

MEMORANDUM

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: WHITNEY MCDONALD, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF A LETTER TO THE 2020 CALIFORNIA CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION REGARDING THE VISUALIZATION OF ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS IMPACTING THE CITY OF ARROYO GRANDE

DATE: NOVEMBER 9, 2021

SUMMARY OF ACTION:

Approval of a letter to the 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission regarding the Assembly visualization published for the week of October 27, 2021, that would redraw Assembly district boundaries in a manner that would separate the City from the remainder of the Five Cities region and the entire San Luis Obispo County area north of the City.

IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:

There are no financial impacts associated with the proposed letter.

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the Mayor to execute the proposed letter to the 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission regarding the visualization presented for the week of October 27, 2021, impacting the Assembly district boundary applicable to the City.

BACKGROUND:

Every 10 years, after the federal government publishes updated census information, California must redraw the boundaries of its Congressional, State Senate, State Assembly, and State Board of Equalization districts so that the districts correctly reflect the State's population. In 2008, California voters authorized the creation of the California Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) when they passed the VOTERS FIRST Act (Act). This Act authorized the Commission to draw new district lines following each census. In 2010, the Congressional Voters FIRST Act added the responsibility of drawing Congressional districts to the Commission.

The Commission consists of fourteen members and is made up of five Republicans, five Democrats, and four individuals who are not affiliated with either of those two parties. The Commission is required draw district lines in conformity with strict, nonpartisan rules designed to create districts of relatively equal population that will provide fair representation for all Californians.

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During its process of creating new district boundaries, the Commission is required hold public hearings and accept public comment. After hearing from the public, the Commission draws and ultimately adopts four maps establishing districts for the House of Representatives (Congressional) districts, 40 Senate districts, 80 Assembly districts, and 4 Board of Equalization districts, to be used for the next decade. In drawing the maps, Commissioners review and discuss pertinent data, including the 2020 census data from which the districts will be drawn, computer modeling of the census data to create potential districts, and public comment.

The Commission is now undertaking the process of redrawing districts following the 2020 census, using the following timeline:

- February - July 2021: Education Presentations (California Redistricting Basics)
- June - September 2021: Public Input Meetings (Communities of Interest)
- August 12, 2021: Census Data Received by the State
- September 20, 2021: Final dataset provided to Commission and Public with People in State Custody Reallocated
- October - November 2021: Public Input Meetings/Line Drawing Sessions
- No Later than November 15, 2021: Preliminary Draft District Maps Released
 - *14 days following the release of Preliminary Draft District Maps, the Commission may not display any other maps for public comment during this period.
- November-December 2021: Following Release of Preliminary Draft Maps: Additional Public Input Meetings and Line Drawing Sessions
- December 2021: Possible additional draft District Maps Released
- No Later than December 23, 2021: Display of Commission Approved Final Maps
- No Later than December 27, 2021: Final District Maps Certified to Secretary of State

Proposed maps have been prepared and published as “visualizations” for discussion at the public input meetings. The Commission meetings scheduled for the week of October 27, 2021, considered maps depicting new district boundaries for Congress, the State Senate, the Assembly, and the Board of Equalization.

Since the prior census was completed in 2010, the City of Arroyo Grande has been served by the districts depicted below.

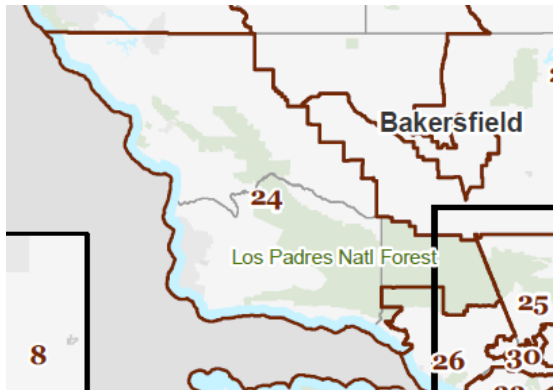
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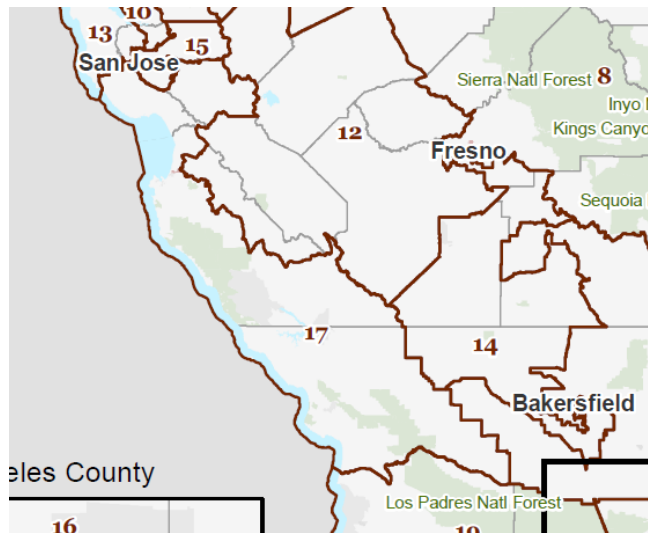
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Congressional District 24:

