



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

REPORT ON THE *REPORT OF THE FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FOR THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA, 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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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

FORTIETH 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 Alberta 2022* in accordance with section 22 of the Federal 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 ALBERTA, 2022

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),¹ 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 Alberta* (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,² 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

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 Alberta was tabled in the House of Commons, and referred to the Committee on 2 February 2023. By the end of the 30-day period, the clerk of the Committee had received five objections.

A. Electoral Boundary Changes

1. The Honourable Randy Boissonnault, P. C., the Member for Edmonton Centre

The Honourable Randy Boissonnault, P. C., the Member for Edmonton Centre, objected to the placement of the eastern portion of the northern boundary for the proposed riding of Edmonton Centre in the Commission's Report. Currently, and in the initial Proposal, Edmonton Centre's northern border follows the transportation corridor formed by the Yellowhead Highway and the Canadian National Railway. However, in its Report, the Commission has placed in Edmonton Centre three communities (i.e., Athlone, Calder and Kensington) that are to the north of this transportation corridor, and cut off by it from the rest of Edmonton Centre.

Mr. Boissonnault proposed that Athlone, Calder and Kensington instead be placed in the proposed riding of Edmonton Griesbach. In order to balance out the difference in population for Edmonton Centre, he proposed to add the communities of Parkview and Laurier Heights³ into Edmonton Centre from Edmonton Griesbach. He indicated that these two communities were well connected with the communities to their southwest, in that all border the North Saskatchewan River, share Community Leagues,⁴ schools, hockey rinks, and have been together in the same federal riding in since 2004.

Mr. Boissonnault indicated that the Yellowhead Highway has long served as a definitive human-made physical and psychological barrier in the City of Edmonton, and ought to be utilized as the northern boundary for Edmonton Centre. According to Mr. Boissonnault, drawing a northern boundary for Edmonton Centre above the Yellowhead Highway does not adequately consider the historical pattern of this electoral district, nor does it take into account the community of identity of the riding, as set out in section 15 of the EBRA.

Mr. Boissonnault indicated that the Yellowhead Highway:

- for almost four decades, has often served as a boundary between north and central Edmonton during federal electoral boundary readjustments;

3 Parkview and Laurier Heights is the area bordered to the north by the Mackenzie Ravine; to the south by Whitemud Drive; and lies to the east of 149 Street to the North Saskatchewan River.

4 In his testimony, Mr. Boissonnault explained that in the city of Edmonton, there are 160 registered associations that call themselves Community Leagues. All are volunteer run community-focused organizations.



- is utilized, for the most part, as the north-south provincial and municipal border for electoral districts;
- is the north-south boundary for postal codes;
- is the border between the north and central divisions for the Edmonton Public School districts;
- business organizations, such as the Kingsway Business Improvement Area, consider it a natural border, and
- is the border for all 18 neighbourhood Community Leagues in Edmonton that run along the highway.

Further, Mr. Boissonnault noted that the neighbourhoods north and south of the Yellowhead Highway have separate histories within the city, as they were developed at different times.

2. George Chahal, the Member for Calgary Skyview

George Chahal, the Member for Calgary Skyview objected to the configuration of the northeast portion of the proposed riding of Calgary McKnight. In the Commission's Report, for that riding, 96 Avenue Northeast (also called Airport Trail) is utilized as the northern boundary in the riding's northeast, as well as 80 Avenue Northeast (which is located to the south of 96 Ave. N.E.). The boundary that the Commission has proposed south from 96 Ave. N.E. to 80 Ave. N.E. is a walking and cycling pathway that lies between backyards of residential housing. As a result, certain neighbourhoods below and above 96 Ave. N.E. are split between the proposed ridings of Calgary McKnight and Calgary Skyview by a walking and cycling pathway.

Mr. Chahal objected to this configuration, proposing instead that the neighbourhoods south of 96 Ave. N.E. be placed in Calgary McKnight.

He stated that the Commission's configuration for the northeast portion of Calgary McKnight does not give full consideration to the community of interest and sense of belonging of the residents of Saddle Ridge/Savanna. According to Mr. Chahal, Saddle Ridge is one community that shares the same community association, recreation centre, schools, and places of worship. He noted that two provincial electoral ridings were divided by 96 Ave. N.E.

