

DRAFT Language Suggested to Revise Operating Procedure II(D):
Deadlines for Written Public Comments

For consideration at the commission's June 10, 2021, meeting

***Suggested new language is underlined; suggested deletions are stricken.

D. (1) Submission of written public comments is encouraged. Written comments are accepted ~~at any time~~ through electronic or regular correspondence and will be copied to all commission members and entered into the record.

(2) Written comments may be mailed, emailed, submitted online, or faxed to the commission at:

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
PO Box 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706

Email: districting@mt.gov

Online Submission Form: <https://leg.mt.gov/districting/2020-commission/redistricting-input/>

Fax: 406-444-3036

(3) ~~The commission and its staff may recommend public comments be sent before a certain date to ensure the comments can be taken into consideration during the redistricting process.~~ In order to allow the commissioners sufficient time to consider written public comment, comments must be submitted **by 5 p.m. at least 72 hours prior to a meeting**. Comments submitted by that deadline will be provided to the commissioners in advance of the meeting.

(4) Written comments submitted after the deadline in subsection (3) but before the meeting date will be provided to the commissioners prior to or at the meeting. Written comments submitted via email or online during or immediately after adjournment of the meeting will be provided to the commissioners prior to the next meeting.

This draft language is largely taken from the 2010 Commission procedures with a few changes from staff to language about file formats and when staff will confirm contact information. Potential decision points are highlighted in yellow.

DRAFT Language to Establish Procedures for Public Map Submissions

For consideration at the commission's June 10, 2021, meeting

The commission accepts redistricting plans drawn by individual citizens or organizations. If the commission wishes to use a publicly submitted plan as one of the several upon which it will seek public comment in a series of hearings, the plan must be offered for consideration by at least one member of the commission. The commission may hold a hearing to narrow the number of maps it will use for the public hearings.

Publicly submitted plans must comply with federal and state redistricting laws. Plans must be accompanied by current contact information (name, address, telephone number, e-mail address) for the entity making the submission. The commission encourages entities to submit maps electronically. Although the commission must consider the statewide impact of any local or regional state legislative district map, the commission will accept partial local or regional maps.

To comply with the commission's mandatory criteria on population equality, each submitted plan must include a written explanation for each district of the mandatory and/or discretionary criteria that justify any deviation from the ideal population.

The commission staff will use Maptitude for Redistricting by the Caliper Corporation as their software for redistricting. Because redistricting plans submitted electronically must be imported into this software, the commission prefers that computer-drafted plans be submitted as equivalency files giving the census block to district assignments. These files may be submitted in .dat, .dbf., or .txt files. Plans may also be submitted as Esri Shapefiles (.shp) or Caliper data files (.cdf or .dbd). Submitted plans must be based on official Census geography (TIGER line) and P.L. 94-171 data.

Although the commission encourages entities to submit electronic files, it will accept paper submissions. Staff will contact each organization or individual submitting a plan to verify authenticity, if requested by the commission. If the commission decides to use a publicly submitted map as one on which it will seek public comment, the commission may direct staff to review the map for accuracy and completeness (all blocks are assigned) and make nonsubstantive changes to ensure that the maps are consistent (district lines don't jump back and forth over highways or rivers with no population gains).

All plans submitted to the commission become part of the public record and are open to any member of the public.

Other topics the commission might consider:

- Difference between congressional and state legislative map submissions?
- Limit the number of submissions made by one individual or organization?
- Limit submissions to individuals or organizations located in Montana?
- Notice that the commission might revise the submission requirements if needed?