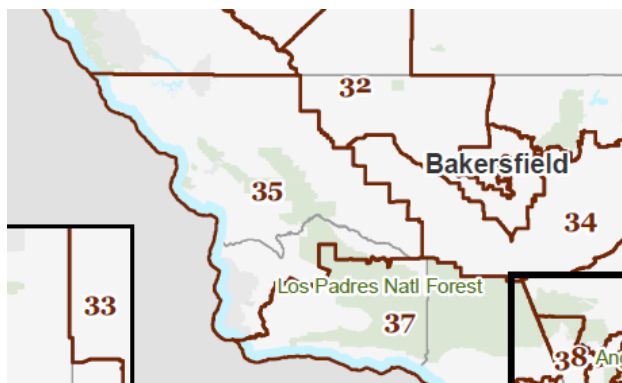


State Senate District 17:



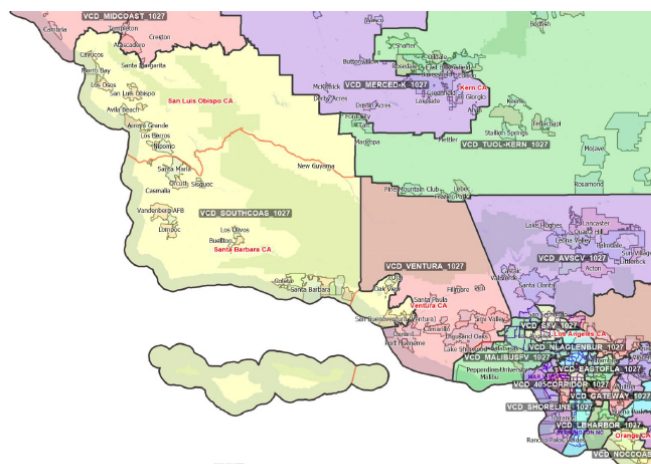
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Assembly District 35:



The Commission is now considering redrawing the district boundaries to place Arroyo Grande in the following districts:

Congressional District:



- Cayucos, Morro Bay, Los Osos, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Avila Beach, Los Ranchos, Edna, Pismo Beach, Grover Beach, Arroyo Grande, Oceano, Los Berros, Callender, Blacklake, Woodlands, Nipomo
- Guadalupe, Santa Maria, Orcutt, Garey, Sisquoc, Vandenberg AFB, Vandenberg Village, Casmalia, Lompoc, Mission Hills, Los Alamos, Buelton, Los Olivos, Ballard, Santa Ynez, Solvang, New Cuyama, Cuyama, Goleta, University of California-Santa Barbara, Isla Vista, Eastern Goleta Valley, Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, Montecito, Summerland, Toro Canyon, Carpinteria, San Miguel Island, Santa Rosa Island, Santa Cruz Island, Santa Barbara Island
- Ojai, Meiners Oaks, Mira Monte, Oak View, Ventura, El Rio, Anacapa Island, San Nicolas Island

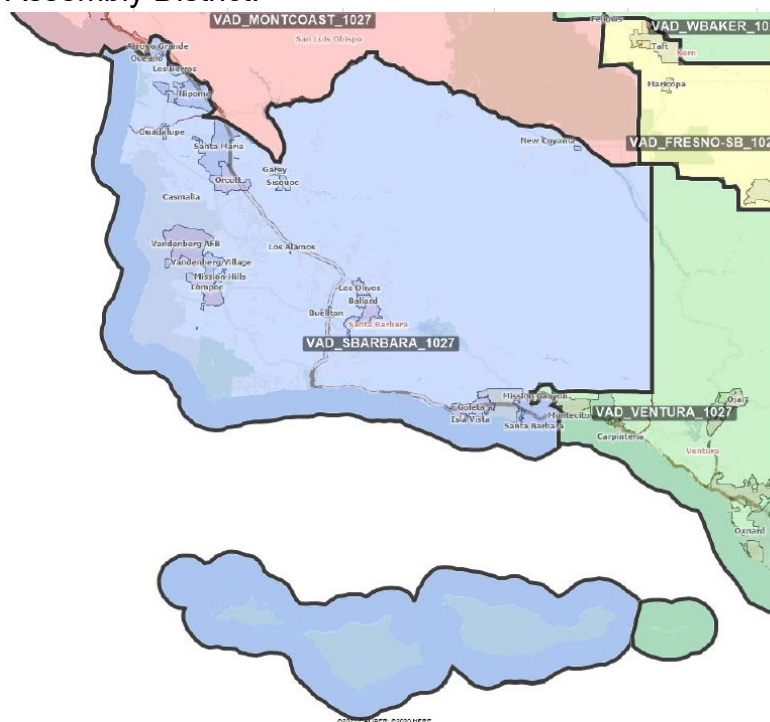
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State Senate District:



- Parts of East and South San Jose, Morgan Hill, San Martin, Gilroy
- Freedom, Amesti, Interlakken, Watsonville
- Monterey County, San Benito County
- Oak Shores, Lake Nacimiento, San Miguel, San Simeon, Cambria, Paso Robles, Templeton, Atascadero, Whitley Gardens, Shandon, Creston, Cayucos, Morro Bay, Los Osos, Garden Farms, San Margarita, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Avila Beach, Los Ranchos, Edna, Pismo Beach, Arroyo Grande

Assembly District:



- Arroyo Grande, Los Berros, Callender, Blacklake, Nipomo, Woodlands
- Santa Barbara County except Mission Canyon, Montecito, Summerland, Toro Canyon, Carpinteria

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ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

The district map visualizations currently being considered by the Commission would radically change the City's representation in the California Assembly. The current Assembly District 35 boundary encompasses all of San Luis Obispo County, plus areas of northern Santa Barbara County. This configuration honors the integrity of the Five Cities region, the shared interests of the jurisdictions within County of San Luis Obispo, and the interconnectedness that the City of San Luis Obispo and the South County share with areas of northern Santa Barbara County, including the City of Santa Maria. By contrast, the proposed new Assembly District would remove the City of Arroyo Grande from its shared representation with its adjacent cities and communities of Grover Beach, Oceano, and Pismo Beach and disregards the shared interests of the Five Cities and South County region. This development has the potential to complicate efforts to seek legislative support for regional projects or to collectively advocate for legislative solutions that impact San Luis Obispo County, which provides several necessary services to the City. Arroyo Grande shares close ties to its neighboring jurisdictions through joint services such as the Five Cities Fire Authority and dispatch services provided by the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's office. It is important for the City to retain the ability to jointly seek support from its Assembly person on regional projects and needs.

A draft letter is provided in Attachment 1 articulating the City's concerns with the Assembly District visualizations considered during the week beginning October 27, 2021.

As the visualizations depicting the potential new boundaries for the Congressional and State Senate districts serving the City keep Arroyo Grande with the areas of San Luis Obispo County that are north of the City, those maps are not addressed in the attached draft letter.

ALTERNATIVES:

The following alternatives are provided for the Council's consideration:

1. Approve and authorize the Mayor to execute the proposed letter;
2. Revise, approve, and authorize the Mayor to execute the proposed letter; or
3. Provide further direction to staff.

ADVANTAGES:

Approving staff's recommendation will enable the City to advocate to the Commission to alter the map that would negatively affect the City's Assembly representation.

DISADVANTAGES:

There are no disadvantages identified to the proposed action.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

No environmental review is required for this item.

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PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMENTS:

The Agenda was posted at City Hall and on the City's website in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

1. Proposed Letter

November 9, 2021

2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission
c/o We Draw the Lines CA
721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: The Visualization of Assembly Districts Impacting the City of Arroyo Grande

To Chair Le Mons,

On behalf of the Arroyo Grande City Council, I am writing to articulate the City's concerns with the Assembly District visualizations considered by the California Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) during the week beginning October 27, 2021. The district map visualizations currently being considered by the Commission would radically change the City's representation in the California Assembly. Currently, the residents of the City of Arroyo Grande are represented by Assembly District 35, which encompasses all of San Luis Obispo County plus areas of northern Santa Barbara County. This configuration honors the integrity of our community of interest, which includes what is known as the Five Cities region, representing the cities of Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, and Pismo Beach, and the communities of Oceano and Shell Beach. This area is known as the Five Cities not only because we share jurisdictional boundaries, but also because we share vital services to our communities, such as fire and emergency services provided through the Five Cities Fire Authority and homelessness services provided by the 5Cities Homeless Coalition. Moreover, the current Assembly District configuration sustains the shared interests of all of the jurisdictions within County of San Luis Obispo, as well as areas of northern Santa Barbara County, including the City of Santa Maria, which are tied to our region through shared water, human, and economic resources.

By contrast, the proposed new Assembly District would remove the City of Arroyo Grande from its shared representation with its adjacent cities and communities of Grover Beach, Oceano, and Pismo Beach and disregards our community's close connectivity with the Five Cities and South San Luis Obispo County region, as well as the remainder of its County representation. This development has the potential to complicate efforts to seek legislative support for regional projects and to collectively advocate for legislative solutions that impact our jurisdiction. For example, the cities of Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, and Pismo Beach are jointly developing a recycled water project, the Central Coast Blue Project, that will ensure sustainable water for the region and protect the precious groundwater resource that we all share within the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, which underlies the area from Pismo Beach down to Santa Maria. Significant grant funding is needed to ensure the success of this project, and redrawing district boundaries to separate Arroyo Grande from its partners will needlessly complicate advocacy efforts for this project. It is important for the City to retain the ability to jointly seek support from its Assembly representative on regional projects and needs, from infrastructure to community services that we share with our regional partners.

The City is aware of the amount of feedback to be received in the coming weeks about the statewide visualization, and that the Commission's task is incredibly complicated. But as the process occurs, please consider the importance of keeping Arroyo Grande a part of the Five Cities and South San Luis Obispo County region in all levels of State representation. The City deserves representatives selected by its community of interest, so that they may be responsive and understanding of our unique and shared needs.

Sincerely,

Caren Ray Russom
Mayor