



October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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

Re: Central Valley Partnership Strongly Supports **Fresno County Equitable Map Coalition (EMC)** Map Proposal

The Central Valley Partnership (CVP) is a progressive network of labor unions, environmental organizations and community leadership with a mission to achieve social, racial, environmental and economic justice in the San Joaquin Valley of California.

Noting the history of exclusion, segregation and racism prevalent in the San Joaquin Valley, often resulting in the disenfranchisement of democratic voting for the region’s residents, we strongly believe that fair maps must be drawn and approved this redistricting cycle, so that voters from underrepresented groups, communities of color and immigrant backgrounds have an opportunity to participate fully in our electoral system of government and to have their voices heard at the ballot box.

We preface our comment letter with reference to 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.

After a thorough review of the district boundaries proposed by the Equity Map Coalition for the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, the Central Valley Partnership is in full, strong support of the map. The proposed districts are contiguous, respect neighborhoods and cities as well as communities of interest, have easily identifiable boundaries, and are compact.

We particularly support the use of Highway 41 as an easily identifiable artificial boundary between rural communities of interest in Westside and Eastside Fresno County. The two distinct regions have significant differences in the areas of agricultural economic drivers, education access, and transportation. Each region deserves to have its own representative that will meet its challenges and uplift its needs.

Under the proposed maps, the entirety of the Westside is kept whole. We support this because it would strengthen the Westside community of interest by including together all the area served by West Hills Community College District and Westlands Water District, and all the areas connected by Fresno County Rural Transit's Westside routes. The Westside has been divided for too long.

In order to meet population requirements and in keeping with the use of easily identifiable boundaries, the proposed map uses Highway 99 as a boundary and includes City of Fresno communities west of the highway with the rural Westside communities. There is precedent for this in the current Supervisorial District map and neighborhoods west of Highway 99 are tied to some of the rural Westside communities via the many farmworkers and ag-related employees living in this area.

City of Fresno neighborhoods in Southeast Fresno and Calwa are put in a proposed district with the rural Eastside cities in current Supervisorial District Four. We support this because these neighborhoods and cities together form a community of interest and are bound together by work, family, shared culture and religion, and socioeconomics. Additionally, together, they all face similar challenges around educational attainment, housing, and healthcare access. District Four includes all the rural towns connected by Fresno County Rural Transit's Eastside routes.

We support keeping the City of Clovis whole and together, anchoring its own supervisorial district and including areas with new growth along with the foothill and mountain areas. Willow Avenue serves as the border between the City of Fresno and the City of Clovis and should also serve as an easily identifiable artificial boundary between Supervisorial District Two and District Five, respectively.

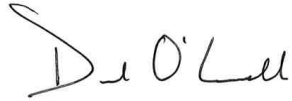
The proposed districts for Central and North City of Fresno maintain the geographic integrity of neighborhoods and respects the ethnic communities of interest in the city's urban core. The Central Supervisorial District Three is largely preserved, along with well-established and historic neighborhoods of working class and low-income families. The North Fresno Supervisorial District Two is also largely preserved and uses well understood natural and artificial boundaries like the San Joaquin River, Highway 99, Shaw and Ashlan Avenues.

The latest Census data shows the great diversity and significant growth of Fresno County. That diversity is represented in the map proposed by the Equity Map Coalition, which creates three effective Latino majority districts, while also ensuring our Supervisors represent distinct regions and communities of

interest within our county. These proposed districts will result in policy, programmatic, and funding decisions that will have a positive and equitable impact for all residents of Fresno County.

We strongly support these proposed districts and urge your serious consideration and ultimate support for this Equity Coalition map.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. O'Connell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a distinct "O'Connell".

**Daniel O'Connell**  
**Executive Director**  
**Central Valley Partnership**