

December 10, 2019

Honorable Mayor and City Council
CC: City Clerk, City Attorney, City Manager
City of Long Beach
411 W Ocean Blvd
Long Beach, CA 90802

RE: Council File 19-1235, Independent Redistricting Commission Implementation Plan

Dear Mayor Garcia and City Councilmembers,

For years, our organizations have worked to bring independent and transparent redistricting practices to California both on the statewide and local level. We commend Long Beach for its for the passage of Measure DDD in 2018 and for bringing fair and inclusive redistricting to your city. Our organizations would like to work with you in the implementation of the Independent Redistricting Commission (Commission). Our top priorities to ensure an inclusive redistricting process include:

- recruiting a Commission that is committed to fair representation and is reflective of the City's diversity;
- engaging the City's many communities during the line-drawing process; and
- ultimately adopting maps that provide fair representation for all of Long Beach's communities.

In reviewing the Independent Redistricting Commission Plan, we were pleased to see the city's comprehensive media and advertising plan to recruit applicants to the Commission. We commend the city for including plans to translate advertisements in Khmer, Spanish, and Tagalog to reach out to diverse communities. We wanted to offer a few additional suggestions for community engagement to include in the city's implementation of Measure DDD.

Establish an Advisory Group

We recommend establishing an advisory group comprised of community-based organizations who would advise and serve as partners in the Commission implementation process. This body would facilitate community-based organizations' assistance in outreach, as required by Measure DDD. Other jurisdictions with independent redistricting commissions, such as the City of Sacramento, are also using advisory groups to create a formal convening space to discuss commissioner recruitment, commission implementation, and facilitating community participation. Members of the advisory group would assist in disseminating information and materials to the city's various neighborhoods and communities and assist with the goal of recruiting a diverse pool of applicants. This group might convene monthly before and during the application launch date, then quarterly thereafter to advise on general community outreach and provide feedback as needed on other aspects of Commission implementation.

Collect Applicants' Demographic Information in the Initial Application and Provide Weekly Updates on the Applicant Pool

One of our organizations' priorities is to ensure that the Commission is reflective of Long Beach's communities. Having a diversity of voices on the Commission will be critical for fair representation. We recommend including a few demographic questions on the initial application, particularly the applicants' age, gender, and racial/ethnic background to assess and adjust recruitment strategies as needed.

In May 2020, which is in the middle of the application period, an application update will be delivered to the Mayor and City Council. Having the current applicant pool's demographic information available at this point would be helpful for the City and its partners to gauge how effectively they are recruiting diverse applicants to the Commission. We would also recommend that the demographics of the applicant pool be updated weekly on the City's redistricting website. This can help the City and partners respond in near real-time by conducting additional outreach if certain groups are underrepresented in the applicant pool.

Notifying Applicants of the Statewide Citizens Redistricting Commission

In the summer of 2019, the California State Auditor's office opened an application for California residents to apply to serve on the statewide Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC), an independent commission tasked with drawing California's state legislative, congressional, and Board of Equalization districts. At least 238 Long Beach residents expressed interest in playing a role in the redistricting process by completing an application to serve on the CRC. As the applicant pool for the CRC is being narrowed, many of these 238 applicants from Long Beach could be potential applicants to Long Beach's Commission.

We recommend that the City of Long Beach work with the State Auditor's office to notify these Long Beach applicants about the opportunity to serve on the Commission and encourage them to apply before the deadline.

Our organizations look forward to partnering with the City of Long Beach in the implementation of Measure DDD. Thank you in advance for considering these recommendations.

Sincerely,



Kiyana Asemanfar
Redistricting Partnership
Strategist
Common Cause



Yvonne Gonzalez Duncan
State Director
California LULAC



Jane Bemis
President
League of Women Voters
of Long Beach Area