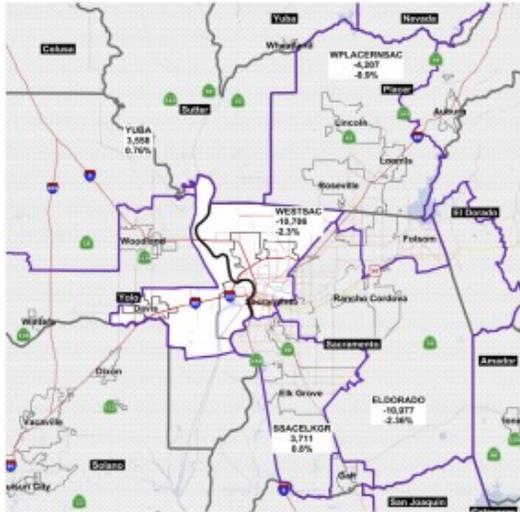


# Local leaders: Yolo should stay unified in new voting maps

California State Assembly - WESTSAC



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Yolo County should not be carved in three as part of ongoing redistricting efforts, local leaders said at a meeting Wednesday.

Doing so would ignore the county's shared agricultural history, natural geographic boundaries and a long history of cooperation, they said — all while weakening its political muscle.

“To have nine representatives for a county that only has 200,000 people is preposterous,” said Delaine Eastin, a former state superintendent of public instruction and assemblywoman who lives in Davis. “We are not Los Angeles. We are little old Yolo County.”

Saving California Communities, a local group created to advocate for good government, sponsored the event at the Hallmark Inn. It drew about 60 people.

The 14-member Citizens Redistricting Commission released the first draft of its legislative and congressional maps on June 10. They would create major changes that include lumping Davis together in legislative districts with parts of Sacramento.

Among the many complex tasks for the commission: preserving so-called communities of interest.

On Wednesday, a panel that included local elected officials as well as taxpayer and environmental groups argued that every corner of Yolo County represents exactly that.

“What’s left of Yolo County (in the draft maps)? Not much...,” said District 4 Supervisor Jim Provenza. “We would become junior partners with Solano (County), junior partners with Sacramento, and then (the northern portion of Yolo would be) part of this other district that includes counties almost all the way to Oregon.

“It entirely disenfranchises us and really takes away from our ability to work and speak with one voice, whether it’s in Sacramento or in Washington, D.C.”

The farmland and open-space preservation that have made the county unique are not just part of a shared history, panelists said.

“We’re working on issues now where we’re sometimes head-to-head with some powerful interests,” Provenza said. “We may have our own land and habitat and farm programs threatened by the desire and need of others for water.”

Cooperation within the county is key for projects ranging from building a bike path between Davis and Woodland to lobbying for federal funds, said Gary Sandy, a Woodland Community College trustee and former mayor of Woodland.

“There are a great number of Woodland jokes and there are some even better Davis jokes, but we get along and we get things done,” Sandy said.

Andrew Fulks, president of the environmental group Tuleyome, said the changes could have serious implications for local preservation efforts. The Yolo Bypass, so important for flood control, water, farming and habitat, is within proposed Sacramento legislative districts.

“When you take the communities like Woodland or Davis and start splitting them off, what interest does Fairfield have with Cache Creek or the Blue Ridge?” Fulks asked. “What interest does Sacramento have in upper Putah Creek? None.

“But in Yolo County, we look beyond the borders of our cities and we look as a community at all our natural resources and how to protect them.”

The changes also could negatively impact other county-oriented services, panelists and audience members warned, like those for the poor and seniors.

Woodland Mayor Pro Tem Skip Davies said he worried the commission could set back the progress of Latino voters in his city.

Stan Forbes, a redistricting commissioner and an Esparto resident, said in a recent interview with The Enterprise that “Davis’ orientation is toward Sacramento. It’s a suburb of Sacramento.”

Not so, said the panel.

“Davis is not a suburb of Sacramento,” Provenza said flatly.

Said John Munn, president of the Yolo Taxpayers Association, “Davis is a small- to medium-sized city with financial and infrastructure concerns that are more like other small- to medium-sized cities.

“Sacramento’s a much larger city, with big city issues and conflicts — like who should pay for an arena.”

Among the possible changes to the legislative maps that Saving California Communities is suggesting is swapping Davis and West Sacramento for Galt and Lodi, arguing that the similarly populated cities have more in common with Sacramento.

The commission is slated to wrap up its work in August. Second drafts of its maps are scheduled for release on July 12.

It will take written public comments until Tuesday. It has meetings to take public input on Friday in Stockton and on Tuesday in Sacramento. To find out how to contribute, see <http://wedrawthelines.ca.gov>.

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