

Excerpts From the Independent Redistricting Commission Public Hearing in Safford, AZ: June 26, 2001

“We’re a very small county, something just over 30,000 people. And when you divide that between legislative districts it makes it very difficult for us to have very much influence. So we very much like to see the county united into one – one district.” – Jim Palmer, Pg 28 Ln 25 and Pg 29 Ln 1-4

“And we feel very strongly that we need rural – rural representation that will represent that community of interest in state government for us.” Palmer, Pg 29 Ln 12-14

“Whereas, Graham County has economic geographic, cultural and legislative interests in common with the other ECO counties; which form the basis of a strong and unique community of interests;” – Palmer reading from Graham County resolution, Pg 31, Ln 5-9

“Be it therefore resolved, that the Graham County Board of Supervisors recommends that a rural legislative district include southern Apache and Navajo counties and Greenlee, Graham and Gila Counties.”- Palmer reading from Graham County resolution, Pg 31, Ln 21-25 and Pg 32 Ln 1.

“The intent of this testimony is to convey Greenlee County’s wishes to remain in a totally rural district to the extent possible given the population changes in the state. We believe that the voice of rural Arizona will not be heard if broken up and attached in large metropolitan areas.” – Don Stacey, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors for Greenlee County, Pg 34 Ln 2-7

“But at the present time, as you probably know, we split the Gila – Gila Valley, which I think is ridiculous.” – Ed Sawyer, Pg 37 Ln 2-3

“We feel very strongly that in order to really meet the needs of our students and our community it takes all of us working together, and that includes having people work for us at the legislature.” – Mark Tregaskes, Superintendent of Safford Schools, Pg 39 Ln 11-14

“This idea of a rural district is wonderful. If we could get that – every district that you have on your legislative map touches or takes a part of one of the major metropolitan areas. Those major metropolitan areas get everything they want, and we get what’s left. That’s not right. It’s just not right.” – George Lemen, Pg 46 Ln 7-12

“I don’t see how going with Navajo and Apache counties can in any way be beneficial. I am not talking about favoritism for any particular minority group whatever. I’m talking about fair and equitable representation. The chances of electing a Hispanic representative from Apache and Navajo about nil.” – Walter Mares, Pg 50 Ln 23-25, Pg 51 Ln 1-3

“I would also like to comment I recognize with the supervisors that we do have interest of commonality concerning the watershed particularly. And as they’ve said the rural communities, as has been stated by Mr. Mares here so well. We also do have commonalities with our border towns and people because of our Hispanic population.” – Gale Barney, Graham County Democratic Chairman, Pg 55 Ln 14-19

“I also like the idea of Graham County being left as a whole and also joining with Greenlee County. We’re sister counties.” – Curtis Ward, Pg 58 Ln 16-18

“Mainly because I think here in Graham County, especially in what we call the Gila Valley, we had the exact prototypical case of what your commission was designed to correct.” – Paul Brierley, Pg 73 Ln 25 and Pg 74 Ln 1-3

NOTE: These summaries and excerpts were developed for the Independent Redistricting Commission by its consultant, National Demographics Corporation, and have not been reviewed by the Commission prior to posting. They are not official statements of the Commission and represent only the consultant’s best effort to identify major themes and highlights of each public hearing. The excerpts were chosen by the consultant in an effort to identify common themes and especially noteworthy statements.

These materials are placed here for citizen review and with the hope that they will encourage comments. Comments can be made on the form provided.