

Public Comments

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission Comments
received between September 27 and October 3, 2022

Distributed electronically October 11, 2022

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 30, 2022 6:48 PM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Katherine Norane Appling-Freistadt

From: Katherine Norane Appling-Freistadt knfreistadt@gmail.com
Residence: Helena

Message:

Map #2 looks best to me. It meets 3 of the mandatory criteria: creating districts that are relatively equal in population, districts that are contiguous, and districts that protect minority voting rights. In terms of the fourth criterion, compactness, this map is not perfect but neither are any of the other three maps in this regard. Importantly, this map meets one of the essential districting goals, which is that "No plan may be drawn to unduly favor a political party." It would likely preserve the status quo from recent elections, which is 57 House seats for Republicans versus 43 seats for Democrats.

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (<https://mtredistricting.gov>)

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 30, 2022 5:37 PM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Katherine Norane Appling-Freistadt

From: Katherine Norane Appling-Freistadt knfreistadt@gmail.com
Residence: Helena

Message:

I want to submit some general comments on the redistricting process here, but I also will go to the map and specifically comment on my district.

I am very concerned that the two maps submitted by the Republican committee members are not compliant with the Voting Rights Act which guarantees Native American Indians majority districts. The way they have presented their maps, it would be next to impossible for Native's to win in those districts. I am also concerned that the overall goals of the Republican-submitted maps are also not consistent with statewide fairness w/ regards to partisanship.

Thank you,
K. Norane Appling-Freistadt

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Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 27, 2022 7:52 AM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Barb S Beck

From: Barb S Beck beartooth1lg@gmail.com
Residence: RED LODGE, MT

Message:

I live near Red Lodge in southwestern Carbon County. I believe the best approach for this area is to include it in a HD that also has the other Yellowstone National Park gateway communities. We are the same community of interest with economies highly dependent on tourism and public lands. We have less in common with agricultural producers in the county to the north and east. Initial proposal maps 2 and 3 best represent this desired boundary for me. I do not support using the county lines as boundaries for the area's HD. Thanks!

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (<https://mtredistricting.gov>)

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 29, 2022 8:21 PM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Roger Breeding

From: Roger Breeding rog7nor@gmail.com
Residence: Bozeman MT

Message:

Maps 2 and 3 are by far the better maps because they protect minority voting rights, they are fair in not unduly favoring a political party, they keep communities of interest intact, they are competitive to much higher degree than maps 1 and 4.

Maps 1 and 4 can only claim to be most compact geographically. This, however, is a disadvantage in a rural state such as Montana with widely scattered large population centers because it leads to major unfairness and partisanship. These 2 maps unduly favor the Republican party by creating non-competitive districts and dividing communities of interest.

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (<https://mtredistricting.gov>)

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2022 9:23 PM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Kelsey Clark

From: Kelsey Clark spoo_is@yahoo.com
Residence: Bozeman, MT

Message:

I appreciate that you face multiple constraints in drawing the boundaries of the districts. I urge you to prioritize creating competitive districts. Competition leads to better candidates and cooperative solutions, and keeps politicians accountable to their all their constituents rather than incentivizing appealing primarily to the fringe of their own party. Proportional representation at the state level is also a desirable outcome.

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (<https://mtredistricting.gov>)

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 27, 2022 4:20 PM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Catherine Fitzgerald

From: Catherine Fitzgerald cfitzgerald8888@yahoo.com
Residence: Billings Montana

Message:

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the redistricting process in Montana. I do a fair amount of voter registration in our area and I am always dismayed when someone says that they don't vote because their vote doesn't matter. To me, feeling enfranchised is critical for having an engaged electorate. For that reason, I encourage this commission to find a map that is most representative of our population's political preference and keeping districts as competitive as possible. According to the statistics from the maps presented for comment, it doesn't appear that the maps 1 and 4 have done that with 60/25 and 58/23 lean when our population as a whole has a 55/42 percent lean. Maps 2 and 3 do a better job with 49/31 and 50/32 percent lean overall. I was glad to see that all of the maps create 15 – 20 competitive districts. I am hopeful that the commission can adjust the boundaries to find a map that makes Montana voters feel enfranchised. Thank you for your hard work on this important job.

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (<https://mtredistricting.gov>)

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2022 10:45 AM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Pat Plowman

From: Pat Plowman partplowman@hotmail.com
Residence: Boyd, Montana

Message:

Good morning.

Pat here from Carbon County.

Please choose wisely.

Map 2 is good. Map 3 is acceptable.

Maps 1 and 4 are insane from my perspective in Carbon County as they remove Carbon County's county seat, one of them throwing it in with Bozeman. Red Lodge doesn't need this on top of the flood.

Have a heart!

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (<https://mtredistricting.gov>)

Sherley, Laura

From: Becky Wiehe <beckywiehe@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2022 2:46 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Montana Redistricting for Fair Voting

I believe there should be as many competitive districts as possible to ensure a vote for legislators that will represent all Montanans. That means more than just 2 or 3 districts for Democrats and the REST for Repiblicans.

Hopefully we can all understand the word fair as it applies to Montana's voters, not just political parties.

Thank you,

Rebecca Wiehe
344 Clark Avenue
Billings, MT 59101

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 29, 2022 1:06 PM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Ron Paul Wirth

From: Ron Paul Wirth ron.wirth1971@outlook.com
Residence: Victor, Mt

Message:

ANY redistricting proposal being considered, MUST be compliant with the Montana Constitution, and all statues that are relevant. Some of the proposals adhere to almost NONE of these requirements, and not only violate the law, but also the credibility of the Commission. These sorts of attempts to gerrymander the districts to favor one party over the other, will most assuredly be challenged in the court system, and needlessly increase the cost to the already financially distressed State of Montana. Please consider this vitally important point in making a fair ruling.

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