



LAKELAND JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT #272
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December 28, 2011

Kootenai County Board of Commissioners
PO Box 9000
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816-9000

Subject: Proposed Precinct Changes

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to express my thoughts and concerns regarding the proposed reduction in the number voting precincts. I understand the desire to save money and I understand the desire to get this difficult task completed quickly. I am, however, urging you to spend a little more time and get the job done right.

Idaho code 34-301 includes the following:

"The January 15 deadline shall be waived during a general election year in which a legislative or court ordered redistricting plan is adopted. In such cases, any precinct boundary adjustments shall be accomplished by the county commissioners as soon as is practicable."

It is clear the legislature anticipated a longer process in those years where redistricting has occurred. Please slow down and consider all the input you have received. The involvement of the political parties and the local taxing districts would greatly improve the prospect of precincts that enhance rather than inhibit voter participation.

I see potential issues for the Lakeland Joint School District if the current changes are approved. Looking at the precincts on our southern and eastern borders it is highly likely we will have school voters traveling miles to polling places in Post Falls and Hayden. Increasing travel distances will have a negative effect of potential voters.

While I agree government should be run in a business like manner, I also believe there are certain aspects of government where efficiency should not be the main consideration. Conducting elections is one of those areas. If making voting more accessible is somewhat more costly, I believe the benefits outweigh the costs.

This is a chance to embrace the concept of election consolidation and to construct boundaries that work with taxing district boundaries where possible. In doing so you could lessen voter confusion throughout the county.

I went through redistricting in 1991-92 while serving as Kootenai County Clerk and I know it can be done better than this. Please reject this proposal and appoint a committee of interested parties charged with finding the best solution. The citizens of Kootenai County deserve no less.

Sincerely,


Tom Taggart
Director of Business & Operations