



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **REPORT ON THE *REPORT OF THE FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FOR THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, 2022***

**Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and  
House Affairs**

**Honourable Bardish Chagger, Chair**

**MAY 2023  
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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**Hon. Bardish Chagger  
Chair**

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## **NOTICE TO READER**

### **Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons**

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS**

has the honour to present its

## **THIRTY-NINTH REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(3)(a)(vi), the committee has considered the objections filed in respect of the *Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec*, in accordance with section 22 of the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. E-3, and has agreed to report the following:





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# REPORT ON THE *REPORT OF THE FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FOR THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, 2022*

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## INTRODUCTION

On 23 March 2023, pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(3)(a)(vi) and section 22 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act (EBRA),<sup>1</sup> the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (the Committee) began its consideration of the objections filed by members of the House of Commons in respect of the *Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec* (the Report and the Commission).

After each decennial census, the number of members of the House of Commons and the representation of each province is adjusted according to the rules found in section 51 and 51A of the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

The chief electoral officer (CEO) is responsible for calculating the number of members of the House allotted to each province. This calculation is mathematical and the CEO exercises no discretion in the matter.

The work of readjusting electoral boundaries is carried out in each province by an independent and neutral three-member electoral boundaries commission. The mandate of these commissions is to consider and report on the division of their province into electoral districts,<sup>2</sup> the description of the boundaries and the name of each electoral district.

The EBRA provides the rules governing the division of a province into electoral districts. The population of each electoral district must be as close as possible to the electoral quota for the province, that is, the population of the province divided by the number of members of the House of Commons allocated to the province under section 51 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

In setting the boundaries of an electoral district, each commission is legally obliged to consider the community of interest, community of identity or the historical pattern of an

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1 [Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act](#), R.S.C. 1985, c. E-3.

2 Note that the terms “electoral districts” and “ridings” are used interchangeably in this committee report.



electoral district in the province. Further, electoral districts must have a manageable geographic size, in cases of sparsely populated, rural or northern regions.

A commission may depart from the provincial electoral quota by plus or minus 25% in order to respect the community of interest, community of identity, or the historical pattern of an electoral district, or to maintain the manageable geographic size of sparsely populated districts. In circumstances that are viewed as extraordinary by a commission, the variance from the electoral quota may be greater than 25%.

After coming up with an initial Proposal for the electoral districts in their province, a commission is required to hold at least one public meeting to hear representations by interested persons. After the completion of the public hearings, each commission prepares a report on the boundaries and names of the electoral districts of the province. These reports are tabled in the House of Commons, and referred to the Committee.

Members of the House then have 30 calendar days to file objections with the clerk of the Committee to the proposals contained in a report.

An objection must be in writing and in the form of a motion. It must specify the provisions of the report objected to, and the reasons for those objections. An objection must be signed by not less than 10 members of the House of Commons.

The Committee then has 30 sittings days to consider members' objections, unless an extension is granted by the House. The Committee's reports on members' objections are referred back to the relevant commissions, along with the objections, the minutes of the proceedings and the evidence heard by the Committee. The commission then has 30 calendar days to consider the merits of all objections, and prepare its final report.

Once all the commission reports have been finalized, the CEO prepares a draft representation order setting out the boundaries and names of the new electoral districts. This is sent to the Governor in Council who, within five days, must proclaim the new representation order to be in force and effective for any general election that is called seven months after the proclamation is issued.

## **OBJECTIONS**

*The Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec* was tabled in the House of Commons and referred to the Committee on 1 February 2023. At the end of the 30-day period, the Clerk of the Committee had received 18 objections from members of Parliament. In the following section, the objections are

grouped according to the territorial units and subgroups used by the Commission in its Report.

## A. Electoral boundary changes

Eleven members filed objections to the proposed Quebec electoral boundaries.

### 1. Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and Côte-Nord

Two members filed objections to the boundaries for the territorial unit of Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and Côte-Nord. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe, member for Lac-Saint-Jean, and Mario Simard, member for Jonquière, both objected to the boundaries proposed by the Commission for the electoral district of Jonquière–Alma (the current electoral district of Jonquière). Despite prior criticisms of the Commission’s initial Proposal for this electoral district, these two members now reluctantly support it, as the alternative proposed in the Report is much more detrimental in their view.

#### a) Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe objected to the boundaries proposed by the Commission for the electoral district of Jonquière–Alma (the current electoral district of Jonquière) and the electoral district of Lac-Saint-Jean. Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe criticized the re-establishment of the electoral district of Jonquière–Alma, a former electoral district encompassing the cities of Alma and Jonquière. Despite his earlier objection to the boundaries set out in the Commission’s initial Proposal, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe said that he would now support these boundaries because they “couldn’t be worse”<sup>3</sup> than the proposed electoral district of Jonquière–Alma.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe also criticized the proposed boundaries for splitting up the regional county municipality<sup>4</sup> (RCM) of Fjord-du-Saguenay by placing the municipalities of Saint-Honoré, Bégin, Saint-Ambroise, Saint-Charles-de-Bourget and Saint-David-de-

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3 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (PROC), *Evidence*, 28 March 2023, 1115 (Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean).

4 In Quebec, the territory is divided for municipal purposes among regional county municipalities, metropolitan communities and the Kativik Regional Government. An RCM comprises all the local municipalities in the same home territory, forming an administrative entity that is a municipality within the meaning of the *Act Respecting Municipal Territorial Organization*. See Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l’Habitation du Québec, *Guide La prise de décision en urbanisme : MRC* and *Act Respecting Municipal Territorial Organization*, R.S.Q., chapter 0-9, section 1.



Falardeau from the existing electoral district of Jonquière to the electoral district of Lac-Saint-Jean.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe based his objection on a number of principles: procedural fairness, the political weight of electoral districts, the historical pattern and the sense of belonging of communities of interest.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe pointed out that the former electoral district of Jonquière–Alma, an “historical error,”<sup>5</sup> was created in the 2002 redistribution and then dismantled in the 2012 redistribution following public outcry. The City of Alma has since been part of the riding of Lac-Saint-Jean, and the city of Jonquière part of the riding of Jonquière.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe argued that the people of Lac-Saint-Jean did not get a chance to voice their opinion on the proposal to re-establish the electoral district of Jonquière–Alma, since this was not one of the options addressed in the Commission’s initial Proposal. According to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, this would be a breach of *audi alteram partem*, the principle that an individual must be able to be heard when a decision affects them. Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe also pointed out that only one intervener, Marc Perron, proposed redistributing the electoral districts this way during the public hearings. In fact, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe’s letter of objection is accompanied by a letter from Mr. Perron, who now says he regrets making this proposal.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe also argued that, by removing the City of Alma from the Lac-Saint-Jean riding, the Commission would be robbing the riding of its largest economic and demographic hub. In his view, this could potentially exacerbate the loss of political weight for the Lac-Saint-Jean community of interest, particularly since the municipalities of Saint-Nazaire, Lamarche and Labrecque, which belong to the Lac-Saint-Jean-Est RCM, are already excluded from the riding. Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe expressed concern that the suggested change could slow down or hinder the implementation of projects that would benefit the Lac-Saint-Jean subgroup.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe further argued that the Commission did not take into consideration the historical pattern of the electoral district of Lac-Saint-Jean, nor its communities’ sense of belonging. He said that the creation of the Jonquière–Alma electoral district in the 2002 redistribution had split the very distinct identities of the sub-regions of Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean (Lac-Saint-Jean, Saguenay, Fjord-du-Saguenay) without taking into account their specific traits, resulting in the fracturing and confusion

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5 PROC, *Evidence*, 28 March 2023, 1105 (Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean).

of regional solidarity. The member of Parliament for Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean at the time even said that

[a]nyone who knows anything about the Saguenay--Lac-Saint-Jean area knows full well that, for example, putting the towns of Jonquière and Alma in the same riding makes no sense whatsoever in terms of the history and development of these communities.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe said that the residents of the City of Alma are concerned that their political weight will be diluted by being joined with the more populated City of Jonquière, whereas Alma is currently the biggest city in the riding of Lac-Saint-Jean.<sup>7</sup> He also pointed out that on the provincial electoral map the City of Alma is in the electoral district of Lac-Saint-Jean and is the biggest city in the RCM of Lac-Saint-Jean-Est.<sup>8</sup>

Jean-Pierre Blackburn, formerly the member for Jonquière–Alma (2006–2011), as well as Sylvie Beaumont, Mayor of the City of Alma, both expressed their support in writing for Mr. Brunelle Duceppe’s objection. The Alma city council also adopted a resolution in support of Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe’s objection.<sup>9</sup> Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe further stated that the arguments presented in his objection are supported by the communities involved. He also pointed out that the Commission’s initial Proposal, which he would like to see reinstated, was supported by Richard Martel, the Member for Chicoutimi–Le Fjord, when it was presented.

