

RESEARCH  
& POLLING  
INC



**San Miguel County  
County Commission Districts  
2010 Census Population**

August 18, 2011

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## Objective

This report was requested to determine whether the current San Miguel County Commission districts must be adjusted to comply with the "one-person, one-vote" principle of equal representation. For each of the County Commission districts, the 2010 Census data is aggregated to derive: total population; deviation from the ideal population of a district (County population divided by 5, the number of districts); and, percent deviation from the ideal population. The results of the analysis are shown on a map and data table.

The analysis shows that the total population deviation for the current districts is 7.2% (the spread between the highest and lowest deviations), which is within the acceptable total deviation standard of 10%. Therefore, using official 2010 Census data, the current County Commission districts are substantially equal in population. Luna County is not required to redistrict and may choose to keep its current districts.

## Redistricting Overview

### *General Issues*

Redistricting refers to the process of revising the boundaries of territories from which government officials are elected; when done for the first time, as in a transition from at-large elections, the process is "districting." The idea of having districts derives from our principle of "representative democracy" whereby the people elect others to represent them in government decision-making. However, the procedures which have guided translating this general principle into action have changed markedly over the years.

Beginning in 1790 the United States conducted its first decennial census count as required by Article I, Section 2, of the Constitution in order that

*". . . Representatives shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers . . ."*

The use of census data as a basis for operating a representative democracy has been expanded over the years to include districting at many levels of government from Congressional to school, water or hospital board districting systems. The general rule is to try to have equal numbers of persons in each elected representative's district. Federal Courts have been active in determining how equal in population districts must be in order to meet the ideal of "one person, one vote."

In 1965 Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, and later amended the Act so as to attempt to protect certain minority groups from electoral "schemes" which might act to discriminate against these groups. In the area of districting, plans or systems which dilute minority voting strength can be subject to challenge and should be avoided.

### *Guidelines*

1. Each district shall contain as nearly as possible substantially the same population based upon the most recent Federal Census. To be equal in population in the context of state or local districting would require that the total population of any one district not be more than five percent off from a mathematically perfectly equal population across all districts.
2. Plans must avoid dilution of minority voting strength. With respect to racial or ethnic communities, courts often refer to a "totality of circumstances" in judging whether or not a plan harms minority group voting strength.

3. Communities of interest shall be preserved whenever reasonable within a single district. Maintaining and preserving communities of interest has no precise mathematical solution.
4. Each district shall be contiguous. All parts must be together with no separated "islands" of territory.
5. Each district shall be compact. The total length of all district boundary lines shall be as short as possible.

### *Interpreting the Guidelines*

The concerns expressed in numbers "1" and "2" above, are of high priority in the process of districting. Equal population and non-dilution of minority voting strength are principles whose transgressions invite litigation. However, while equality of population is a fairly straightforward issue, the definition of a vote dilution is complex in the context of districting. It must be remembered that, while minority voting strength is an important consideration, it cannot subordinate the other traditional redistricting guidelines, such as compactness and contiguity.

- In general, no other guidelines may justify a violation of these first two paramount principles. -

If districts are non-diluting and equal in population, they may also be expected to respect a host of other guidelines, the most common of which are listed above as items "3", "4" and "5". In addition, it should be noted that no law prevents concern for incumbency of office holders so long as no essential principle is violated.

### *Redistricting Data*

The United States decennial census is the basis for all population figures for redistricting governmental areas. The census bureau has released a special tabulation especially for redistricting. This tabulation is known as the "Public Law (PL) 94-171 dataset" which for New Mexico was released on March 15, 2011. All tabulations are for the census date of April 1, 2010.

The PL 94-171 dataset contains information which redistricting experts and the courts have identified as important indicators of compliance with the one-person, one-vote principle and application of the Voting Rights Act to the redistricting endeavor.

### *Who Is Included In Population Tabulations?*

As census data are the basis for figuring populations in redistricting, census enumeration procedures and residence rules determine who is or is not included in the basic population counts for redistricting.

The census attempts to count all persons in the country at their "usual place of residence." Foreign travelers who had not established a U.S. residence were excluded from the census count. American travelers were counted at their usual "home" residence. U.S. military personnel, their dependents and civilian employees overseas are excluded from census tabulations.

Within the United States, persons in the Armed Forces were counted as residents of the area in which their installation was located. Military family members were counted where they were living on April 1.

*Who Is Included In Population Tabulations? (continued)*

College students are counted as residents of the area in which they live while attending college as has been the case since the 1950 census.

Persons in institutions are counted in those places. This includes jails, prisons, nursing homes, hospitals or other centers for handicapped or mentally ill persons, as examples.

*PL 94-171 Subject Tabulations Of Importance*

In addition to total population counts, the redistricting dataset from PL 94-171 includes some data on subject characteristics. Limited age, race and Hispanic status tabulations are included in the redistricting data. Other data are available from other census datasets.

Age tabulations are restricted to counts of persons ages 18 and over and thus correspond to counts of the voting age population (VAP). The census bureau has noted a tendency for respondents to have declared their age as of when they filled out their census questionnaires and not as of exactly April 1 of the census year.

As of 1980, data reported on Spanish or Hispanic origin is based upon a question asked of all census households. Persons of Hispanic origin include all persons responding "Mexican," "Puerto Rican," "Cuban," or "Other Spanish/Hispanic" origin. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any racial grouping.

