



Central California Environmental Justice Network

October 4th, 2021

Via Email

Fresno County Board of Supervisors
Fresno County Hall of Records
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Fresno, CA 93721
Clerk/BOS@co.fresno.ca.us

Fresno County Redistricting Advisory Commission
County Administrative Office
2281 Tulare Street, Room 304
Fresno, CA 93721
FresnoCounty2021Redistricting@fresnocountyca.gov

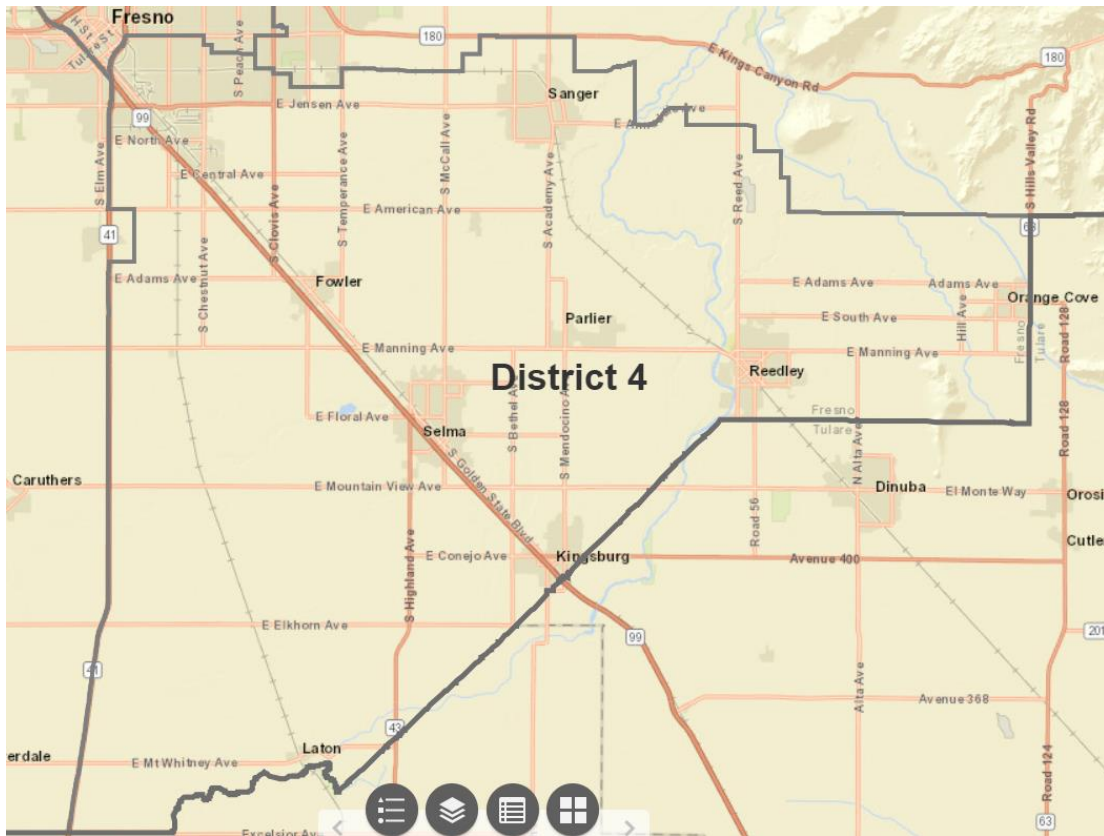
Re: Support for Fresno County Equitable Map Coalition (EMC) Map Proposal

Dear Members of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors and Members of the Fresno County Redistricting Advisory Commission:

On behalf of the Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN), we write to express our strong support of the Equity Map Coalition's ("EMC") proposed revised map, specifically as it relates to proposed District 4 which includes the communities of **Fowler, Kingsburg, Orange Cove, Parlier, Reedley, Sanger, Selma, and other disadvantaged unincorporated communities** such as **Calwa, Del Rey, Malaga, and Laton**. The proposed District 4 also includes the **older urban neighborhoods in Southeast Fresno**, as these residents share much in common with residents in the rural communities on the Eastside.

For over 20 years, CCEJN has worked closely with residents of the disadvantaged communities of Calwa, Del Rey, Malaga, Orange Cove and Southeast Fresno and we have seen firsthand the socioeconomic and environmental similarities that warrant them being in the same district. Keeping these communities of interest whole in proposed District 4 will allow them to receive the adequate representation they deserve, and that Fresno County has failed to provide under existing supervisorial maps. For these and the following reasons, we urge the Commission and Board of Supervisors to adopt the Equitable Map Coalition's proposed map and preserve our communities of interest.