**The Committee supports Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

## **b) Mario Simard, the member for Jonquière**

Mr. Simard objected to the proposed boundaries for the electoral district of Jonquière–Alma (the current electoral district of Jonquière) and, by extension, the neighbouring electoral district of Lac-Saint-Jean. Like Mr. Brunelle Duceppe, Mr. Simard criticizes the return of the Jonquière–Alma electoral district, an “historical error”<sup>10</sup> created as a result of the 2002 redistribution that grouped together the cities of Alma and Jonquière.<sup>11</sup>

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6 House of Commons, Subcommittee on Electoral Boundaries Readjustment of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, *Evidence*, 10 June 2003, 1650 (Sébastien Gagnon, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean–Saguenay, BQ).

7 PROC, *Evidence*, 28 March 2023, 1125 (Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean).

8 Ibid., 1135.

9 Ibid., 1125.

10 PROC, *Evidence*, 28 March 2023, 1110 (Mario Simard, the member for Jonquière).

11 Ibid.



Mr. Simard also believes that the Commission's initial Proposal for the ridings of Jonquière and Lac-Saint-Jean, which he initially opposed, would be a "less harmful"<sup>12</sup>, if imperfect, solution. Mr. Simard based his objection on several distinct grounds, namely procedural fairness, the historical pattern of the riding of Jonquière, and the sense of belonging of the various communities of interest.

Mr. Simard criticized the late introduction of the proposal to combine Alma and Jonquière in a single electoral district. Because it was not an option explored in the initial Proposal, no one had an opportunity to comment on it during the public hearings. He believes this proposal would have caused a much greater outcry than the initial Proposal did at the time of the hearings. Mr. Simard deplored the fact that only one public hearing was held in the region, in Chicoutimi, tens of kilometers away from the Lac-Saint-Jean municipalities in affected by the proposed changes. Echoing Mr. Brunelle Duceppe, Mr. Simard pointed out that this situation constitutes a violation of the principle of *audi alteram partem*.

Mr. Simard also argued that the Commission's Report does not consider the historical pattern of the electoral district of Jonquière and the sense of belonging of its communities. According to Mr. Simard, including the City of Alma in the electoral district of Jonquière–Alma in the 2002 redistribution resulted in a fracturing and confusion of regional solidarity, because it split up the very distinct identities of the sub-regions of Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean without taking their unique characteristics into consideration. Furthermore, Mr. Simard pointed out that the City of Alma is the main city in the riding of Lac-Saint-Jean: all the surrounding municipalities rely on this city, particularly for its college education and its community and cultural organizations.

Lastly, Mr. Simard expressed concern that the proposed boundaries may result in a loss of political weight for the Lac-Saint-Jean community of interest, which is already cut off from the municipalities of Saint-Nazaire, Lamarche and Labrecque on the electoral map. According to him, isolating the City of Alma's services and economic development hub from the rest of the Lac-Saint-Jean community would adversely affect the implementation of projects that would benefit the entire sub-region. Mr. Simard pointed out that the community organizations, recreation and sports clubs, economic development organizations and health and education networks of Jonquière and Alma do not overlap in any way. There is therefore no community of interest between the two cities.

Mr. Simard indicated that his objection is supported by the affected communities. His letter of objection was accompanied by letters of support from Sylvie Beaumont, Mayor

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12      *Ibid.*, 1120.



of the City of Alma; Jean-Pierre Blackburn, former Member of Parliament for Jonquière–Alma (2006–2011); and Marc Perron, the individual who had previously proposed re-establishing the riding of Jonquière–Alma during the public hearings. Mr. Simard also pointed out that Richard Martel, the Member for Chicoutimi–Le Fjord, had supported the Commission’s initial Proposal when it was released.

**The Committee supports Mr. Simard’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

## **2. Montmagny to Îles-de-la-Madeleine**

Three members filed objections to the proposed boundaries for the territorial unit of Montmagny to Îles-de-la-Madeleine: Maxime Blanchette-Joncas, the member for Rimouski-Neigette–Témiscouata–Les Basques; the Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., the member for Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine; and Kristina Michaud, the member for Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia. The three objections stem from the proposal to abolish the electoral district of Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia and redistribute its territory between the electoral districts of Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Rimouski-Neigette–Témiscouata–Les Basques.

In their appearance before the Committee, these three members, as well as Bernard Généreux, Member for Montmagny–L’Islet–Kamouraska–Rivière-du-Loup, criticized the proposal to eliminate an electoral district in this region and stressed that current and future commissions must take into account the particular nature of rural electoral districts when proposing new boundaries.

### **a) Maxime Blanchette-Joncas, the member for Rimouski-Neigette–Témiscouata–Les Basques**

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas objected to the proposal to reduce the number of electoral districts from Montmagny to Îles-de-la-Madeleine from four to three by eliminating the electoral district of Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia. He believes that this proposal dismisses the regional, social and territorial reality specific to the Lower St. Lawrence and eastern Quebec and is a “frontal attack”<sup>13</sup> on the representativeness of Quebec’s regions. Mr. Blanchette-Joncas called for the status quo to be maintained, as extraordinary circumstances warrant exceeding the 25% threshold from the electoral

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13 PROC, *Evidence*, 23 March 2023, 1205 (Maxime Blanchette-Joncas, the member for Rimouski-Neigette–Témiscouata–Les Basques).



quota in the electoral districts of Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia and Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, pursuant to section 15(2) of the Act.

First, Mr. Blanchette-Joncas stressed the importance of ensuring that Quebec’s regions are represented in the House of Commons, since the resource regions make up 80.2% of Quebec’s territory but account for only 6.7% of its population. By having their voice weakened in Parliament, the fate of these regions is left to elected officials who represent the interests of the major urban centres. Mr. Blanchette-Joncas also reminded the Committee that, in the 1960s, seven federally elected officials served the region from Montmagny to Îles-de-la-Madeleine, and that the number of electoral districts has shrunk with subsequent redistributions. Yet the territory has not shrunk, and if another electoral district were to be abolished, three elected officials will have to do the work previously done by seven.

Secondly, Mr. Blanchette-Joncas said that it’s essential to preserve the ability of members to provide local services to their communities, particularly in rural communities where the availability of government services remains limited. Federal members of Parliament play a front-line role in this regard, particularly outside of major urban centres. Eliminating a riding means taking away services from already underserved communities.

Finally, in its Report, the Commission leans on the demographic decline observed in Eastern Quebec to justify the elimination of an electoral division. However, Mr. Blanchette-Joncas pointed out that positive net migration levels have been observed in the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeline regions in the past few years. According to Mr. Blanchette-Joncas, eliminating a riding in the region would jeopardize this population renewal. He also said that the new reality of telework, pressure on the real estate market in big cities and the desire to be closer to nature have prompted numerous households, including young families, to settle in rural or remote areas.

**The Committee supports Mr. Blanchette-Joncas’ objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

**b) The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., the member for Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine**

Ms. Lebouthillier objected to the proposed boundaries for the electoral district of Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine. Ms. Lebouthillier expressed concern that adding two RCMs (the RCM of La Matanie and the RCM of Avignon) to the territory covered by this riding would hinder the member’s ability to properly serve the residents of Îles-de-la-

Madeleine, given the region's identity and insular. While Ms. Lebouthillier would prefer status quo as to the number of seats from Montmagny to Îles-de-la-Madeleine, she proposed as an alternative that the RCM of La Matanie be transferred to the proposed riding of Rimouski-La Matapédia. Should this be accepted, she would not object to transferring the RCM of Avignon to the riding's territory.

