

Good afternoon, Chairman and Committee members!

My name is Venghan (Winnie) Tang. I have lived in Miami-Dade County for nearly fifteen years in District 116.

Currently, I am ^{State} President of the Organization of Chinese Americans - South Florida Chapter. ~~(I speak to you on behalf of OCA which is a national non-partisan civil~~

~~rights advocacy and education grassroots organization.)~~ We work very hard to educate the Asian Pacific American community about good government.

As you know, the Asian population according to Census 2000 is the fastest growing group.

One person, one vote! Citizen input in the redistricting process is very important to us in the OCA and that is why we are grateful for your being here today. All citizens should be actively involved in the redistricting process. However, it is hard for working people to attend many of the daytime hearings such as this.

On their behalf, we urge the Redistricting Committee to adopt standards that will ensure that a fair and just redistricting will guide the final drawing of the voting map. Standards of fairness in this process should honor already existing political subdivisions such as cities, counties, and neighborhoods. The goal should be to keep the communities as intact as possible to unite the communities and best protect their citizens interests.

Fairness means a lot to all of us because we elected you, voted for many of you. So all we expect out of you is to be very, very fair when the redistricting happens.

During this process, we sincerely ask that you protect the voting rights of minorities throughout the state and in our community. District boundaries need not be dramatically changed, only adjusted as necessary to balance the new population differences and to satisfy the statutory requirements. In this manner, we can ensure that districts remain compact, keep our communities together, our cities intact and contiguous to other cities and counties.

Florida is a very diverse state. So the more compact the district is within the state; the easier it will be for an individual to well represent his or her constituency.

We can only hope that once the new proposed maps are released we can again meet with you in Miami-Dade County where the public will have an opportunity to comment.

Again, we appreciate your effort going around the state seeking our input.

Thank you very much!

Good afternoon.

I'm sure Mr. Gerry and his imaginary salamander are thoroughly enjoying the media coverage of the proceedings.

My name is Rosi Alvarez and I reside within House District 119. I vote for *people*, not political parties. As far as I'm concerned, history shows the mechanics of politics are the same, regardless of party affiliation.

During this particularly trying time in our country, when voter alertness is sensitized, we need to *walk* the bipartisan talk, and truly listen to the individual .

Years ago, citizens were handed predisposed boundaries. We complied, reshuffled, and accommodated. We got to know each other, and elected the leadership we value. Our district is blessed with a Representative that is a proven communicator, and with people united by the tragedy of Hurricane Andrew. In many ways we are the ideal community mentioned in the redistricting guidelines.

We are a well balanced group, racially, and economically.

Local media through their recent coverage of redistricting proceedings, states that the very people that are against gerrymandering are practicing it. I disagree. That's not why I'm here. The act of gerrymandering requires *action*, and I'm here ladies and gentlemen to ask you to do *nothing* about House District 119.

I appreciate your time.

End text

**Lorenzo Lebrija's
Comments to the Redistricting Committee
Wednesday, October 03, 2001**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to make some remarks regarding the upcoming redistricting of Florida's legislative seats.

First, let me take a moment to speak generally about district 116. The district, as many of you may know, covers most of the Kendall area in Miami-Dade County. The district is very unique, especially in an area like Miami, because it encompasses no municipalities. There are no cities, towns, villages or other form of local municipality within the district's boundaries. Aside from being a part of Miami-Dade county, it is on it's own. And that, I would argue, makes it unique.

When the legislature drew the district ten years ago it, in effect, created a political subdivision. The fact that there are no municipalities within the district means that for a decade now — when people have wanted to access their *local* government — they have done so through their *state* legislator, in this case, Annie Betancourt. This is evidenced by the fact that people call Representative Betancourt's office with what are really local issues: from traffic and potholes, to schools and even zoning. Any redistricting which would affect district 116 must be sensitive to this fact so as to not needlessly disrupt or silence the voice of the community, or weaken and obstruct the political avenues known to the residents in the Kendall area for over the past decade. It is, after all, these avenues that have formed a community of interest in District 116.

The Kendall area can not, and must not now, be dismantled simply for political reasons. However, since District 116 needs to be redrawn to gain some 10,698 residents, permit me to spend another minute or so suggesting how such a district may be redrawn, effectively, and most importantly, fairly and in the best interest of those who call Kendall home.

