



ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

**Alaska Redistricting Board Meeting
April 2, 2022 | 2:00 p.m.
Anchorage Legislative Information Office and Zoom Virtual Meeting
1500 West Benson Blvd, Anchorage, AK 99503**

The Alaska Redistricting Board met on April 2, 2022. Present participants are below:

John Binkley	Chair of the Board
Melanie Bahnke	Board Member
Bethany Marcum	Board Member
Nicole Borromeo	Board Member
Peter Torkelson	Executive Director
Matt Singer	Legal Counsel

Agenda

- Call to Order & Establish Quorum
- Adoption of Agenda
- Adoption of Minutes
- Public Testimony
- Review of Supreme Court Decision
- Discussion
- Adjournment

Call to Order

Chairman Binkley called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Member Simpson's absence is excused. All other members are present, and a quorum was established.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Borromeo moved to approve the agenda as presented. Member Marcum seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Adoption of Minutes

Member Borromeo moved to approve the February 16, 2022 board meeting minutes. Member Marcum seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.



ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

Public Testimony

Public testimony was given as follows:

- Anchorage resident, Anna Brawley, suggested that if the board considers any House District changes, House Districts 14 and 16 should be paired together because West Anchorage and Midtown Anchorage have a fair amount of continuity. Northern Lights Blvd also connects the two districts. Spenard and Turnagain are similar neighborhoods with similar interests.
- Fairbanks resident, Kasey Casort, not surprised by the Alaska Supreme Court's decision to overturn the gerrymandered maps. Mentioned previous call-ins that specifically identified the areas that would be unconstitutional. In a state of disbelief that there is new testimony when there is a large amount of previous testimony ignored. Asks and urges the board to immediately wrap up this confusing process by adopting a map that has already been vetted through the whole public process which would mean adopting the Senate pairings that were proposed by Board Member Melanie Bahnke. In conclusion, would love to see the redistricting process be wrapped up quickly and constitutionally so that we can focus on our upcoming special election and our first election cycle.
- Nicky Eisman, urged the board to adopt the Senate pairings suggested by Member Bahnke and would like the process to be done as soon as possible. Regarding the error of including Goldstream Valley residents in its current district, the residents are largely urban in nature and drive to work in Fairbanks every day. They also play there; any other characterization is false. All testimony of Goldstream Valley supported the area being included with the Fairbanks district. Nicky revisited the evening at the Carlson Center where public testimony was last taken where Nicky watched several people "being grilled" by board members; this resulted in her decision not to testify as she'd intended.
- Anchorage resident, Carolyn Cliff, Carolyn lives in the new District 21 which borders Districts 20-J, 19-J, and 12-F. District 22-K is also grouped with District 21. Map 1 does not show a population area in their district because it's all on Elmendorf AFB. There is also no way to get from her district to Eagle River without traveling through 2 other districts. Carolyn's district and Eagle River are not contiguous or socioeconomically integrated. Carolyn expressed support for Member Bahnke's proposed maps (no details specified).
- Fairbanks resident, Luke Hopkins, stated that in the last redistricting cycle, the board's decision to place then-District 38 of Fairbanks North Star Borough all the way to the west coast of Alaska. There were objections to this board decision and court action found that its boundaries did not mean the constitutional requirements. Luke Hopkins has opposed and continues to oppose the board's action to place Goldstream Valley residents in a district that is non-contiguous, non-compact, and has little to no socioeconomic integration to the communities that are now in the House District 36. Many Goldstream residents report back to the local government where their schools, libraries, and churches are, and for Luke, the other communities in District 36 can only be reached by plane. Luke hopes the board will remove District 36 from the Cantwell appendage.
- Fairbanks resident, Elyse Gutenberg, expressed concern about Goldstream Valley being placed in District 36 which places a suburban neighborhood with deep ties to Fairbanks into a rural district. Many Goldstream Valley residents attend or work at the university which is not a far drive. They also live, work, shop, and vote in Fairbanks. The Cantwell appendage



ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

creates a non-compact district that is unconstitutional and is not socioeconomically integrated. Like Cantwell, Goldstream Valley was gerrymandered.