Ms. Lebouthillier stressed the identity of Îles-de-la-Madeleine, which face specific challenges distinct from those on the mainland, especially in terms of transportation and access to public services, challenges that are exacerbated by severe, harsh weather. She said that no other federal riding faces the same constraints, as the islands are accessible only by plane or by boat, which requires travelling through two provinces, 700 kilometres on the road and five hours by ferry. Adding two RCMs to the riding's territory would greatly affect the member's availability and accessibility, resulting in a democratic deficit for islanders. She also expressed concern that this would make it difficult to recruit future candidates, who may be reluctant to commit to a riding that is difficult to serve.

Ms. Lebouthillier said that placing the RCM of La Matanie to the proposed riding of Rimouski-La Matapédia makes more sense, since this RCM has cultural and economic ties with cities and municipalities in the Lower St. Lawrence, not those in the Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine. She pointed out that La Matanie represents just under 14,000 voters, but that adding Avignon to her riding alone reduces the deviation from the electoral quota from -35.5% to -20.6%.

Ms. Lebouthillier said that she has the support of local officials. She sent two letters of support to the Committee, one from Antonin Valiquette, Mayor of Îles-de-la-Madeleine, and one from the Regroupement des MRC de la Gaspésie.

**The Committee supports Ms. Lebouthillier's objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

### **c) Kristina Michaud, the member for Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia**

Ms. Michaud objected to the proposal to abolish the electoral district of Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia and to redistribute its territory between Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Rimouski-Neigette–Témiscouata–Les Basques. She believes that the Commission's proposal overlooks considerations set forth in the Act, in particular respect for communities of interest, the historical pattern of the electoral district and the goal of maintaining a manageable geographic size for districts in sparsely populated, rural or northern regions of the province.



Ms. Michaud pointed out that, while the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspésie regions are sparsely populated and rural, their territory is almost entirely occupied. From Montmagny to Îles-de-la-Madeleine, 184 municipalities and 4 Indigenous communities are grouped in 15 RCMs, in addition to the Îles-de-la-Madeleine archipelago. Redistributing the riding of Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia to the adjacent ridings of Rimouski–Neigette–Témiscouata–Les Basques and Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine would create two ridings of 15,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Ms. Michaud believes that reducing the number of members to three to cover such a vast area will cause an inordinate loss of political weight for the region, making effective representation difficult. She pointed out that she has four constituency offices and that, if the electoral district were eliminated, constituents might have to drive several hours to get to their member’s office. She noted that expanding the territory covered by an electoral district does not necessarily lead to a proportional increase in the member’s office budget.

With respect to communities of interest, Ms. Michaud asserted the vital importance of preserving them. In her opinion, the complaints of various communities of interest seem to have been better received, heard and accepted by the boundaries commissions of other provinces. Ms. Michaud sees an imbalance for her region, with the loss of a member leading to reduced services for constituents and the loss of a major development promoter. She said that, in rural and remote areas, members’ offices have become extensions of federal departments. She also was critical of the fact that eastern Quebec has to constantly fight to maintain its political weight in Parliament.

Lastly, Ms. Michaud emphasized the strong consensus that has emerged to preserve the riding of Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia. Many residents, organizations and stakeholders as well as federal and provincial elected officials, mayors, wardens and the Senator for the Gulf region have spoken out publicly against eliminating this riding. Ms. Michaud submitted 55 resolutions in support of maintaining this electoral district from municipalities, RCMs and civil groups.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the Quebec National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion condemning the proposal, stating that “any loss of political weight by our Quebec regions jeopardizes our nation’s democratic health.”<sup>15</sup> Ms. Michaud also said she had the support of members from each of the parties recognized in the House of Commons.

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14 PROC, *Evidence*, 23 March 2023, 1215 (Kristina Michaud, the member for Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia).

15 National Assembly of Quebec, [Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly](#), 7 February 2023.

**The Committee supports Ms. Michaud’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

### **3. Chaudière-Appalaches (Western Part), Estrie and Centre-du-Québec**

Three members filed objections to the electoral boundaries for the territorial unit of Chaudière-Appalaches (Western Part), Estrie and Centre-du-Québec: Luc Berthold, the member for Mégantic–L’Érable, the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., the member for Compton–Stanstead and Louis Plamondon, the member for Bécancour–Nicolet–Saurel.

During their appearance, all three spoke about the special role of regional Members, who must serve ever bigger territories with ever more municipalities. The many stakeholders (MRC wardens, mayors, local organizations, etc.) also makes the job of regional Members more complex.<sup>16</sup>

Mr. Berthold, who is a member of the Committee, recused himself from the discussion and consideration of the territorial unit of Chaudière-Appalaches (Western Part), Estrie and Centre-du-Québec.

#### **a) Luc Berthold, the member for Mégantic–L’Érable**

Mr. Berthold objected to the boundaries proposed in the Commission’s Report for the electoral district of Mégantic–L’Érable and, by extension, for the neighbouring electoral districts of Compton–Stanstead and Bécancour–Saurel–Odanak. He raises three distinct issues, based on the existence of communities of interest.

Mr. Berthold criticized the proposal to add three municipalities belonging to the Haut-Saint-François RCM to the electoral district of Mégantic–L’Érable, as they are currently located within the boundaries of the electoral district of Compton–Stanstead. The three municipalities in question are Scotstown, Lingwick and Weedon. Mr. Berthold said that this proposal does not consider the socio-economic membership of the community of interest formed by these towns, and recommended that the 3,767 affected residents remain in Compton–Stanstead. This suggestion is in keeping with the wishes of the member for Compton–Stanstead Ms. Bibeau, the municipalities concerned and the Haut-St-François RCM.

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16 PROC, *Evidence*, 30 March 2023, 1255 (Luc Berthold, the member for Mégantic–L’Érable); PROC, *Evidence*, 30 March 2023, 1300 (The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., the member for Compton–Stanstead); PROC, *Evidence*, 30 March 2023, 1300 (Louis Plamondon, the member for Bécancour–Nicolet–Saurel).



Mr. Berthold objected to the proposal to remove the municipality of Villeroy, in the L'Érable RCM, from Mégantic–L'Érable and place it in the electoral district of Bécancour–Saurel–Odanak. He said he wants this municipality to remain in his electoral district, like the other municipalities in the RCM, and argued that the proposal does not consider the existing intermunicipal services as well as the common socio-cultural, economic, geographic and political aspects.

Mr. Berthold pointed out that the Commission's Report proposal would divide the 18 municipalities of the Lotbinière RCM among three ridings: 9 in Mégantic–L'Érable, 2 in Bécancour–Saurel–Odanak and 7 in Lévis–Lotbinière. While Mr. Berthold supports incorporating nine municipalities of the Lotbinière RCM into the electoral district of Mégantic–L'Érable, he is critical of the proposal to split the RCM among three ridings rather than two. In his opinion, the two municipalities placed in the riding of Bécancour–Saurel–Odanak (Leclercville and Val-Alain) should instead be incorporated into Mégantic–L'Érable, given the existing ties among the various communities. This part of the objection is supported by local elected officials and by Louis Plamondon, the member for Bécancour–Nicolet–Saurel.

In his appearance before the Committee, Mr. Berthold said that it would be important for future redistributions that the role of rural members and their particular reality be given greater consideration by the commissions, as these members are expected to serve ever bigger ridings with ever more municipalities. As a recommendation to the Committee, he submitted that a second round of public hearings should be considered when major changes to the initial Proposal are made; this would require a legislative amendment.<sup>17</sup>

Mr. Berthold's objection is supported by resolutions from the affected municipalities as well as the RCMs of Lotbinière and Haut-Saint-François.

**The Committee supports Mr. Berthold's objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.<sup>18</sup>**

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17 PROC, *Evidence*, 30 March 2023, 1255 (Luc Berthold, the member for Mégantic–L'Érable).

18 Mr. Berthold, who is a member of the Committee, recused himself from the discussion and consideration of the territorial unit of Chaudière-Appalaches (Western Part), Estrie and Centre-du-Québec.

### **b) The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., the member for Compton–Stanstead**

Ms. Bibeau objected to the boundaries proposed by the Commission for the electoral district of Compton–Stanstead. In particular, she would like to see the municipalities of Weedon, Lingwick and Scotstown (3,767 residents) remain in this riding rather than be placed in the electoral district of Mégantic–L'Érable, so that the Haut-Saint-François RCM, where the three municipalities are located, is not split between two electoral districts.