In addition to persons of Hispanic origin, Research & Polling, Inc. uses the census tabulations of non-Hispanic White population as equivalent to the New Mexico concept of the "Anglo" population. In order to avoid possible overlap, we also report other relevant racial data based upon those who did not indicate that they were of Hispanic origin. Thus, we report, depending on the specific area involved, e.g., non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic American Indian, and other non-white, non-Hispanic figures. Our tabulations avoid double-counting minority group figures.

*Other Data Adjustments*

Generally, Research & Polling, Inc. makes use of the best officially accepted data available for redistricting which includes, especially in the early years of a decade, a strong desire to use census data as reported. However, some adjustments to the data are made in certain circumstances. For city redistricting work, we may analyze data in order to count population for the city as it exists at the time of redistricting including annexation which may have taken place since the official census map city limits were established. In this instance, we try to determine the 2010 population of the current city limits in order to assure comparability of data.

Some districted governmental entities, notably school districts and hospital districts, have outer boundaries which cross census areas. We perform estimation in these situations in order to calculate population figures for the total governmental area. The estimates are usually very minor in proportion to the total population of the governmental area.

### *Building Block and Boundaries*

When districting involves officials elected in the regular cycle of primary and general elections, the actual conduct of the election makes use of voting precincts as the basic electoral building blocks of New Mexico politics. This is so because the voting machine choices given to a voter are organized by precinct boundaries. This mandate, however, could cause a violation of some other requisite fundamental principles of districting. For example, a city could have too few voting precincts to organize city council districts with equal populations.

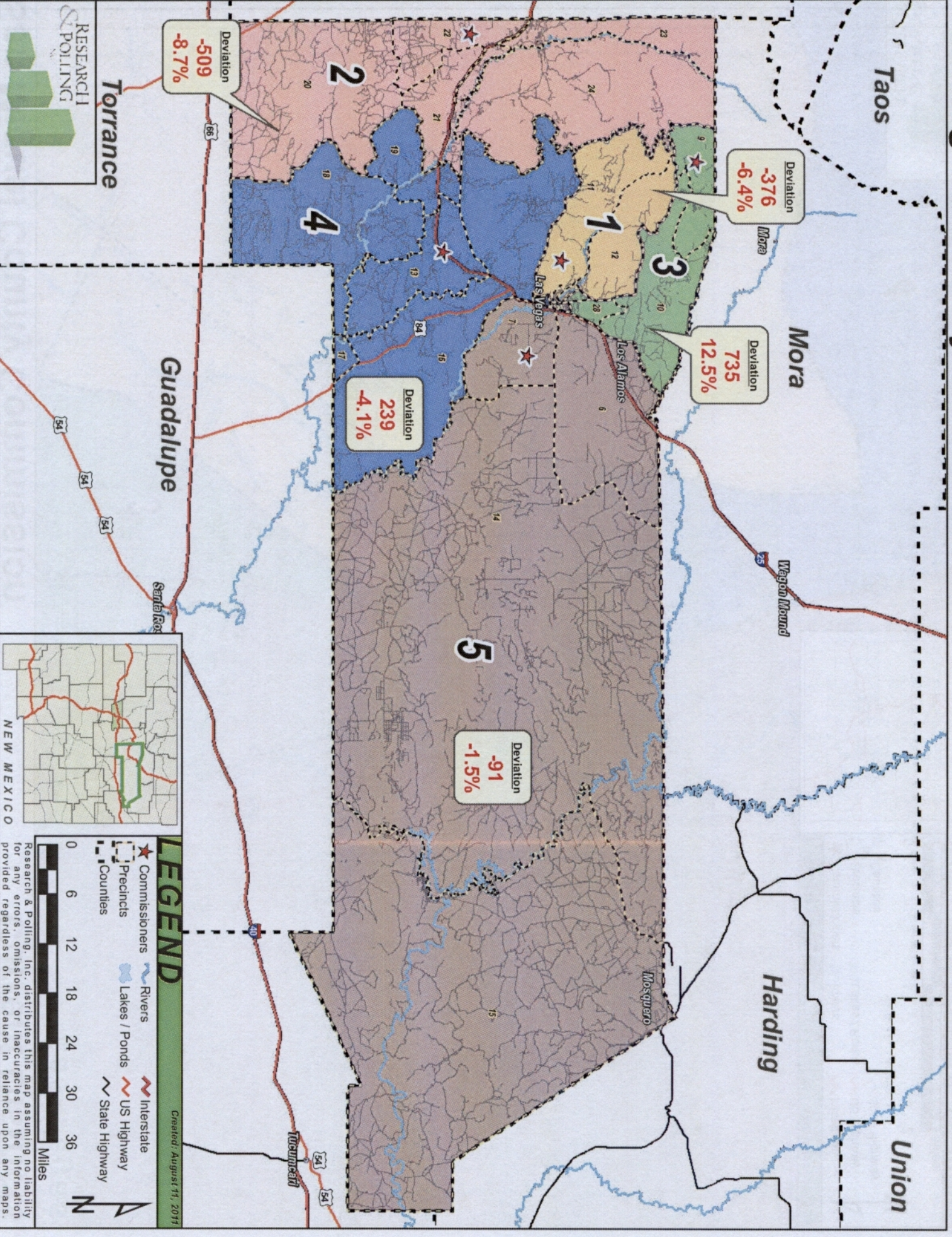
For elected officials who "run" in other election schedules, the precinct carries less significance. Voters may be reorganized for local elections whose district boundaries frequently do not coincide with precincts. This is the case, for example, with city limits, the boundaries of school districts, and other entities in New Mexico. While elections need not be organized by precincts, the county clerk must sort voters in "split" precincts used to district local elections and so additional expense is incurred when precinct lines are ignored.