Further, he indicated that he believed this configuration would result in lower voter participation and engagement in Saddle Ridge/Savanna, and that voter turnout there was traditionally lower than in other major urban areas. He also noted that all entry points into the southeastern part of Saddle Ridge must be through Calgary McKnight.

He indicated that the unique character of the communities east of the Deerfoot Trail was acknowledged during the public hearings by local municipal representatives.

Mr. Chahal noted that his proposal would increase the population of Calgary McKnight by 8,530 and result in a riding of 131,678 people, making it the largest riding in Alberta, as its variance would be 14.3% above the province's electoral quota. However, he stated that, in this case, it was necessary and desirable to deviate from population parity. Further, in his view, the proposed riding of Calgary Skyview would, over the next decade, experience population growth that would make it the most populous riding in Alberta.

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

3. Gerald Soroka, the Member for Yellowhead

Gerald Soroka, the Member for Yellowhead, objected to the drawing of an eastern portion of the proposed riding of Jasper—Banff—Canmore.

In the initial Proposal, the Commission proposed to retain the riding name Yellowhead and it had placed all of Yellowhead County in this proposed riding. Mr. Soroka supported this proposed name and boundary configuration, and indicated that these proposals also had the support of the mayor and residents of Yellowhead County. However, in the Report, the Commission substantially changed the configuration of the proposed ridings in this area. They created a riding to the west of the City of Edmonton called Parkland, and placed the eastern part of Yellowhead County in Parkland, while placing the western part of Yellowhead County in Jasper—Banff—Canmore.

Mr. Soroka did not believe that the Commission had taken into account communities of interest in proposing the configuration for Jasper—Banff—Canmore. He noted that placed within this single riding were the disparate interests of Calgary residents, coal mining, forestry, and oil and gas industries, and national parks that focus on tourism.⁵

5 PROC, Evidence, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, Meeting 58, 23 March 2023, 1115 (Gerald Soroka, M.P., Yellowhead).



In order to keep the whole of Yellowhead County in the single riding of Jasper—Banff—Canmore, Mr. Soroka proposed several changes to the nearby ridings to balance out the population deviations.⁶ These were:

- In the Report's proposed riding of Parkland: remove Yellowhead County from Parkland and place it in Jasper—Banff—Canmore. Add to Parkland a larger portion of Lac Ste. Anne County from the riding of St. Albert—Sturgeon River. Mr. Soroka indicated that the Report contains confusing boundaries and that his proposal provides easier boundaries to follow. This would result in a population for Parkland of 115,124, versus 114,679 in the Report.
- In the Report's proposed riding of St. Albert—Sturgeon River: remove from St. Albert—Sturgeon River the communities he specifies in Lac Ste. Anne County and add them to Parkland. This would result in a population for St. Albert—Sturgeon River of 114,787, versus 121,306 in the Report.
- In the Report's proposed riding of Battle River—Crowfoot: add a specified portion of Mountain View County to Battle River—Crowfoot and remove it from the riding Ponoka—Didsbury Riding. This would result in a population for Battle River—Crowfoot of 116,567, versus 110,212 the Report.
- In the Report's proposed riding of Bow River: add a specified portion of Rocky View County and South of Mountain View County. This would result in a population for Bow River of 112,905, versus 112,763 the Report.

Mr. Soroka also noted that he was providing the Committee with letters written by several mayors from the area, in support of his objection.

The Committee supports Soroka's objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Alberta consider it favourably.

4. Arnold Viersen, the Member for Peace River—Westlock

Mr. Viersen objected to the configuration, in the Commission's Report, of the northwest portion of the proposed riding of Peace River—Westlock. In the Commission's initial

⁶ Mr. Soroka's objection contains a web link to an interactive map that provides exact details about his proposed riding configurations.

Proposal, the northwest portion of the boundary for Peace River—Westlock extends west to meet the provincial border with British Columbia. However, in the Report, the northwest portion of this boundary extends due north to the border with the Northwest Territories.

It is worth noting that Chris Warkentin, the Member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, filed the identical objection with the clerk of the Committee.