Ms. Bibeau said there is a community of interest between the residents of Weedon, Scotstown and Lingwick and those of Cookshire-Eaton, East Angus and even Sherbrooke, since the residents of the former mostly use the health services, businesses, and cultural and sports facilities of the latter. Even so, residents of the three affected cities are less likely to travel to Lac-Mégantic or Thetford Mines for services.

Ms. Bibeau also stated that, unlike urban members, members for remote and/or rural ridings must provide a great deal of support to the various municipalities in their riding and work closely with RCM wardens. This means that splitting an RCM between two ridings can result in a duplication of work and inefficient and possibly inconsistent responses to issues.

Ms. Bibeau's objection is supported by Luc Berthold, the member for Mégantic–L'Érable, as well as by the three municipalities concerned, all of which have passed resolutions to that effect. The Haut-Saint-François RCM also passed a resolution in support of the objection.

**The Committee supports Ms. Bibeau's objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.<sup>19</sup>**

### **c) Louis Plamondon, the member for Bécancour–Nicolet–Saurel**

Mr. Plamondon objected to the boundaries proposed in the Commission's Report for the electoral district of Bécancour–Nicolet–Saurel (proposed electoral district of Bécancour–Saurel–Odanak). He is particularly critical of the proposal to place three municipalities currently that currently belong to the neighbouring electoral districts of Lévis–Lotbinière (municipalities of Leclercville and Val-Alain) and Mégantic–L'Érable (municipality of Villeroy). Mr. Plamondon said that these three municipalities, with a total population of

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<sup>19</sup> Mr. Berthold, who is a member of the Committee, recused himself from the discussion and consideration of the territorial unit of Chaudière-Appalaches (Western Part), Estrie and Centre-du-Québec.



2,000, do not wish to be part of the electoral district of Bécancour–Saurel–Odanak, since they do not share any economic, cultural, social or community affinity with it.

The Commission made this proposal to reduce the population deficit affecting the electoral district of Bécancour–Nicolet–Saurel; however, Mr. Plamondon pointed out that the population deficit affecting the riding should be reduced considerably in the next few years, as the region is on the verge of experiencing an economic boom due to the creation of a large number of permanent jobs, various infrastructure projects and housing developments. Six major plants are in development, with some projects representing investments of more than \$500 million. To house future workers, 500 lots will be de-zoned in the Bécancour region. This suggests the riding will have at least 5,000 more people in the next three years. Mr. Plamondon believes that it is not necessary to place three municipalities with a combined population of 2,000 into the riding to address the deviation from the electoral quota.

Mr. Plamondon's objection is supported by resolutions of the municipality of Val-Alain and the RCM of Lotbinière.

**The Committee supports Mr. Plamondon's objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.<sup>20</sup>**

#### **4. Island of Montréal**

Two Members objected to the electoral boundaries for the territorial unit of the Island of Montréal: Alexandre Boulerice, Member for Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie and the Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., Member for Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Sœurs.

##### **a) Alexandre Boulerice, the member for Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie**

Mr. Boulerice objected to the proposed boundary changes for all of the electoral districts on the Island of Montréal. He is of the opinion that some of the boundaries proposed in the Commission's Report are confusing, divide communities of interest and fail to respect the historical pattern of Montréal's ridings. Since he is of the opinion that the current boundaries of the 18 electoral districts on the Island of Montréal properly reflect Montréal's electoral composition and that the population variances between the Island's electoral districts do not undermine democratic representation, Mr. Boulerice suggested

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<sup>20</sup> Mr. Berthold, who is a member of the Committee, recused himself from the discussion and consideration of the territorial unit of Chaudière-Appalaches (Western Part), Estrie and Centre-du-Québec.



that the Commission maintain the status quo and not make any changes to the boundaries of Montréal’s electoral districts.

Mr. Boulerice argued that, in an effort to respond to concerns raised during the public hearings, the Commission published a final Report that proposes an “unpredictable”<sup>21</sup> and “artificial”<sup>22</sup> redistribution that does not respect communities of interest and that could cause confusion among Montrealers.

By way of example, Mr. Boulerice said that, following the testimony of councillor Craig Sauvé, who represents the Sud-Ouest borough of Montréal, the Commission proposed to keep the Shaughnessy Village neighbourhood in the same riding as the southwest area of Montréal, namely Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Sœurs. However, this solution comes with the suggestion of incorporating about half of the Saint-Henri neighbourhood into the electoral district of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce–Westmount. The Saint-Henri neighbourhood has belonged to the same riding since Confederation and, according to Mr. Boulerice, dividing this community of interest in such a way goes against the spirit of the arguments presented during the public hearings.

Mr. Boulerice also believes that the boundaries proposed for the electoral districts of Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Sœurs, Outremont, Lasalle-Verdun and Laurier–Sainte-Marie are not in any way logical or natural boundaries between the communities of interest. For example, taking part of Plateau-Mont-Royal and adding it to the riding of Outremont, when part of Old Montréal is being added to Laurier-Sainte-Marie, “creates something artificial that people will not be able to identify with.”<sup>23</sup>

Mr. Boulerice also said that some of the proposed riding names could be confusing for Montrealers if the boundaries were changed. By way of example, he mentioned the riding of Outremont, which would bear that name even though it would also include a large portion of the Plateau-Mont-Royal borough.

Mr. Boulerice said that the “domino effect”<sup>24</sup> of trying to reduce the deviation from the electoral quota in Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Sœurs on the surrounding ridings is disproportionate, since Montréal’s demographic weight within Quebec for the purposes of redistribution is the same as it was in 2012.

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21 PROC, *Evidence*, 28 March 2023, 1235 (Alexandre Boulerice, the member for Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie).

22 Ibid., 1200.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.



Mr. Boulerice said that he had discussed his proposal with other federal Members as well as provincial and municipal elected officials. Mr. Boulerice also said that he had collected, in Plateau-Mont Royal and in a single day, the signatures of 200 residents opposing the redistribution. Lastly, all of the elected officials in the Sud-Ouest borough signed a letter opposing the redistribution proposed in the Commission's Report.

**The Committee supports Mr. Boulerice's objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

**b) The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., the member for Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Sœurs**

Mr. Miller objected to the configuration of the southwest portion of the proposed riding of Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Sœurs in the Commission's Report. He said that the proposed redistribution divides the community of Saint-Henri in two, with half located in the proposed riding of Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Sœurs and the other half in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce–Westmount. Aware that his riding has seen the highest population growth in the province since the 2012 redistribution, Mr. Miller said he is willing to accept the loss of Old Montréal and the Old Port, a community of interest in itself.<sup>25</sup>

According to Mr. Miller, Saint-Henri is a unique community of interest with a long-standing cultural identity and a distinct socio-economic profile. It is served by a vibrant set of community organizations. Residents use the same businesses, government institutions and community organizations that are located in Little Burgundy and other Sud-Ouest boroughs.

Currently, the whole of St. Henri is represented by a single member at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. Federally, this community has remained intact for 40 years. According to Mr. Miller, the change proposed by the Commission would place an unnecessary burden on the already limited resources on community organizations to access federal support. Mr. Miller said that his objection is supported by municipal officials and community groups, including the Mayor of the borough of Sud-Ouest, Benoit Dorais.

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25 PROC, *Evidence*, 28 March 2023, 1220 (The Hon. Marc Miller, P.C., the member for Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Sœurs).

Mr. Miller said that the Ville-Marie highway (also called Route 136 and Highway 720) is a significant physical barrier for the residents of St. Marie, who would end up in the proposed riding of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce–Westmount.

**The Committee supports Mr. Miller’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

## **5. The Laurentians and Lanaudière**

One Member filed an objection to the electoral boundaries for the territorial subgroup of the Laurentians and Lanaudière: Jean-Denis Garon, the member for Mirabel.

### **a) Jean-Denis Garon, the member for Mirabel**

Mr. Garon objected to transferring the City of Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines from the electoral district of Mirabel to the electoral district of Rivière-du-Nord. He criticized the proposal for having been made without consultation and deplored the impact on the community of interest formed by Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines and municipalities in the riding of Mirabel.

Mr. Garon argued that the Commission did not consult with the community of Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines, since the redistribution presented in the initial Proposal did not affect this region. Consequently, no representative of this community attended the public hearings conducted by the Commission.

