

Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony regarding the redistricting process in our State. My name is Ruth R. Nelson and I live in unincorporated Columbia County outside of the town of Scappoose, Oregon.

I am a fourth generation Oregonian and grew up on a farm in rural Marion County. My husband and I moved from North Portland in 1997 and have lived here for 24 years. We came here precisely because Columbia County and its communities are rural. We enjoy the small close knit communities and the families and individuals we have learned to know and spend time with while living here.

We feel we should be represented by those from our local communities who understand our local economy, the issues that are important to our local businesses, and the common interests and challenges which our rural citizens face. The issues for rural communities are very different from those of urban communities and I urge you not to disenfranchise our currently underrepresented rural citizens by combining our districts with a heavy urban presence. May I remind you that to do so would not only be unfair, it would be illegal.

ORS 188,010 requires that the criteria for apportionment of the state into congressional and legislative districts meet the following criteria:

Be contiguous;

Be of equal population;

Not divide communities of common interest; and

Be connected by transportation links.

That no district shall be drawn for the purpose of favoring any political party, incumbent legislator or other person.

That no district shall be drawn for the purpose of diluting the voting strength of any language or ethnic minority group.

And that two state House of Representative districts shall be wholly included within a single state senatorial district.

These criteria are not met on some of the maps before the committee. For example, both the Oregon House maps and the Senate maps marked "Map C" divide our county, divide two school districts, divide our PUD and divide our Fire Protection District along with several other local service districts. This is unacceptable and completely contrary to the criteria for redistricting. I urge you to follow the law and to approve all three maps marked "Map B." They are the most fair to our marginalized rural communities and they meet the criteria as established in the laws of the Oregon Revised Statutes.

Thank you