



Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission

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REDISTRICTING NEWS

December 20, 2002

Vol. 1, Number 14

The Commission held the statutorily required hearing on the tentatively adopted redistricting plan of 100 house districts and 50 senate districts on December 6, 2002. The Commission adopted amendments proposed by Senator-elect Bales in Powder River County, amendments proposed by the Sanders County Commissioners for Sanders County and amendments in Sweet Grass and Park Counties on behalf of Representative (Senator-elect) Esp and Senator Grosfield. The Commission had previously met on November 19, 2002, and adopted Option A for the paring of House Districts into Senate Districts. The sole amendment was to reassign Senator Perry to new Senate District 28.

The Commission will present the plan to the Legislature by the 10th Legislative day, January 16, 2003, and the Legislature has 30 days to comment. The Commission then has 30 days to finalize the plan and submit it to the Secretary of State, at which time it will become law. Additional information will be sent to the county election administrators to assist in the redrawing of precinct lines. These districts will be in effect for the 2004 election.

Please send all written correspondence to the Districting and Apportionment Commission, PO Box 201706, Helena MT 59620, or to sfox@mt.gov. It will be copied and sent to each Commissioner and the originals retained for the Commission's file. For more information, visit the redistricting home page at the Legislative Branch website <http://leg.mt.gov/> or contact Susan Byorth Fox at (406)444-3597.

The Legislature's website has been updated! To find the Districting and Apportionment Commission's webpage, please visit <http://leg.mt.gov> and under "**Committees**" in the left column, click on "**Interim**" and then find the "**Districting and Apportionment Commission**". Information will be updated as the plan proceeds.

This will be the **final Redistricting News** until the Commission meets again after the Legislature reviews the plan and makes its recommendations. Please check the Commission's website during the Legislature for information on when the Legislature will be taking up the Redistricting Plan and various proposed bills on the redistricting process.

P.S. The state prevailed in an unanimous Ninth Circuit Court opinion filed December 4, 2002, on the Old Person v. Brown litigation that was filed against the redistricting plan that became law in 1993. The court concluded that the "district court did not clearly err in determining that the totality of circumstances did not establish vote dilution in the districts where plaintiffs resided" and affirmed Judge Pro's District Court decision. The plaintiffs have applied for a rehearing en banc with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Happy Holidays!

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