Mr. Garon also argued that Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines is part of a community that forms a political, economic and media community of interest within the current riding of Mirabel. This community of interest does not include the municipalities of the Rivière-du-Nord riding. For example, with respect to refugees, ABL Immigration serves Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines and Mirabel, but not the municipalities of the neighbouring riding. In the same vein, the Centre de Services scolaires des Mille-Îles serves these two cities, but not the municipalities of Rivière-du-Nord.

In addition, Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines is part of the Thérèse-De Blainville RCM, so it is attached economically, culturally and developmentally to municipalities in the riding of Mirabel. Mr. Garon brought up the wave of expropriations in the 1960s and 1970s that affected Mirabel and Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines and that is still causing issues in terms of agriculture, land use, urban planning and airport safety. The federal Member serving these cities must therefore stay on top of these issues.



Lastly, Mr. Garon argued that, from a strictly demographic point of view, there is no need for the City of Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines to be removed from the riding of Mirabel, as its reintregation affects the riding's deviation from the electoral quota by only about 2%.<sup>26</sup> As well, the City of Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines has a municipal by-law capping its population growth so that it remains a farming city. With urban development in the City of Mirabel also capped, Mr. Garon said it makes sense to keep them in the same riding for the next decade, as their growth is restricted.

The member for Rivière-du-Nord, Rhéal Fortin, supports Mr. Garon's objection. Mr. Garon's objection was accompanied by letters of support from Mr. Fortin; Julie Boivin, Mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines; and Lucie Lecours, MNA for Les Plaines.

**The Committee supports Mr. Garon's objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

## **B. Electoral district name changes**

Ten members filed objections to the proposed names of electoral districts in Quebec.

### **1. Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and Côte-Nord**

One Member filed an objection to the proposed name of an electoral district for the territorial unit of Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and Côte-Nord: Marilène Gill, the member for Manicouagan.

#### **a) Marilène Gill, the member for Manicouagan**

Ms. Gill objected to the proposal to rename the riding of Manicouagan "Côte-Nord–Kawawachikamach–Uapashke." As an alternative, she proposes the name "Côte-Nord–Nitassinan," for which she claims there is a strong consensus among residents of the riding, including the First Nations present on the territory.

Ms. Gill said that it was commendable that the Commission is seeking to highlight the presence of First Nations in the riding by including the terms "Kawawachikamach" and "Uapashke" in the proposed name, but she criticized the lack of consultation with the Innu and Naskapi Nations on their preferred names. She said that the word

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26 PROC, *Evidence*, 30 March 2023, 1155 (Jean-Denis Garon, the member for Mirabel).

“Nitassinan” is more appropriate as it’s an Innu word meaning “land” or “our land,” and basically refers to the same territory as “Côte-Nord.”<sup>27</sup>

As to why she was proposing the name “Côte-Nord–Nitassinan” instead of “Nitassinan–Côte-Nord,” Ms. Gill said it was simply a matter of alphabetical order. However, she said that she should not be the one to decide the issue, and that she was simply sharing her constituents’ opinions.<sup>28</sup>

Ms. Gill’s objection was accompanied by letters of support from the Caniapiscou RCM, the chiefs of the Innu Nation and the City of Port-Cartier. It was also accompanied by resolutions from the councils of several RCMs in the riding, namely the RCMs of Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent, La Haute-Côte-Nord, Manicouagan, Minganie and Sept-Rivières. Ms. Gill also said that all of the members for the adjoining ridings agree with the proposed name, although they are not greatly affected by the decision. Lastly, Ms. Gill distributed a survey to her constituents and just over 1,100 households supported the proposed name of “Côte-Nord–Nitassinan.”<sup>29</sup>

**The Committee supports Ms. Gill’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

## **2. Montmagny to Îles-de-la-Madeleine**

Two members filed objections to the proposed names of electoral districts for the territorial unit of Montmagny to Îles-de-la-Madeleine: Maxime Blanchette-Joncas, the member for Rimouski-Neigette–Témiscouata–Les Basques, and Bernard Généreux, the member for Montmagny–L’Islet–Kamouraska–Rivière-du-Loup.

### **a) Maxime Blanchette-Joncas, the member for Rimouski-Neigette–Témiscouata–Les Basques**

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas objected to the proposed name for the electoral district of Rimouski–La Matapédia (current electoral district of Rimouski-Neigette–Témiscouata–Les Basques), which he believes does not reflect the entire regional and territorial identity of the riding. He called on the Commission to choose a name that would fully reflect these identities.

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27 PROC, *Evidence*, 28 March 2023, 1120 (Marilène Gill, the member for Manicouagan).

28 Ibid., 1130.

29 Ibid., 1120.



**The Committee supports Mr. Blanchette-Joncas’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

**b) Bernard Généreux, the member for Montmagny–L’Islet–Kamouraska–Rivière-du-Loup**

Mr. Généreux objected to the proposed name change for the current electoral district of Montmagny–L’Islet–Kamouraska–Rivière-du-Loup. The proposed name is “Montmagny–Témiscouata–Kataskomiq.” He suggested instead renaming the electoral district “Côte-du-Sud–Rivière-du-Loup–Kataskomiq–Témiscouata.”

Mr. Généreux said that the name “Côte-du-Sud” would be more inclusive of the various RCMs in the riding than the name “Montmagny,” since “Côte-du-Sud” represents the Montmagny RCM as well as the neighbouring RCMs of L’Islet and Kamouraska. As to Rivière-du-Loup, he said that it’s the most populous city in the riding and is an important cultural, economic, touristic and industrial hub in the Lower St. Lawrence, representing 30% of the regional population, and that it should therefore be reflected in the name of the riding. Although his proposed name is longer than the one proposed in the Commission’s Report, Mr. Généreux said that it is a matter of respect for everyone living in the riding.<sup>30</sup>

Mr. Généreux said that his proposal was the result of consultations with current and former wardens and local mayors, as well as with the Rivière-du-Loup Chamber of Commerce and Tourism.

**The Committee supports Mr. Généreux’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

**3. Chaudière-Appalaches (Western Part), Estrie and Centre-du-Québec**

Two members filed objections to the names of electoral districts in the territorial unit of Chaudière-Appalaches (Western Part), Estrie and Centre-du-Québec: Luc Berthold, the member for Mégantic–L’Érable, and Louis Plamondon, the member for Bécancour–Nicolet–Saurel.

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30 PROC, *Evidence*, 23 March 2023, 1225 (Bernard Généreux, the member for Montmagny–L’Islet–Kamouraska–Rivière-du-Loup).

Mr. Berthold, who is a member of the Committee, recused himself from the discussion and consideration of the territorial unit of Chaudière-Appalaches (Western Part), Estrie and Centre-du-Québec.

**a) Luc Berthold, the member for Mégantic-L'Érable**

Mr. Berthold objected to the proposal to maintain the current name of the electoral district of Mégantic-L'Érable. He said that the name of the riding should be changed to Appalaches-Mégantic-L'Érable-Lotbinière to better reflect the four RCMs within its territory. He believes this change is important so that constituents can see themselves reflected in the name of the riding, especially since the member for that riding does not have the resources to open an office in each of the RCMs in that territory. A representative name is crucial for constituents to be able to easily identify their member.

With the riding stretching from the St. Lawrence River to the U.S. border, Mr. Berthold said that it was impossible to come up with a shorter name that would represent all the communities in the territory.

**The Committee supports Mr. Berthold's objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.<sup>31</sup>**

**b) Louis Plamondon, the member for Bécancour-Nicolet-Saurel**

Mr. Plamondon objected to the proposal to change the name of the current riding of Bécancour-Nicolet-Saurel to "Bécancour-Saurel-Odanak." According to him, there is a strong consensus that the three RCMs represented in the current name (Bécancour, Nicolet-Yamaska and Pierre-De Saurel) should remain in the riding name. However, Mr. Plamondon agreed that it is important that the name reflect the Wabanaki Nations. In consultation with the Odanak and Wôlinak Wabanaki Nations, Mr. Plamondon proposed that the electoral district be renamed "Aln8bak-Bécancour-Nicolet-Saurel"<sup>32</sup> or, alternatively, "Alnôbak-Bécancour-Nicolet-Saurel."

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31 Mr. Berthold, who is a member of the Committee, recused himself from the discussion and consideration of the territorial unit of Chaudière-Appalaches (Western Part), Estrie and Centre-du-Québec.

