



CROW TRIBE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

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May 14, 2012

Presiding Officer Jim Regnier and Members of the Commission
Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
State of Montana
Helena MT

Dear Presiding Officer Regnier:

On behalf of the Crow Nation Executive Branch, the Black Eagle Administration, we submit testimony to the Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission.

The Crow Nation has a strong record of voter participation, with a general election voter turnout that is among the highest of the seven Montana Indian reservations, often exceeding 65%. We have benefitted greatly from the presence of our representatives in the Montana House, since 1982 with Representative Ramona Howe up until now with our current Representative Carolyn Pease Lopez and in the Senate with Sharon Stewart Peregoy. Of particular note in our history with this process, was the service of Crow Tribal Member Janine Pease as Presiding Officer of the Redistricting Commission from 1999 – 2003.

As a nation, we have presented testimony in the redistricting hearings in this decennial process, since the 1980 Commission. The representation of the Crow people in the Montana State House of Representatives and the State Senate is of critical importance, given the state block grants that administer federal programs as well as the state funded services and programs. The **Crow Nation supports THE COMMUNITIES PLAN**, for the following reasons:

- **FIRST, THE COMMUNITIES PLAN**, best complies with the federal Voting Rights Act, in the protection of American Indian voters, the language minorities in our state of Montana, on the Crow Indian Reservation and in Big Horn County. Under the **COMMUNITIES PLAN**, the House Districts #41 and #42 are strong Indian majority districts, with strong percentages of Indian Voting Age

The Great Apsáalooke Nation: "Teepee Capital of the World"

My name is Leroy A. Spang. I am the President of the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council, and testify on behalf of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe.

The Northern Cheyenne Tribe supports the Community Plan for our area. We believe this plan best complies with the requirements of the Federal Voting Rights Act and represents the community interests in our area. The House District for our area includes all of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, and extends east to the Crow Reservation, and north to include part of Colstrip.

This Indian-majority house district has always included the eastern portion of the Crow Reservation. Our two reservations butt up against each other. So it makes sense to include all or portions of both of our reservations in these Indian-majority districts.

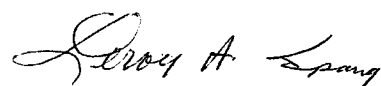
It also makes sense for this district to reach north to include part of Colstrip, as our reservation communities have much in common with Colstrip. Many of our members work in Colstrip, go to school in Colstrip, and live in the Colstrip area. This will continue to be the case in the next decade.

For nearly 30 years, the Northern Cheyenne and Crow have been united in our efforts to ensure that the Federal Voting Rights Act is complied with in our area. This alliance was first created when individual members of both of our tribes filed suit in federal court in Billings in 1984. The case of Windy Boy v Big Horn County because the leading case in the Nation enforcing the Federal Voting Rights Act in Indian Country.

For more than two decades the Northern Cheyenne and Crow have shared a Senate District, and for almost as long as have shared a House District. Our representatives are familiar with the issues that affect our communities, and have included both democratic and republican representatives.

We do not support the Subdivision Plan or the Urban-Rural plan for our area. Those plans have low Indian voting age populations that jeopardize the Indian-majority district for our area. The Communities Plan has the highest Indian voting age population for the Senate District in our area and best protects our voting rights.

I thank the Redistricting Commission for holding this hearing in our area, and for the opportunity to present our views.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leroy A. Spang".

Crow Agency - May 15, 2012

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
P.O. Box 201706
Helena, MT 59620 - 1706

To Members of the Commission:

The only acceptable objective districting proposal is the Deviation map. It has the merit of providing that every Montanan has equal opportunity of representation without reference to age, gender, race, ethnicity, income, occupation or political affiliation. That is sound government.

Montana is a large state with a diverse population – the Deviation map will include all interests within our state – the Commission can do no more. There is no way to guarantee that every interest is ultimately represented in the Legislature. That is beyond the power of the Commission.

The “community of interest” proposal is so vague and ill-defined that it is unacceptable. Other districting maps such as the Urban-Rural or Subdivisions are also unacceptable. The reason is that the other proposals are not non-partisan and objective. The other proposals create factions and contribute to partisan strife in government. Partisan strife and factionalism are not sound government. They pander to narrow special interests, not all Montanans.

We strongly urge the Commission to adopt the Deviation map districting proposal.

Respectfully submitted,



Gary W. Huckins
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