

ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

Verbal Testimony Summaries

Valdez Public Hearing 9/30/2021

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ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD COMMUNITY PUBLIC HEARING VERBAL TESTIMONY SUMMARY

Valdez 9/30/2021 Verbal Testimony

Transcription date: October 14, 2021

First Name: **James** Last Name: **Devens**

Group Affiliation, if applicable: **City Council**

Email or Phone Contact: [REDACTED]

Mr. Devens spoke in opposition of grouping Valdez with the Mat-Su Borough as there are no socio-economic ties between the two that are significant and measurable. Placing Valdez in a district with Sutton, Chickaloon, and portions of Palmer and Wasilla would result in Valdez becoming an appendage.

Mr. Devens noted that there is more socio-economic integration with the Richardson Highway communities leading up to the Fairbanks North Star Borough. For example, the Valdez port is the regional harbor for Richardson Highway communities. Military supplies arrive at the port and are shipped to Eilson Air Force Base and Ft. Greeley. Heavy mining and oil equipment are also shipped through Valdez routinely.

There is also significant use of Valdez port with private and commercial vessels, including essentially every community on the Richardson Highway.

Mr. Devens spoke in favor of Board Map v.3, specifically District 36, as this proposed district unites Valdez with the communities on the Richardson Highway and there is no integration with the Mat-Su Borough, which Valdez has no significant socio-economic ties with. There are some limitations due to the large size of the district stretching to Holy Cross, but the overall integration of this map is better than other proposed maps.

Mr. Devens also spoke in favor of the Alaskans for Fair Redistricting (AFFR) map, specifically District 36-R, as Valdez is grouped with Richardson Highway communities.

Mr. Devens acknowledged that the map does take a significant population portion from the Fairbanks North Star Borough, but since that area has a population surplus this is acceptable.

Mr. Devens expressed concerns regarding Board Map v.4 as it separates Valdez from all of Richardson Highway and a large portion of Tonsina, Copper River, Kinney Lake, Silver Springs, Tazlina, and Glennallen. Valdez is considered a hub to those communities' residents. Additionally, this map separates Valdez from Prince William Sound communities with no geographic overlap of the districts.

Mr. Devens commented that using the Glenn Highway as a boundary separates communities unnecessarily and at detriment. Doing this bisects communities by a highway, resulting in neighbors living in different districts.

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Summary Date: October 15, 2021

Name: **Nathan Duval**

Mr. Duval noted that the history of Valdez is rich with the Richardson Highway and the affiliation with these communities is more realistic for socio-economic purposes. Growing up in Fairbanks, Mr. Duval played sports coming down the Richardson Highway. Mr. Duval has also on the Transalaska Pipeline where there were crews and connections to people going north toward Fairbanks; there was little connection with the Mat-Su Borough to the west. Recently, Valdez has received more support from legislators from the Fairbanks area while receiving silence from their representative from these same issues.


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Transcription date: October 14, 2021

First Name: **Dennis** Last Name: **Fleming**

Group Affiliation, if applicable: **Community Council**

Email or Phone Contact: 

Mr. Fleming spoke in favor of Board Map v.3, specifically District 36, as it groups Valdez with the Fairbanks area. This grouping is much better than the borough the district is currently in where representation is not as strong. Fairbanks and Valdez also share commerce and recreation between both communities.

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VERBAL & WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUMMARY**

Valdez 9/30/2021 Verbal Testimony

Transcription date: October 14, 2021

First Name: **Dawson** Last Name: **Moore**

Group Affiliation, if applicable: **Valdez City Council**

Email or Phone Contact: [REDACTED]

Verbal Testimony Summary: **Mr. Moore stated that in the last decade, Valdez has been underrepresented at a statewide level and spoke in favor of Board Map v.3 as it seems to have communities that mirror his own experiences as a Valdez resident. Mr. Moore commented that he would be much happier if Valdez was not grouped with the Mat-Su Borough.**

Handwritten Testimony: **Valdez has been essentially unrepresented for the past decade on a state level because of districting and I have no interest in continuing to be lumped together with Mat-Su. Version three seems like it connects Valdez with other end-of-the-road communities best. There is also a good case to have us grouped with the other communities in Prince William Sound.**

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Transcription date: October 15, 2021

First Name: Sheri Pierce

Group Affiliation, if applicable: City of Valdez

Email or Phone Contact: [REDACTED]