To the west of district 116, lies district 112 which needs to lose itself of approximately 52,000 residents in any upcoming redistricting. I would strongly encourage the Legislature to extend the boundaries of district 116 further west to gain the residents that the overpopulated district 112 must shed. The solution is simple in that it adds the necessary voters to district 116 without unnecessarily changing the political landscape as Kendall residents have come to know it.

Allow district 116 to simply expand to the west: do not redraw the whole district. Do not destroy the political subdivision which you, the Legislature, created, and which we, the voters, have enjoyed over the past decade.

I applaud your efforts to get the public's insight into their political future. As Rep. Diaz-Balart himself said, it would be "irresponsible" not to do so. But quite honestly, we need additional public meetings *after* you have settled on some proposed new district boundaries so that we can engage in a true political discourse based on *real* facts and *real* boundary lines. To speak hypothetically is one thing, but to be capable of speaking on suggested or proposed political divisions and district boundaries in an informed manner is but another. The difference, put quite bluntly, is the difference between holding meetings with uninformed citizens and holding meetings with well-informed citizens in an attempt to foster true political discourse and voter input. Today, we shall all take a few moments to speak to you on boundaries which we have not seen, and will not likely see until after the fact. I look forward to seeing you travel the state, maybe even in just 10 more "regional" meetings, after you release the new district maps, to receive the voter input you so desire.

As we leave here today, let us remember that district 116 is the only political subdivision in the area and the only one that was expressly created by the legislature. It is unique and I would encourage you to simply expand it, and not destroy it. Redrawing one of the district's boundary lines, I understand, is necessary. Redrawing all of the district's boundary lines is unnecessary, and, undesirable.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you today.

Miami-Dade County Public Hearing

Wednesday, October 03, 2001

Good Afternoon Senator Webster, Representative Byrd and Members of the Committee:

My name is Virginia Braddock and I live in District 112.

Partisan politics are part of the democratic process that we all believe to be the finest in the world. Whether we are Democrat, Republican or Independent we all have a say in our government. And now we get to **the reality**. Depending on who is in office at the time of redistricting **reality is one parties' say speaks louder than the other one does**. I read, with interest, Senator Webster's letter in the Miami Herald yesterday and a couple of other articles in the past few days that talk about how "fair, open and inclusive" these proceedings are going to be.

Let me say, there seems to be a great deal of legislative arrogance in this whole process. To say that these meetings are meant for meaningful community input is insulting. Meetings held in the middle of the day or early in the morning, in places difficult to reach, with inadequate parking don't seem to be very conducive to community input. Most people directly impacted by boundary changes in the legislative mapping process work during the day. It is not likely that an employer would be willing for them to take time from their jobs to express concern that they are being boundaried out of their district.

I have read the rules regarding these meetings and noted the fact that there are no proposed maps available to the general public. Of course I can understand if there really are maps you could be accused of just going through the motions of listening and compiling information. Personally I believe the committee must have draft maps available to study (or why would the Legislature have a rule exempting such drafts from public scrutiny). So much for government in the Sunshine! This certainly lends credence to the possibility that our opinions and concerns are of no consequence to the committee and for that matter the Legislature.

The FREDs 2000 software made available at a cost of \$20.00 is supposed to help cover the above lapse in open government. However unless you have a computer and are extremely computer literate with lots of time to work with the software it too would seem to be another roadblock to citizen input.

I would quote from Senator Webster's letter, "Ten years ago, I participated in redistricting as a member of the minority party in the House of Representatives. During that time I observed a process that was flawed and unfair. Most legislators were denied access to information, public testimony was ignored and, ultimately, the district lines were drawn by hired political operatives." Ladies and

Gentlemen now is the time to put your "money where your mouth is"; live up to all the fine pronouncements that have been made here and elsewhere and don't repeat past history.

Real life tells me that I can't expect you to forget that the Republicans are in office and that they want to get even. However I can expect our elected officials to be as fair as possible to the electorate when drawing lines. They should keep areas of community, try very hard to have continuity of districts, and to keep the populations of districts as close as possible and of course, keep incumbents of **both parties** in office.

Therefore in light of my above remarks about the existence or non-existence of maps; it is my suggestion that this committee reconvene (in public settings that are convenient, in time and place, to the concerned citizen) as soon as possible after redistricting maps are made available so that our opinions may be heard. With a hard copy (so to speak) it will be much easier to be precise in our agreement, disagreement or suggestions with the plan for our districts.

