



May 1, 2017

**National Headquarters**

MALDEF Nonprofit Center  
634 S. Spring Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
Los Angeles, CA 90014  
TEL: 213.629.2512  
Fax: 213.629.0266

**Atlanta**

**Program Office**

500 West Lanier Avenue  
Suite 908  
Fayetteville, GA 30215  
Tel: 678.559.1071  
Fax: 678.559.1079

**Chicago**

**Regional Office**

11 East Adams Street  
Suite 700  
Chicago, IL 60603  
TEL: 312.427.0701  
Fax: 312.427.0691

**Los Angeles**

**Regional Office**

634 S. Spring Street,  
11<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
Los Angeles, CA 90014  
TEL: 213.629.2512  
Fax: 213.629.0266

**Sacramento**

**Program Office**

1512 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Tel: 916.444.3031  
Fax: 916.444.7207

**San Antonio**

**Regional Office**

110 Broadway  
Suite 300  
San Antonio, TX 78205  
TEL: 210.224.5476  
Fax: 210.224.5382

**Washington, D.C.**

**Regional Office**

1016 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Suite 100  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: 202.293.2828

**Via Facsimile at (805) 349-0657 and U.S. Mail**

Ms. Alice Patino, Mayor  
City of Santa Maria  
City Hall  
110 E. Cook Street  
Santa Maria, CA 93454

Mr. Gilbert A. Trujillo, City Attorney  
City of Santa Maria  
City Hall  
110 E Cook Street  
Santa Maria, CA 93454

Re: City of Santa Maria's District Elections Map Finalists

Dear Ms. Patino and Mr. Trujillo:

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund ("MALDEF") has been involved in community education and participation in the district mapping process in cities and school districts throughout California. MALDEF is following the City of Santa Maria's districting and has received complaints from Latino residents and voters of the City regarding one of three district election map finalists announced by the Council. Specifically, MALDEF writes to adamantly oppose the adoption of Map H-1.

In establishing the boundaries of the districts, "the council may give consideration to the following factors: (1) topography, (2) geography, (3) cohesiveness, contiguity, integrity, and compactness of territory, and (4) community of interest of the districts." Cal. Elec. Code § 21620. Map H-1, however, disregards communities of interest. For example, District 3 in Map H-1 combines a west side neighborhood of Latino renters with Hancock Park, an east side neighborhood of white homeowners.

Additionally, "[i]n determining the final sequence of the district elections conducted in a political subdivision in which members of the governing body will be elected at different times to provide for staggered terms of office, the governing body shall give special consideration to the purposes of the California Voting Rights Act of 2001." Cal. Elec. Code § 10010(b). We therefore urge the Council to adopt sequencing that places at

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Mr. Gilbert A. Trujillo

May 1, 2017

least one majority Latino CVAP district up for election in the City's next municipal election.

Santa Maria previously resolved a claim for violation of the California Voting Rights Act as a result of its at-large election system. Nonetheless, Santa Maria is now faced with the possibility of adopting a plan that goes against redistricting principals and the community's desire for a district election map that will provide for fair and democratic elections. We urge to Council to remove Map H-1 from consideration and instead adopt a map that receives broad public support and preserves communities of interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt J. Barragan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Matthew J. Barragan  
MALDEF

MJB/ro

cc: Jack Boysen, Councilmember  
Etta Waterfield, Councilmember  
Michael Moats, Councilmember  
Mike Cordero, Councilmember