

Public Comments

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
Comments between 8 a.m. on November 30 and 8 a.m. on December 1, 2022

Distributed electronically December 1, 2022

Sherley, Laura

From: Darin Gaub <daringaub@protonmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 30, 2022 8:44 AM
To: Districting
Cc: Darin Gaub
Subject: Redistricting

To the Commission,

The statute MCA 5-1-115 (Redistricting Criteria) makes it clear that Maps 2 & 3 violate the law, and Map 4 best upholds the law. Therefore, adopt Map 4 as it best represents the people of Montana.

My family resides all over Montana and being 5 generations deep now we know the state as well as anybody. As a result we know the communities and their makeup. From Sidney to Butte, to Kalispell down to Baker we are there. This deep multi-generational knowledge is invaluable to understanding our state.

I have also canvassed many areas around Helena specifically and can speak directly to the negative effects of the illegal wagon wheel or hub and spoke techniques employed here. Communities of interest are left unrepresented in the legislature as a result. It's a lot easier to just follow the law and do what's right. Doing anything other than following the law shows that some seek power over people rather than service to people.

LEGAL OBJECTIONS

1. The law states you must avoid dividing political subdivisions. Maps 1 and 4 show that you can avoid dividing political subdivisions to a great extent.

Violation - Maps 2 and 3 divide Bozeman and Missoula far more than is necessary.
- political subdivision is "any division of any local governmental unit."

2. Compact. This law was created to make it illegal to create wagon wheel and spoke type districts. Maps 1 and 4 are compact districts and adhere to law.

Violation - Maps 2 and 3 have elongated districts that do not adhere to state law. They are longer than three times the average width.

3. Contiguous.

Violation - Maps 2 & 3 have districts that violate this. Example: The lowest district that takes in Big Sky and Red Lodge and Cooke City. At least 3 mountain ranges, must leave the state to travel from one end to another, or Drive 6 hours through Montana.

4. Areas of interest.

By drawing districts to carve up rural areas and outnumber rural voters and rural communities by city center populations is not fair to areas of interest. Gallatin Gateway

doesn't have anything in common with College. Different communities attend different schools, etc.

Violation- Maps 2 and 3 disenfranchise rural voters and smaller communities. The University area should be its own district.

5. Keep political subdivisions intact. State law says that maps should not favor one party over another. This needs to be taken into consideration at the county level because if you target one county to give one particular party more seats, it is gerrymandering. It is not fair to Gallatin to take a roughly 50/50 District and give Democrats 80% of the legislative House seats.

SUMMARY OF LAWS BROKEN by Maps #2 & 3:

- The districts must be as equal as practicable. FAIL
- Keep political subdivisions intact. EPIC FAIL
- The number of cities divided among more than one district must be as small as possible. FAIL
- District boundaries must coincide with the boundaries of political subdivisions of the state to the greatest extent possible. FAIL
- The districts must be contiguous, meaning that the district must be in one piece. FAIL

I strongly urge you to follow the law on selecting the LEGAL maps! With this in mind Map 4 is the closest map that follows the law. Map 1 would also pass the legal test. Selecting Maps 2 or 3 would force the legislature to reject the redistricting plan and potentially cost the state a lot of money to show the courts how clearly illegal are Maps 1 and 2.

There are a number of examples of these violations with Maps 2 & 3.

Part of Bozeman being lumped in with Fours Corners, Belgrade and other rural or golf course mansion millionaires.

In Helena - HD 85 splits East Helena up and puts the Helena's high income upper eastside and southeast hills with a working class, compact city. East Helena is its own community and should not be combined with any part of Helena.

Map 4 is the ONLY map that adheres to the law. I urge all of you to vote Map 4.

Thank you for your hard work
Darin

Darin Gaub
Helena, Montana, USA
www.restore-liberty.org
<https://t.me/RestoreLiberty>
@FeroxGladio

Mountain Time (UTC -7 hours)

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 30, 2022 4:33 PM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Donna Lee Martin

From: Donna Lee Martin donnalee6259@gmail.com
Residence: Libby, Montana

Message:

Re: Lincoln County District splits.

