

Kayla 8/11 testimony

My name is Kayla Asato and I am the redistricting organizer for Orange County Environmental Justice. As our name suggests, OCEJ fights for environmental justice in water quality, cleaning the lead from our soils, better air quality, and electoral change to make all of this happen. We mostly do work in the cities of Santa Ana, Anaheim, and Fullerton. In addition, we are a member of the People's Redistricting Alliance, a coalition of 15 community-based organizations established to promote a greater community voice in statewide and local redistricting processes here in OC.

Because of the work that we do, especially with disadvantaged communities dismissed by our political establishment, our communities of interest typically include low-income communities of color facing environmental justice concerns, many undocumented. Our communities in Fullerton, Anaheim, and Santa Ana are similarly impacted by soil lead levels, sometimes exceeding 50x the recommended limit, ignored when voicing their concerns about water quality due to poor pipes and other infrastructure concerns, or even horrendous air quality from traffic and oil plumes. These devastating environmental justice issues are often overlooked by policy makers, while low-income and mostly Latinx communities already facing problems like housing injustice and police brutality, pay the price.

In Fullerton, our communities of interest are generally south of Chapman Avenue near the Anaheim border. In Anaheim, they are located west of the 55 freeway. In Santa Ana, they are located throughout the city. While these areas face similar environmental justice challenges, they are very different than cities to the north and east like Yorba Linda, areas that face SUBSTANTIALLY less environmental burdens, and have more housing security as a result.

Across these cities, environmental justice is one of MANY challenges our communities face. In Santa Ana, communities have been demanding change and remediation for the soil lead crisis for over four decades, but it still is not seeing substantial progress in the general plan. In Anaheim, communities aren't even getting acknowledgement of Little Arabia, let alone the support for action on the oil plume. In Fullerton, we know that there still has not been any justice for Hector Hernandez and other victims of police brutality, nor has there been action on housing, stopping gentrification, or on Ethnic Studies. These are layered issues impacting those that are ignored the most, heard the least, and lack representation. And that is unacceptable.

And as such, it is essential that these communities of interest are kept together to grow the electoral strength and voice they desperately need. We need power to offset the harm that has been done to our communities and advocate for the changes that we need to achieve even a semblance of equity if not liberation. Let our voices be heard, and allow us to be part of the democratic process.

Kayla 8/4 and 8/5 testimony

My name is Kayla Asato and I am the redistricting organizer for Orange County Environmental Justice. As our name suggests, OCEJ fights for environmental justice in water quality, cleaning the lead from our soils, better air quality, and electoral change to make all of this happen. We mostly do work in the cities of Santa Ana, Anaheim, and Orange. In addition, we are a member of the People's Redistricting Alliance, a coalition of 15 community-based organizations established to promote a greater community voice in statewide and local redistricting processes here in OC.

In the city of Santa Ana, there are large amounts of soil lead and poor air quality, predominantly in the Latinx communities. In Garden Grove and Westminster, the issues and communities are very different in terms of environmental justice concerns. The large majority of Santa Ana is much more similar to the cities of Orange and Anaheim in terms of demographics and issues. Santa Ana and Anaheim have two of the deadliest police departments in California, have the majority of frontline workers in OC, and also bear the brunt of the soil lead crisis, in some cases exceeding 50x the recommended health limit. To be clear, no amount of soil lead is good, but 50x higher than the state recommended limit of toxins poisoning our kids is far too unacceptable. These devastating environmental justice issues are often overlooked by policy makers, while low-income and mostly Latinx communities already facing problems like housing injustice and police brutality, pay the price.

The communities that we serve are primarily based in the Madison Park Neighborhood, the Santa Ana neighborhoods between Cedar and Evergreen, the Southern 760 census tract in Orange, Northwestern Orange tracts like 762.04, and a majority of Anaheim in the 864 and 865 census tracts. The environmental justice burdens in the air and in the soil are far different than the burdens are in Garden Grove and Westminster.

We must keep these environmental burdens in mind when drawing the district lines, ESPECIALLY because they fall along racial and socioeconomic lines. Please keep our communities together when drawing the maps,

And as such, it is essential that these communities of interest are kept together to grow the electoral strength and voice they desperately need. We need power to offset the harm that has been done to our communities and advocate for the changes that we need to achieve even a semblance of equity if not liberation. Let our voices be heard, and allow us to be part of the democratic process.