



# CITY OF CLEARLAKE

City Council

## STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** California Redistricting Special Election and Its Affect on Clearlake

**MEETING DATE:** September 4, 2025

**SUBMITTED BY:** Melissa Swanson, Administrative Services Director/City Clerk

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:** ☒ Information only ☐ Discussion ☐ Action Item

### WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF THE CITY COUNCIL/BOARD:

For informational purposes only. No action is required at this time.

### BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

This report provides an important update regarding California's mid-decade congressional redistricting process. Governor Newsom has signed the redistricting package, specifically AB 604 and SB 280, with ACA-8 also chaptered upon passage. This action places the matter of new congressional district boundaries before voters in a special election on November 4, 2025. Vote centers across California, including those within Clearlake, will be instrumental in administering this election.

SB 280 includes a crucial provision for reimbursement of counties for election-related expenses. This means that the direct financial impact on the City of Clearlake's agency is expected to be minimal, if any. However, the City may still be called upon to support minor logistical needs. These could include the use of City facilities as polling places, coordination of staffing efforts, and assistance with parking or traffic management around vote centers. These requests are similar in nature to the logistical support the City routinely provides during regular statewide elections, and as such, they are within our current operational capabilities and experience. City Staff will continue to monitor developments closely.

A summary of the proposed changes can be found on the CalMatters website: <https://calmatters.org/politics/2025/08/find-out-if-your-vote-could-be-affected-by-newsoms-redistricting-plans/>

While the primary effect of congressional redistricting is at the federal level, altering the boundaries of U.S. House of Representatives districts, these changes can have several significant, albeit indirect, impacts on the City of Clearlake and its voters:

- **Federal Representation and Advocacy:** The most direct impact will be on who represents Clearlake in the U.S. House of Representatives. Redistricting can shift the City from one congressional district to another or significantly alter the demographic and political composition of its current district. A new representative might bring different priorities, policy focuses, and levels of engagement with local issues specific to Clearlake. This could influence the City's ability to advocate for federal funding, support for local projects, and attention to key issues such as economic development, infrastructure improvements, and environmental concerns. Voters will

need to re-evaluate candidates and understand their platforms in the context of potentially new district lines.

- **Voter Engagement and Awareness:** The special election itself requires voters to be aware of the changes and understand which district they are now in. This can lead to a period of adjustment for voters, who may need to familiarize themselves with new candidates, and potentially, a new set of local issues prioritized by the latest district. Education and outreach efforts by election officials will be critical to ensure high voter participation and informed decisions. While the City's direct operational role is limited, supporting these outreach efforts through communication channels can benefit the community.
- **Political Dynamics:** Changes in district boundaries can also alter the political landscape within Clearlake's federal representation. If Clearlake is grouped with areas that have different socio-economic or political leanings, it could influence the types of legislation and initiatives our representative champions. This shift might necessitate a greater effort from local leaders and community groups to ensure Clearlake's unique needs are heard and addressed by their federal representative. For voters, it means understanding how their vote contributes to the overall representation of the newly drawn district.
- **Continuity and Relationships:** A change in congressional representation can sometimes disrupt established relationships between the City and its federal office. Building new rapport and educating a new representative and their staff about Clearlake's specific challenges and opportunities will be an ongoing task for City leadership and community advocates.

The mid-decade congressional redistricting is a significant electoral event with the potential to reshape federal representation for the City of Clearlake. While the direct operational and financial impacts on the City are expected to be minimal due to state reimbursement, the implications for voter representation and advocacy at the federal level are notable. City staff will continue to monitor the redistricting process and the upcoming special election and are prepared to provide further details, or a participation plan should the City Council deem it necessary.

#### FISCAL IMPACT:

☒ None      ☐ \$      Budgeted Item? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Budget Adjustment Needed? ☐ Yes ☐ No      If yes, amount of appropriation increase: \$

Affected fund(s): ☐ General Fund ☐ Measure P Fund ☐ Measure V Fund ☐ Other:

Comments:

#### STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT:

- ☐ Goal #1: Make Clearlake a Visibly Cleaner City
- ☐ Goal #2: Make Clearlake a Statistically Safer City
- ☐ Goal #3: Improve the Quality of Life in Clearlake with Improved Public Facilities
- ☐ Goal #4: Improve the Image of Clearlake
- ☐ Goal #5: Ensure Fiscal Sustainability of City
- ☐ Goal #6: Update Policies and Procedures to Current Government Standards
- ☐ Goal #7: Support Economic Development