Ms. Pierce stated that Valdez should not be grouped into a district with the Mat-Su Borough for the following reasons:

1. Valdez is a regional port and harbor for Richardson Highway communities and the Fairbanks North Star Borough.
2. There are military supplies that come in through Valdez and are transported to Eilson Air Force Base and Ft. Greeley.
3. Heavy mining and oil equipment are routinely shipped through Valdez.
4. Richardson Highway and the Fairbanks North Star Borough residents use Valdez harbor facilities at a rate equal to or greater than Valdez residents. Statistics available for this if needed.
5. Richardson Highway and the Fairbanks North Star Borough residents recreate and do business in Valdez.
6. The City of Valdez has a Memorandum of Agreement with Ft Greeley to provide recreational opportunities in Valdez for service members stationed there.
7. Trucking companies move goods back and forth between Valdez to the Fairbanks North Star Borough.
8. Valdez residents fish hunt along the Richardson Highway and the Fairbanks North Star Borough.
9. Valdez is part of the DOT northern region which includes the Richardson Highway and Fairbanks North Star Borough.
10. Valdez is served by the electric and telephone companies that also serves Glennallen and other Richardson Highway communities.
11. Transalaska Pipeline system creates employment associated with its operation unites communities along its route including the Richardson Highway and Fairbanks North Star Borough communities.

Ms. Pierce spoke in favor of the following maps:

1. Board Map v.3, specifically District 36, is acceptable as it keeps Valdez out of the Mat-Su district and ties them in with Fairbanks.
2. Alaskans for Fair Redistricting map, specifically District 36-R, as it unites Valdez with socio-economically integrated communities along the Richardson Highway and does not force Valdez into an unnatural district. It would also be paired with District 35-R which includes socio-economically integrated areas of the Fairbanks North Star Borough and North Pole.

Ms. Pierce noted that Valdez' representative has had difficulties picking priorities as most of their support comes out of the Mat-Su Borough.

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Transcription date: October 15, 2021

First Name: **Allison**

Last Name: **Rapp**

Ms. Rapp noted that her and others' opinions about their legislator should not be what motivates the redistricting decisions, instead Valdez should be districted with other communities that have similar socio-economic similarities.

Ms. Rapp expressed concern for Board Map v.3 as it would "go from one extreme to the other by going from being the red-headed step child of Mat-Su to being the big bully. " Valdez would be the predominant economic force which is also unfair and would result in Valdez outnumbering other communities in the same district dramatically.

Ms. Rapp expressed the importance of other communities' connections to the port, fishing, etc. Mainly, Ms. Rapp would like to be connected with other similar communities that are coastal rather than inland.

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First Name: **Caleb** Last Name: **Rapp**

Email or Phone Contact: 

Mr. Rapp stated that it is unfair to the individual representing Valdez as they are often representing Valdez and other communities that do not have similar interests to Valdez. This places an unfair burden on the representative and results in them needing to learn about a wider variety of issues.

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First Name: **Patricia** Last Name: **Relay**

Ms. Relay referenced the socio-economic impacts voiced by other testifiers that have stated that District 36 (Board Map v.3) and District 36-R (AFFR map) shows this. It is important that Valdez stays in these districts for their cultural identity and connection as well. Also, Valdez residents drive up the Richardson Highway and recreate along the Richardson Highway often.

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Transcription date: October 15, 2021

First Name: **Hope** Last Name: **Van Der Mevlee**

Public Comment: **Ms. Mevlee agreed with what other testifiers have stated about not being grouped with the Mat-Su Borough. Ms. Mevlee spoke in support of the Alaskans for Fair Redistricting (AFFR) map, specifically District 36-R, and Board Map v.3. Ms. Mevlee would like to see more of Prince William Sound and Cordova included with Valdez to include more coastal representation.**

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Transcription date: October 15, 2021

First Name: **Todd** Last Name: **Wegner**

Email or Phone Contact [REDACTED]

Mr. Wegner stated that he is speaking on behalf of the school district and noted that two years ago, Valdez used to be Region 3 (Palmer, Wasilla, Kenai Peninsula), but they've regionally moved into Region 6 along the Richardson Highway corridor that also includes Fairbanks and Galena schools. There is a cultural connection with school districts as well.

Mr. Wegner is in favor of Board Map v.3.