

September 28, 2021

North Dakota Legislative Redistricting Committee

Testimony of Lisa DeVille

Mandaree, ND

Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation

Chairman Devlin and members of the legislative redistricting committee,

Dosha, my name is Lisa DeVille and I am a citizen of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation in Fort Berthold. I grew up in Mandaree where I and my family are lifelong residents of our ancestral lands. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation is a federally recognized tribe in the state of North Dakota, located in the counties of Dunn, Mountrail, McKenzie, Mercer, Ward and McLean. The Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation is a sovereign nation governed by its Tribal Business Council. We have an enrollment of nearly 17,000 members. Under the 2020 Census, the population of the reservation was 8,350. The total population in North Dakota increased overall between 2010 and 2020 from 672,591 residents to 779,094, representing a 15.8% increase. The Native American population outpaced the state, and grew by 29.7% in the last decade. The Fort Berthold Reservation is within North Dakota State District 4, which elects two members to the State House (at-large), and one member to the Senate.

Currently, District 4 is represented by three Republicans: Senator Jordan Kannianen, Representative Clayton Fegley, and Representative Terry B. Jones. Prior to the 2016 election, the District had a Democratic senator and one Democratic representative for several years. In 2020 I challenged Senator Kannianen and unfortunately was not able to be elected even though portions of the district on the reservation strongly supported myself and House of Representatives candidate Thomasina Mandan.

Every decade new district lines are drawn that give each of our votes equal weight, each of our voice's equal stature, and each of our communities equal resources. Voters pick our leaders, and our leaders should not pick their voters. To determine how we will be represented and how funds for schools, hospitals, and other essential services will be allocated we need legislators that work with tribal citizens as well as government.

Representation at state, county, and federal level is not all about oil and gas. We Native American/Indigenous people have our own voice. The Non-Native American have been speaking for us since they landed here.

Recently, I gave a short comment on redistricting during the ND and MHA Tribal relations meeting. I support implementation of subdistricts. We need to be at the table when decisions are made that impact our lives and possibly the lives of future generations. There should be no assumption that ND knows what is best for us Indigenous people when our culture, tradition, and beliefs are different and often not taken into account when decisions are made.

Again, we need to be at the table and we need fair representation in North Dakota.
Maacagiraac-Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you.

Exhibit W