

# ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

## Testimony Presented 9/9/2021

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*“Presented” refers to the date that it was included in the Board packet.*

# ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD PUBLIC TESTIMONY SUMMARY

**Date/Time:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 3:23 PM

**Name:** David Dunsmore

**Affiliation:** Alaskans for Fair Redistricting

**Email or Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Zip Code:**

**Issue of Concern:** Kachemak Silo with Kodiak

**Public Comment:** Kachemak Silo is made up of Russian Old Believers which are culturally and historically distinct from the Kodiak's Russian history and community. They arrived in 1968 and not during the 1,700. Ninilchik was settled by a group from Kodiak and has a population similar to the wider Kachemak Silo region.

# ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

## WEBSITE RESPONSE

**Date/Time:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 2:38 PM

**Name:** Pamela Goode

**Affiliation:** Alaskans for Fair Redistricting

**Email or Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Zip Code:** 99737

**Issue of Concern:** Growing and non-growing areas, rural: organized rural borough and unorganized Alaska

**Public Comment:** Take into Consideration:

- \* Area growth and non-growth. If you must have a population that is "less" than the desired amount because the borders make better sense, consider growth that will occur in the next 10 years. As you plan, consider this also. This will work the same for areas that may be declining or remaining stagnate.
- \* As technology increases, one might think this will populate the rural areas. This is not necessarily true. As younger generations have the education, skills and ability to "see" what is available elsewhere, they often times relocate to where the jobs, people, and entertainment thrive. It is a natural occurrence world wide which I have seen in the richest and poorest of nations. Populated areas offer opportunities that rural areas do not, and should not, which often times attracts the youth. Those wanting to escape what populated areas offer and settle down will usually take their earnings and/or retirement and move to more quiet places with less population and more rural. Those places need to exist. Governments fail when they try to counter what is natural. Do not fight it as though decreasing populations are bad, they are not. It is natural. Instead plan for it and let people live the way they wish to live by moving.
- \* What you are doing has a lot to do with that. What you are doing is important. When smaller rural areas are represented by individuals that are clueless to their way of life, they have no representation and therefore no one to defend their way of life and why they chose to live where they wish to live. Heavily populated areas think rural needs to "be like them" with all the services. They do not. Many wish to be left alone and free. There needs to always be a place where that can happen and Alaska is the only place left in the world that still offers that today. Unfortunately, it remains under constant attack because it is so rare and because it has no defense against overreaching governments.
- \* When you grab "rural" areas and put them in with populated areas, the representatives will likely always come from the populated area that have the services, the populations and the

more affluent donors. Therefore, representation for rural is unlikely. In this context, representation does not mean more services, it means defending the freedoms they have and their way of life.

- \* Most do not realize this. There are two types of "rural". Village rural and Sourdough rural. This is not meant to offend and it should not. It is a fact. The two are different with different lifestyles, different cultures and different expectations. As for the elders of both these types of rural living, there appears to be a high respect for each other because of the shared common ground of outdoorsmanship, survival skills, hardships and challenges. Often times in Alaska and the legislature, when one hears and uses the word rural, they think of villages. The Sourdough rural is usually left out and is becoming more rare and less represented with each passing year because they are represented by those that are familiar with and/or know village rural or those that know borough city populated.
- \* There are some Alaskans living in rural parts of boroughs not because they want to be in a borough. The Mandatory Borough Act of the 1960s put them inside boundaries with people they have nothing in common with and never will. When trying to detach, they receive little to no support. These people will never be represented. Even those that did choose to live very rural inside borough boundaries did not do so because the borough provided them anything. They wanted a lifestyle that was different, away from everything and on land was available. Unfortunately, about 99% of all elected officials live in the populated areas which means, these people are also not represented and never will be with the boundaries drawn today.
- \* Think about this when you are drawing those lines. Borough boundaries are meaningless when it comes to those who live Sourdough rural other than they get to pay for what they do not need and mostly what they will never use with a property tax and ordinances that were forced on them by people they did not elect. The stories from these rural living Alaskans that lived through the Mandatory Borough Act times is heart-wrenching. Help them if you can.
- \* Those before you did not do a very good job for certain areas of Alaska because they didn't think sparsely populated rural areas of Alaska mattered. The numbers were more important. As I was listening to you focused on the numbering, it became apparent that what I have discussed above is not being considered and for a very good reason. How many on the board live or have ever lived a rural lifestyle (off the grid, dry cabin, no postal delivery service (PO Box only), check mail once a month or quarterly, heat off wood, no cell service (no phone or internet) etc.) by choice? By the way, that may be on land or maritime. By choice! If you have never tasted this lifestyle, then you do not know how to describe it, paint it, defend it or represent it. Or represent it! However, this lifestyle still matters and what you are doing matters to them.

# ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

## WEBSITE RESPONSE

**Date/Time:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 2:37 PM

**Name:** Pamela Graham

**Affiliation:** Matanuska-Susitna Borough

**Email or Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Zip Code:** 99645

**Issue of Concern:** Mat-Su Borough

**Public Comment:** On September 7, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly adopted a resolution directing the borough manager to develop and present a State Redistricting plan that allocates the borough six house districts, with 3 senate districts. This may require partnering with Denali Borough to minimize districts that cross other borough boundaries and accommodates the future growth of the borough to the greatest extent possible. The full plan will be submitted early next week.

From: Madeleine Grant [REDACTED]  
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 9:10 AM  
To: Testimony <testimony@akredistrict.org>  
Subject: Redistricting- Turtles > snakes

Hello

I'm a concerned citizen worried about the increasing partisanship in our country, to which partisan redistricting has contributed (& is legal).

Acknowledging this, Alaska has an independent board to make these decisions, with guidance from the Constitution that districts be compact, contiguous & similar socioeconomically.

I'm hoping that coming districts will look more like turtles than snakes, and will not contribute to our paralyzing polarization Thanks for your hard work Madeleine Grant

**From:** Andrew Gray [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 6:16 AM  
**To:** Testimony <testimony@akredistrict.org>  
**Subject:** KEEP DISTRICTS INTEGRATED

Redistricting Board:

Alaska's state constitution directs that legislative districts be formed of relatively integrated socioeconomic areas. There has been a suggestion of lopping off a piece of north Muldoon and attaching it to Eagle River, and lopping off a piece of south Muldoon and attaching it to South Anchorage. East Anchorage is socioeconomically different from South Anchorage and Eagle River due to physical location (you have to drive quite a ways to get from one to the other) and the income differentials of the two areas.

More generally speaking, we Anchorage citizens do not want crazy maps with skinny parts stretching into various communities and dividing them up. We want to keep our districts integrated, so that our elected officials can more easily represent all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
Andrew Gray  
Anchorage  
99507

**From:** Kathy Hosford [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 12:16 PM  
**To:** Testimony <testimony@akredistrict.org>  
**Subject:** Redistricting Testimony Upper Lynn Canal

Date: September 8, 2021

To: Alaska Redistricting Board

From: Kathy and Fred Hosford

Thank you for taking our testimony. Fred was born in Skagway in 1949. We were married and had our children here. We moved to Skagway (Dyea) in 1999 and are small business owners who have participated in civic affairs for years. We have not looked at any possible redistricting maps yet but wanted to submit our opinions early in the process.

Southeast Alaska has lost population which is why 10 years ago, Haines and Skagway were pulled in to the Juneau Senate district. However, we never understood why the 2010 redistricting board put Haines and Skagway with downtown Juneau. It never made a bit of sense to us and we never felt like we had much of anything in common with that downtown district. For those who are not familiar with the geography of our region, this is what you need to know:

- Lynn Canal communities are basically Haines and Skagway (Upper Lynn Canal) and the populated areas on the eastern mainland of Lynn Canal including the Kensington Mine (where some people from Haines and Skagway work) and continuing down to the "out the road" areas of Juneau - like the Lynn Canal precinct which is in District 34.
- Logically and definitely visually, these areas all belong together.
- The way Haines and Skagway connect with Juneau is not by cruise ship but by small planes from the airport or the ferry terminal and possibly someday from Cascade Point or an east Lynn Canal Highway.
- Haines and Skagway (on the upper Lynn Canal) are now in District 33 which is downtown Juneau which is located on Gastineau Channel.
- We think upper Lynn Canal communities should share a district with the area closest geographically. That would be the "northernmost" area of Juneau not the southernmost

Fred & Kathy Hosford  
[REDACTED]

[www.chilkoottrailoutpost.com](http://www.chilkoottrailoutpost.com)





**From:** Helen Howarth [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 11:02 AM  
**To:** Testimony <testimony@akredistrict.org>  
**Subject:** Cordova concerns

As you develop Alaska's redistricting maps, I encourage you to consider the boundaries of the regional development organizations (ARDORS) developed by the State to prepare and implement regional development strategies ( [Alaska Statute 44.33.896](#)).

The nine regional ARDORS in Alaska champion economic development through representational leadership that advances each region's economy and leverages baseline support provided by the State of Alaska and federal government.

Cordova is a member of the Prince William Sound Economic Development District (PWSEDD) organization which regularly meets to discuss and solve regional issues. Member communities include Whittier, Tatitlek, Chenega, Cordova and Valdez all brought together by our shared interest in Prince William Sound and the challenges and opportunities the region presents.

A map that includes all these communities in one district will allow us effective and meaningful representation in Juneau.

Cordova (and every other Alaskan community) is best served having political representation that understands regional concerns. Other Alaskan coastal communities share our interest in fisheries and resources development, tourism, the Alaska Marine Highway, marine transportation, and off-the-road-system issues. The Anchorage hillside does not have similar priorities to ours, but Kodiak does.

The puzzle before you is difficult but I encourage you to consider subdivisions that take into account the communities that share issues and regularly work together. Political alliances in a common cause may bring together those of widely differing views but without the common cause nothing is accomplished.

Sincerely,

Helen Howarth

Cordova City Manager

**From:** Robin O'Donoghue [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 2:35 PM  
**To:** Testimony <testimony@akredistrict.org>  
**Subject:** Robin O'Donoghue Public Testimony

For the record my name is Robin O'Donoghue, I am the coordinator of the Alaskans for Fair Redistricting coalition but I'm also speaking to you today as a lifelong Fairbanksan.

I was not prepared today to speak about Fairbanks but we wanted to respond to member Boromeos's request for input on the Fairbanks region. I grew up in Two Rivers and Goldstream valley and as an adult I've lived and worked within the city of Fairbanks as well so I wanted to offer my perspective.

The current map keeps the entire Fairbanks North Star Borough together, but the split within the borough as the lines as they are currently drawn breaks communities of interest and does not factor in the north to south socio economic integration of communities within the borough.

For example the communities of Chenna Ridge, Ester and Goldstream Valley are very socio-economically integrated through the University of Alaska Fairbanks which is a major economic driver and a major employer in Fairbanks.

Likewise the communities of North Pole, Salcha and Two Rivers are closely socioeconomically related as well and Fort Wainwright and Eilson Air Force Base are major economic drivers of northeast and southeast Fairbanks.

Another way to think about the way these communities are related is through the public school system and how communities feed into schools. The western communities of goldstream valley, Chena Ridge and Ester all feed into West Valley Highschool. In the map we saw earlier Chenna Ridge and Salcha were grouped together in the same district. For a student living in Salcha West Valley is actually distance wise the farthest away highschool in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School district.

We do not believe that connecting the Chena Ridge area to Salcha and Northpole through the tanana flats is contiguous when you consider that you would have to drive through all of the other Fairbanks districts in order to reach the other end of this district.

If you were to rotate the current east to west line that splits fairbanks on more of an axis it would keep more of these existing communities of interest together and better respect existing socioeconomic units. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and we look forward to presenting our map next week.