

Redistricting Discussion Comes To Long Beach April 27

City Council To Examine District Boundaries May 5

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Should Long Beach have two members in the U.S. House of Representatives as it currently has, or return to the former system of one representative covering the entire city? On April 27, you have an opportunity to voice your opinion on that and other issues related to the redistricting process.

The California Citizens Redistricting Committee is hosting a business meeting and public hearing at Long Beach City Hall on April 27 to discuss the redrawing of state and federal political district boundaries.

From 1-4 p.m., a regular business meeting will follow a commission agenda that includes: technical and outreach discussion topics, public information topics, legal topics, finance and administration topics and an executive director's report. Business meeting attendees may only comment on agenda items.

Following the business meeting, public testimony on redistricting is open at the pre-map input hearing from 6-9 p.m. with a redistricting boundary line drawer present. The pre-map hearing is part of the first round of discussions covering the state and federal districts. For those who are unable to attend, comments may be submitted via e-mail at votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov, faxed to 916/322-0904 or given over the phone by calling 866/356-5217. Comments on the first draft redistricting maps are due by June 10.

A second round of hearings is scheduled to take place between June 16 and July 1. So far, the commission has yet to schedule a second-round meeting in Long Beach, according to Tom Modica, director of government affairs and strategic initiatives.

Long Beach was chosen as one of 23 locations for pre-map input hearings after the city council invited the commission to Long Beach in a letter dated March 15. City Manager Pat West sent the letter to all four Los Angeles County Redistricting Commissioners requesting a primary and secondary public input meeting.

The meeting is scheduled for live online streaming and will be documented by a videographer and stenographer. The business meeting agenda, transcripts and video coverage of the meeting can be found online at www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov.

Long Beach Gain Or Loss?

During the last redistricting process following the 2000 Census, Long Beach's 38th Congressional District – then held by Republican Steve Horn – was eliminated. The district covered the entire city and a few other nearby communities. In its place came the 37th District, covering about 60 percent of Long Beach as well as most of Carson and Compton and several unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. The eastern portion of Long Beach and the

coastal area became part of the 46th District, which stretches from Rancho Palos Verdes all the way to Costa Mesa in Orange County. Additionally, for some unexplained reason, a few blocks of North Long Beach are part of the 39th District.

The former 38th District was always a hotly contested area, resulting in several close races between the republican and democrat candidates. When the 38th went away, the future results of the 37th and 46th Districts became a foregone conclusion: The 37th became a safe seat for democrats with the 46th the same for republicans. It's so one-sided, it is virtually impossible for the other party to win.

One argument in favor of the current system is that Long Beach has a stronger voice by having two representatives to speak for it in Washington, D.C. However, some political observers say, those two representatives nearly always vote along party lines thus giving Long Beach no voice. These same people argue that the current system does not allow either congressional member to fully concentrate on the needs of Long Beach as the late Congressman Horn did.

"Steve Horn was Mr. Long Beach," Business Journal Publisher George Economides said. "He and his family lived here, they were heavily involved in the community, very visible and very likeable. At least half a dozen times a year he would drop by the office unannounced to chat and see how things are going and to ask our opinion on certain issues. He truly cared about his city, his district and his constituents. Most importantly for Long Beach, he was a political moderate, which is surely missed today. He voted with republicans and with democrats. He was one of the few republicans who voted against the impeachment of President Clinton. That took guts. Long Beach deserves that type of person representing it."

Boundary Adjustment Discussion For City Council Districts Continues May 5

In Long Beach, city council districts are also reviewed to determine if a boundary adjustment needs to be made based on population. The Long Beach Planning Commission is expected to review population statistics from the 2010 U.S. Census and present recommendations during the May 5 city council meeting.

If the districts are deemed out of balance, the council can begin the boundary adjustment process in May. The first round of redistricting maps is estimated for release in June for further public comment before the official maps are due to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder by August 31 for the 2012 election.

Public input on city council district boundary adjustments can be made online at www.longbeach.gov/redistricting. ■