

BRENTWOOD RESIDENTS COALITION

May 16, 2011

Citizens Redistricting Commission
1130 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814
votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov

Re: Boundaries for the 23rd Senate District

Dear Commissioners:

The Brentwood Residents Coalition (“BRC”) is a grass-roots advocacy group whose purpose is to preserve and enhance the environment and quality of life in the Brentwood neighborhood within the City of Los Angeles. We strongly support the existing boundaries of the 23rd Senate District, which were originally drawn in 1991 and encompass important communities of interest.

1. **The transportation community of interest.** Traffic and transportation are among the most important issues in Southern California. The geographic areas within the District are linked as part of a cohesive transportation system, where direct impacts in one area effect other areas throughout the District, creating a community of interest that should be preserved.

The major east-west transportation corridors on the Westside pass through the length of the District. These routes include the Pacific Coast Highway and I-10 freeway as well as Sunset, Wilshire, Santa Monica, Olympic and Pico Boulevards, passing through Malibu, the Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Westwood, Bel Air, Beverly Hills, West Hollywood and Hollywood. Traffic impacts on any one of these Westside corridors effect traffic along others, as well as cut-through traffic on residential streets in between the boulevards. For the past few years, the inner-connected nature of the Westside boulevards has been graphically illustrated during the “I-405 Sepulveda Pass Improvements Project,” where construction-related obstructions on one boulevard inevitably lead to traffic impacts on other east-west boulevards, as well as cut-through traffic on local streets between the boulevards.

BRENTWOOD RESIDENTS COALITION

Traffic on these Westside transportation routes, however, is equally impacted by (1) traffic on the District's major north-south corridors, the I-405 freeway and Sepulveda Boulevard, and (2) the 101 (Ventura) freeway, which is the major "feeder" transportation route into the I-405, and Mulholland Drive, which is a major feeder onto Sepulveda Blvd. and the I-405. Congestion on the 101 East and I-405 South leads to congestion on the I-10 and the Westside's east-west boulevards, just as congestion on the I-10 impacts the I-405 North and the 101 West, and the arterial roads along the route. The worst traffic in Brentwood is typically on eastbound Sunset Blvd. during the weekday evening rush hour, accommodating commuters leaving work in Santa Monica, many of whom are on their way to the northbound I-405 en route to the westbound Ventura freeway. District-wide impacts are also implicated when traffic is obstructed on eastbound Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu or Santa Monica as traffic patterns shift to the cross-mountain roads for access to the eastbound 101 and southbound I-405, with predictable traffic impacts along the way in Westlake Village, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Tarzana, Encino, Sherman Oaks, Brentwood and West Los Angeles. In this manner, and countless others, communities within the 23rd Senate District are linked, forming a unified transportation community of interest.

2. **The Santa Monica Mountains and Watershed community of interest.** The length of the 23rd Senate 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 the Las Virgenes Community, Westlake Village, Calabasas, Agoura Hills, Topanga, Tarzana, Woodland Hills, Encino, Sherman Oaks and Studio City, on the north side of the Santa Monica Mountains, and Pacific Palisades, Santa Monica, Brentwood, Bel Air, Beverly Hills, the Hollywood Hills, and Hollywood on the south side.

The Santa Monica Mountains and Watershed community of interest within the District 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 corridors, and public recreational opportunities.

BRENTWOOD RESIDENTS COALITION

Perhaps nothing better illustrates the commonality of interest within the District than the shared vulnerability to the risk of brushfire and no week in history better illustrates that common risk than the week of November 6, 1961. That is when the Bel Air-Brentwood and Santa Ynez fires simultaneously burned through more than 15,000 acres of brush between Bel Air to the east and just short of Topanga Canyon to the west, threatening homes on both sides of the Mountains but heroically confined by fire fighters to the south side of Mulholland Drive, narrowly avoiding major conflagration on the north side of the Mountains. Similarly, the devastating Mandeville Fire in October 1978 began on Mulholland Drive, spread to Mandeville Canyon, then spread west into the Pacific Palisades to the ocean, while the Agoura-Malibu Fire simultaneously burned through 13 miles of brush from Agoura to the Pacific Ocean. All of these historic fires were contained within the boundaries of the 23rd Senate District. While brushfires know no artificial boundaries, the District's boundaries mark actual areas of common vulnerability.

To protect these communities of interest, the BRC asks that you preserve the long-established boundaries of the 23rd Senate District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W.S. Rosen', written in a cursive style.

Wendy-Sue Rosen, President
Brentwood Residents Coalition