Both Mr. Viersen and Mr. Warkentin proposed the same two changes to the proposed western boundary of Peace River—Westlock/eastern boundary of Grande Prairie, for the Commission to consider:

- place Mackenzie County in its entirety in the proposed riding of Peace River—Westlock. This would reunite the county in the same federal riding. Further, a stronger community of interest exists between the Town of High Level and the Town of Peace River, than between High Level and the City of Grande Prairie. Mr. Viersen noted that this boundary configuration was suggested in the Commission’s initial Proposal.
- for Grande Prairie and its near communities, revert to the boundary configuration that exists currently between the ridings of Peace River—Westlock and Grande Prairie—Mackenzie. Mr. Viersen noted that the Commission is proposing to transfer communities that have a community of interest with Grande Prairie out of the proposed riding of Grande Prairie and into the proposed riding of Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Viersen stated that residents in Peace River—Westlock were largely content with the Commission’s initial Proposal, and as such, did not voice any objections to it. However, they object to the Commission’s Report, yet have no forum to voice their concerns except to the Committee, through him as their representative.

He stated that residents of northwest Alberta had close community ties with the towns and geographic areas in which they lived. He noted that Grande Prairie, Peace River and High Level all were distinct communities of interest. He also noted that the proposed riding configuration for Peace River—Westlock could create confusion among residents about where they vote in federal elections.

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



5. Chris Warkentin, the Member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie

Mr. Warkentin filed a written objection that is identical to the one filed by Mr. Viersen. As such, he proposed the same two changes as Mr. Viersen to the proposed eastern boundary of Grande Prairie/western boundary of Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Warkentin indicated that he and Mr. Viersen were in agreement that Mackenzie County should remain intact in a single federal riding.

Mr. Warkentin noted that, in the Commission's Report, Highway 58, a major east-west thoroughfare, was split into the two different ridings of Grande Prairie and Peace River—Westlock. He stated that Highway 58 is a connective roadway for First Nations communities who live in that region, and that dozens of small First Nations communities live along it. In his view, Highway 58 should be placed in a single federal riding.

In addition, he noted that a Member of Parliament needed to drive north about five hours to participate in the large community meetings held near Highway 58, and that it made more sense for a single Member of Parliament to represent the residents of that area, rather than two Members. He noted that provincially, the region was represented by a single Member of the Legislative Assembly, as was the case with the local municipal government.

Mr. Warkentin also indicated that in the Report, Sturgeon Lake, Crooked Creek and Goodwin were shifted from the proposed riding of Grande Prairie and into Peace River—Westlock. He stated that, under this proposal, those communities would be separated from Grand Prairie where they conducted their business. He stated that those three communities have close ties with Grande Prairie, as it is where they work and go to school.

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

B. Electoral District Name Changes

1. George Chahal, the Member for Calgary Skyview

Mr. Chahal objected to the proposed riding name of Calgary McKnight. He proposed instead that the name Calgary Skyview be retained, as the Calgary International airport was placed in Calgary McKnight in the Report but not in the Initial Proposal. He also noted that his constituency office was located in the proposed riding of Calgary

McKnight, which in his view would result in unnecessary transition costs to the House of Commons and create confusion for residents in the area.

In addition, to the alternative name of Calgary Skyview for the proposed riding name of Calgary McKnight, Mr. Chahal suggested other potential names for the Commission to consider to reflect the diversity of the area: Calgary Metis (after a major local road), Calgary Mandela (after a local high school) or Calgary Stoney.

He also suggested that the proposed riding of Calgary Skyview be named instead Calgary Country Hills (Country Hills is a major thoroughfare in central northeast Calgary) or Calgary Stoney (the Stoney Trail runs through the proposed riding).

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

2. Gerald Soroka, the Member for Yellowhead

Mr. Soroka objected to renaming the current riding of Yellowhead with the proposed name of Jasper—Banff—Canmore. His objection is based on the following reasons:

- the riding name Yellowhead was first use in a federal election in 1979 and is very familiar with its constituents;
- the name Yellowhead is a reference of historical and regional significance. It refers to the nickname given to the 19th-century explorer David Thompson, who spent a period stationed in Rocky Mountain House;
- the Rt. Hon. Joe Clarke was the Member for Yellowhead when he became prime minister in 1979; and
- the choice by the Commission of the towns that compose the proposed name of Jasper—Banff—Canmore has led some constituents to wonder why these town names were selected instead of other equally suitable communities encompassed in the proposed riding.

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

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
Hon. Randy Boissonnault, P.C., M.P., Edmonton Centre	2023/03/23	58
George Chahal, M.P., Calgary Skyview		
Gerald Soroka, M.P., Yellowhead		
Arnold Viersen, M.P., Peace River—Westlock		
Chris Warkentin, M.P., Grande Prairie—Mackenzie		

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 58 and 64](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Bardish Chagger
Chair

Report on the Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Alberta: 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 (Megantic-L’Erable), MP Blaine Calkins (Red Deer-Lacombe), and MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert-Edmonton).

