



VALLEY VOICES

July 27, 2021

Submit via bosquestions@co.kings.ca.us

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Kings
1400 W Lacey Blvd
Hanford, CA 93230

Re: July 27, 2021 Redistricting Public Hearing

Dear Kings County Board of Supervisors:

I am writing on behalf of Valley Voices, a local 501(c)(3) nonpartisan, nonprofit organization established to increase civic engagement and voter education throughout Kings County.

In this endeavor, we are committed to ensuring that districts have population balance and are redrawn to accurately reflect the interests of all residents of our community and are created in such a manner so as to comply with the Section II of the Federal Voting Rights Act and the Fair Maps Act.

Valley Voices would like to thank you for commencing the Public Hearing portion of the Kings County Redistricting process last Tuesday, July 20, 2021 in the BOS chambers and online via the WebEx portal.

We are concerned, however, with several inconsistencies that have occurred in relation to this public hearing, thus raising concerns and confidence as to the integrity as we move forward. The items addressed at the hearing related to website and email inaccuracies as pointed out by Supervisor Valle are shocking, given the “team of 23 communications experts—robust enough to offer experienced and effective professionals for the job, yet small enough to be nimble and responsive” as stated in the Tripepi Smith proposal presented to the BOS prior to giving them a \$40,000 contract.

In addition to the missteps mentioned above, there were several issues that shamefully hindered public access to last Tuesday's public hearing. Specifically:

- The general public was compelled to give their name and contact information prior to the doors of the BOS Chamber being unlocked for entry. Public meetings should be open to the public.
- Online Spanish interpretation was offered as a “whispered” translation and often not understandable due to the main English audio also being captured.



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- Translation did not include all information that was shared in English.
- Visuals presented during the meeting were only shown in English, not Spanish, including online.
- The BOS general meeting had no explanation of the Spanish translation starting at 10am for those individuals who joined prior to the public hearing start time. With no explanation of what to expect, some Spanish speakers could potentially disengage before the meeting begins.
- ASL interpretation for hearing impaired in the community was not offered.
- Documents presented were not offered in high contrast for the vision impaired or the color-blind.
- Public comments submitted for Public Testimony were not read into the record.

In an effort to facilitate the best possible community input for the County's Redistricting efforts, Valley Voices requests that the Kings County Board of Supervisors offer interactive maps that can function as a look-up tool to facilitate the best community input for these redistricting efforts, similar to the option ([Find My District](#)) which Tulare County is offering to its residents. Although it is stated on the redistricting website: <https://redistrictkings.com/draw-a-map/> that an "Interactive Review Map" is coming soon, we believe it should become the top priority and be made available within a week as the PDF currently available on the BOS website does not allow residents to quickly nor easily identify which district they currently reside in. We also request that as the process moves forward, the interactive map include a download function of current and all proposed boundaries, communities of interest geographies as shapefiles or geodatabases, and are to include for each the equivalency blocks spreadsheet. We also request that all Communities of Interest (COI) geographies (Points and Polygons) identified by the public be included within 24 hours of being submitted to interactive website for the entire community to review.

We request that public hearings be held in several of the Kings County communities such as Armona, Avenal, Corcoran, Kettleman City and Stratford so as to allow residents in these communities ample opportunity to provide public comments. We believe that these public hearings should not come at an additional cost to taxpayers and should be included as part of the terms and conditions of NDC's and Tripepi's original contracted services, as the Fair Maps Act requires cities and counties to engage communities in the redistricting process by holding public hearings and/or workshops and engaging public outreach, including to non-English-speaking communities. These public meetings should be held after business work hours so as to accommodate those that work during the day and are unable to attend the public hearings scheduled during the BOS regular Tuesday morning meetings. We believe scheduling only one public hearing at 6:30pm limits the working community's ability to participate in the redistricting conversation.



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Thank you for your consideration of our views. We look forward to these issues being addressed at the July 27, 2021 Kings Redistricting Public Hearing session. We look forward to working with you to ensure that districts are redrawn to accurately reflect the interests of our community.

Sincerely,

Ruth López
Founding Executive Director
Board President
Valley Voices