Under the current Fresno County Board of Supervisors map, the communities east of Highway 41, in EMC's proposed District 4, are grouped in with towns and unincorporated communities in West Fresno County, like Huron and Coalinga, that tend to rely on Interstate 5, rather than the Highway 99. The communities in proposed District 4 are also grouped with unincorporated communities like Raisin City in West Fresno County, for which Kerman serves as its hub for shopping, pharmacy and banking needs.



EMC's proposed District 4

The communities in proposed District 4 share socioeconomic similarities

The communities in EMC's proposed District 4 share demographic and socioeconomic similarities. For example, in the jurisdictions of Calwa (90%), Orange Cove (94.8%), Malaga (92.8%) and Parlier (97.5%), over 90 percent of the population identified as Hispanic in the 2020 census. In the jurisdictions of Laton (73.6%), Reedley (79.1%), Selma (89.2%), Del Rey (88.8%), and Sanger (82.6%), over 70 percent of the population identified as Hispanic in the 2020 census.

Residents from the older urban neighborhoods in Southeast Fresno and Calwa share much in common with residents in the rural communities on the Eastside, including living in high poverty areas, heavily Latino (as described above), seasonal income because of seasonal work, and difficulty accessing health and social services. Because these areas are heavily Latino, it also means that they share linguistic similarities.

These communities also have a more difficult time accessing broadband internet. According to ACS 2019 data, only 53.7% of Parlier residents have a subscription to broadband; only 60.3% in Orange Cove; and 68.9% in Reedley. When it comes to residents with a bachelors degree or higher, only 4.1% have one in Parlier; 1.6% in Orange Cove; and only 12.7% in Reedley.

Many residents in these communities also travel more than 20 minutes each day to work. Specifically, ACS 2019 data reveals that Kingsburg residents travel an average of 22.9 minutes; Sanger residents 26.7 minutes; Orange Cove 27.5 minutes and, Parlier 23.2 minutes.

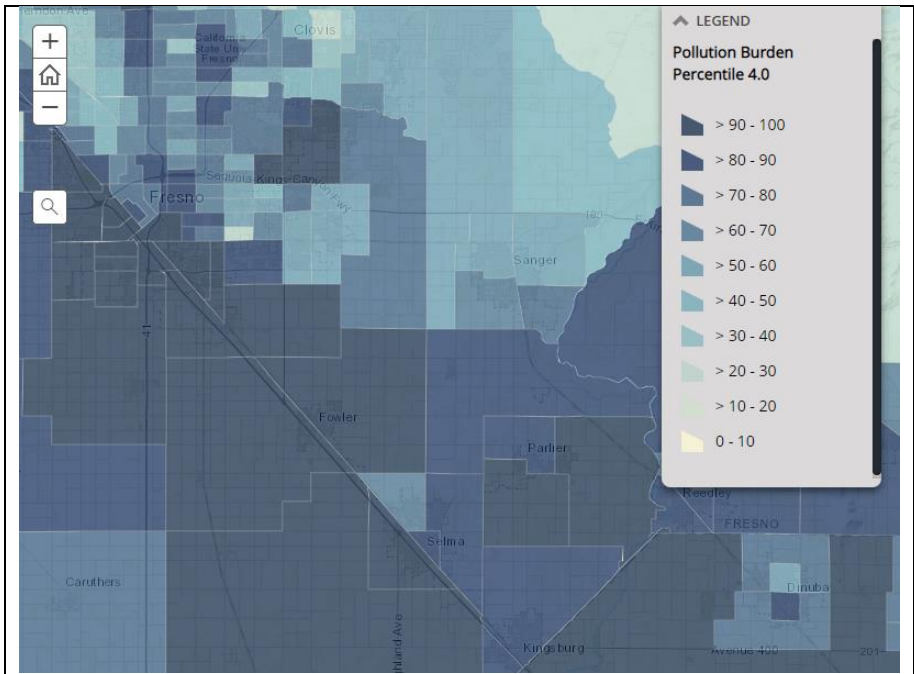
The communities in proposed District 4 experience shared environmental burdens

While much of Fresno County experiences environmental burdens such as poor air quality and water insecurity issues, the communities in proposed District 4 share similarities in how they are disproportionately burdened with pollution and pesticide contamination. The undersigned organizations used California’s CalEnviroScreen’s mapping tool to illustrate this point.¹ This screening tool is particularly effective because it uses environmental, health, and socioeconomic information to produce scores for every census tract in the state. Under such screen, almost all of the communities in proposed District 4 have a CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Score of 91-100% or above. This means that these communities are some of the most environmentally burdened and vulnerable communities in California. The screen is also used by CalEPA and its departments to aid in administering environmental justice grants, promote compliance with environmental laws, prioritize site-cleanup activities and identify opportunities for sustainable economic development. As such, it is important that these communities remain “whole” to ensure that they benefit from the same grants and funding that could be available through the state using such screening tool.