32 In a letter to Mr. Plamondon dated 10 January 2023, Denys Bernard, Director General of the Grand Council of the Waban-Aki Nation, said that the term "Aln8bak" translates to "human beings" or "Abenakis" in Aln8ba8dwaw8gan, the Abenaki language, and that the "8" is pronounced as a nasal "Ô" as in the sound "on."



As to the length of the proposed name, Mr. Plamondon said that he has found at least 25 federal ridings with names that long.

Mr. Plamondon's objection is supported by letters from the Grand Council of the Waban-Aki Nation, the Nicolet-Yamaska RCM and MNA for Nicolet–Bécancour Donald Martel and resolutions from the City of Nicolet, the City of Bécancour and the Village of Saint-Célestin.

**The Committee supports Mr. Plamondon's objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.<sup>33</sup>**

#### 4. Montérégie

Two members filed objections to the names of proposed electoral districts in the territorial unit of Montérégie: Stéphane Bergeron, the member for Montarville, and Claude DeBellefeuille, the member for Salaberry–Suroît.

##### a) Stéphane Bergeron, the member for Montarville

Mr. Bergeron objected to the proposed riding name of Montarville. He acknowledged that the current name of the riding is Montarville, and Montarville is the name proposed in both the Commission's initial Proposal and Report. However, it is his belief that the riding's name ought to better reflect the constituent communities of the proposed riding so as to be more inclusive and create a sense of shared belonging among all of the riding's constituents. He proposed that "Montarville" be replaced with "Mont-Saint-Bruno" and "L'Acadie" to form the electoral district of Mont-Saint-Bruno–L'Acadie or L'Acadie–Mont-Saint-Bruno.

Mr. Bergeron said that Mont-Saint-Bruno is a common geographic feature shared by three of the municipalities (i.e., Saint-Basile-le-Grand, Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville and Sainte-Julie) that compose the proposed riding of Montarville. It is a distinctive feature of the riding's landscape and can be easily seen by all who live in the riding. Further, Mont-Saint-Bruno is located within a popular national park and is widely known outside of the riding.

Moreover, Mr. Bergeron noted that the Acadie River is an important geographic feature within the proposed riding and links the city of Carignan and part of the city of Saint-

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<sup>33</sup> Mr. Berthold, who is a member of the Committee, recused himself from the discussion and consideration of the territorial unit of Chaudière-Appalaches (Western Part), Estrie and Centre-du-Québec.



Basile-le-Grand. Further, the name “Acadie” is a historic reference the Acadians who, upon their deportation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, settled in Montérégie and played an important role in its development. He added that a part of Carignan has been included in the proposed riding of Montarville against the objection of the municipality before the Commission. In his view, adding “L’Acadie” will give these residents a better sense of belonging in the new proposed riding.

Lastly, Mr. Bergeron said that Montarville as a single name for the riding is appropriate at the provincial level but not at the federal level because the federal riding is larger and encompasses more municipalities.

**The Committee supports Mr. Bergeron’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

#### **b) Claude DeBellefeuille, the member for Salaberry–Suroît**

Ms. DeBellefeuille objected to the proposed name change for the electoral district that is now Salaberry–Suroît to “Beauharnois–Soulanges.” Ms. DeBellefeuille deplored the fact that certain parts of the large territory covered by this electoral district are not included in the new riding name and suggested that the electoral district instead be called Beauharnois–Salaberry–Soulanges–Huntingdon. The name proposed by Ms. DeBellefeuille includes a reference to the Upper St. Lawrence area, where Huntingdon is located, and to Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, the most populous city in the riding. She added that “Soulanges” and “Huntingdon” correspond to the names of the provincial ridings covering this same territory, making things clearer for citizens.

Ms. DeBellefeuille pointed out that, during the public hearing in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield on 3 October 2022, many participants told the Commission how important the riding name was. She said that she was therefore shocked that the proposed name leaves out the names of some areas. She said that there is also some confusion among constituents in the municipalities of Soulanges, who sometimes contact the office of the member for Vaudreuil–Soulanges rather than that of Salaberry–Suroît.

Ms. DeBellefeuille’s objection was accompanied by letters of support from the Warden of the Haut-Saint-Laurent RCM and the Mayor of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. Ms. DeBellefeuille also consulted the Grand Chief of the Mohawk community of Akwesasne regarding the name of the riding; he did not wish to submit an Indigenous name for the riding.

**The Committee supports Ms. DeBellefeuille’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**



## 5. Island of Montréal

Three members filed objections to the names of proposed electoral districts in the territorial unit of the Island of Montréal: Anju Dhillon, the member for Dorval–Lachine–LaSalle, the Honourable David Lametti, P.C., the member for LaSalle–Émard–Verdun, and Soraya Martinez Ferrada, the member for Hochelaga.

### a) Anju Dhillon, the member for Dorval–Lachine–LaSalle

Ms. Dhillon objected to the proposal to change the name of the electoral district from Dorval–Lachine–Lasalle to “Dorval-Lachine.” The Commission’s initial Proposal suggested that the current name of the electoral district be retained.

Ms. Dhillon said that about half of the current population of the proposed riding of Dorval–Lachine live in LaSalle. In her view, removing the name “LaSalle” will adversely affect the sense of identity of many communities in LaSalle, who will not feel represented.

She also pointed out that the proposed electoral district of Lasalle–Verdun would include only 17,000 voters from LaSalle, while the proposed electoral district of Dorval–Lachine would include approximately 60,000 voters from that area. This discrepancy would create more confusion than already exists, as residents of LaSalle may be led to believe that the new electoral district of Lasalle–Verdun includes the entire area.

In addition, the communities that comprise LaSalle are ethnically and religiously diverse and most residents are visible minorities. Ms. Dhillon believes that removing LaSalle from the proposed riding name denies the existence of these communities.

**The Committee supports Ms. Dhillon’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

### b) The Honourable David Lametti, P.C., the member for LaSalle–Émard–Verdun

Mr. Lametti objected to the proposal to change the name of the electoral district from LaSalle–Émard–Verdun to Lasalle–Verdun. He believes that the current name of LaSalle–Émard–Verdun should be kept. Mr. Lametti based his objection on three aspects of the riding: its history, demographics and identity.

With respect to history, Mr. Lametti noted that “Émard” has been part of a federal riding name since 1987. In the 2012 redistribution, the name proposed for the riding now

known as LaSalle–Émard–Verdun, Lasalle–Verdun, was also criticized for dropping the name “Émard.” According to Mr. Lametti, dropping the name could confuse some constituents who may feel that they no longer belong in the riding.

As to demographics, Mr. Lametti said that, during the previous redistribution, the borough of LaSalle was split between two ridings: Dorval–Lachine–LaSalle and LaSalle–Émard–Verdun. Mr. Lametti argued that that decision caused a great deal of confusion among voters; even today, the members representing these two ridings receive calls from voters living in the neighbouring riding. While the Commission notes in its Report that keeping the name “LaSalle” in both ridings could cause confusion, Mr. Lametti finds it curious that the Commission would propose dropping “LaSalle” from the name of the riding of Dorval–Lachine–LaSalle, when that riding accounts for two-thirds of the constituents in the borough. In addition, the new electoral district of Lasalle–Verdun would include 17,000 voters from the borough of LaSalle, as opposed to 21,000 voters living in the area represented by the name “Émard.” Approximately 35% of voters in the riding live in Ville-Émard. While he is not opposed to keeping the name “Lasalle” in the name of his district, Mr. Lametti said that a greater number of voters would be represented by keeping the name “Émard.”

Lastly, with respect to identity, Mr. Lametti stressed that it is important to understand the nature of Émard as a community. While Émard was annexed by Montréal over a century ago, this historic community has never lost its distinctive character or identity. He believes that the geography of the area, surrounded by railroads, highways and waterways, has helped keep the community apart from the adjacent areas, forging a strong sense of community among residents. The community also has an industrial and immigration history distinct from that of Verdun and LaSalle.

Mr. Lametti’s objection is supported by the Sud-Est borough, including the borough’s Mayor, Benoit Dorais.

**The Committee supports Mr. Lametti’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

### **c) Soraya Martinez Ferrada, the member for Hochelaga**

Ms. Ferrada objected to the proposed riding name of Hochelaga. Although this is the current name of the riding, Ms. Ferrada does not believe the name Hochelaga adequately reflects the neighbourhoods that compose the riding. She proposed instead that the riding be named Hochelaga–Rosemont-Est. She argued that this name would be



more inclusive and representative to its residents and would give them a greater sense of belonging to their federal riding.

