

MINUTES
Approved by the Commission
Commission for Reapportionment
Friday, September 24, 2021
11:00 A.M.

Silverthorne Theater, Lewis-Clark State College
Lewiston, Idaho

Members: (Commissioners) Cochairs Bart Davis and Dan Schmidt, Commissioners Thomas Dayley, Nels Mitchell, and Eric Redman; (Commission Staff) Paul Boucher, Elizabeth Bowen, Keith Bybee, and Todd Cutler

Absent/Excused: Commissioner Amber Pence

Also present (Signed in): Mary Lou Amidoi, Skip Brandt, Rachel Edwards, James Evans, Pete Gertonson, Helen Hawley, Dan Johnson, Hailey Lewis, Kay Mairis, Missy McLaughlin, Brandon Mitchell, David Nelson, John Bradberry, Samuel N. Penney, Caroline Troy, Patty Weeks, Rick Winkel, Doug Zenner

The meeting was called to order by Cochair Davis at 11:00 a.m. A silent roll call was taken.

Opening Remarks

Cochair Davis explained the purpose of the Commission for Reapportionment. The commissioners introduced themselves.

Public Testimony

Cochair Davis invited the public to testify.

- Former Senator Skip Brandt testified on the boundaries of District 7. He noted that anywhere south of the Salmon River was connected in McCall and Boise. Senator Brandt asked the commission to leave Adams County in the south and blend Clearwater County with Idaho and Lewis Counties. Cochair Schmidt restated Senator Brandt's position that Idaho, Lewis, and Clearwater Counties made sense together, and the commission should take a piece of Nez Perce County for District 7 if the commission needed to split anything. Senator Brandt agreed.
- Pete Gertonson read a letter from Amanda Gill. Ms. Gill supported a Moscow-Lewiston connection. Mr. Gertonson asked the commission to not split counties if possible, but if it was necessary, then Nez Perce County should be split due to its growth. He stated that the Lewiston-Moscow area would benefit with a Nez Perce County split for more representation. Commissioner Redman asked if the commission should split Nez Perce County so the area has access to Latah County. Mr. Gertonson noted the Nez Perce Tribe's economic influence and said that including the tribe's voice would be beneficial as well.
- Patty Weeks, Nez Perce County Clerk, testified that the commission should leave Nez Perce County whole. She stated that splitting the county would create an unnecessary burden and increase costs. She asked that if the commission were to split Nez Perce County, it should account for the county's taxing and school districts, follow precinct lines, and keep in mind that more complex ballots create room for error. Ms. Weeks attested that Lewiston and Nez Perce Counties shared a connection, and she would support splitting Idaho County. Cochair Davis commented that redistricting from the north down creates pressure on Latah and Nez Perce Counties to be split to balance the population. He asked Ms. Weeks to provide ways to help all counties fit together and to provide feedback after the commission puts out a final map. Ms. Weeks said that Nez Perce County had a population of 42,090 so it would need to be combined with another county, and combining it with Clearwater, Lewis, or Idaho County made sense. Commissioner Redman mentioned that Ada County would be redrawing their precincts and asked if Nez Perce County would do the same. Ms. Weeks said the

precinct boundaries would not change with the exception of the city of Lewiston's annexations. Cochair Schmidt noted that the commission had drawn multiple variations of northern Idaho and wished to receive as much advice as possible.

- Senator Dan Johnson testified that the Salmon River north and the southern border of Idaho County were divides that should not be crossed. He advised against splitting Lewiston. Senator Johnson asked about county splits regarding the example of the "donut" districts. Cochair Davis answered to count splits by focusing on only the external splits.
- James Evans testified that Nez Perce County was better whole and he disliked the L01 plan for the Lewiston area. He offered his support for Plan L026, which split Idaho County. Cochair Davis added that, once the commission submits a plan, people could submit written comments. Cochair Schmidt noted that toward Bonner County, there would be a split and the eastern part would be with Shoshone County. He requested the public try and put that back into Bonner County and make the numbers work.
- Brandon Mitchell stated his concern of splitting Lewiston in half, as well as having a portion of Latah County not properly represented without a solid county line.
- Representative Caroline Troy noted that two school districts crossed the border of Latah and Nez Perce Counties. She stated that Latah County should be split if it is needed, considering the rural interests in Lewiston. Representative Troy agreed that the Salmon River acted as a dividing line between parts of northern and southern Idaho, and that Lewiston acted as a center of commerce for the region. Commissioner Redman asked what the population on both sides of the Salmon River was. Representative Troy responded that the city of Riggins was the only notable population center south of the river.
- Doug Zenner, Nez Perce County Commissioner, testified that election precincts statewide should remain unchanged and stated that changing them creates voter confusion. Commissioner Redman stated that the commission would like to follow precincts, however population differences in various counties may force the commission to split lines. Commissioner Dayley remarked on the Ada County Clerk's testimony, which stated that the commission should ignore precinct lines due to population growth. Mr. Zenner said the rural counties were different than urban counties. Commissioner Dayley added that there are smaller precincts that would not be changed in Ada County.
- Helen Hawley testified that she would like to see Lewiston and Moscow together and noted the similarities between the two cities. She added that she liked Plan L01.
- Rick Winkle, Chairman of the Clearwater County Commission, testified that his constituents were afraid of having their rural voice drowned out if connected to a city. Cochair Davis commented on his previous experience representing rural districts and noted geographically large districts were harder to represent. Mr. Winkle questioned if there was a problem with larger districts. Cochair Davis said the commission wants to draw lines that meet legal requirements and provide citizens adequate access to their legislators. Cochair Schmidt noted a proposal that would assign representatives to different parts of a district and pondered if that might solve the rural representation issue. Cochair Davis spoke to the support Mr. Winkle would need for such a proposal and noted it could help the rural issue.
- Senator David Nelson testified that there was a lot of commonality in north central Idaho. He challenged earlier testimony that people from Lewiston never went to Moscow and asserted that there was a connection between the two cities and Latah County.
- Sam Penney, Chairman of the Nez Perce Tribe, stated that the tribe's interests extended beyond the range of their boundaries and he wanted the commission to recognize the tribe's strong connection to Latah County, Nez Perce County, the city of Lewiston, and the city of Moscow. He understood that the tribe may not be kept to a single district but requested that, if a split is necessary, the commission keep the tribe's interests in mind. Commissioner Redman asked where

the major part of the tribe's population resides. Chairman Penney responded that Lapwai, the Kamiah-Kooskia area, and Orofino held most of the tribe's population.

- Hailey Lewis asked the commission if having fewer than 35 districts would make redistricting easier. Cochair Davis explained the history behind the amendment for 35 districts. Ms. Lewis said that Lewiston and Moscow should be considered a community of interest due to their close ties.
- John Bradberry testified against Plan C02. He stated that Lewiston's community of interest causes people to put rural and urban interests aside. He added that the commission should act similarly when drawing a congressional map in order to have urban and rural interests reconcile their differences.
- Ms. Bowen covered the schedule for eastern Idaho, including times and locations as well as logistics. Cochair Davis suggested the commission consider holding a public hearing in Blackfoot.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:51 p.m.