Thank you for you attention.

M.A. Ebadian

Remarks By:

Dr. M. A. Ebadian

Director of The Hemispheric Center for Environmental Technology at
Florida International University

Florida Congressional Redistricting Public Hearing
(District Seventeen)

October 2, 2001

Good Afternoon. Mr. Chair and committee members, my name is Doctor Ali Ebadian. I serve the community as Director of the Hemispheric Center for Environmental Technology at Florida International University. We perform environmental services that assist our community and are helping the community by ensuring a stable economic foundation for the Seventeenth Congressional District.

The Center is a key player in performing environmental assessments, developing remediation plans, and designing information tools that assist in the improvement of the environmental condition of the District. Congresswoman Meek has been a strong proponent for the efficient and effective clean-up of environmental insults that have occurred in years past within the District. It is evident from the widespread phase 1 and phase 2 assessments that we have performed, and as illustrated by the map we have prepared for you, that the District has a significant accumulation of perceived and actual environmental impacts. Unfortunately, this density of problem properties is all too representative of the environmental inequity that poorer communities have experienced in the past.

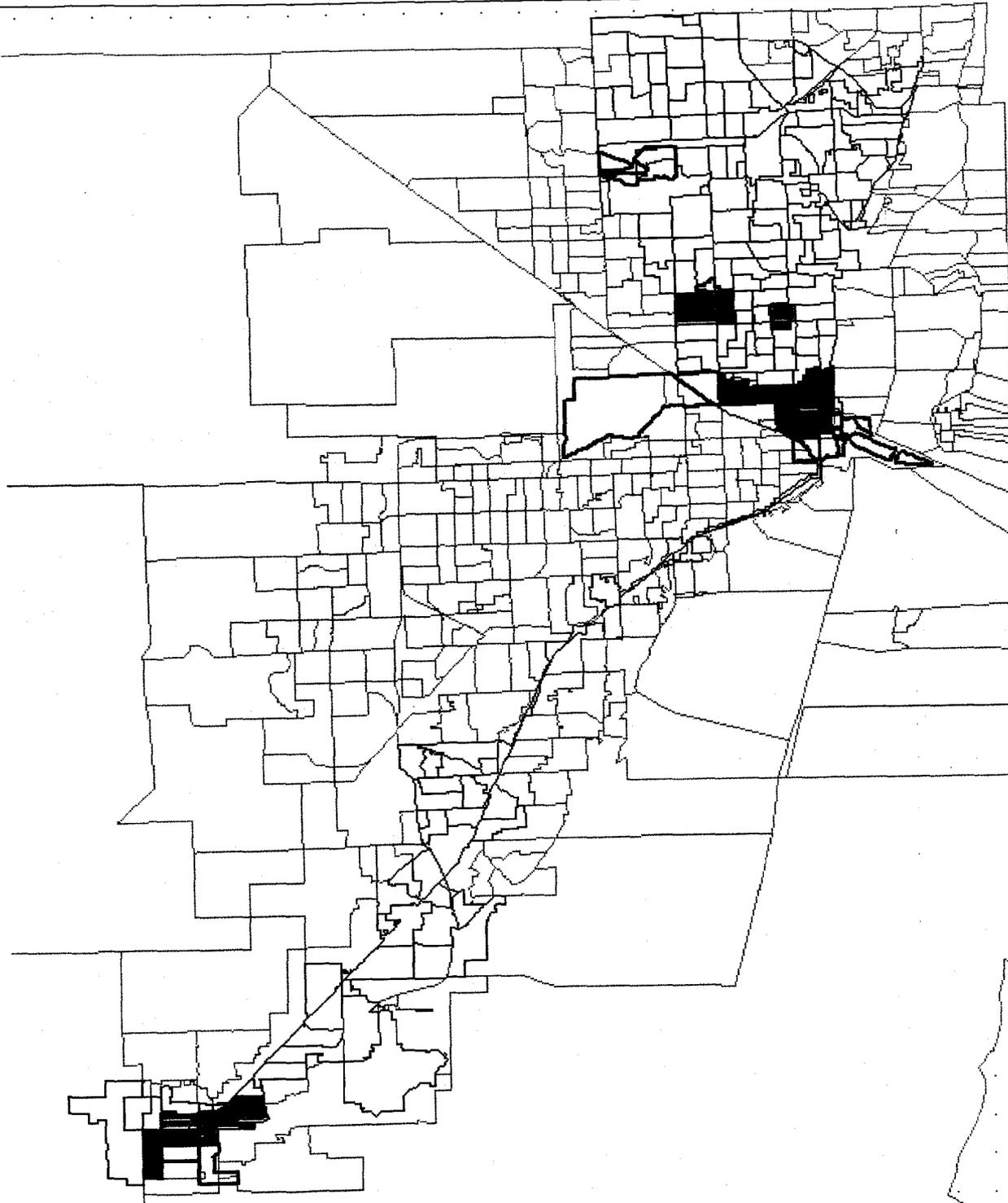
This is why I am here today - Our role as independent assessors and experts in the clean-up of contaminated communities is greatly enhanced by the knowledge and experience, and actions of Congresswoman Meek. She is a strong advocate for addressing these concerns and I feel that re-districting will expose the residents of this community to a political arena in which these significant priority issues will again be de-emphasized and will negatively impact the inroads we have made towards Environmental Justice!

