

June 9, 2011

Washington State Redistricting Commission  
Wenatchee Hearing  
Wenatchee Valley Community College

Members of the Commission:

My name is Jim Hunter and I live in Douglas County at 1636 Harrington Lane in East Wenatchee.

First, let me thank and commend you for holding these hearings throughout the state. This process not only provides you with needed information and public opinion about your task, but it also provides people with a valuable firsthand opportunity to learn about the reasons for and process of redistricting. It also gives people a chance to directly participate in a key function of representative government.

Douglas County is essentially rural in nature, with an economic base primarily vested in agricultural, recreational and related land-based activities. Even the areas surrounding the primary population center of East Wenatchee are dominated by such activities and there are still several orchards located within and immediately surrounding the city. The North Central Washington Fair (county fair), FFA, 4-H, the Grange and similar organizations are still a big part of our community activities here and are well-supported by county residents.

I believe Douglas County's geography, economy, interests, activities, population and other key attributes, while not unique, are distinct enough for you to consider the following recommendations.

- ***Keep the county intact; do not break it into parts and put those different parts into different districts – either congressional or legislative.*** Many of our residents have interests that cross the rural and more “urban” portions of the county and frequently our political, social and economic issues do as well.
- ***Keep the county connected with similar counties and communities in forming congressional or legislative districts.*** Do not hook us onto a primarily city-based district

or an “across the mountains” district simply to make the numbers work out. We have much in common with our neighbors in the current 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District and, similarly, with our non-Douglas County friends in the legislative districts of which we are a part. As a result, we are able to work cooperatively and productively with each other and with our elected legislative and congressional representatives.

- ***Do not create any districts focused on providing increased representation based on “minority, cultural, economic” or other similar “status” identification.*** I have been told that you have received testimony urging you to do essentially that in order to improve or increase representation for various groups. But, I urge you to reject such notions. Forming districts with such considerations in mind is not the way to provide anyone in our country with representation. It would violate many of our fundamental principles and laws about the nature and composition of representative government. Taken to its fullest expression, such an approach to forming districts would create representation by race, ethnicity, color, culture or similar attributes. But, we have enacted anti-discrimination laws to prohibit participation and decision-making based on such irrelevant factors and we should not use those same factors to create political districts. I voluntarily moved to this area more than eight years ago, and I most certainly would not even think of asking you to create a district in which transplants from Oregon would have their own district. In our system of government, we are all people – all equal under the law. Please do not begin to undue the progress we have made in bringing that concept toward reality by creating political subdivisions based on its antithesis.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. And, thanks again for being here.

Respectfully,

Jim Hunter  
1636 Harrington Lane  
East Wenatchee, WA 98802