

BRENTWOOD RESIDENTS COALITION
ZONING | LAND USE | PLANNING | ENVIRONMENTAL

September 26, 2011

County Board of Supervisors
c/o Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Room 383, Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012
commserv@bos.lacounty.gov

Re: BRC's Second Letter On Third Supervisorial District Boundaries

Dear Supervisors:

The Brentwood Residents Coalition (“BRC”)¹ joins with constituents in the Third Supervisorial District in support of Redistricting Plan A3, which would keep current boundaries largely intact. In our letter to the Boundary Review Committee, dated May 23, 2011, we stated our strong support for the existing boundaries of the Third Supervisorial District. In doing so, we asked that the three key communities of interest that form the current Third District—the greater Westside, the Santa Monica Mountains (stretching from Griffith Park in the east to the Las Virgenes region in the west), and the San Fernando Valley—be maintained as a single community within the District.

The Boundary Review Committee recognized the importance of maintaining this community of interest by recommending that it be maintained largely intact. Unfortunately, two plans submitted after the Boundary Review Committee completed its open and transparent review process, Plans S2 and T1, ignore the views expressed by our organization and the hundreds of others who were represented in the public process. We now write to reemphasize the importance of maintaining the existing Third District’s community of interest and our very strong opposition to the S2 and T1 proposals that would sever it. The District’s longstanding boundaries share unifying transportation-related, environmental, hillside, safety and recreational interests. Residents have benefited from having these common interests represented by a single County Supervisor and would suffer if this commonality were diluted by severely altering the existing boundaries, as proposed under S2 and T1.

¹ The BRC is a grass roots, non-profit advocacy group whose purposes are to preserve and enhance the environment and quality of life in Brentwood, to protect the integrity of residential neighborhoods, to assist with planning, to uphold zoning and municipal codes, to encourage traffic safety, and to educate the public on issues that affect quality of life and the environment.

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The Boundary Review Committee was established by the Board of Supervisors to take public input and craft a thoroughly vetted plan that would then be recommended to the Board of Supervisors. The recommendation of the Committee both incorporated this public input and adhered to the admonition of state and federal laws to consider a variety of factors, including compliance with the federal Voting Rights Act, and drawing compact and cohesive districts that keep communities of interest together. And the Committee's proposed map, A2, has been slightly revised in A3 to improve upon the original A2 map.

First, and in stark contrast to the Committee's recommendations, which were fully vetted through the extensive public process, the eleventh hour S2 and T1 proposals would create widespread voter confusion by suddenly displacing 3.3 and 3.5 million people, respectively, into a different district—causing them to live under a Supervisor for whom they never had a chance to cast a ballot. Over 1 million of those individuals would also live in a place where no Supervisorial election would have been held for a total of six years, thereby exacerbating the disenfranchisement of voters in Los Angeles County.

Second, Plans S2 and T1 would cleave the Santa Monica Mountains in two—dividing the Mulholland Scenic Corridor, splitting its interwoven trail and open space network, and denying Mountain residents a unified voice on many shared public policy issues. Preserving this community of interest was a major theme of our May 23, 2011 letter. The length of the District follows the backbone of the Santa Monica Mountains between the Hollywood Hills and the Pacific Ocean. The width of the District encompasses both the north and south sides of the Mountains, including watershed areas. This wide swath of the Santa Monica Mountains and watershed areas includes Malibu, Las Virgenes, Topanga, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Tarzana, Woodland Hills, Encino, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, and Griffith Park, on the north side of the Santa Monica Mountains, and Pacific Palisades, Santa Monica, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Bel Air, Beverly Hills, the Hollywood Hills, and Hollywood on the south side.

This Santa Monica Mountains Range and watershed community of interest requires leadership that combines an appreciation and respect for the natural hillside environment and the recreational opportunities it offers to area residents and the general public. We in the District have unique concerns, interests and experiences related to the preservation and public acquisition of open space, environmental and watershed protection, hillside planning and development controls, fire and flood safety, wildlife habitat and connectivity, and public recreational opportunities. We need unified leadership within a single Supervisorial District to effectively represent our common interests and concerns.

The Santa Monica Mountains Range, stretching from Griffith Park in the east to the Las Virgenes/Conejo region in the west, encompasses communities that share unique Santa Monica Mountains interests and concerns. These include:

- The need for close coordination of government efforts related to disaster preparedness, recovery, and response. (See BRC letter, May 23, 2011)

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- The need to coordinate activities to protect the health of watersheds, both through policies that reduce polluted runoff in urban areas, and by acquiring open space that can be used to preserve watersheds in their natural state and reduce pollution downstream.
- The need to protect the transportation links between the greater Westside, Hollywood, and the San Fernando Valley. The roads and freeways that run through the passes and canyons of the Santa Monica Mountains form a key portion of the region's transportation network. It is vital that these key arteries remain in a unified supervisorial district so that adequate planning and funding for road improvements from the Sepulveda Pass to, and including, the Cahuenga Pass can be sought at Metro and other state and regional transportation entities.

Plans T1 and S2, however, would sever the eastern portion of the Santa Monica Mountains, making it less likely that the entirety of the Santa Monica Mountains would receive the same level of advocacy on each of these policy issues. In particular, Plans T1 and S2 would destroy this unity by dividing the Mountains at the Cahuenga Pass, thereby dividing the eastern Santa Monica Mountains from its western extension. As a result, Griffith Park and its surrounding communities would be separated from the rest of the Santa Monica Mountains.

The importance of maintaining the actual Santa Monica Mountains Range boundary – between Griffith Park and Las Virgenes/Conejo – has been recognized as essential by the Legislature in establishing the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. This boundary was designed to ensure that the Conservancy not stop at either the boundaries of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the western border of the City of Los Angeles, or any other **artificial boundary** because the concerns of the Santa Monica Mountains—preservation of open space, development of trail networks that would be accessible to millions of Angelenos, fire protection, and maintenance of wildlife corridors, view sheds and air sheds—do not recognize such man-made distinctions. The continued success of these Santa Monica Mountains endeavors demands unified representation. This representation is enhanced when a single Supervisorial District encompasses the entire Range so as to facilitate coordination of local, state, private and federal resources. Plans T1 and S2 fail to keep the Santa Monica Mountains unified in this manner.

The Brentwood Residents Coalition is a member of the Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations, which was formed in 1952. The Federation has naturally organized along the Santa Monica Mountains geographic lines for decades, representing both the eastern and western portions of the Santa Monica Mountains within the City of Los Angeles and its environs. Plans T1 and S2 would divide the Hillside Federation, isolating some of the neighborhood associations it represents, including the Los Feliz Improvement Association, Franklin Hills Residents Association, Hollywood Dell Civic Association and Hollywoodland Homeowners Association. This artificial boundary would diminish our established community of interest.

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Dilution of the Santa Monica Mountains community of interest through Plans T1 and S2 would impair the traditions of leadership and vision that have characterized the Third District. The BRC therefore asks that the Supervisors reject Plans T1 and S2 and approve Plan A3, substantially preserving the existing boundaries of the Third County Supervisorial District.

Sincerely,



Wendy-Sue Rosen, President
Brentwood Residents Coalition

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Advisory Committee, Governor's Appointee*
Vice President, Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations*
Founder and Officer, Canyon Back Alliance*
Board Member, Veterans Park Conservancy*
Past Chairwoman, Brentwood Community Council*
Past Vice President of Government Relations, The Nature of Wildworks*
Past President, Upper Mandeville Canyon Association*

*title for identification purposes only