Within the geographic boundary of the Seventeenth Congressional District are over 244 Brownfield properties; and an additional 144 perceived Brownfields. The variety of contamination events, both from inadvertent contamination, and from deliberate contamination as a consequence of unwise and careless industrial processes is a major inhibition to economic re-vitalization. Our efforts to initiate the economic cycle to remediate these derelict and abandoned properties is in large part aided by the representational continuity of the district.

Many of these areas are just now at the cusp of seeing some true redevelopment activities, and much of that redevelopment momentum is directly attributable to Congresswoman Meek. She was a key player in directing funding for the Empowerment zone to Miami, she has assisted in ensuring completion of the Poinciana Park clean-up, and is the key legislative advocate for the utilization of that park as a small business resource for the community. Of course she is responsible for countless other projects that have improved and will improve and promote economic revitalization in the District.

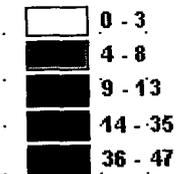
I therefore, urge you to consider the essential fact that; communities require community leaders and representatives who share the experiences and intimate knowledge of those communities. I believe we should maintain the District as currently bounded, and let the community retain its strongest advocate and most effective voice.

District 17 Brownfield Data



Empowerment Zone and
Dev Area Boundaries

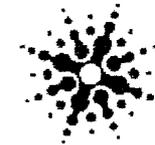
District 17 : Brownfields



Miami-Dade County Precincts - '98

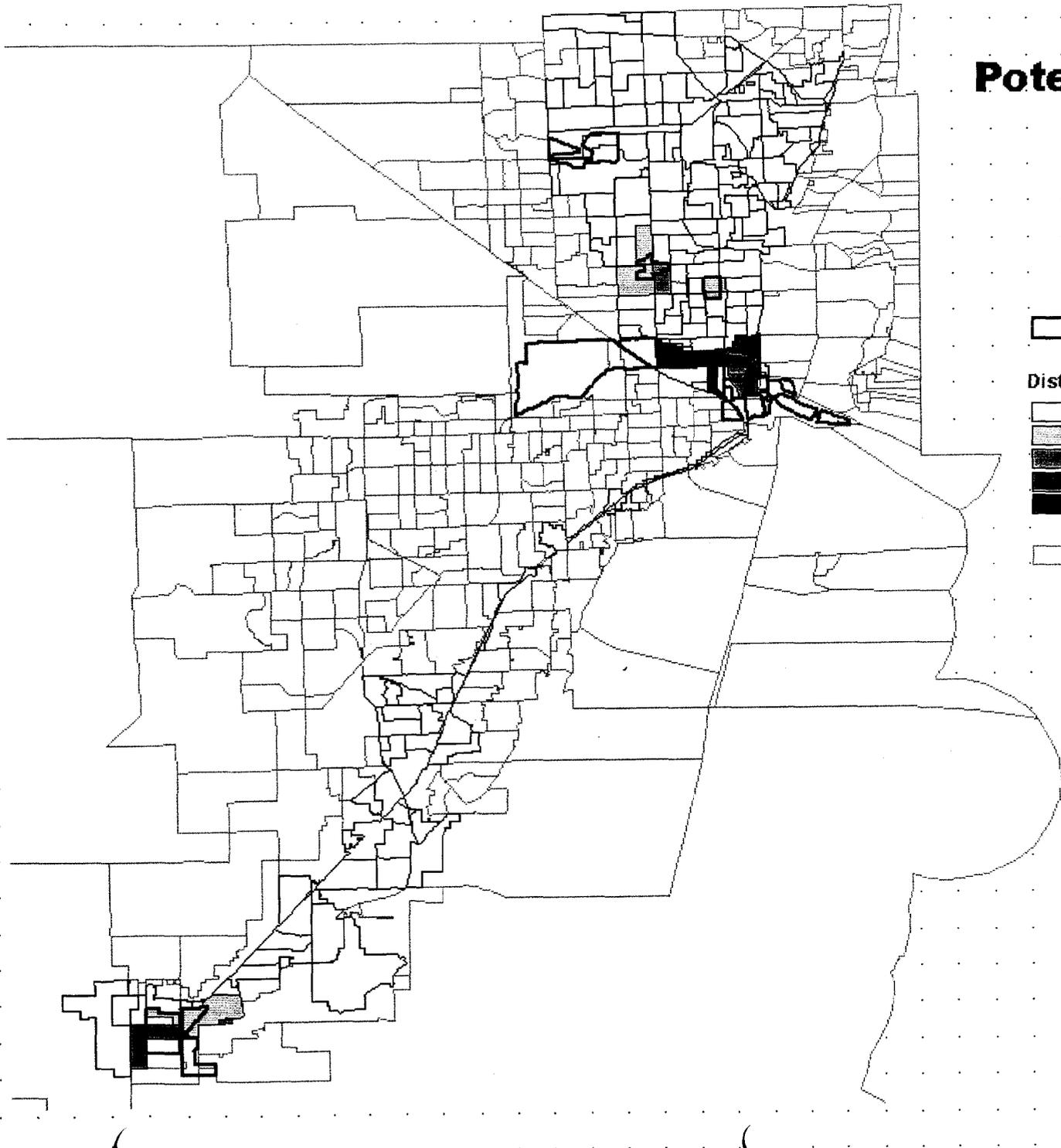


2 0 2 4 Miles



H CET
Hispanic Center for
Environmental Technology
www.hcet.org • 305.455.1000

District 17 Potential Brownfield Data

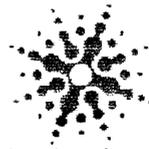
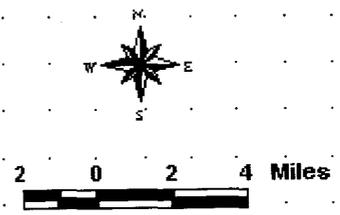


