Luis Obispo County.
Although this district crosses several county lines, it connects the agricultural inland communities of the Monterey Bay Area. The Monterey Bay Area, or the tri-counties of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito, is a broader community of interest, but within it are sharp divisions between coastal and more affluent communities like Monterey, Carmel, and Santa Cruz and inland agricultural and farmworker communities like Salinas and Watsonville. It is a vital protection under the Voting Rights Act for these majority Latino communities to be able to continue to elect the candidate of their choice to the Assembly.

The Salinas and Pajaro Valleys developed as hubs of immigrant farmworker communities during the sugarbeet boom at the turn of the century and continued as crops shifted to lettuce and strawberries. The lettuce industry in the Salinas Valley in particular was one of the major battlefields of the United Farm Workers. Like the Oxnard and Santa Maria areas, the Salinas Valley is also home to a large population of indigenous communities from Southern Mexico who often work in agriculture. Hollister and Gilroy are also majority Latino agricultural communities. The area is known for local writer John Steinbeck who wrote about the struggles of farmworkers in the Salinas Valley. Watsonville is home to Driscoll’s, the largest distributor of berries in the world, Gilroy is the Garlic Capital, and the Salinas Valley is known as America’s Salad Bowl. These communities share many of the same challenges in dealing with immigrant rights and language access, poverty, disparities in health, education, and housing, and environmental justice challenges like agricultural pesticides and groundwater sustainability.

**CAUSE proposes to keep roughly the current Assembly District (brown) along the coastal communities of the Monterey Bay connecting to the suburbs of San Jose.**

This district would include Monterey, Carmel, Seaside, Marina, Moss Landing, Prunedale, Aptos, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, Felton, Ben Lomond, Morgan Hill, and the Almaden Valley and Edenvale areas of South San Jose.

This is a predominantly white and affluent area with a strong environmental orientation towards coastal preservation and limits on development to protect open space. Monterey Bay communities’ histories are rooted in the Spanish Missions, commercial fishing canneries, the postwar military boom, development of universities, bohemian culture and the environmental movement, coastal tourism, and emerging high-tech industry. UC Santa Cruz and CSU Monterey Bay give the area high levels of educational attainment, homeownership rates, and other markers of economic success. Like other similar communities such as Santa Barbara, they are not a monolith, with historic diverse neighborhoods, but in general the coastal towns are more affluent than the farmworker communities inland in the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys.
The suburbs of South San Jose share similar demographics and socioeconomics and we believe are likely the best fit for an Assembly District with the Monterey Bay Area. The Monterey Bay coastal towns are more connected to the rural Central Coast and dependent on tourism, while South San Jose is more suburban and connected to the South Bay Area’s tech industry. However, Silicon Valley continues to spill into the Monterey Bay, where many newly-minted tech CEO’s buy homes to escape the city. Because of its university presence, the Monterey Bay has its own growing tech industry as well. Finally, the far fringes of the Bay Area such as Morgan Hill feel less connected to the urban core of the Bay and have a semi-rural suburban character.

These areas have been connected in districts for many years and may be best served as continuing to be connected in an Assembly District. While CAUSE explored the possibility of connecting the Monterey Bay to San Luis Obispo as an alternative, we believe the current configuration offers the best protection of voting rights and representation for not only the Latino agricultural communities of the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys but the Latino and Asian urban communities of Eastside San Jose and Silicon Valley.
Other Assembly Maps Considered

This Assembly District configuration in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties was considered, connecting the immigrant farmworker communities of the Oxnard Plain, Santa Clara Valley, Lompoc Valley, and Santa Maria Valley to create a Latino majority CVAP (53%) district, while connecting the tourist and mission towns along the coast of Ventura, Ojai, Santa Barbara, Santa Ynez, Pismo Beach, and San Luis Obispo. While this would create an additional opportunity for Latino voters to elect the candidate of their choice in the Assembly, we believed it might be more viable to present a more compact district to the Commission. CAUSE would still fully support this map if the Commission felt it was preferable to prioritize VRA considerations over compactness here.

