



The League of United Latin American Citizens

Salinas Council #2055

Greenfield City Council
Ann Rathburn, City Clerk
599 El Camino Real
Greenfield, CA 93927

October 28, 2020

Via US Mail and email to arathbun@ci.greenfield.ca.us

Dear City Officials,

I am writing on behalf of Salinas League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Council #2055 and Karina Ramires, a voter in Greenfield. We are interested in improving the accountability and responsiveness of future elected officials as well as the election system of the City of Greenfield. As Greenfield and its government continues to grow, it must adopt positive election policies in order to promote integrity of the electoral system. We appreciate the meetings with Mayor Lance Walker and Mayor Pro Tem Martinez, as well as the invitation by the Greenfield City Council (Council) to present on this issue at the Council meeting. Recently LULAC Council #2055 unanimously voted to request that the City of Greenfield move toward district elections.

One of the growing trends in California is district elections. District elections have been shown to improve the voter turnout and help governments respond to community concerns. Districts are the cornerstone of our state and federal systems. Accordingly, they have been adopted by numerous cities, community college districts and school districts. The vast majority of cities similar in size to Greenfield have adopted district elections. We look forward to you joining in this truly democratic system.

With regard to City of Greenfield elections, after studying demographics and election results, we have determined that a violation of the California Elections Code sections 14025 *et. seq.*, known as the California Voting Rights Act of 2001 (CVRA), may be occurring by polarized voting. A change is mandated in the election system to prevent occurrences of voting patterns that impair the ability of voters to elect candidates of their choice or impair their rights to influence the outcome of an election, particularly as a result of the dilution or abridgment of its rights and privileges under state and federal law.

We therefore respectfully demand that the City of Greenfield change its at-large voting system to a district-based voting system that affords all voters, and protected groups, the equal opportunity to choose elected officials for the City of Greenfield and, thereby, bring the system into compliance with the CVRA.

The reality is that all public agencies that have litigated this issue have lost. The costs to litigate a CVRA challenge can be tremendously high since a city must pay the plaintiff's legal fees if the city is unsuccessful. In similar cases, plaintiff's legal fees have ranged from \$385,000 to \$4.5 million. These amounts exclude the city's own legal fees which can be comparable and which doubles the costs of litigating. All of these factors have driven some cities to agree to switch to district elections rather than defending a lawsuit. Additionally, if the court finds a CVRA violation, the court has the authority to impose district-based elections and to determine district boundaries with input solely from the plaintiff's attorney and consultants, effectively removing this authority from the City Council and the community. Finally, even if the public agency successfully defends a CVRA lawsuit, that success does not bar a subsequent challenge under the CVRA by a different plaintiff. A few cities have decided to defend against these actions, but none have prevailed on the merits.

We look forward to your response, which should include the City of Greenfield's plans to calendar a resolution and outline the steps it will take to facilitate the transition to district elections along with an estimated timeline. If the City fails to take action within the statutory timeline to effect change in its election process, we will sue under the aforementioned CVRA.

The Mission of the League of United Latin American Citizens is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of the Hispanic population of the United States.

Respectfully,



Andrew Sandoval, Vice President
Salinas LULAC Council #2055
P.O. Box 1396
Salinas, CA 93902
Phone: (831) 809-1150

E-mail: emailandrewnow@icloud.com
Website: <http://lulacsalinas2055.org/>

Karina Ramires, Voter in Greenfield

