

February 14, 2024

Ms. JoAnn McClendon
City Clerk, City of Chowchilla
130 S Second Street
Chowchilla, CA 93610

RECEIVED

FEB 16 2024

Initial: 

Notice of Possible Violation of California Voting Rights Act

Dear Ms. McClendon:

I represent the California League of Latin American Citizens (California LULAC), which has received requests from members who are electors residing in Chowchilla to petition the City to adopt electoral districts. The City's at-large method of electing council members dilutes the influence of minority voters, which violates the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA). As a result, neighborhoods in large parts of the City are chronically underrepresented on the City Council.

As recently noted in a local newspaper,¹ our initial document "often stretch[es] to twenty pages with charts and graphs." This letter departs from this practice for several reasons. As the article observes, another attorney has already "blanketed the state" sending "waves" of "short letters, full of legal boilerplate, threatening to sue." If Chowchilla has received such a letter, it will affect how NEN proceeds. Therefore, this letter includes a request that the city produce any prior correspondence alleging a possible violation of the CVRA. We have also deferred presenting detailed evidence so that the City can initiate the voluntary process set forth in Elections Code, §10010, in time to implement district elections in the November 2024 elections.

NEN is committed to supporting the City Council if it elects to comply voluntarily. Once you confirm that the City has not already received a notice from another attorney, we will provide detailed evidence of racially polarized voting within Saratoga and detail how this affects the participation and influence of the city's minority communities. We will provide detailed demographic information and present maps

¹ "A powerful California law is reshaping how you vote. Lawyers are making millions off it," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Dec. 24-26, 2023.

that are effective remedies for minority voter dilution and comply with the Fair Maps Act.

We look forward to working with the City to achieve this reform that has strengthened our democracy by incorporating minority communities into the political life of local governments across our State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "S. Rafferty", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Scott J. Rafferty