Introduction

PROC received five Notices of Objection in response to the Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Alberta by MPs, the Honourable Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton-Centre), George Chahal (Calgary-Skyview), Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead), Arnold Viersen (Peace River-Westlock), and Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie-Mackenzie).

We respectfully disagree with the conclusions in the Report of PROC to support the objection of MP Chahal and set out our observations in this Dissenting Report. Although PROC did not support MP Boissonnault’s objection, and merely reported it back to the Commission, we wish to detail our opposition to the objection. We agree with the conclusions in the Report of PROC to support the objections of MPs Soroka, Viersen and Warkentin, however, we wish to offer our observations regarding these objections.

Error in the Report of PROC

We wish to note a factual error in the Report of PROC. With reference to the objection of MP Soroka, the Report of PROC reads:

“In the Report’s proposed riding of Battle River-Crowfoot: add a specified portion of Mountain View County to Battle River-Crowfoot and remove it from the riding Ponoka-Didsbury Riding. This would result in a population for Battle River-Crowfoot of 116,567, versus 110,212 the Report.”

That does not accurately reflect MP Soroka’s objection, which does not propose removing any part of Ponoka-Didsbury. Instead, MP Soroka proposes that an area south of Ponoka-Didsbury within Yellowhead be moved to Battle River-Crowfoot. His objection reads:

“Battle River-Crowfoot would need to be increased in size and add in Mountain View County south of the boundary of Ponoka-Didsbury Riding and east of Hwy 776 including the town of Carstairs. The new population would be 116,576 compared to 110,212 in the report.” [emphasis added]

The Boissonnault Objection

MP Boissonnault proposes that the communities of Athlone, Calder, and Kensington, situated north of the Yellowhead Trail, not be part of Edmonton-Centre. To adjust for the consequent

population loss, MP Boissonnault proposes that the communities of Laurier Heights and Parkview be moved to Edmonton-Centre from Edmonton-West.

We respectfully submit that the Commission appropriately drew Edmonton-Centre, including having regard for the historical pattern of an electoral district and communities of interest and identity.

Athlone, Calder, and Kensington are reasonably placed in Edmonton-Centre

We observe that the Commission's decision to include Athlone, Calder, and Kensington in Edmonton-Centre is reasonable and consistent with decades of precedent for these communities.

MP Boissonnault contends that Yellowhead Trail represents "one of the most definitive human-made geographic boundaries within Edmonton."¹ Therefore, he submits that it is inappropriate for Athlone, Calder, and Kensington to be part of Edmonton-Centre. However, these communities have a long history of being connected with communities south of Yellowhead Trail at the municipal and provincial level; communities that are also part of Edmonton-Centre.

For example, the City Council ward of Anirniq, which encompasses Athlone, Calder, and Kensington, includes five residential communities south of Yellowhead Trail, including Dovercourt, Inglewood, Prince Charles, Sherbrooke, and Woodcroft (all of which are in Edmonton-Centre). Together these communities have a sizeable population. This is contrary to MP Boissonnault's testimony at PROC, wherein he claimed that much of the ward south of the Yellowhead Trail is "industrial."² As such, MP Boissonnault's assertion that including Athlone, Calder, and Kensington in Edmonton-Centre would put these communities "in a federal riding that is separate from their...municipal representation" is inaccurate.³

For decades, prior to the establishment of Anirniq in 2021, Athlone, Calder, and Kensington, were part of Ward 2. This ward traversed Yellowhead Trail and included the aforementioned communities south of Yellowhead Trail.

At the provincial level, the constituency of Edmonton-Calder, which existed between 1993 and 2019, included communities on both sides of the Yellowhead Trail. That included at times all or some of the aforementioned communities south of the Yellowhead, as well as Athlone, Calder, and Kensington.

MP Boissonnault's claim that Yellowhead Trail "has been the northern boundary for different iterations of Edmonton-Centre" "for almost 40 years" is also inaccurate. Edmonton-Centre was drawn for the 2004 election.⁴ The previous iterations of Edmonton-Centre, namely, Edmonton-West (1997-2004), and Edmonton-Northwest (1988-1997), traversed Yellowhead Trail. In

¹ Evidence, Notice of Objection of Randy Boissonnault, p.1.

