



December 21, 2021

Board of County Commissioners, Klickitat County  
205 S Columbus, Room 103  
Goldendale, WA 98620

Re: Klickitat County 2021 Redistricting Plan Commissioners:

Via email to [BoCC@klickitatcounty.org](mailto:BoCC@klickitatcounty.org)

The Trout Lake Community Council would like to express our concerns with the proposed redistricting map that has been presented by the Klickitat County Board of Commissioners (BoCC), the process the commissioners have used to publish the map, and the lack of opportunity that has been given for Klickitat County residents to thoughtfully consider and comment on the proposed map.

Trout Lake is an isolated, rural community, and maintains a strong sense of identity supported by having its own school, community council, and economic opportunities. This is why we feel it is important to keep all of the Trout Lake community together in one commissioner district. It was very disappointing when a portion of the community was sectioned off and placed in District 2, in a significantly different watershed, during the redistricting process ten years ago. This resulted in the splitting of family-owned farms and the center of the town. It left many Trout Lake residents feeling frustrated and unable to support primary candidates who they felt would best serve their community.

We understand that you have criteria to meet when forming districts. We feel that the current map does not meet the basic criteria. These points are outlined below. Please seriously consider these comments and make the appropriate changes to the designated Commissioner Districts.

1. The plan does not meet requirements of RCW 36.32.020 that each district "shall comprise as nearly as possible one-third of the population of the county."

- District 1 is significantly larger in population than the other two districts and is the fastest growing area of the county. Maintaining the status quo will expand existing inequity which will be exacerbated over the next 10 years, pending the 2030 census.
  - There are possible adjustments that more closely balance the district populations and these proposals could have been made had the Commission allowed proper time for the discussion.
2. The plan does not meet requirements of RCW 29A.76.010 (4)(e) that “district boundaries shall coincide with existing recognized natural boundaries and shall, to the extent possible, preserve existing communities of related and mutual interest.”
- The Trout Lake Valley is distinct geographically from the Glenwood Valley. The two valleys are in different watersheds, have different sources of drinking and irrigation water, and other natural features.
  - Trout Lake is a community of related and mutual interest. We have a school, a post office, and the Trout Lake Community Council.
  - Under the 2011 redistricting decision the Trout Lake Community Council must work with two county commissioners. We have one set of interests. The Council bylaws define our district to match that of the School District to reflect fair representation and to not disenfranchise those living in our community.
  - The blocks moved to District 2 are in the very center of the town of Trout Lake. The Pearson Family farm, the iconic and historic farm at the entrance to the town center, is divided so that the family residence is in one district and the barn and farmland across the street are in another district.
3. The plan does not meet the requirement of RCW 29A.76.010 (4)(d) that “population data may not be used for purposes of favoring or disfavoring any racial group or political party.”
- There have been primary candidates for District 1 Commissioner that have come from Trout Lake. The current situation, with 276 Trout Lake residents only able to vote in District 2, prevents them from voting for these candidates from their community, if they so choose.
4. The plan does not meet the requirement of RCW 29.A.010 (5) that “the county shall ensure that full and reasonable public notice of its actions is provided”.
- Publication date of the public notice for the December 21 meeting was December 11, a Saturday. The draft plan was not included in the public notice, and the draft plan was not available until Monday, December 13.
  - Besides this technicality, we feel strongly that a public meeting held on December 21, four days before Christmas and 10 days before the legal deadline for the County to complete the plan does not provide full and reasonable notice.
  - We are not aware that the BoCC has had discussion of this plan, including but not limited to, discussion of the timeline for publishing and adopting the plan. It seems

incredible that the Commission could have arrived at a decision to put forward the draft plan without a single public discussion or workshop.

When does the Commission expect to adopt the plan? The current time schedule does not allow for any amendment following public comment. RCW 29A.76.010 (5)(b) requires that the Commission "amend the draft as necessary after receiving public comments and resubmit any amended draft plan for additional written public comment at least one week before adopting the plan." If the Commission were to revise the plan based on comment today, the revised draft plan would have to be published on December 23 or 24 to allow a week of public comment before the required adoption date of December 31. This is not a practical or reasonable schedule. It appears, then, that the Commission's intention is to adopt the draft plan regardless of public comment or input received today. This is a disservice to your constituency.

Although this is not a matter of RCW, we find it disturbing that the County has not presented any background for the Redistricting Plan. No reasons, no rationale, no examination of alternatives. The plan is imbalanced based on population data. When the 2011 redistricting plan was presented the Trout Lake Community Council expressed its collective opinion, at that time, with attention to preserving communities. At that time a similar process of plan adoption on very short notice was followed. You must have known that the current plan, which mirrors the 2011 plan, causes issues here and yet you actually shortened the amount of notice. In 2011 there was a public hearing, with three weeks' notice. In 2021, there is a mere 10 days' notice for the public meeting.

It is our sincere hope that you will address these concerns now. The imbalance in the population of the districts and the splitting of communities is not acceptable. Now is the time to make the proper adjustments to provide equal and balanced representation for all county residents and, to the extent feasible, avoid the division of communities into separate districts. These moves must be carefully thought out and informed decisions made with the opportunity for input and discussion from all communities that will be impacted.

Respectfully Submitted,



DAINA L. BAMBE

Chair, Trout Lake Community Council,

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