When precincts must be broken into smaller areas, the most common, and smallest unit used, is the U.S. census block. A block is literally a geographic block bounded by physical features such as various streets or political boundaries such as a city limits. We do not attempt to subdivide census blocks except as may be necessary at the outer boundaries of an area to be districted (such as the outer boundary of a school district).

## Maps and Tables

# San Miguel County Commission

# Current Districts



**LEGEND**

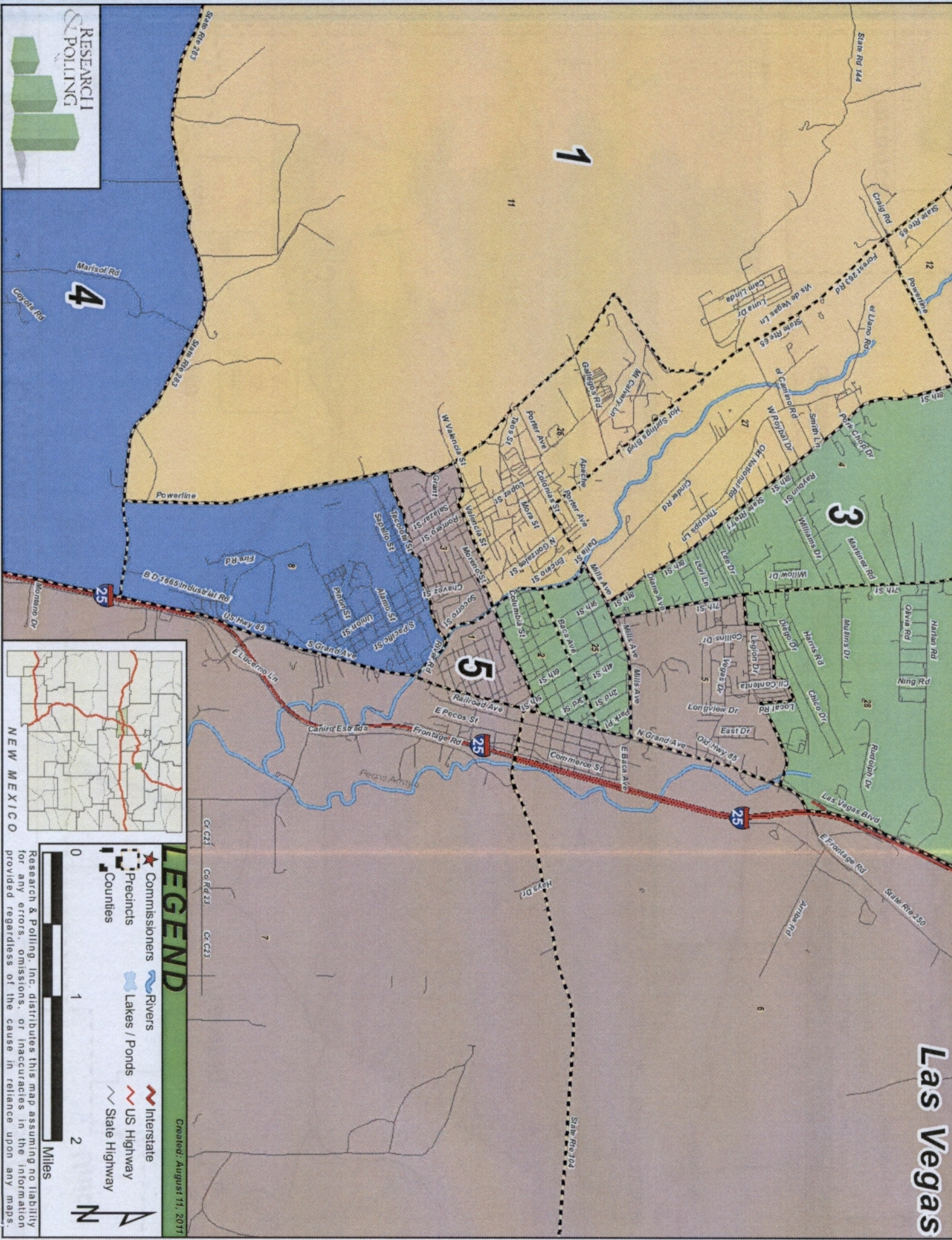
- Commissioners
- Precincts
- Rivers
- Lakes / Ponds
- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- Counties

Created: August 11, 2011

0 6 12 18 24 30 36 Miles

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## Las Vegas



**LEGEND**

- ★ Commissioners
- ⬢ Precincts
- ⬢ Counties
- 🌊 Rivers
- 🌊 Lakes / Ponds
- 🛣️ Interstate
- 🛣️ US Highway
- 🛣️ State Highway

