

Greetings Co-Chairs Taylor and Salinas, and Vice-Chairs Knopp and Boshart-Davis, and members of the redistricting committee,

My name is Josh Berger, I live in Sisters Country in Deschutes County.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and making this process a public one for all citizens to participate.

I live outside Sisters city limits, but I am definitely part of the Sisters community. My son goes to Sisters Middle School, and I am involved with various community organizations and events. I mention this specifically because the proposed maps divide our community in half in what seems to be a very arbitrary manner.

The town of Sisters is the hub for people living, working, learning, recreating, and worshiping, within about a 10 mile radius in every direction, from Camp Sherman and Black Butte Ranch to Tumalo and Eagle Crest, and from the Three Sisters Wilderness to the confluences of Whychus Creek and Metolius River with the Deschutes River. Highways 126 and 20 are the main transportation arteries from which all other roads connect. The highway might split the center of the community—but politically, socially, and economically this region should remain cohesive.

The people living here are closely connected through networks, organizations, and festivals, including interests such as: art, music, fly-fishing, horses, history, camping, dark skies, and animal rescue. The people of the East Cascades love the outdoors in many ways. We are also keenly aware that we are living on the lands that were once used as hunting grounds by the regional Tribes, and we understand that the struggles of our neighbors on the Warm Springs Reservation must be addressed by U.S. and State government officials. There must be Tribal Consultation in this process as this upholds the sovereign rights of all Tribes in Oregon.

The new Census data shows changes: The population of the incorporated town of Sisters grew by 42% in the last 10 years. Subdivisions and light industry are replacing open space, and the growth is showing no sign of slowing down. Drought and urbanization will continue to impact our landscape. We understand there are limits to how much we can change the land and water around us without undesirable consequences. Citizens in the Sisters landscape as well as the greater East Cascades region need legislative representation by people who understand the sustainability imperative. We need leaders who make decisions that affect water and land resources through the lens of examining water supply, storage, and use, across entire watersheds.

Water is life: Because water availability is the primary driver of all interests and concerns in the Sisters region, and we anticipate policy decisions related to water supply, storage, and use, as well as forest and fire management, I ask that for each State House and Senate map, please keep together under the same district, all the land within the Whychus and Metolius Sub-basins, from the headwaters of Cascades to the Deschutes River. Likewise, the Congressional District lines that encompass Sisters should be contiguous with all Sub-basins of the Deschutes Basin. To identify these watersheds, you can overlay the Basin and Sub-basin boundaries from U.S. Geological Survey maps or go to: oregonexplorer.info/places/basins for the precise boundaries. With this tool, you can apply the precise boundaries of the Deschutes River Basin, Whychus Creek Sub-basin, Metolius River Sub-basin, and all other Sub-basins.

I ask that: 1) the Congressional District lines that encompass Sisters be contiguous with all of the Sub-basins within the Deschutes River Basin, and 2) for the State House and Senate District maps, you keep together all the land within the Whychus Creek and Metolius River Sub-basins because the Sisters landscape is supported by, and supports, these 2 Sub-basins of the Deschutes River Basin.

Congressional Map A is mostly appropriate because across this landscape, the social, cultural, and economic lives of the people in the Sisters landscape have more in common with communities north of us, along Hwy 97 and 197, up through The Dalles and Hood River than the communities east, west, or south of us. Specifically, from the Columbia River to Bend, we have in common: increased urbanization, increased wildland-urban-interfaces (WUI), social and economic ties

among Caucasian, Native American, and Hispanic neighbors, a similar diversity of agricultural land uses, a strong interest in fisheries resources, thriving recreational opportunities, and expanding tourism economies. Map A would be improved if it included the entirety of the Deschutes watershed, instead of straight lines that cut across Sub-basins, and the split between the west and east sides of the Lower Deschutes River Basin. On that note, Congressional B is an obvious gerrymander around Medford and should be tossed out based on that alone.

House and Senate Maps A are good in that they include much of the Whychus Sub-basin, but these need to incorporate all of the Whychus and Metolius Sub-basins. Also, rather than a line cutting through the Tumalo Sub-basin, it would be more appropriate to completely include or completely exclude it.

House and Senate B Maps are non-starters as they divide: the Whychus Creek watershed, the Sisters School District, the Hwy 126-fed transportation routes, and the Sisters community in general, between the northern and southern parts of the Sisters landscape.

House and Senate C Maps are almost adequate but fall short by excluding large portions of the Whychus and Metolius watersheds.

Two final considerations:

1. PLEASE cross-check each redistricting rule with each map before you finalize them, because I can see some of the guidelines were not followed in some maps, particularly the following, that: "maps should not divide communities of interest" and "maps should be connected by transportation links".
2. Given the history of all the indigenous peoples that lived on what is now Oregon land, the Tribal leaders and members of this region deserve to be consulted and have their interests respected, before any final lines are drawn.

Thank you for your time and work on the drafted maps, and for the opportunity to comment during this important process.

Josh

joshua berger
po box 104
sisters, or 97759
503 490 0004