This Assembly District connecting the Monterey Bay coastal towns with San Luis Obispo County was considered, as they share universities, wine country, and coastal tourism as well as similar demographics. However, we chose not to submit this configuration because of compactness and population deviation concerns, as well as our conversations with advocates in Kern County, who were able to better protect voting rights for farmworker communities in East Bakersfield by connecting West Bakersfield with San Luis Obispo County.
CAUSE proposes to continue roughly the current configuration of a senate district (purple) stretching from Eastern Ventura County to the Western San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles.

The district would include Camarillo, Somis, Thousand Oaks, Oak Park, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Agoura Hills, Westlake Village, Malibu, Calabasas, Woodland Hills, West Hills, Canoga Park, Chatsworth, Encino, Porter Ranch, Reseda, Tarzana, and Winnetka. The changes we propose to the current district, removing the portion of Santa Clarita included now, and adding the city of Camarillo, help with population balancing and completeness of cities.

Both East Ventura County and the West San Fernando Valley are largely middle to upper income suburban bedroom communities which are heavily college-educated homeowners and with an aging population. They have a strong voice on environmental conservation and quality of life issues. These communities are predominantly white but have growing Asian and Latino populations. They are distinct from both the urban core of Los Angeles to the east and the agricultural communities of Ventura County to the west. While many residents of this area commute into the core of Los Angeles for work in high tech and white-collar professional occupations, they choose to live in communities that are less urban and densely populated for lower traffic, single-family only zoning, and strong access to open space and amenities, high home values and well-funded schools.
CAUSE proposes to continue roughly the current configuration of a senate district (blue) spanning all of Santa Barbara County and the western part of Ventura County.

The district would include Oxnard, Port Hueneme, El Rio, Ventura, Saticoy, Ojai, Mira Monte, Meiners Oaks, Oak View, Santa Paula, Fillmore, Piru, CSU Channel Islands, Carpinteria, Summerland, Montecito, Santa Barbara, Goleta, Isla Vista, Santa Ynez, Buellton, Solvang, Lompoc, Vandenberg Village, Cuyama, Sisquoc, Orcutt, Santa Maria, Guadalupe, Nipomo, Oceano, Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, and Pismo Beach. While not a Latino majority CVAP Voting Rights Act district, this district would be majority Latino in total population (51%) and predominantly people of color (63%). It would be 36% Latino CVAP and 47% people of color CVAP, giving Latino voters the ability to strongly influence the outcome of elections. This is intended to roughly nest the West Ventura County and Santa Barbara County assembly districts, with adjustments made to keep the “five cities” area of San Luis Obispo County together and the city of Camarillo in Ventura County whole.

Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties are strongly connected and in fact were originally one county from initial California statehood until Ventura County split from Santa Barbara County
in the 1870’s after the discovery of oil. Together they make up the bulk of indigenous Chumash territory, and under the Spanish mission system, composed a governing unit of missions commanded from the presidio (military fort) in Santa Barbara. Today, they share an area code (805), political districts, civic organizations, and many other connections. The Channel Islands National Park and the Los Padres National Forest span both counties. Many Ventura County residents commute into the employment center of Santa Barbara and many Ventura County residents attended college at UC Santa Barbara. Their climates are similar and agricultural industries specialize in many of the same crops like berries and citrus. There are many communities with similar counterparts across the Ventura/Santa Barbara County line, from immigrant farmworker communities like Oxnard and Santa Maria, to old coastal mission towns like Santa Barbara and Ventura, to charming tourist destinations like the Ojai Valley and Santa Ynez Valley, to military bases like Vandenberg Air Force Base and Naval Base Ventura County.