 Empowerment Zone and Dev Area Boundaries

District17: P-Brownfields

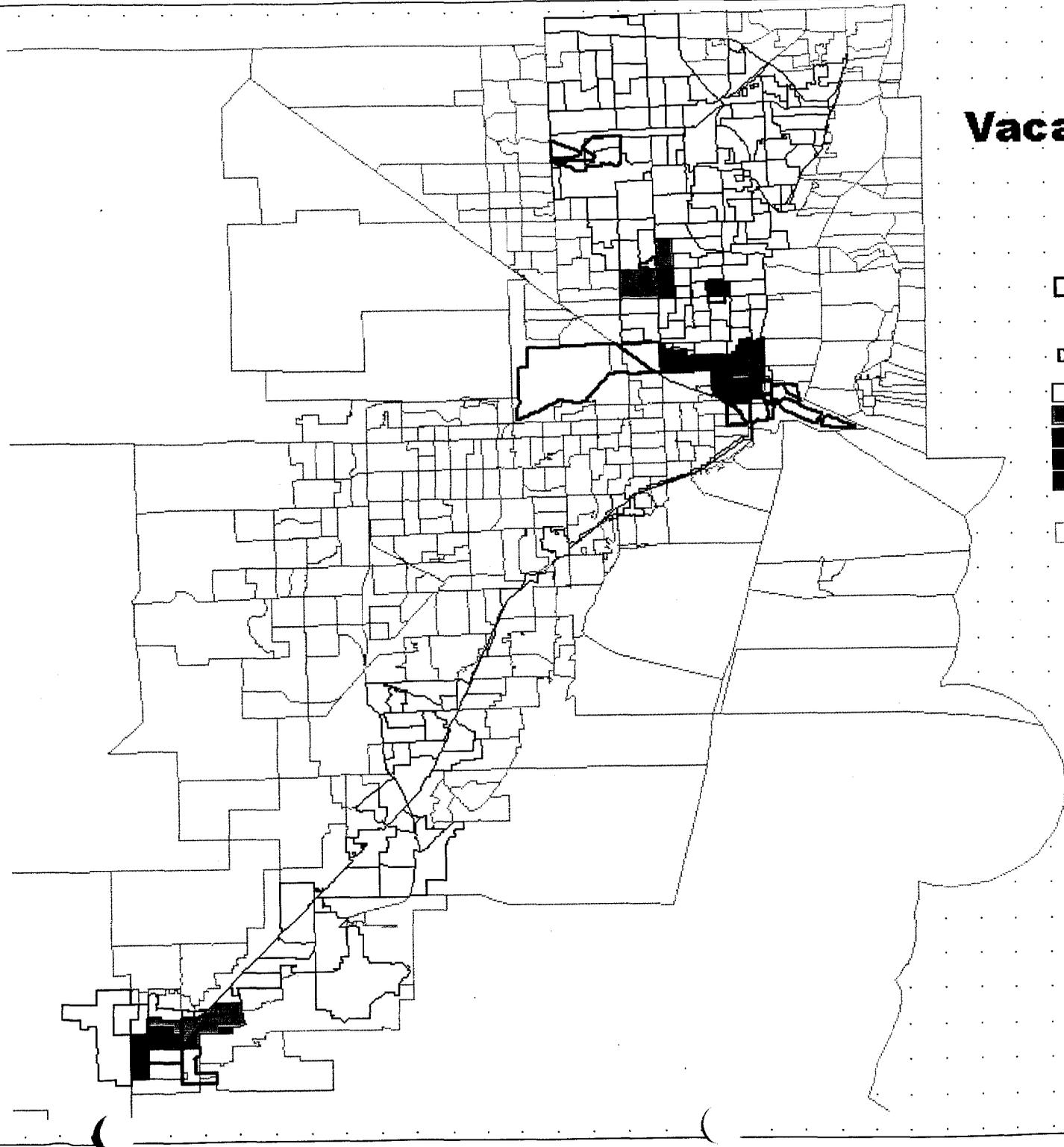
-  0 - 1
-  2 - 4
-  5 - 7
-  8 - 10
-  11 - 41

 Miami-Dade County Precincts - '98



HCET
Hispanic Center for
Environmental Technology
enhancing energy, education, community

District 17 Vacant Property Data

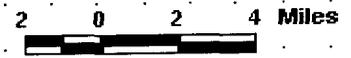


 Empowerment Zone and
Dev Area Boundaries

District 17: Vacant Properties

-  0 - 3
-  4 - 14
-  15 - 26
-  27 - 35
-  36 - 70

 Miami-Dade County Precincts - '98



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Environmental Technology
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**Points for Public Testimony
South Florida Redistricting Hearing**

- I would like to thank the Chairman for scheduling public hearings before plans are drawn. It is nice to know that, unlike 10 years ago, you are asking for public input *before* the decisions on how to draw the lines are made.
- I would also like to thank the leadership for insuring that the redistricting process be open, fair, and inclusive.
- I have looked at both the House and Senate Websites and find them to be extremely helpful and user friendly. I strongly urge any member of the public listening that has not utilized these websites, to do so as soon as possible.
- I appreciate the legal overview that your attorney's gave the public and trust, as you have stated, that you will proceed through this redistricting process pursuant to established legal and constitutional principles.
- As you consider redistricting plans that affect South Florida, I ask that you maintain communities of interest together.
- With the growing number of Hispanic residents in South Florida, I am concerned that there may be a dilution of minority voting strengths.
- As you know, South Florida is extremely diverse, with an increasingly large number of Hispanics from various Latin American countries.
- We, South Florida Hispanics, who live in Dade, Broward, Collier, and Monroe County, have very strong family values, and some very unique concerns and issues, so it is important for us to have representatives in the House, Senate, and Congressional districts who understand us and our issues. Our delegation in the State House and Senate, as well as our Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, transcend geographic and district boundaries, representing ALL Hispanics.
- We need to be able to choose representatives who understand our culture, our needs, and our concerns.
- We respectfully ask that you please consider increasing Hispanic representation in order to reflect the growth in numbers in our state.