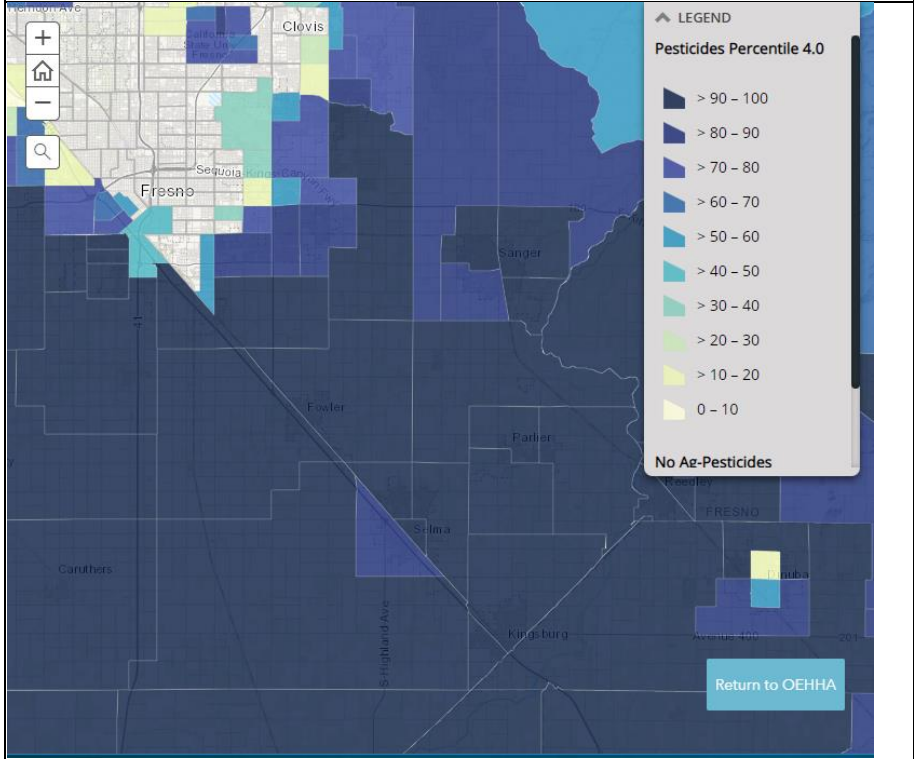
When analyzing these communities further, these communities are similarly burdened by pollution and pesticides. According to the screening tool, the communities of Fowler, Kingsburg, Selma, Parlier, Kingsburg and the unincorporated communities in-between all have a pollution burden percentile in the 80 to 100 range and a pesticide range in the 90 to 100 percentile. *See* Images below.

These communities have and will continue to advocate for environmental protections, as illustrated by the screening tool. As such, they will benefit from remaining together in one district as proposed in the Equitable Map Coalition’s map.

¹ CalEnviroScreen 3.0, available at: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-30>.



Source: CalEnviro Scree 4.0, Pollution Burden



Source: CalEnviro Scree 4.0, Pesticides Percentile 4.0

Similarities in the type of crops farmworkers harvest

Residents who live in the communities in proposed District 4 also work in and harvest similar crops, including crops that are different from those grown in West Fresno County. For example, citrus and fresh fruit are more commonly grown in the communities of proposed District 4 while West Fresno County is known for row crops like processing tomatoes, garlic, alfalfa, and cotton. Specifically, in the Orange Cove Irrigation District, 75% of farmland is citrus and only 16% nuts and grapes.² These differences are important because it impacts skills required to cultivate and harvest the different crops. In other words, the farmworkers in West Fresno County are more familiar working with row-crops while those in Sanger, Selma, and Parlier are more familiar with citrus.

Conclusion

We urge that the Commission and Board of Supervisors take our comments about our communities of interest seriously and adopt the proposed Equity Maps Coalition's map that keeps the communities of **Calwa, Fowler, Kingsburg, Orange Cove, Parlier, Reedley, Sanger, Selma, and other disadvantaged unincorporated communities, and the older urban neighborhoods in Southeast Fresno** together within one district. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to the undersigned organizations.

Sincerely,



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² Orange Cove Irrigation District, available at:
<http://www.orangecoveid.org/about%20the%20district.php#>.