The region shares many similar issues: It has a large historic oil industry, which is aging and facing questions about its transition and future in the face of environmental and climate policy. This stretch of the coast was home to the founding and growth of Union Oil (Unocal), California’s largest oil company, which ultimately caused major environmental disasters like the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill (and lesser known disasters in Guadalupe and Avila Beach) which helped spark the modern environmental movement, with Santa Barbara home to the nation’s first Earth Day. Today, climate resilience is an existential question for the region, with major wildfires like the 2017 Thomas Fire, which was then the largest fire in California recorded history, cutting across Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties and devastating communities from Montecito mansions destroyed in mudslides to farmworkers laboring under choking smoke. Local agriculture is threatened by rising days of extreme heat and sea level rise leading to saltwater intrusion into groundwater aquifers. In fact, a Washington Post analysis found that Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties are the fastest-warming counties in the continental United States, already crossing the threshold of 2 degrees Celsius that climate scientists warn about. The region also faces major economic challenges, with residents who depend on low-wage jobs in agriculture and tourism struggling to afford skyrocketing housing costs along its scenic coast. The region’s immigrant communities, with high rates of undocumented residents excluded from the social safety net, have faced severe crises from the Thomas Fire to the COVID-19 pandemic that have impacted agriculture and tourism, leaving families suffering financially.

In particular, CAUSE’s most important goal for this senate district is to continue to unite the farmworker communities of the Oxnard Plain, Santa Clara Valley, Santa Maria Valley, and Lompoc Valley, some of our most important communities of interest, in one senate district. The senate is the only jurisdiction with districts large enough to easily do this. Oxnard and Santa Maria especially, the largest cities in Ventura and Santa Barbara County respectively, have much
shared history and economic and demographic similarity. Both were built from the turn-of-the-century sugarbeet boom and became hubs of immigrant farmworkers. Both boomed with suburban homes in the postwar era due to their proximity to military bases, but later experienced “white flight” and a declining economic base particularly after the end of the Bracero program and housing integration in the 1960’s brought more Latino immigrant families into the cities. Both are now strawberry-growing centers, which attracted indigenous migrant communities beginning in the 1990’s and now many guestworkers under the federal H-2A program. Both experience shared issues from immigrant and farmworker rights to housing and economic challenges to pesticide drift and groundwater contamination problems.

We have adapted the current senate district slightly to population balance while keeping communities of interest whole by removing Camarillo and adding the “five cities” area of Southern San Luis Obispo County. Camarillo shares much in common demographically with Eastern Ventura County as a more affluent white suburban bedroom community, although it is below the Conejo Grade that normally separates East/West Ventura County. The “five cities” area around Pismo is the most closely connected to the Santa Maria Valley of any part of San Luis Obispo County, with many Santa Maria and Guadalupe residents traveling there for services or work. Historically, farms in the Santa Maria Valley shipped their goods to outside markets from the Avila pier. The Pismo area is coastal and tourism-oriented like Santa Barbara, although it probably has even more in common with blue-collar Ventura also within the district. The five cities are technically part of the Santa Maria Valley and are connected to the groundwater aquifer, Santa Maria River watershed, and dune complex which runs across the county line.
San Luis Obispo, Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Senate Districts

CAUSE proposes a senate district (green) spanning the entire northern portion of the Central Coast including all of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties with most of San Luis Obispo County.

Our proposed Senate District would include San Luis Obispo, Morro Bay, Los Osos, Santa Margarita, Atascadero, Templeton, Paso Robles, Cayucos, Cambria, San Miguel, King City, Greenfield, Soledad, Gonzales, Salinas, Watsonville, Hollister, Monterey, Carmel, Seaside, Marina, Moss Landing, Prunedale, Aptos, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, Felton, Ben Lomond, and Boulder Creek. This district is 46% Latino total population and 28% Latino CVAP. It is intended to roughly nest the coastal Monterey Bay and agricultural Salinas Valley assembly districts, with adjustments made to improve communities of interest such as removing South San Jose and adding northern San Luis Obispo County.
This would unite the inland farmworker communities with the coastal Monterey Bay communities rather than the current Latino majority Senate District stretching across the mountains from the Salinas Valley into the Merced area. We believe this is justified because the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys have stronger community of interest ties to the Monterey Bay area and community members we spoke to prefer a coastal district, even though a solely racial analysis might connect them to the Central Valley. We also support this change because of our communication with our sister voting rights advocates in the Central Valley like the Dolores Huerta Foundation, who have calculated that it is now possible to draw two Latino majority Senate districts within the Central Valley floor itself so there is no loss of VRA districts statewide by making this change.