² Evidence, Procedure and House Affairs Committee, 23 March 2023 (Randy Boissonnault).

³ Evidence, Notice of Objection of Randy Boissonnault, p.2.

⁴ Ibid., p.1

fairness, the areas north of Yellowhead Trail in Edmonton-West and Edmonton-Northwest comprised largely of industry and farms.

More generally, there is plenty of precedent for federal, provincial, and municipal boundaries to traverse the Yellowhead Trail. For example, the provincial constituency of Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview takes in Beverly south of Yellowhead Trail and Clareview north Yellowhead Trail. The former federal ridings of Edmonton-North (1997-2004), and Edmonton-East (1997-2015), included communities on both sides of Yellowhead Trail. Numerous other examples can be cited.

No compelling argument to move Laurier Heights and Parkview into Edmonton-Centre

MP Boissonnault argues that Laurier Heights and Parkview should be moved into Edmonton-Centre from Edmonton-West, because they share “community leagues, schools and hockey rinks” with “the communities on the southwest border” of Edmonton-Centre.⁵ MP Boissonnault places a particular emphasis on supposed community league ties between Laurier Heights, Parkview, and Crestwood.

While Laurier Heights and Parkview share some connection with Crestwood, they also share a connection with neighbouring communities, including Lynwood and Jasper Park, which are in Edmonton-West. It should be noted that each of these communities has a separate community league. These and other community leagues are part of Zone E, which is divided between Edmonton-Centre and Edmonton-West. MP Boissonnault is not proposing to unite Zone E within Edmonton-Centre (nor are we recommending this). In short, we see no compelling argument that Laurier Heights and Parkview be moved into Edmonton-Centre because of a community of interest or identity connected to community leagues.

We further observe that the southern boundary of Edmonton-Centre, 95 Avenue, is also the boundary line for City Council wards. Crestwood, situated north of 95 Avenue, is in the Nakota Isga ward. Parkview, situated south of 95 Avenue, and Laurier Heights, are in the sipiwiyiniwak ward. Adjacent communities to Laurier Heights and Parkview, including Lynnwood and Jasper Park are also in the sipiwiyiniwak ward.

Moreover, MP Boissonnault’s proposal to move the communities of Laurier Heights and Parkview to Edmonton-Centre would result in a significant deviation for Edmonton-West, having regard for Alberta’s electoral quota. Edmonton-West’s population would be reduced by approximately 6,000 people. This loss would result in a deviation of approximately -7%. This would be by far the largest deviation among Edmonton ridings.⁶

Taken together, MP Boissonnault’s proposal to bring Laurier Heights and Parkview into Edmonton-Centre does not merit the population deviation that would result for Edmonton-West.

⁵ Evidence, Procedure and House Affairs Committee, 23 March 2023 (Randy Boissonnault).

⁶ Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Alberta, pp.29-30.

The Chahal Objection

MP Chahal proposes that the area south of 96 Avenue NE (Airport Trail) in Calgary-Skyview be moved to Calgary-McKnight. MP Chahal also proposes that Calgary-McKnight be renamed Calgary-Skyview.

We respectfully defer to Commission's configuration of the boundaries of Calgary-McKnight and Calgary-Skyview.

The Proposed Boundary Readjustment

We note that the Commission received numerous representations urging it to keep northeast Calgary together in two ridings with a third riding to be situated exclusively on the west side of Deerfoot Trail. After considering these submissions, the Commission concluded that this would result in a "substantial" cascading effect on other ridings in Calgary.⁷ The Commission nonetheless adjusted boundaries based on this input, including "adding more of the densely populated Saddle Ridge community to Calgary-McKnight" from Calgary-Skyview.⁸ Moving these more densely populated neighborhoods reflects that Calgary-McKnight consists of "the densely populated northeast sector of the city."⁹

We observe that the part of Saddle Ridge that MP Chahal objects to being part of Calgary-Skyview was included in Calgary-Skyview when the Commission released its proposal. Notwithstanding this, MP Chahal did not make a submission to the Commission during the consultation period, for which he had ample time.¹⁰

In any event, MP Chahal's proposal, if implemented, would result in a substantial deviation from the electoral quota for Calgary-McKnight of +14.3%. That represents a deviation that is approximately three-and-a-half times larger than the Calgary riding with the next largest deviation, Calgary-Centre at +4.63%.¹¹ It would also fall outside the plus or minus 10% deviation that the Commission set for the drawing of riding of boundaries.¹² This would make Calgary-McKnight the most populated riding in the province.

