



Central Valley Leadership Round Table

September 15, 2021

Submitted via Electronic Mail

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To: Fresno County Board of Supervisors
& the County's Advisory Redistricting Commission

Re: Central Valley Leadership Round Table Strong Support
for **Fresno County Equitable Map Coalition (EMC)** Map Proposal

The Central Valley Leadership Round Table (CVLRT) is a group of rural elected and community leaders in Fresno County, many of whom are former farm laborers or the children of farmworkers. We note with concern that our representatives often do not reflect the region's diversity. We strongly believe that fair maps must be drawn and approved this redistricting cycle, so that minority voters have an opportunity to elect their candidates of choice.

The CVLRT represents many families and cities in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. We advocate for more farmworker protections, a pathway to citizenship, and inclusion in coronavirus relief funding.

We have carefully reviewed the new Census data, which confirms that significant demographic changes continue to transform Fresno County.

Fresno County Board of Supervisors - 2020

Current Districts			Race/Ethnicity				
YEAR	Total Population	Year % Change	Latino %	White %	Black %	Asian %	% of Pop
1990	666,675		35.4%	50.7%	4.7%	8.1%	1.0%
2000	798,800	19.82%	44.0%	39.7%	5.0%	7.9%	3.4%
2010	930,450	16.48%	50.3%	32.7%	4.8%	9.3%	2.8%
2020	1,008,654	8.40%	53.6%	27.0%	4.4%	10.9%	2.7%

While the Latino population has increased dramatically over the past 30 years, the opportunity for disadvantaged populations to elect candidates of their choice at the County Supervisor level, has not kept pace. We see the Fair Maps Act of 2019 and the federal Voting Rights Act as opportunities and requirements to do more than simply move a few census tracts between urban districts to equalize population.

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We are excited at the potential for significant change in the boundaries of County Supervisorial Districts, to reflect the demographic shifts that have occurred.

The CVLRT believes the current map for the Fresno Board of Supervisors should be changed to reflect two distinct communities of interest separated by Highway 41: the rural Westside (Proposed District 1) and the rural Eastside (Proposed District 4).

EMC's Proposed Map recognizes the significant differences between these two regions, whether we look at crops grown, soil type, or transportation patterns. Even their water comes from different sources. On the Eastside, the farms are smaller, with more communities that are more densely populated. On the Westside, the communities are fewer and farther apart, with much bigger farms and more mechanized agriculture, requiring less labor.

We are pleased District 1, as proposed by EMC, covers the entire rural Westside, everything west of Highway 41 and all areas of the City of Fresno west of Highway 99.

- **Rural Cities:** Firebaugh, Kerman, Mendota, San Joaquin. Proposed District 1 **ADDS** Huron and Coalinga, which are now in District 4. The current District 4 stretches 100 miles, from Coalinga to Orange Cove.
- **Unincorporated communities:** Biola, Cantua Creek, Five Points, Tranquility, and West Park. As proposed, District 1 **ADDS** Caruthers, Easton, Lanare, Raisin City, & Riverdale, which are now in District 4.

These unincorporated rural communities are among the poorest and most isolated, and lack the basic features of a safe, healthy, sustainable neighborhood—potable drinking water, sewer systems, safe housing, public transportation, parks, sidewalks, and streetlights. Moreover, these communities are systematically underserved in the overall allocation of public resources and are frequently overlooked in local decisions.

The Fresno County Rural Transit Agency transit routes shed light on transportation patterns in the rural Westside and support use of Highway 41 as the dividing line.

Westlands and Westhills College District are currently split into two supervisor districts, but EMC's Proposed District 1 includes:

- All of the West Hills Community College District located within Fresno County, including the main Coalinga campus and the Firebaugh campus.
- All of the Westlands Water District

For these, and many other reasons, and after carefully reviewing the Supervisorial District map proposed by the Fresno County Equitable Map Coalition and the Dolores Huerta Foundation, the Central Valley Leadership Round Table stands in strong support.

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EMC's map is fair, research-based, meets all federal and state legal requirements, and provides an opportunity for fair representation.

Sincerely,

Eliseo Gamino

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