

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BIG HORN COUNTY
P.O. BOX 908
HARDIN, MT 59034**

Fax (406) 665-9706

(406) 665-9700

E-mail to: cwells@bighorncountymt.gov

April 4, 2016

Honorable Greg Todd,
Chair, Judicial Redistricting Commission
217 North 27th Street, Room 516
PO Box 35026
Billings, MT 59107
gtodd@mt.gov

Dear Judge Todd:

This office has reviewed the redistricting proposals. Of great concern is Proposal Number 5. Since as of 10:00 a.m. March 30, 2016 (one week prior to the meeting of April 6, 2016) the Judicial Redistricting Commission's web page did not have a Draft Analysis Packet or Bill Draft Language for Proposal Number 5 our comments will be, by necessity and unfortunately, rudimentary. (Those items were found to be available on April 4, 2016, two days before the meeting of April 6, 2016.)

First, the "new" Sixteenth Judicial District will make the largest Judicial District, in terms of the number of counties served even larger by adding Big Horn County.

Second, no matter where in the districts the judges may choose to live, adding Big Horn County to the Sixteenth Judicial District will only increase travel time in the Sixteenth Judicial District which already has according to Appendix E of the Montana District Court Judicial Weighted Study, 2014, the largest annual travel time of any Judicial District in the state. Adding travel time is not a good use of what are already limited judicial resources.

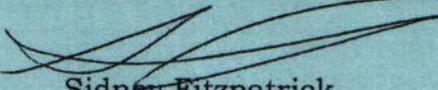
Thirdly, the Analysis of the Proposal Number 5, (page 5 of Draft Analysis Packet) put Stillwater County in the Sixteenth Judicial District and Big Horn County in the Sixth Judicial District. This is just the opposite of the language of Proposal Number. 5.

Lastly and most importantly, given the fact that Proposal Number 5 impacts two counties, Rosebud and Big Horn, which contain parts of Indian Reservations, we

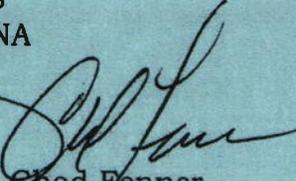
would encourage that prior to any redistricting that the State of Montana conduct an analysis to determine if the proposed redistricting could lead to Federal litigation under the Federal Voting Rights Act. Such litigation, if any, could be extensive and of great expense to the State of Montana. The funds used to defend such action would be better spent hiring additional District Judges or redistricting that would be more responsive to the district's populace.

Respectfully,

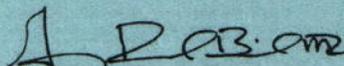
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BIG HORN COUNTY, MONTANA



Sidney Fitzpatrick
Chairman



Chad Fenner
Member



George Real Bird III
Member

cc Representative Nate McConnell
P.O. Box 8511
Missoula, MT 59807-8511
nateforhd89@gmail.com

Senator Kristin Hansen
P.O. Box 1957
Havre, MT 59501-1957

Honorable Ray Dayton
800 South Main
Anaconda, MT 59711
rdayton@mt.gov

Rick Cook: Clerk of District Court, Chouteau County
1308 Franklin
PO Box 459
Fort Benton, MT 59442-0459
rcook@mt.gov

Dave Schulz: Commissioner, Madison County
110 West Wallace
P O Box 278
Virginia City, MT 59755-0278
dschulz@madison.mt.gov

Emily Jones, State Bar Member
PO Box 1098
Billings, MT 59103-1098
ejones@mkmfir.com