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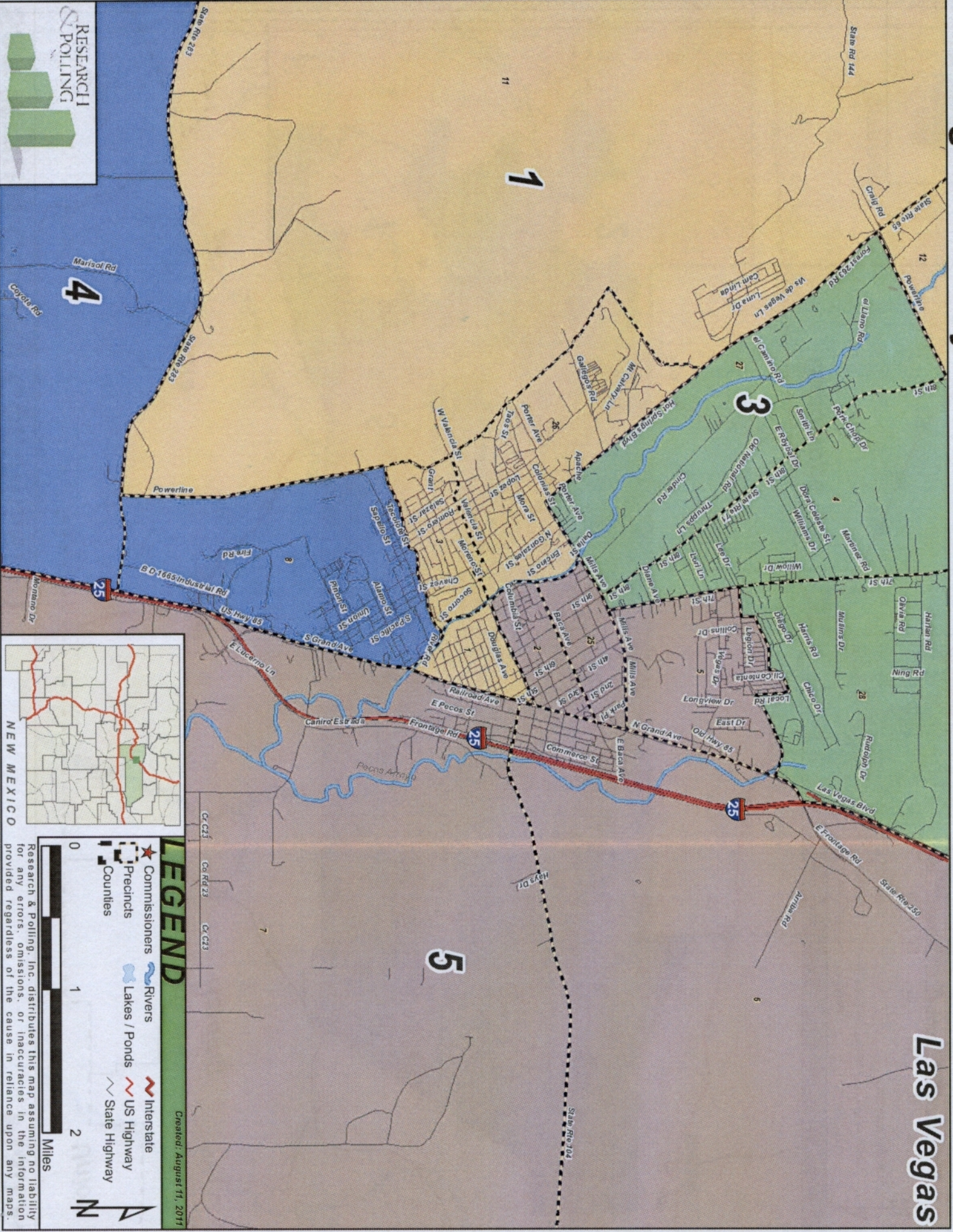


San Miguel County Commission  
Current Districts

2010 Census  
Redistricting

District	Pop	Deviation	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Origin					
				White	Native American	Black	Asian	Other Races	
1	5,503	-376 -6.4%	4,268 77.6%	1,018 18.5%	29 0.5%	78 1.4%	56 1.0%	54 1.0%	
18+	4,208		3,187 75.7%	857 20.4%	24 0.6%	62 1.5%	37 0.9%	41 1.0%	
2	5,370	-509 -8.7%	4,012 74.7%	1,227 22.8%	36 0.7%	29 0.5%	10 0.2%	56 1.0%	
18+	4,155		2,973 71.6%	1,081 26.0%	26 0.6%	22 0.5%	10 0.2%	43 1.0%	
3	6,614	735 12.5%	4,847 73.3%	1,377 20.8%	91 1.4%	165 2.5%	43 0.7%	91 1.4%	
18+	5,346		3,734 69.8%	1,258 23.5%	76 1.4%	160 3.0%	37 0.7%	81 1.5%	
4	6,118	239 4.1%	4,943 80.8%	1,097 17.9%	20 0.3%	11 0.2%	15 0.2%	32 0.5%	
18+	4,719		3,697 78.3%	951 20.2%	19 0.4%	10 0.2%	14 0.3%	28 0.6%	
5	5,788	-91 -1.5%	4,513 78.0%	1,062 18.3%	50 0.9%	56 1.0%	51 0.9%	56 1.0%	
18+	4,503		3,392 75.3%	933 20.7%	45 1.0%	49 1.1%	47 1.0%	37 0.8%	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29,393</b>	<b>Ideal: 5,879</b>	<b>22,583 76.8%</b>	<b>5,781 19.7%</b>	<b>226 0.8%</b>	<b>339 1.2%</b>	<b>175 0.6%</b>	<b>289 1.0%</b>	
18+	22,931		16,983 74.1%	5,080 22.2%	190 0.8%	303 1.3%	145 0.6%	230 0.8%	