Many residents of Salinas and Watsonville commute to the wealthier coastal communities like Monterey and Santa Cruz for work. Because they share county governments in Monterey and Santa Cruz, many residents of the lower-income farmworker communities are also connected to public services in the coastal communities. Environmental issues impact the whole region, such as agricultural runoff in the river valleys that ends up in Monterey Bay. When fires sweep across the Santa Cruz Mountains, farmworkers labor under the smoke in the Salinas Valley. Although most residents of communities like Salinas and Watsonville would say there are vast demographic differences between them and the wealthier and whiter communities along the coast, if you asked whether their day-to-day lives were more connected to Santa Cruz or Merced, they would answer Santa Cruz without hesitation. CAUSE believes that the community of interest in the Monterey Bay surpasses a simple racial demographic analysis, and proposes to keep the senate district within the Central Coast rather than crossing the mountains.

The six-country Central Coast region (Zone E) shares much in common in demographics, economics, and environment, but can generally be divided into northern and southern population hubs. The northern tri-counties, Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito, are closely linked in political districts and civic organizations and have many commuters between them. The southern tri-counties, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo, also often share government districts, civic organizations, and economic ties. They even have distinct area codes, with northern Central Coast phone numbers beginning with 831 and southern Central Coast phone numbers beginning with 805.

The northern Central Coast is more closely linked with broader Northern California and the San Francisco Bay Area, while the southern Central Coast is more linked with Southern California and Los Angeles. The north is defined by the Monterey Bay and Big Sur and the redwood forests of the north, while the south is defined by the Channel Islands, the Los Padres National Forest, and the chaparral and oak ecosystem of the south. Like California as a whole, the north half of
the Central Coast tends to be both more politically liberal and less populated than the south. Both Central Coast regions are shaped by major universities, but northern Central Coast residents are more likely to have graduated from UC Santa Cruz while southern residents likely attended UC Santa Barbara. Both regions are major centers of berry and wine grape production, but farms in the north specialize more in leafy greens and farms in the south specialize more in citrus.

While San Luis Obispo County is typically grouped in the southern tri-county region rather than the north, it is really the sparsely populated center between the two population hubs of north and south. It shares much in common with both the north and south, including wine country, universities, and coastal tourism. In our proposed senate maps, we attempted to include the parts of San Luis Obispo County most connected with Big Sur and wine country in the northern district, and the parts most connected with the Santa Maria Valley and Nipomo-Oceano dunes in the southern district.

In the Senate, the Central Coast can be roughly divided into two and a half senate districts. The most logical division is to have one senate district fully encompassing the northern tri-counties with some of San Luis Obispo County added, while one senate district encompasses the core of the more populated southern counties. The final half district of eastern Ventura County fits well with the western San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles.
CAUSE proposes a congressional district (blue) encompassing the bulk of Ventura County, minus part of Simi Valley and the Ojai Valley.

The district would include Oxnard, Port Hueneme, El Rio, Ventura, Saticoy, Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru, Camarillo, Somis, CSU Channel Islands, Thousand Oaks, Oak Park, Moorpark and part of Simi Valley roughly south of the 118 freeway and west of Tapo Canyon Road. The district would be 46% total Latino population and 34% Latino CVAP and keeps united Ventura County’s key farmworker communities of interest of the Oxnard Plain and the Santa Clara Valley, giving them an ability to influence the outcome of elections in this district.

