

VCF WATSONVILLE RP

Districting 1/9/89 supporters 89 plan protest

Supporters of the federal appeals court decision ordering Watsonville to change its at-large election system to a district system are planning to stage a demonstration at 7 p.m. tomorrow at City Hall.

The court found Watsonville's at-large system to be discriminatory to Hispanics and ordered the city to work out a districting plan, but city officials have asked the appeals court for more time to prepare the paperwork for a U.S. Supreme Court appeal.

Meanwhile, the attorney for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, which brought the suit, said he would file opposition papers to that request today.

Among groups supporting the election decision is the League of United Latin American Citi-

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zens. LULAC president Rebecca Garcia has vowed to turn the community out en masse tomorrow night to urge switching to district elections.

People will have a chance to speak to the City Council on the issue at the council's 7:30 p.m. meeting. An item was added to the agenda at the request of Mayor Betty Murphy to allow public comment on the topic of districting in Watsonville.

The discussion will follow the oral communications portion of the agenda and announcement of the winners of the Christmas decoration competition.

The City Council has yet to vote on whether to fight the election suit all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, but Murphy has said publicly she thinks the city should fight the suit. Councilman Dennis Osmer has advocated ending the fight and studying ways the city could accomplish districting.