

to oregon.redistricting, chair

I write to defend Columbia County's representation in Oregon statehouse.

In the redistricting process, please do not further dilute our district with metro-Portland population. Rural and small-town communities have different issues and seek different solutions than the city. We are not the Portland Metro area, and we need leadership that understands us, our needs and concerns.

The 2020 voting record of Columbia County in local and county elections shows a clear pattern that is different from metro-Portland. However, the slices of Multnomah and Washington Counties now included in the district with Columbia County swing election outcomes for state races. The voice of Columbia County was stifled in last year's state representative contest.

Many Columbia County residents will interpret further dilution of Columbia County voters with Portland's progressive neighborhoods as "stacking the deck". Such a change to our district will further polarize the state's political mood and stoke cynicism of the prevailing government.

I hope we all can agree redistricting should create a government more representative of the people, not gerrymandered to squelch more conservative rural counties.

Thank you.

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