Ms. Ferrada said that about 25,000 residents live in the area bordered by Pie IX Boulevard, Lacordaire Street, Sherbrooke Street and Bélanger Street. In her view, this area is historically and administratively associated with the Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie borough rather than the neighbourhood of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

However, the proposed name of Hochelaga only makes reference to the neighbourhood of Hochelaga–Maisonneuve, not to Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie.

In her view, residents east of Pie IX Boulevard have no attachment to the name Hochelaga because, at the municipal and provincial levels, they are part of Rosemont. As such, these residents often mistakenly contact the member for Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie, instead of the Member for Hochelaga. Ms. Ferrada said that Alexandre Boulerice, the member for Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie, supports her objection, which he himself confirmed when he voiced his own objection during the same appearance before the Committee.<sup>34</sup>

In support of her objection, Ms. Ferrada also provided a historical account of the development of the eastern part of Rosemont.

Regarding the argument that names should not be repeated in the names of more than one riding to limit confusion, she gave several examples from across the country that prove the opposite: Edmonton Centre, Edmonton Manning and Edmonton–Mill Woods–Beaumont, Burnaby North–Seymour and Burnaby South, and Winnipeg Centre and Winnipeg North.

Ms. Ferrada said that, in October 2021, her office conducted a survey among residents as to their preferred name for the current federal riding of Hochelaga. 33% of respondents said that they preferred Hochelaga–Rosemont-Est above all others.

Further, many community organizations and public institutions have expressed their support for the name Hochelaga–Rosemont-Est, including the Corporation de développement communautaire de Rosemont, which represents all of the community organizations in the neighbourhood. Ms. Ferrada’s objection is also supported by the Mayor of the borough of Rosemont–La Petite Patrie, François Limoges.

**The Committee supports Ms. Ferrada’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec consider it favourably.**

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34 PROC, *Evidence*, 28 March 2023, 1200 (Alexandre Boulerice, the member for Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie).

## APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Maxime Blanchette-Joncas, M.P., Rimouski-Neigette— Témiscouata—Les Basques	2023/03/23	58
Bernard Généreux, M.P., Montmagny—L'Islet— Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup		
Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Gaspésie—Les Îles-de- la-Madeleine		
Kristina Michaud, M.P., Avignon—La Mitis—Matane— Matapédia		
Alexandre Boulerice, M.P., Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	2023/03/28	59
Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe, M.P., Lac-Saint-Jean		
Anju Dhillon, M.P., Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle		
Marilène Gill, M.P., Manicouagan		
Hon. David Lametti, P.C., M.P., LaSalle—Émard—Verdun		
Soraya Martinez Ferrada, M.P., Hochelaga		
Hon. Marc Miller, P.C., M.P., Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest— Île-des-Sœurs		
Mario Simard, M.P., Jonquière		
Stéphane Bergeron, M.P., Montarville	2023/03/30	60
Luc Berthold, M.P., Mégantic—L'Érable		
Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Compton— Stanstead		
Claude DeBellefeuille, M.P., Salaberry—Suroît		
Jean-Denis Garon, M.P., Mirabel		
Louis Plamondon, M.P., Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel		



# MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 58 to 60 and 68](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Bardish Chagger  
Chair





## **Report on the Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Québec: Conservative Dissenting Report**

This Dissenting Report reflects the views of the Conservative Members of Parliament who serve on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (“PROC”): MP John Nater (Vice Chair of the Committee, Perth—Wellington), MP Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L’Érable), MP Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe), and MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton).

### **Introduction**

PROC received eleven Notices of Objection in response to the Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Québec requesting electoral boundary changes (the “Boundary Objections”). In addition, PROC received 10 Notices of Objection requesting electoral boundary name changes (the “Name Objections”).

We respectfully disagree with the conclusions in the Report of PROC to support the objections of MPs Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean) and Mario Simard (Jonquière) (collectively referred to as the “Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean Objections”) and set out our objections in this Dissenting Report. We concur with the Report of PROC to support the objections of MPs Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L’Érable), the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau (Compton—Stanstead), and Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel) (collectively referred to as the Chaudière—Appalaches Objections) and wish to set out our observations. We take no position on the other Boundary Objections.

We concur with the Report of PROC to support the Name Objections. However, we wish to set out our observations in support of the Name Objections of MP Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L’Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup) and MP Berthold.

We note that MP Berthold recused himself from assessing his own objection and did not participate in drafting the parts of the Report of PROC or this Report that pertain to his riding.

### **The Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean Objections**

We respectfully defer to the manner in which the Commission drew the electoral boundaries in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region, including the configuration of the Jonquière—Alma riding.

It is our observation that the Commission had an unenviable task in drawing an electoral map in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. As the Commission noted in its Proposal, the region had “worrying demographics” with three of the four ridings in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and Côte-Nord regions seeing “their populations decline in absolute figures over the past 10 years.”<sup>1</sup> The Commission considered removing one of the three ridings in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. However, it observed that this would result in the two remaining ridings in Saguenay—Lac-

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<sup>1</sup> Proposal of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec, p.12

Saint-Jean having the highest populations in Québec. It would have also resulted in a “significant expansion” of the already vast Manicouagan riding.<sup>2</sup>

Another challenge for the Commission is that Jonquière and Chicoutimi-Le Fjord have populations significantly below the electoral quota for Québec. In the case of Chicoutimi-Le Fjord, the population exceeds the -25% threshold imposed by the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. E-3 (*ERBA*).<sup>3</sup> Having made the decision to maintain three ridings in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, the Commission needed to increase the population of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord to bring it within the threshold imposed by the *ERBA*. Beyond this, it is reasonable for the Commission to decide to reduce the disparities between the region’s three ridings. After all, as the Commission correctly noted, the “primary” requirement of effective representation, as determined by the Supreme Court of Canada, is population parity.<sup>4</sup>

On the low end, Chicoutimi—Le Fjord has a population of 80,593 while Jonquière has a population of 87,596. By contrast, Lac-Saint-Jean has a significantly larger population of 103,886, which is 23%, and 16% greater than Chicoutimi—Le Fjord and Jonquière respectively.<sup>5</sup> To address the disparities, it became necessary for the Commission to adjust the Lac-Saint-Jean riding.

The Commission initially proposed moving several communities within the Regional County Municipalities (“RCMs”) of Maria-Chapdelaine and Lac-Saint-Jean-Est from Lac-Saint-Jean to Jonquière. As the Commission acknowledged, “the proposal was not well received.”<sup>6</sup> Based upon the feedback that the Commission received during the consultation process, the Commission decided to transfer back to Lac-Saint-Jean the communities in the RCMs of Maria-Chapdelaine and Lac-Saint-Jean-Est, thereby keeping the RCMs united. Having decided this, the Commission had no practicable choice but to transfer another part of Lac-Saint-Jean to Jonquière to achieve relative population parity. The Commission decided to move Alma from Lac-Saint-Jean to the newly named riding of Jonquière—Alma.

We acknowledge that Saguenay and Lac-Saint-Jean are distinct regions, and that Jonquière is part of the Saguenay region, and Alma is part of the Lac-Saint-Jean region. However, boundary lines must be drawn somewhere. Given the Commission’s mandate, it seems that no matter how they drew these boundaries, it would leave some in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean unsatisfied. This is demonstrated by MPs Brunelle-Duceppe and Simard. Both MPs were unhappy with the Commission’s initial proposal and are likewise unhappy with the Commission’s final proposal. In short, there is no ideal solution for the region.

Assessing the reasonableness of the drawing of the Jonquière—Alma riding cannot be done in isolation and consideration must be given to the regional impact. Arguably, transferring Alma

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec, p.11

<sup>5</sup> Proposal of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec, p.12

<sup>6</sup> Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec, p.19

into the new riding of Jonquière—Alma is the “cleanest” adjustment that can be made in the region. Alma is one municipality. As a result, the Commission’s final proposal keeps RCMs and municipalities united, to the greatest extent possible. As the Commission noted, dividing the RCMs of Lac-Saint-Jean-Est and Maria-Chapdelaine in its initial proposal was “particularly” “not well received.”<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Alma is proximate to Jonquière, being only 42 km apart, and is approximately a 30-minute drive. Geographically, Jonquière—Alma is a workable riding to represent.

