

MINUTES
Approved by the Commission
Commission for Reapportionment
Thursday, October 07, 2021
7:00 P.M.

Idaho State University - Idaho Falls Campus Center for Higher Education Building,
Room 213
Idaho Falls, Idaho

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

Absent/Excused: None

Also present (Signed in): Roger Christensen, Trent Clark, Kevin Cook, Cathy Johnson, David Johnson, Carrie Scheid, and Dennis Sutton

The meeting was called to order by Cochair Schmidt at 7:03 p.m. A silent roll call was taken.

Opening Remarks

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

Public Testimony

- Carrie Scheid asked the commission to keep the southeastern portion of Bonneville County intact. She said the communities of interest for her precinct were Idaho Falls and Ammon, noting that it was proposed her home be in the same district as Soda Springs, almost 100 miles away.
- Roger Christensen, representing the Bonneville County commissioners, testified in favor of Plan L01. He stated that the county commissioners supported Plan L01 but understood changes could be necessary in order to finalize the map. He recognized the need for at least one external and two internal splits within Bonneville County. The county had two external splits for a long time, and the commission did not believe those splits provided constituents with fair representation. The county commissioners suggested that the commission draw lines along easily identifiable boundaries, such as roads or waterways, and keep existing subdivisions or communities of interest as whole as possible. Precincts 53 and 45 were suggested as places where the county should be split. Cochair Davis asked how Mr. Christensen would handle the issue raised by Mrs. Scheid, to which Mr. Christensen responded that it comes down to preference, but it was difficult to call the country club a part of Idaho Falls, and it was similar to the foothills subdivisions, such as Blackhawk. He mentioned that the Bonneville County commissioners were not opposed to splitting voting precincts.
- Trent Clark gave a [handout](#) to the commissioners and asked them to reconfigure the district containing Teton, Bonneville, Caribou, and Bear Lake Counties. He shared an anecdote about driving to see his sibling who lived in the same district yet was four hours away when driving. He explained that the only road connecting Bonneville and Caribou Counties was covered in snow for most of the year. He went on to say that legislators representing that district consistently overlook, and even go against, the interests of rural constituents in order to appeal to citizens in the population centers. He recommended having legislative districts split into A and B zones so that constituents who are currently being overshadowed as a result of the at-large legislative elections may be represented. He said that preserving county lines was seen as more important than protecting communities of interest, but his perspective was that protecting communities of interest was a greater legal requirement.

- Senator Kevin Cook said that his precinct had nothing in common with Soda Springs or Bear Lake. He said Idaho Falls and Ammon were the communities where they worked, worshipped, and learned. He expressed that the Plan L01 would diminish his community's voice.
- David Johnson supported the statements made by Ms. Scheid and Mr. Cook. He asked the commission to respect the fact that his precinct identifies with Idaho Falls.
- Roger Christensen spoke about the issue of Precinct 57 in Bonneville County. He suggested that it would be best to incorporate Precinct 57 into the "donut" district and take an Iona subdivision out of the "donut" and put it in the same district as Iona. He stated that would be a better solution to represent communities of interest in the map.
- Dennis Sutton testified that the legislative district along the southeastern edge of the state, containing Teton County, was not a viable community of interest. He asked the commission to not be strict with using county boundaries to draw districts. He stated that having geographic representatives within districts would be a good solution to improve legislative representation. He also said that changing the number of legislative districts would be beneficial to represent the changing population in Idaho.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.