**LEGEND**

- ★ Commissioners
- ▣ Precincts
- ▭ Counties
- ~ Rivers
- ~ Lakes / Ponds
- ~ Interstate
- ~ US Highway
- ~ State Highway

0 1 2 Miles

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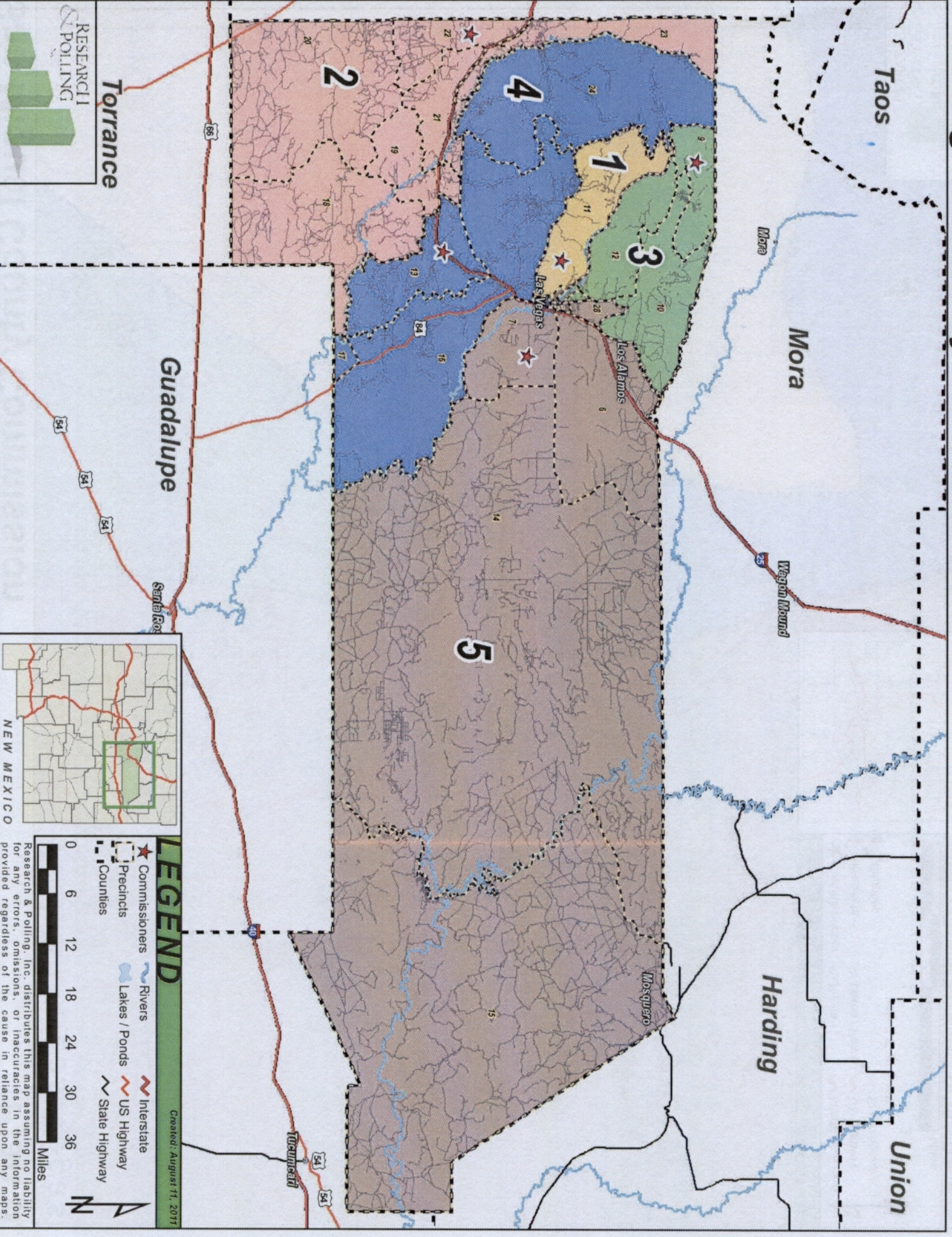
San Miguel County Commission  
Plan A

2010 Census  
Redistricting

District	Pop	Deviation	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Origin					
				White	Native American	Black	Asian	Other Races	
1	5,721	-158 -2.7%	4,313 75.4%	1,094 19.1%	62 1.1%	103 1.8%	80 1.4%	69 1.2%	
18+	4,475		3,298 73.7%	925 20.7%	54 1.2%	87 1.9%	58 1.3%	53 1.2%	
2	6,113	234 4.0%	4,655 76.1%	1,320 21.6%	37 0.6%	31 0.5%	10 0.2%	60 1.0%	
18+	4,753		3,476 73.1%	1,170 24.6%	27 0.6%	23 0.5%	10 0.2%	47 1.0%	
3	5,951	72 1.2%	4,738 79.6%	1,097 18.4%	19 0.3%	42 0.7%	11 0.2%	44 0.7%	
18+	4,597		3,522 76.6%	979 21.3%	14 0.3%	39 0.8%	9 0.2%	34 0.7%	
4	5,856	-23 -0.4%	4,498 76.8%	1,277 21.8%	19 0.3%	14 0.2%	17 0.3%	31 0.5%	
18+	4,550		3,362 73.9%	1,115 24.5%	18 0.4%	12 0.3%	16 0.4%	27 0.6%	
5	5,752	-127 -2.2%	4,379 76.1%	993 17.3%	89 1.5%	149 2.6%	57 1.0%	85 1.5%	
18+	4,556		3,325 73.0%	891 19.6%	77 1.7%	142 3.1%	52 1.1%	69 1.5%	
<b>Totals</b>	29,393	Ideal: 5,879	22,583 76.8%	5,781 19.7%	226 0.8%	339 1.2%	175 0.6%	289 1.5%	
18+	22,931		16,983 74.1%	5,080 22.2%	190 0.8%	303 1.3%	145 0.6%	230 1.5%	