A key argument of MPs Brunelle-Duceppe and Simard is that from a representation standpoint, Alma will be disadvantaged in the new riding. At PROC, MP Brunelle-Duceppe argued that Alma would be negatively impacted because the town’s “political weight will shrink.”<sup>8</sup> MP Simard offered anecdotal evidence from a group of businesspeople who said that Alma was “poorly served”, because the then MP for Jonquière—Alma was “focused more on Jonquière than Alma and did not attend as many events there.”<sup>9</sup>

Respectfully, we find this argument to be unconvincing. Alma’s population as of 2021 is 30,331, representing approximately one third of the population of Jonquière—Alma. The population of Alma is sufficiently sizeable within the new riding to give it significant “clout” with whoever is elected as the MP for the new riding. Any MP who ignored the second largest municipality in their riding, which accounts for one-third of the population, would likely face political consequences.

We accept that whoever is the MP for the new riding may have a stronger connection with either Jonquière or Alma. However, this is hardly novel. Many MP’s represent ridings with multiple municipalities, sometimes spread over large geographic areas. It is natural that they might be more familiar with one part of their riding over another, at least initially upon being elected. However, the work of an MP is to bridge those gaps, by working their riding, and being accessible to constituents. In the case of Jonquière—Alma, the MP would have to become acquainted with only two main municipalities. In these circumstances, it is difficult to accept the argument that such an arrangement would in any meaningful way negate “effective representation” for either Jonquière or Alma.

We wish to note that the Report of PROC mentions twice that MP Richard Martel (Chicoutimi-Le Fjord) supported the Commission’s initial Proposal. It fails to mention that MP Martel also supports the Commission’s Final Report.<sup>10</sup> The failure to acknowledge this in the Report of PROC inaccurately suggests that MP Martel endorses the objections presented by MPs Brunelle-Duceppe and Simard, which he does not.

Taken together, we believe that the Commission should leave Jonquière—Alma intact.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.19

<sup>8</sup> Evidence, Procedure and House Affairs Committee, 28 March, 2023 (Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe)

<sup>9</sup> Evidence, Procedure and House Affairs Committee, 28 March, 2023 (Mario Simard)

<sup>10</sup> Paradis, Melissa. “Electoral redistribution sown controversy in Lac-Saint-Jean” *Radio Canada*, February 2, 2023

## The Chaudière—Appalaches Objections

We support the Chaudière—Appalaches Objections. Taken together, they are targeted, minor adjustments that will better keep communities of interest together, while respecting the principle of voter parity amongst ridings. It is noteworthy that these objections are collectively supported by all affected municipalities and MPs - the latter of whom are from three different political parties.

### Weedon, Lingwick, and Scotstown

We submit that Weedon, Lingwick, and Scotstown should be moved from Mégantic—L'Érable to Compton—Stanstead. The Commission's final proposal places these communities in a riding separate from the 11 other municipalities in the RCM of Haut-St-Francois, which are in Compton—Stanstead. The Commission has recognized that RCM's represent important communities of interest. To that end, the Commission has made efforts to keep RCMs united within the same riding, to the degree that this is possible, having regard for other factors, including the overriding principle of relative population parity.<sup>11</sup> An example of this is the adjustments made to Lac-Saint-Jean between the Commission's initial and final proposal. From this standpoint, we submit that Weedon, Lingwick, and Scotstown more appropriately belong in Compton—Stanstead.

Moreover, as noted by MP Bibeau, these communities are socially, economically, and culturally connected to other municipalities in Compton—Stanstead. Particularly, there are strong ties with Cookshire—Eaton and East Angus. In contrast, there is no meaningful connection between these communities and Thetford Mines, the municipality that is at the centre of Mégantic—L'Érable.<sup>12</sup>

Another relevant factor, which favours these communities returning to Compton—Stanstead is “the historical pattern of an electoral district”, pursuant to section 15(2)(b) of the *ERBA*. These communities have been part of Compton—Stanstead since the riding was established in 1996.<sup>13</sup>

The Commission has appropriately given significant weight towards achieving relative population parity amongst ridings. Moving these communities back to Compton—Stanstead does not upset that objective. Collectively, these communities have a population of 3,767.<sup>14</sup> With this adjustment, Compton—Stanstead would go from +0.6% to +5.5%, whereas Mégantic—L'Érable would go from -3.9% to -7.3% relative to the electoral quota for Québec. This is well within the range of the plus or minus 10% target the Commission set.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that the voter parity of Mégantic—L'Érable will be brought closer to the electoral quota,

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<sup>11</sup> Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec, p.10

<sup>12</sup> Evidence, Procedure and House Affairs Committee, 30 March, 2023 (Marie Claude Bibeau)

<sup>13</sup> Evidence, Municipality of Weedon Resolution No. 2023-031, p.1

<sup>14</sup> Evidence, Procedure and House Affairs Committee, 30 March, 2023 (Marie Claude Bibeau)

<sup>15</sup> Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Quebec, p.11

if Val-Alain, Leclercville and Villeroy are added to Mégantic—L'Érable as proposed in the Chaudière—Appalaches Objections.

### Villeroy

We respectfully submit that Villeroy be moved from Bécancour—Saurel—Odanek to Mégantic—L'Érable.

From a community of interest perspective, Villeroy is part of the RCM of L'Érable, and would be the only municipality in the RCM to not be situated in Mégantic—L'Érable. With a population of 484, returning Villeroy to Mégantic—L'Érable will have no meaningful impact on the deviation of either riding from the electoral quota. As such, Villeroy should be returned to Mégantic—L'Érable.<sup>16</sup>

### Leclercville and Val-Alain

We acknowledge that the Commission listened to and gave weight to the feedback that it received during the consultation period regarding the division of the RCM of Lotbinière. In our opinion, the division of the RCM of Lotbinière in the final proposal is a significant improvement from the initial proposal.

However, we submit that Leclercville and Val-Alain more appropriately fit within Mégantic—L'Érable, having regard for their ties to nearby communities in the RCM that are part of Mégantic—L'Érable. This is supported by the submissions of Councils of the RCM of Lotbinière, Leclercville, Val-Alain, and nearby municipalities in the RCM of Lotbinière. Collectively, the Councils of these municipalities request that the Leclercville and Val-Alain be moved to Mégantic—L'Érable. This transfer would also see that the RCM of Lotbinière be divided into two, rather than three federal ridings. This would be a desirable outcome for the RCM of Lotbinière and is consistent with the Commission's approach to keep RCMs united, where possible.

We concede that this adjustment would result in Bécancour—Saurel—Odanek being at -11.6% relative to the electoral quota, which falls outside of the Commission's population target of plus or minus 10%. However, the Commission has shown flexibility in departing from this target in the case of eight ridings, having regard for other factors in the *EBRA*. Being outside the target by a mere 1.6% is a modest departure. Moreover, such a deviation will likely be offset by anticipated population growth for Bécancour—Saurel—Odanek in the near future, bringing the population back within the Commission's target. This is detailed in MP Plamondon's objection and testimony at PROC.

### Proposed Name Changes

We respectfully ask the Commission to give favourable consideration to the name changes proposed by MPs Généreux and Berthold.

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<sup>16</sup> Evidence, Notice of Objection of Luc Berthold, p.1

With respect to MP Généreux’s proposal, Côte-du-Sud is a better descriptor of the region than Kamouraska, which is only one of three RCMs in the riding. Consistent with this, the name Côte-du-Sud has been adopted at the provincial level. Further, Rivière-du-Loup, being the largest municipality in the riding, is the economic, social, and cultural centre of the riding. As such, it should be included in the name of the riding.

With respect to MP Berthold’s proposal, we submit that the name “Appalaches—Mégantic—L’Érable—Lotbinière” is a better descriptor of the riding. We note in particular that approximately half of the RCM of Lotbinière, representing a sizeable population, has been moved into the riding. As such, it should be recognized in the name of the riding.

Respectfully submitted,

John Nater, MP, Vice-Chair  
Perth—Wellington

Luc Berthold, MP  
Mégantic—L’Érable

Blaine Calkins, MP  
Red Deer—Lacombe

Michael Cooper, MP  
St. Albert—Edmonton