



## Board of County Commissioners

October 21, 2021

Dear colleagues,

We have been keeping close watch on the once-in-a-decade state legislative redistricting process and what its impact would be on Boulder County's residents and communities. As provided for under Amendment Z to the state constitution, legislative redistricting for the first time is now overseen by an independent commission and the state supreme court.

Throughout this process, we have submitted official comments advocating for Boulder County to be preserved as a "whole community of interest" and a "whole political subdivision," quoting two of the redistricting criteria specified in Amendment Z. In areas such as transportation, health care, education, and natural resources management, there are strong and historic ties that unite the entirety of Boulder County. It is for that reason that we have strongly and consistently opposed proposals to split off portions of the county into legislative districts dominated by neighboring counties that might not share these same interests.

The final state senate legislative map approved by the redistricting commission does not meet this standard. Instead, large portions of western and central Boulder County, including the communities of Nederland, Ward, Jamestown, and Lyons, would be placed in Senate District 15. This district would be dominated by Larimer County residents who would comprise 86% of the district, with the remaining 14% being comprised of Boulder County residents.

When we first received indications that this map – which was introduced extremely late in the commission's process and which diverged significantly from prior drafts – would be considered for adoption, we immediately filed formal comments expressing our opposition. Unfortunately, the redistricting commission unanimously chose to move forward and adopt the map, which now goes to the state supreme court for final review.

We have spent the past several days exploring with our legal counsel any potential path forward for filing a challenge with the state supreme court objecting to this map. While we believe the map does not meet the standard in the state constitution for preserving whole communities of interest and whole political subdivisions, the standard for reversing a decision of the redistricting commission is an extremely high one. Specifically, we would have to demonstrate that the redistricting commission had "abused its discretion" in making its determinations. After discussing the approved map and the applicable legal standard for a challenge with our legal counsel, we have reluctantly concluded that such a challenge would have little or no chance of success.

Needless to say, we are disappointed with this outcome. We will continue to monitor the remainder of the process closely, including any opportunities that might yet arise to continue

**Matt Jones** *County Commissioner*   **Claire Levy** *County Commissioner*   **Marta Loachamin** *County Commissioner*

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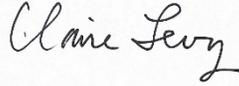
to advocate for the interests of Boulder County, its residents, and its communities. If this map is adopted, please rest assured our county staff will continue to engage with the elected senator from Senate District 15 to advocate for your interests.

We value your input and always welcome your suggestions and concerns on issues that affect Boulder County.

Best wishes,



Matt Jones  
Chair



Claire Levy  
County Commissioner



Marta Loachamin  
Vice-Chair