# San Miguel County Commission

# Plan B



Torrance



**LEGEND**

- ★ Commissioners
- ▭ Precincts
- ▭ Counties
- ~ Rivers
- ~ Lakes / Ponds
- ~ Interstate
- ~ US Highway
- ~ State Highway

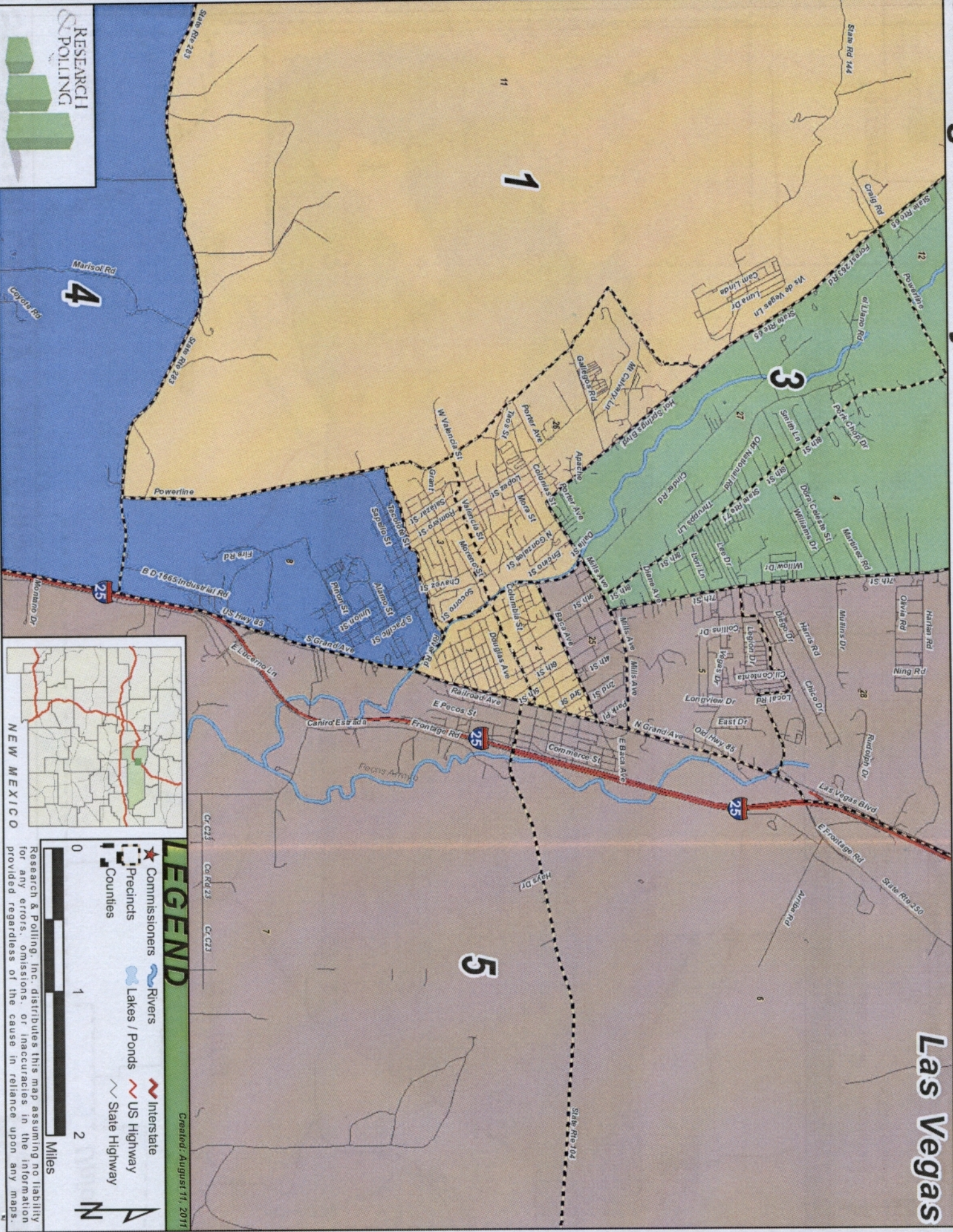
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0 6 12 18 24 30 36 Miles

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# San Miguel County Commission

# Plan B



**LEGEND**

- ★ Commissioners
- ▭ Precincts
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- ~ Rivers
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- ~ US Highway
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0 1 2 Miles