This is my 3rd time today, but I have now had time to check out the 2 newest maps. Sorry I didn't see them until after I'd written the first time.

I am not so concerned now about NW Sanders County sharing HD 2 with Lincoln County. However, both maps still have Troy and Yaak paired with Eureka, and separated from Bull Lake, which is part of the Troy community.

These communities need to be kept together:

HD 1 – Eureka, West Kootenai, Rexford, Fortine, Trego, and Stryker. (Probably Indian Springs, but I don't know where that is.)

On Map 5, Fortine, Stryker, and Trego (all of which are along US 93 NW of Whitefish) are in HD 99 with Marion and Kila and other communities along Highway 2, NW of Kalispell. There is no highway connecting these communities except to go through Whitefish and Kalispell.

I would suggest that the needed number of people for HD 99 come from the Happy's Inn and Chain of Lakes area as far west toward Libby as need be. The people who live in this part of Lincoln County are more likely to shop and doctor in Kalispell than Libby anyway.

HD 2 – Troy, Sylvanite, Yaak, Bull Lake, whatever communities might come from Sanders County, and west to the Idaho line. Then east toward Libby as needed to balance populations.

Currently, HD 2 (to be HD 1) extends from north to south and east to west covering most of Lincoln County except for a compact area that basically includes Libby and Troy City limits and the Bull Lake corridor, which is HD 1 (to be HD 2). Current HD 1 doesn't even go to the Idaho line so the Yaak and people north and west of the Kootenai river, but part of the Troy extended community are in HD 2. It's even worse on the east and north sides of the Libby area.

Many people who live just across the Kootenai River in Libby don't even realize they are not in the same HD as Libby proper. I live 4 miles SE of Libby and am in HD 1, but my friend a mile down the same road is in HD 2.

As I said previously, since the Libby area is already chopped up in weird ways, it would even be helpful to have it divided more along a north-south dividing line – possibly the river – and have basically an Eastern and Western District, but with the northern part making it more of a T, going from Flathead County to the Canadian border along US Highway 93. I don't know if West Kootenai goes to the Idaho line, but probably.

This would hold true with either Map 5 or Map 6. The only differences I would see would be how the Commission decides to divide Sanders County. If it is decided to take part of Lincoln County into HD 99, then take it from the SE rather than the NE part of the county. It seems to make more sense, but then I don't know all of your considerations.

Again, I do so appreciate all of your hard and dedicated work.

Sincerely,

Donna Martin
Chair, Lincoln County Central Committee
406-291-1187

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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, November 30, 2022 8:58 AM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Russel W Miner

From: Russel W Miner russminer4@gmail.com
Residence: Great Falls

Message:
Proposal 3 best represents rural Montana

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

Sherley, Laura

From: Susan Smith <susbosmith@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 30, 2022 2:46 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Prefer maps 1 and 4

My husband and I live at 2008 5th Avenue and have evaluated the maps with extended family interests in mind as well as fairness to all in following the legal criteria.

Maps 1 and 4, especially 4, are best in keeping the interests of the Helena Valley together. They are more compact and avoid dividing political subdivisions more than 2 and 3.

2 and 3 disenfranchise rural voters and smaller communities. 2 and 3 also are extremely elongated, gerrymandered districts that divide up Bozeman and Missoula more than necessary. University areas should be its own district. 2 and 3 maps would also automatically flip 5 districts. That is an unfair and illegal concept according to set rules against giving advantages to one party.

Please choose map 4 or 1 to adhere to fairest principles set to govern this procedure.

Respectfully,
Susan and Stephen Smith
2008 5th Avenue
Helena, Mt 59601
406-461-5409

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 30, 2022 1:54 PM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Representative Ken Walsh

From: Representative Ken Walsh kmwalsh54@gmail.com
Residence: Twin Bridges, MT

Message:

I would certainly support Maps #1 and/or#4 as these maps keep Madison County in tact and also along the current and traditional boundaries. #1 includes more of the City of Whitehall which works well. This keeps the Jefferson Valley intact. #4 includes more of the Big Sky community, which is currently split. It would be good to consolidate as their issues would be similar. The other 2 maps cause a split in demographics, and geography.

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