The six county Central Coast region (Zone E) is almost exactly three congressional districts. Because of the low deviations allowable for congressional districts, we must remove approximately 70,000 people to be placed either with a Los Angeles, Bay Area, or Central Valley congressional district. We propose to continue the current method of putting some of Simi Valley with the Santa Clarita area which it has much in common with.

Ventura County is the Central Coast’s most populated county by far and has just above the population needed for a congressional district. We propose to keep the county as whole as
possible by putting a portion of Simi Valley with nearby Santa Clarita (as it is in the current congressional maps) and all of the Ojai Valley with Santa Barbara.

Simi Valley and Santa Clarita are both inland exurbs of Los Angeles, with predominantly white but rapidly diversifying populations. They are somewhat more working-class with more traditionalist values than the Conejo Valley or western San Fernando Valley, and you are more likely to find police officers and firefighters rather than engineers and college professors. However, generally they have high levels of homeownership and middle-class families.

The Ojai Valley is very similar to Santa Barbara, sharing the same historic roots of being developed in the 1800’s as health resort towns promoted to sick and wealthy easterners as places where the beautiful California climate could cure their ailments. They have continued to be destinations for luxury tourism and the hospitality industry, as well as hubs of vacation homes for Hollywood celebrities to British royalty. This has given them a cosmopolitan and bohemian culture often not shared by surrounding rural towns. Both are also strongholds of the environmental movement, and share environmental issues related to their connection to the Los Padres National Forest. In the current congressional maps, coastal parts of the city of Ventura are included with Santa Barbara, but to minimize the division of cities and adjust for shifting populations in our proposed maps, we believe the Ojai Valley is a better fit.

Otherwise, Ventura County shares many common connections, including the Ventura County Community College District, the VISTA inter-city bus service, the Ventura County public hospital system, library system, sheriff, and the 101 and 126 corridors. A mix of historic agriculture, oil, and military industries exist alongside newer white-collar employers like Patagonia and Amgen, employing residents who commute throughout the county. Ventura County is the most densely populated part of the Central Coast, and this district contains over half of the six county region’s cities with populations over 100,000. It is also the most industrialized part of the region, with several power plants, the Port of Hueneme, major oilfields and Naval Base Ventura County. The working-class immigrant communities of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, El Rio, Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru share a common agricultural heritage, economic challenges and disparities, and Latino immigrant identity, and are vital to keep together in a congressional district, especially as related to federal immigration policy.
CAUSE proposes a Central Coast congressional district (green) with all of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties, plus the Ojai Valley of Ventura County and the sparsely populated southern end of Monterey County.


This district is the most rural and scenic stretch of the Central Coast that is least connected to the urban areas of the Bay Area or Los Angeles. It covers almost all of the Los Padres National Forest, with important federal issues for balancing resource extraction and conservation, public access to recreation, and wildfire resilience. It includes major tourism and hospitality destinations including Ojai, Santa Barbara, Santa Ynez and Paso Robles wine country, Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo, and much of Big Sur. Major public universities UC Santa Barbara and
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo give the region a significant student population as well as many residents employed by the universities.

Without the large Latino communities on either end of the Central Coast in the Oxnard and Salinas areas, this is the least racially diverse part of the region. However, the communities of Santa Maria, Guadalupe, and Lompoc are kept together within this district and can still exercise some voice within the district.
 Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz County Congressional Districts

CAUSE proposes a congressional district (purple) spanning the northern portion of the Central Coast with almost all of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties.

Our proposed Congressional District would include King City, Greenfield, Soledad, Gonzales, Salinas, Watsonville, Hollister, Monterey, Carmel, Seaside, Marina, Moss Landing, Prunedale, Aptos, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, Felton, Ben Lomond, and most of Boulder Creek. This district is majority (52%) Latino total population and 33% Latino CVAP, giving Latino voters the ability to strongly influence the outcome of elections.