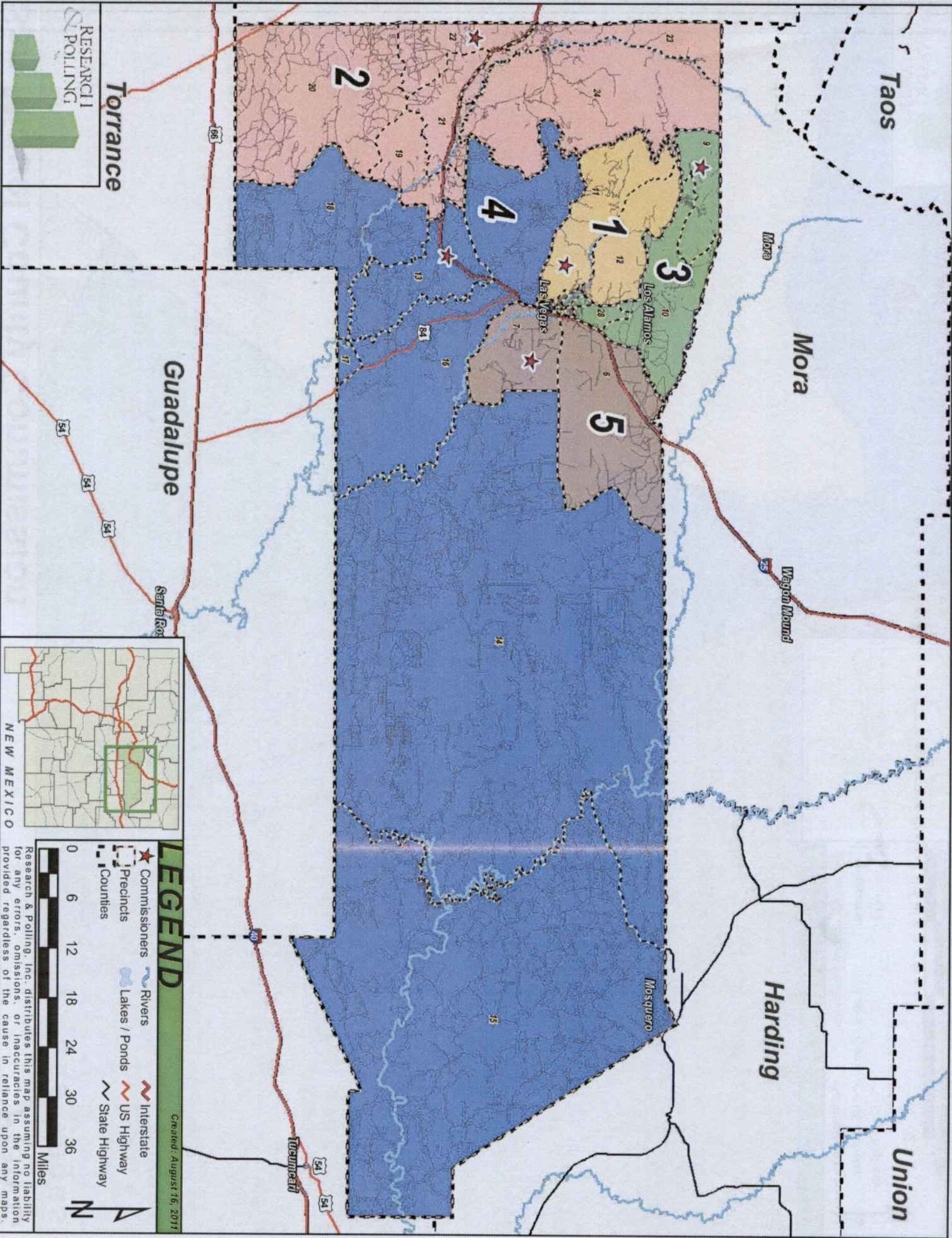
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San Miguel County Commission  
Plan B

2010 Census  
Redistricting

District	Pop	Deviation	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Origin					
				White	Native American	Black	Asian	Other Races	
1	6,061	182 3.1%	4,297 70.9%	1,241 20.5%	120 2.0%	210 3.5%	97 1.6%	96 1.6%	
18+	4,936		3,396 68.8%	1,082 21.9%	108 2.2%	192 3.9%	75 1.5%	83 1.7%	
2	5,717	-162 -2.8%	4,310 75.4%	1,276 22.3%	35 0.6%	30 0.5%	10 0.2%	56 1.0%	
18+	4,423		3,207 72.5%	1,118 25.3%	25 0.6%	22 0.5%	10 0.2%	41 0.9%	
3	5,766	-113 -1.9%	4,472 77.6%	1,183 20.5%	21 0.4%	30 0.5%	14 0.2%	46 0.8%	
18+	4,402		3,261 74.1%	1,051 23.9%	16 0.4%	29 0.7%	11 0.2%	34 0.8%	
4	5,771	-108 -1.8%	4,645 80.5%	1,048 18.2%	21 0.4%	10 0.2%	15 0.3%	32 0.6%	
18+	4,451		3,463 77.8%	914 20.5%	20 0.4%	10 0.2%	14 0.3%	30 0.7%	
5	6,078	199 3.4%	4,859 79.9%	1,033 17.0%	29 0.5%	59 1.0%	39 0.6%	59 1.0%	
18+	4,719		3,656 77.5%	915 19.4%	21 0.4%	50 1.1%	35 0.7%	42 0.9%	
<b>Totals</b>	29,393	Ideal: 5,879	22,583 76.8%	5,781 19.7%	226 0.8%	339 1.2%	175 0.6%	289 1.0%	
18+	22,931		16,983 74.1%	5,080 22.2%	190 0.8%	303 1.3%	145 0.6%	230 0.9%	



