

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, Co-Chairs Salinas, Boshart-Davis, and members of the committee...

For the record, my name is David Michalek. I live in Hood River and have lived here for over a decade after moving here from Austin, Texas to take advantage of the public lands, natural beauty, and outdoor recreation opportunities that the Columbia Gorge and Oregon as a whole have to offer. I'm here to testify in support of House, Senate, and Congressional Map A -- specifically as they pertain to our part of the state.

I know you have heard from many folks in my community about the numerous social and economic ties Hood River has to the rest of the Columbia Gorge including The Dalles, as well as Mount Hood and the communities that populate it. I want to reiterate everything they have shared with you over the past few days, and highlight just a few other things that connect our communities.

I am on the board of an organization called Friends of the Columbia Gorge -- which led the plight toward getting the Columbia Gorge designated as the first of just nine National Scenic Areas in our country. Currently, we are working on a project called the Towns to Trails Initiative, which will provide visitors the experience of backpacking on over 200 miles of established and maintained trails that connect them to various towns along the Columbia Gorge. It's important that we are represented by a legislator who will support the work of our organization which has been crucial to keeping the Gorge a world-class destination for people around the world.

Another organization that links our communities is Columbia Riverkeeper, which works to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River. Many communities along the Gorge recreate along the Columbia and view it as being a critical part of what makes their towns such a wonderful place to live. In addition, I want to highlight that there was once a time when the Columbia River was the largest producer of salmon in the world. Today, due to pollution and the impacts that dams have on our waters, salmon populations in the river are a fraction of what they used to be. This not only impacts our ability to enjoy locally caught salmon, but also our capacity to export our products around the world and sustain our regional economy.

While it is not possible to keep every community that borders the Columbia River in one Congressional District due to the many other statutory requirements that come with redistricting, I feel confident that Congressional Map A does a great job at taking environmental concerns (which know no borders) into serious consideration while still keeping communities of common interest and who hold similar shared values together.

The impacts that climate change will have on communities like the Gorge and Bend are not isolated to our communities alone. Our areas are massive tourist attractions. Our agricultural workers provide much of the fresh produce and dairy you buy at your local grocery stores. Our rivers provide much of the seafood people across the state and country enjoy every single day. Smoke from the wildfires we've seen an increase in in recent years impacts *all* of our abilities to breathe the clean, fresh air that Oregon is notorious for -- or enjoy the lush greenery that we see everywhere we look. It's time for our district maps to reflect the interconnectedness of our state's urban and rural communities. Congressional Map A's 3rd Congressional District is a good place to start.

I hope you'll keep my thoughts in mind as your committees continue to navigate what I'm certainly a very challenging process that will have many impacts on our communities in the years to come. Thank you for your time.

David Michalek

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