

**Summary of Public Hearing
of the
State of Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission**

Location: Thatcher
Eastern Arizona College

Date: September 13, 2001
6:30 p.m.

In Attendance:

Commissioners: Steve Lynn, Chairman
Joshua Hall
Dan Elder

Commission Attorneys:
Lisa Hauser
Jose Rivera

NDC Staff:
Florence Adams

Approximately 31 persons attended the meeting at Eastern Arizona College Activity Center and 17 of them addressed the Commission.

A major theme of the testimony was the importance of "rural representation;" but there were differences over its definition and how best to achieve it. Most of the speakers, including several eastern Arizona County Supervisors (all of whose boards had unanimously passed resolutions in its favor), supported the draft Legislative district that unites Gila, Greenlee, Graham and the southern portions of Navaho and Apache Counties. A supervisor of Graham County commented that the configuration was a great improvement over current legislative lines that had divided his county and denied it effective representation. Inter-county cooperation and common issues -- rural health care, endangered species, public land management, water, forest health, grazing, economic development and others --- were mentioned as the primary justifications for uniting these counties. In response to questions of linkage with Cochise County, several speakers said that they worried about the rapid growth of Sierra Vista and its orientation toward Tucson. One said that the problem with a southern linkage was that "the likes of Sierra, of Douglas, many large areas, (could) quite honestly swallow us up not even realizing we're there." He noted also, that the EACO Legislative district as drafted is competitive.

Some individual citizens and representatives of smaller communities preferred linkage to Cochise County. Thus, the Mayor and town manager of Clifton, a community with a large Hispanic population, said that many residents had migrated from Bisbee or Douglas into the mining areas around Clifton and that their interests were "supported by Cochise, Nogales and the CaniMex plan" and the Hispanic population of the Border area. Another speaker expressed concern that Show Low, Pinetop and other communities to the north were developing into "blooming tourist areas that probably will become the center draw of this new district;" and said that the linkage should be with SEAGO and Cochise county.

One speaker commented that the draft Legislative map had excised Sierra Vista, the principal city from Cochise County, to link it with Tucson. He also joined others in criticizing draft Congressional district C as too big. This was the view, as well, of the Mayor of the Town of Hayden who, commenting that the district failed to develop community of interest for Hispanic and mining areas, said it was too large to be effectively represented. Other speakers, however, said that whole states such as Alaska and Wyoming which are very much larger than the draft district, have been given effective representation by a single U.S. representative. There were statements too, that modern means of transportation make it possible to travel much greater distances and that rural people are practiced in covering a lot of territory. The point was also made that a representative of Safford and of Kingman will be confronting the same BLM issues that face both of these widely separated communities.

Whether it would be better to have two districts that are primarily but not exclusively rural was debated. Some preferred the exclusively rural district as proposed: but others thought that it might be possible to dip into selected areas of Maricopa or Pinal County to a limited extent while still retaining rural dominance. One suggestion was that a district would still remain rural if up to 20 percent of its population was from other than strictly rural areas.

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.