**LEGEND**

- ★ Commissioners
- ▭ Precincts
- ▭ Counties
- ~ Rivers
- ~ Lakes / Ponds
- ~ Interstate
- ~ US Highway
- ~ State Highway

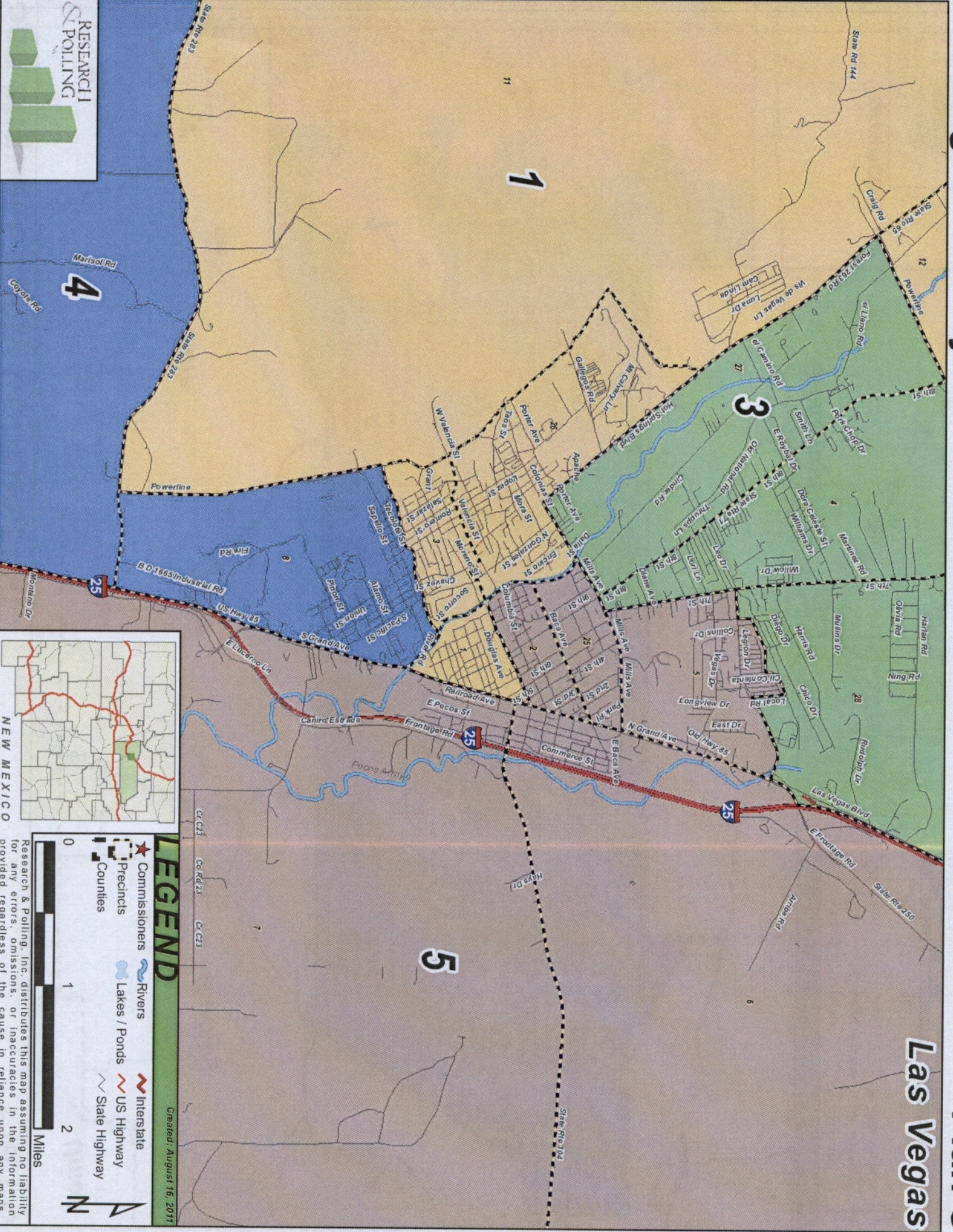
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## Las Vegas



**LEGEND**  
Created: August 16, 2011

- Commissioners
- Rivers
- Precincts
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- Interstate
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0 1 2 Miles

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18+	4,475		3,298 73.7%	925 20.7%	54 1.2%	87 1.9%	58 1.3%	53 1.2%	
2	5,749	-130 -2.2%	4,507 78.4%	1,167 20.3%	19 0.3%	15 0.3%	13 0.2%	28 0.5%	
18+	4,499		3,398 75.5%	1,033 23.0%	18 0.4%	12 0.3%	12 0.3%	26 0.6%	
3	6,220	341 5.8%	4,646 74.7%	1,430 23.0%	37 0.6%	30 0.5%	14 0.2%	63 1.0%	
18+	4,804		3,440 71.6%	1,252 26.1%	27 0.6%	23 0.5%	14 0.3%	48 1.0%	
4	5,951	72 1.2%	4,738 79.6%	1,097 18.4%	19 0.3%	42 0.7%	11 0.2%	44 0.7%	
18+	4,597		3,522 76.6%	979 21.3%	14 0.3%	39 0.8%	9 0.2%	34 0.7%	
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