

# COLUMBIA COUNTY

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Redistricting Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Redistricting Committee,

As Columbia County Commissioners, we would like to provide our perspective regarding the redistricting maps presented for public comment.

Columbia County is located along the Columbia River bordered on the south by more urban and populated Multnomah and Washington Counties, and on the northwest by Clatsop County. Our major population areas are situated around the perimeter of forestlands, rural lands, and have mostly resource-based economies. Over 77% of the land in Columbia County is forestland and home to some of the most productive Douglas Fir forests in the world. The communities within Columbia County are close-knit and deserve representation by those who understand our local economy, the issues that are important to our local business, and the common interests and challenges that our rural citizens face.

We urge you not to disenfranchise our currently underrepresented nonurban citizens by combining their districts with a dense urban presence. Columbia County's citizens would find their voices diluted, and that would simply be unfair.

ORS 188.010 requires that the criteria for appointment of the state into congressional and legislative districts meet the following criteria:

- Be contiguous;
- Be of equal population;
- Utilize existing geographic or political boundaries;
- 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.

Having studied the maps that are before the committee, we see that some of these criteria are not met.

### **House Maps**

All of the Legislative House maps presented propose various forms of dividing Columbia County into several districts. This would create management and advocacy issues by unnecessarily separating our various schools, service districts, and cities. House maps A, B, and C all violate the constitutional guidelines by dividing the county, communities of interest, and transportation arteries. Plan C would be acceptable if revised to contain all of Columbia County.

### **Senate Maps**

The Senate District maps provide additional issues of splitting Columbia County. We recommend that Senate District Plan C be redrawn to remove the current portions of Washington and Multnomah counties while keeping Columbia, Clatsop, and Tillamook counties intact. If this is not an option, then Plan A would be an alternative.

### **Congressional Maps**

Plan A proposal will effectively disenfranchise District 1 voters in Columbia County because of the current population and geographical makeup of Congressional District 1. These voters do not share the same communities of interest as their urban and suburban neighbors.

Congressional Map B does a far better job of assuring a voice for rural citizens, placing Columbia County in District 5 with our more pastoral, neighboring counties. This more closely meets the Constitutional guidelines of keeping counties intact and maintaining communities of interest.

In summary, we urge the adoption of Congressional Plan B. We urge the amendments suggested above, for Plan C proposals for both the House and the Senate Districts, which keep Columbia County whole and preserve our communities of interest and transportation arteries. These adoptions will enable the citizens of rural Oregon to maintain our identity and way of life.

Respectfully,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By:   
Margaret Magruder, Chair

By:  /scan/  
Casey Garrett, Commissioner

By:   
Henry Helmuller, Commissioner