- Fairbanks resident, Bernie Hoffman, opposed the placement of Goldstream Valley into the rural district area. Goldstream is being treated like Cantwell and Bernie understands this is not being done properly per the Alaska Supreme Court. This seems unfair. Bernie asked the board to please consider Goldstream and Member Bahnke's proposed plan to come up with new pairings and get the new elections going.
- Girdwood resident, Mike Edgington, thanked the board for creating a cohesive District 9 and went on to testify on the Senate pairings from his perspective on the southern part of Anchorage. At the November 8th meeting, Mike recalled Member Bahnke suggesting Senate pairings that paired Districts 9 and 11 together. Through discussions with his community that same evening, this pairing generally had wide local support and Mike was surprised to see a different pairing the following morning: House District 9 (rural) and District 10 (suburban). Mike testified in favor of pairing Districts 9 and 11 that combine the southern parts (Hillside, Bear Valley, Glen Alps) with Whittier/Girdwood/Turnagain Arm. Mike also spoke in favor of pairing House Districts 22 and 24. Mike strongly opposed pairing House District 9 (Turnagain Arm) with House District 22 (Eagle River) because these districts are non-contiguous due to the separation of the two districts by the Chugach Mountains.
- Fairbanks resident, David Guttenberg, referred to the 2012 redistricting process where Goldstream Valley was placed in a rural district stretching out to the coast; this was declared unconstitutional and was changed. During the current process, the board has placed Goldstream Valley in a rural district contrary to the resolution adopted by the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly. This resolution was misrepresented by the board and David urged the board to fix this issue simply by doing so in the interior.
- Anchorage resident, Jamie Rodriguez, testified in favor of the "second to the left" Senate pairings that were presented by Member Bahnke. These pairings have already been considered on the record, considers the public testimony, makes sense geographically, upholds the idea of "one person, one vote", is socioeconomically integrated, does not affect the deviation, keeps Muldoon, West Anchorage, Hillside, and Eagle River together. The board needs to act immediately and comply with the court's requirements to make the maps legal and minimize costs and time. It is in the public's interest to adopt legal maps that check all constitutional requirements as proposed by Member Bahnke.
- Anchorage resident, Karen Williams, East Anchorage is diverse and pairing an East Anchorage district with a South Anchorage or an Eagle River district is unfair and does not allow the diverse community to have accurate representation. It is important for the community to elect a Senator that understands the community's needs. Karen testified in support of the Senate pairings proposed by Member Bahnke.
- Anchorage resident, Rich Curtner, The Alaska Black Caucus is in support of pairing House Districts 20 (North and South Muldoon) in District K. Doing so is the simplest and best solution and should be done as soon as possible.
- Anchorage resident, Kay Brown, urged the board to follow the Alaska Supreme Court's directions as expeditiously as possible. The court's directions are very straightforward and can be done quickly. This process needs to be completed as soon as possible as it negatively impacts elections, giving everyone uncertainty.
- Anchorage resident, Benny Wells, testified against the Goldstream Valley placement, the Cantwell finger, and the Senate pairings in Anchorage, particularly the Eagle River/Muldoon



ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

and North Muldoon/U-Med District). Encouraged to use the pairings proposed by Member Bahnke as they are consistent with the testimony given by the public. There were several testimonies also given from the Hillside and Eagle River communities asking the board not to pair these two communities. Benny suggested pairing Districts 9 and 11 and Districts 14 and 16.

- Anchorage resident, Yarrow Silvers, requested that the board redo the Senate pairings without delay so Alaskans can vote from a fully constitutional map. Yarrow spoke in support of the Senate pairings proposed by Member Bahnke as they would fix the constitutional errors, has broad public support, and respects communities. The pairings also keep Eagle River as one community, Muldoon as one community, connects the U-Med and Airport Heights areas, and reconnects the north and south sides of 4th Avenue in downtown. Yarrow asked the board to develop a truncation process that is transparent and random. Yarrow stated that the public's trust in the board was broken because the board stated that no members were knowledgeable about incumbent information when at least two members looked at and discussed the information on camera before voting. Additionally, the action on the South Anchorage pairing was done without discussion or reasoning as to why it was split apart at the last minute, making it seem as though someone reviewed political data the night before and decided the new pairing gave a partisan advantage. Yarrow asked that the board follow the Alaska state constitution which does not allow politically based mapping, and asked board members attending public sessions virtually to turn on their cameras.
- Anchorage resident, Chris Stern noted that the board should group based on communities as it is a relevant data point to be used in the redistricting process. Chris urged the board to quickly complete the adoption of the Senate pairings put forward by Member Bahnke; there is no need to begin a new map.
- Anchorage resident, Candace Oxford spoke against South Muldoon being paired with Eagle River to give more representation to Eagle River; this is undemocratic and unfair to the Muldoon community. Candace implored the board to adopt Member Bahnke's maps before the next election.
- Anchorage resident, Joelle Hall, states that the board has an opportunity to repair the Senate pairings to fulfill their duty to Alaskans. There is no reason to delay the process with Member Bahnke's proposed Senate pairings on the record which gives the board the ability to swiftly complete the process. There has been public concern about the board's decision to present maps to the public for final consideration that did not include Senate pairings; the judge also called this out. This meeting could have been avoidable with all of the public testimony already given to the board.
- Anchorage resident, George Martinez testified on behalf of himself, but also noted that he is one of the plaintiffs in the East Anchorage lawsuit. Written testimony has been submitted on behalf of himself and the other plaintiffs, too. George hopes the board will consider that detailed testimony. George urged the board to move expeditiously and effectively to take the direction given by the courts and to consider the cost of this process to taxpayers and the erosion of the public's trust.
- Anchorage resident, Bruce Farnsworth, the pairings adopted by the board only make sense if the goal is to water down the votes of eastside residents in Anchorage. To see the socioeconomic similarities, one would only need to drive from North to South Muldoon; there is no significant change and a working-class neighborhood that is very different from Eagle River. Bruce urged the board to adopt the Senate pairings proposed by Member Bahnke.



ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

- From Anchorage, Representative Matt Claman, The Trial Court was specific about criticizing the board for not announcing the Senate pairings that were under consideration. The court's opinion makes it very clear that the board needs to publicly say what else is being considered and announce it in a manner that gives time for public comment. The window of time to propose a new map and obtain public comment is very limited. Representative Claman recommended that the board look at the affidavit from Chase Hensell who testified on behalf of East Anchorage plaintiffs; this affidavit gives a detailed explanation of how North and South Muldoon are a single community of interest and how Eagle River and Chugiak are a single community of interest. The Hensell proposal notes that Chugiak-Eagle River is a single community of interest because it is the only community that has its own volunteer fire department, the municipal parks and funding are managed differently than the Municipality of Anchorage, and Chugiak-Eagle River has many residents who see themselves as a unified community separate from the rest of Anchorage. Representative Claman urged the board to adopt the pairings proposed by Member Bahnke.
- House District 17 resident, Veri di Suvero, having attended several redistricting board meetings, speaking from a personal capacity is glad to see that this process is happening right now in hopes that the Senate pairings will move quickly. As someone who lives in House District 17 and travels to work in House District 23, there is not a lot of change when passing through the Park Strip. The pairing would make logical sense. Urging the board to comply with the court's requirements immediately to minimize confusion. It would be in the public's interest to adopt a map with the final Senate pairings so that voters could familiarize themselves. It would be best to do this quickly and in a legal way by adopting Member Bahnke's pairings.
- Anchorage resident, Chris Constant, looking closely at the map, there is a small residential section on the west southern portion of House District 23 with a couple of thousand residents. On the far east southern corner of the same district, there is a tiny neighborhood on Muldoon with a few hundred residents. That population borders Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson and now these residents are suddenly part of South Eklutna. To get from one end of the southern portion of the district, you must move through three Senate districts to get there - this division is harmful. The North Anchorage District should include Districts 17, 18, 20, and 23. The House Districts work well, but the board was asked to consider how the narrow populations of the district in the two corners mentioned are in any way associated with the Chugiak-Eagle River community.
- Anchorage resident, Cliff Grove, the board has heard some incisive and well-thought-out comments that Chris agrees with. The board's action items, in Chris's opinion, are short and simple.
- Anchorage resident, Celeste Hodge Growden, echoes the comments shared by Rich Curtner from the Alaska Black Caucus (ABC). ABC does not have permanent friends or enemies, what they do have is permanent interest. The main interest is championing the lives of black and BIPOC communities. At every turn, unfortunately, they must fight for justice in economics, education, and health. Now, they are fighting for justice in redistricting. This is exhausting, old, and must stop. Celeste urged the board to follow the court's direction now, not tomorrow or several days from now.
- Alaskans for Fair Redistricting member, David Dunsmore, reviewed the Superior and Supreme Courts' decisions and determined that the pairings proposed by Member Bahnke are the fairest pairings to address the concerns raised by the Supreme Court. The board can



ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

quickly make changes. The following Senate pairings by Member Bahnke are supported for the following reasons:

- Districts 22 and 24: This is most logical.
- Districts 20 and 21: Muldoon area is an integrated community of interest.
- Districts 18 and 19: Keeps 2 Senate districts in East Anchorage.
- Districts 23 and 17: Keeps the historic neighborhoods of Downtown and Gov't Hill in the same Senate district.
- Districts 16 and 14: Keeps Spenard and Turnagain in the same district, often referred to as "Spenardagain" as it's looked at as one community
- Districts 13 and 12: Creates a midtown residential core district rather than splitting these communities into South Anchorage
- Districts 15 and 10: Keeps Southport, Bay Shore, and Klatt in one district and allows the pairing of Districts of 11 and 9, which the board had reached consensus on at one point in the process to keep the hillside in one district.
- First Alaskans Institute, Liz Medicine Crow, expressed appreciation for the testimonies given by the Alaska Black Caucus and encouraged the board to follow the court's directions immediately without delaying the process and voters during elections. Liz testified in favor of the East Anchorage Senate pairings proposed by Member Bahnke that have already been vetted and do not diminish the population over the deviations that were already outlined.
- Eagle River resident, Susan Fischetti, Over the last 40 years, the Eagle River population has more than doubled and has always been represented by 2 senators. Randy Phillips once represented Muldoon in Eagle River in the 80s and 90s - he did well and this worked fine. He attended community council meetings and supported schools and businesses, and East Anchorage as a whole. In 2000, they were paired with Hillside all the way to Hope, posing a "geographical nightmare". Past senators tried to represent Eagle River but never connected to what was important to the community in Eagle River. Now, Chugiak and Eagle River each have their own Senator and there have been no complaints. Eagle River is adjacent to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and many Chugiak residents are in the military.

Review of Superior Court Decision

Matt Singer updated the board and gave a brief summary on the following litigation process regarding the board's November Proclamation Plan:

- There were five lawsuits filed by the constitutional deadline for legal challenges on December 10th.
 - The Matanuska-Susitna Borough challenged the population of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough District and the combination of Valdez and the Matanuska-Susitna communities in District 29.
 - The City of Valdez challenged District 29. A preference was indicated for the Richardson Highway and the House District.
 - The City of Skagway indicated a preference to be with Downtown Juneau instead of the north-end of Juneau.
 - Calista's lawsuit had a primary focus on how Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay would be districted. In addition, there was focus on the representation for the Calista shareholders and the residents of Southwest Alaska.



ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

- The East Anchorage Plaintiffs challenged and primarily focused on Senate District K.
- The Trial Courts experienced a compressed time frame for litigation due to the delay of the U.S. Census. An expedited trial began on January 21st and concluded in early February.
- The Trial Court issued a 171-page decision on February 16:
 - The court directed the board to redo House Districts 3 and 4 in Southeast Alaska and Senate District K.
 - It was found that the plan was constitutional.
 - There were four petitions for review to the Supreme Court. Those were argued to the State Supreme Court on March 18th, the Supreme Court issued an order a week later, on March 25th.

Matt Singer stated that it is common for the Alaska Supreme Court to issue a short preliminary order to the litigants in expedited cases. A detailed opinion and explanation of the Court's reasoning with a detailed analysis can be expected further into the future.

- The court's decision agreed with the board that the House Districts 3 & 4 were constitutional. No further work is necessary regarding the Southeast Alaska Districts.
- The court ruled against Valdez and Matanuska-Susitna appeals. Findings suggested that District 29 was compact, socioeconomically integrated, and that Valdez could be in a house district with its neighbors to the west and Matanuska-Susitna.
- The court found that House District 36 is not compact due to the addition of the Cantwell Appendage, providing a specific directive that the Cantwell Appendage should be returned to District 30 within the Denali Borough.
- The court found that testimony for Senate District K was invalid and violated the Alaska equal protection clause. The district as drawn, will need to be replaced.
 - The Supreme Court remanded the case to the Superior Court for further proceedings, which transferred the jurisdiction dispute away from the Supreme Court back to the Trial Court.
 - On March 30, Judge Mathews, remanded that matter back to the board, all consistent with the process set forth in our constitution, Article 6, Section 11.
 - Judge Mathews in the remanded order, consistent with the Supreme Court, directed the board to do the following:
 1. Remove the Cantwell Appendage from District 36.
 2. Address the constitutional deficiency in Senate District K.
 3. Adjust District 30 accordingly.

Matt Singer recommended that the board invite the public to offer solutions regarding Senate District K. The board should then present its ideas in a public meeting, providing the public a chance to give feedback. It is additionally recommended that this meeting take place before April 15 in order to offer Judge Mathews a revised proclamation plan on time.

Member Bahnke stated that further discussion about the process will take place at Monday morning's meeting.

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John Binkley, Chair
Melanie Bahnke
Nicole Borromeo
Bethany Marcum
Budd Simpson

ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

Adjournment

Member Borromeo moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Bahnke seconded the motion.

The board adjourned at 3:42 p.m.