



October 3, 2021

Submitted via Electronic Mail  
FresnoCounty2021Redistricting@fresnocountyca.gov

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

Re: Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter support for the Fresno County Equitable Map Coalition  
map proposal

The Sierra Club is our nation's premier, volunteer-driven environmental organization, with more than 760,000 dues-paying members. Our Club's Tehipite Chapter covers four counties in the Sierra Nevada foothills and central San Joaquin Valley, including 1,330 members in Fresno County. Our Club's mission is, "To explore, enjoy and protect the planet. To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out those objectives."

The Sierra Club is best known for advocating for protection of the magnificent wildlands of the United States, and has played a significant role in preserving public lands, including Yosemite National Park, back to our founding by John Muir in 1892. In the past decade, however, the Club has recognized that we need to influence local government, as well, if we are to limit climate change, which is breaking our planet's life support system. For this reason, the Sierra Club is involved with electing and supporting elected officials with the courage to speak up on environmental issues, and has allied with communities on the front lines of the environment, including San Joaquin Valley residents confronting air pollution, toxic waste, or a lack of safe and affordable drinking water.

Our Sierra Club believes that elected government functions best when it makes decisions in the open, with transparency and accountability to the public. The California FAIR Map Act, passed in 2019, provides the guidance for local government to use in redistricting. The Act lays out clear guidelines for how political district lines, including County Supervisorial districts, need to be drawn in time for the 2022 elections. Districts must comply with seven criteria, in the following order: (1) equal population to comply with the U.S. Constitution; (2) compliance with the federal Voting Rights Acts to ensure minorities have an equal opportunity to elect representatives of their choice; (3) districts must be contiguous; (4) they must respect the boundaries of cities, counties, neighborhoods and communities of interest; (5) they should be geographically compact; (6) they should have two Assembly districts nested within each State Senate district; and (7) they shall not be drawn to favor or discriminate against an incumbent, candidate or political party. California Constitution article XXI; CA Government Code, §§ 8251 - 8253.6.

*Despite these explicit instructions required by state law, three Fresno County Supervisors have stated on the record that existing Supervisorial districts, with very minor modifications, will be left unchanged in the current redistricting. This intransigence in the face of significant shifts in the County's demographics would, in our opinion, violate the California FAIR Map Act.*

The Fresno County Equitable Map Coalition has done an impressive amount of work to carefully identify the Communities of Interest in our county, and to work to ensure these are not diluted by splitting them across County Supervisor districts in our proposed map.

For example, in our proposed map, Supervisorial District 4 is reduced to a manageable geographic size, combining the population centers along Highway 99 south of Fresno, from Calwa to Kingsburg, and adding in the farming communities of Reedley and Sanger. Also, Westside Fresno County is no longer arbitrarily split in two, and the western half of existing District 4 is merged with District 1. Also, District 5 includes East Clovis and the developing region of former farmland, now transforming into bedroom communities, and keeps the City of Clovis intact. Communities of Interest of District 5 are preserved, including the surviving groves of Sequoia trees and Sierra foothill tourism-oriented communities such as Squaw Valley.

In conclusion, the Sierra Club urges that you support the proposed map of the Fresno County Equitable Map Coalition. We believe it is healthy when government responds to the needs of the entire electorate rather than catering to the needs of a limited segment of our population, one which has historically had the ear of our Fresno County Supervisors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Lasky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Lasky, Chair  
Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter

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