This district is intended to concentrate the northern hub of population in the Central Coast clustered around Monterey Bay. Like the similar proposed Senate district, this district attempts to keep the northern “tri-countries” area of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County together as much as possible. This tri-counties Monterey Bay region shares close connections in commuting for work, government services, and natural areas. The tri-counties is just over the population limit for a congressional district, meaning some small areas had to be removed.

A small pocket of population from the Santa Cruz Mountains was removed for population balancing purposes. The Santa Cruz Mountains are connected to the city of Santa Cruz, but are
also somewhat connected to the San Francisco Peninsula areas by the mountains and preserved open space stretching up through Half Moon Bay. These are some of the last few undeveloped areas so close to the San Francisco Bay Area, and environmental conservation issues loom large.

A small pocket of population in southern Monterey County (San Ardo, San Lucas, and Lockwood) was also removed, as these towns share similarities with the sparsely populated wine country of northern San Luis Obispo County and are not as heavily Latino as the towns connected to the labor-intensive industrial agriculture of the Salinas Valley.

We focus on keeping together the farmworker communities of the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys to ensure strong Latino voice in this district. While many farmworker communities are heavily undocumented, leading the district to not be majority Latino CVAP, the majority Latino population will heavily influence the representative of this congressional district. This is particularly important for federal immigration policy, which has unique issues in the area. For example, the growing use of the H-2A agricultural guestworker visa program in California is concentrated in the Central Coast, but the Salinas Valley in particular has the state’s largest population of H-2A workers.
CAUSE considered an alternative configuration for congressional maps that would keep Simi Valley whole by cutting Paso Robles and Templeton out of San Luis Obispo County and putting them with Kern County. Paso Robles is the most similar to Kern County of any San Luis Obispo County city, while Simi Valley is somewhat connected to Moorpark and other parts of Ventura County. However, this would require splitting the city of Ventura in half. We chose not to submit this version because we preferred the heavily Latino Westside of the city of Ventura to be kept with the Oxnard Plain and Santa Clara Valley in a Ventura County district.
Conclusion

CAUSE’s maps attempted to maximize representation for our three population hubs of immigrant farmworker Latino communities, including the Oxnard Plain and Santa Clara Valley in Western Ventura County, the Santa Maria and Lompoc Valleys in Northern Santa Barbara County, and the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys in the Monterey Bay area. We balanced these considerations with other factors such as compactness and population balance, combining statistical analysis with lived experience in our communities.

**CAUSE’s proposed Assembly Districts** include one Latino VRA district (52% Latino CVAP) representing the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys and one Coalition district (55% people of color CVAP) representing the Oxnard Plain and Santa Clara Valley that is majority Latino total population. While it is possible to draw a second Latino VRA district rather than a Coalition district, we decided not to submit that map based on compactness concerns, but would still support that configuration if the Commission chose to draw it. While we were not able to put our other priority community of interest in the Santa Maria and Lompoc Valleys into a strong voting rights district, it is in a 30% Latino CVAP influence district.

**CAUSE’s proposed Senate Districts** include a Latino influence district (36% Latino CVAP) unifying our key communities of interest in the Oxnard Plain and Santa Clara Valley with the Santa Maria Valley and Lompoc Valley in a district that is majority Latino total population. While the Salinas Valley and Pajaro Valley COIs are no longer in a majority Latino senate district stretching into the Central Valley in our proposed maps, we believe this will result in the strongest Latino representation for Central California as a whole, as the Central Valley now has two majority Latino CVAP senate seats without crossing into the Central Coast. Based on our stakeholder engagement, we believe it will also improve communities of interest by keeping the Monterey Bay region together.

**CAUSE’s proposed Congressional Districts** create two strong Latino influence districts. The Salinas and Pajaro Valleys are in a Latino influence congressional district that is overall majority Latino population (33% Latino CVAP). The Oxnard Plain and Santa Clara Valley are also in a Latino influence congressional district (34% Latino CVAP).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit maps to the California Citizens Redistricting Commission. We look forward to your deliberation.