We acknowledge that the Commission does have latitude relative to population pursuant to the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. E-3 (the "EBRA"). However, as the Commission observed, "the overarching principle of the [EBRA] is to ensure that each electoral district 'shall, as close as reasonable possible, correspond to the electoral quota for the province,' having regard for the factors that the Commission must consider pursuant to section 15(1) of the EBRA."¹³ We note that the part of Saddle Ridge within Calgary-Skyview is a growing suburban community like other nearby communities within Calgary-Skyview. In the

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.15

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.15

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.13

¹⁰ Evidence, Procedure and House Affairs Committee, 23 March 2023 (George Chahal).

¹¹ Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Alberta, pp.29-30.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.11

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.6

circumstances, it is our opinion, that MP Chahal has not presented compelling reasons that would justify such a significant deviation from the electoral quota for the province.

The Proposed Name Change

In our opinion, Calgary-McKnight is appropriately named. As the Commission notes, McKnight Boulevard, a major roadway, runs through the middle of the riding from east to west.¹⁴

We also observe that the community of Skyview Ranch is in Calgary-Skyview. As such, renaming Calgary-McKnight as Calgary-Skyview is bound to cause confusion amongst residents.

The Soroka Objection

MP Soroka proposes that the entirety of Yellowhead County be placed within the Jasper-Banff-Canmore riding. To offset the consequent population increase, MP Soroka proposes changes to the neighbouring ridings of Parkland, St. Albert-Sturgeon River, Battle River-Crowfoot, and Bow River. MP Soroka also requests a name change from Jasper-Banff-Canmore to Yellowhead.

We respectfully submit that MP Soroka's proposal has merit.

Keeping Yellowhead County united is consistent with the *EBRA*

Having regard for section 15(1)(b) of the *EBRA*, Yellowhead County shares a common community of interest and identity that should be respected. This is supported by a letter to the Commission from the Mayor of Yellowhead County, Wade Williams, who has requested that Yellowhead County be united within one riding.¹⁵ The Mayor of Edson, Kevin Zahara, in his letter to the Commission, also cites the historical ties of Yellowhead communities, and Yellowhead County.¹⁶ Most of these communities are connected by a major transportation corridor, the Yellowhead Highway, and have strong economic and social ties. This is reinforced by being within or surrounded by the municipality that is Yellowhead County. Moreover, one school division, the Grande Yellowhead Public School Division serves Yellowhead County. We further note that Yellowhead County has been part of the same federal riding, since at least 1979.

We further observe that the eastern half of Yellowhead County, and eastern Yellowhead communities, including Evansburg and Entwistle, are more closely aligned with the rest of Yellowhead County, compared to Parkland County, and communities such as Spruce Grove and Stony Plain in the Parkland riding. The population base of the Parkland riding resides near Edmonton. The largest centres are Spruce Grove and Stony Plain, which can be characterized as bedroom communities of Edmonton. Moreover, Parkland County, Spruce Grove and Stony Plain, unlike Yellowhead County, are formally connected with the Edmonton region, being members of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board. Accordingly, as the President of the Evansburg Entwistle Chamber of Commerce, Terrance Smith, observes, the Commission's

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.13

¹⁵ Evidence, Letter of Wade Williams, Mayor of Yellowhead County, 16 February 2023.

¹⁶ Evidence, Letter of Kevin Zahara, Mayor of Edson, 3 March 2023.

report puts Evansburg and Entwistle “in a district that covers a larger urban area which would alter how we are represented.”¹⁷

The impact of the objection on other ridings

To adjust for the population increase to Jasper-Banff-Canmore, MP Soroka proposes adjustments to neighbouring ridings.

The most significant proposed adjustments are to the Parkland and St. Albert-Sturgeon River ridings. In short, St. Albert-Sturgeon River would lose the part of Lac Ste. Anne County that is situated west of the Pembina River to Parkland. Parkland would also gain part of Lac Ste. Anne County from Jasper-Banff-Canmore.

There are ties between the Lac Ste. Anne County, Parkland County, Spruce Grove and Stony Plain. They are linked by a major transportation corridor, Highway 43, which connects to the Yellowhead Highway. Spruce Grove and Stony Plain are service centres for Lac Ste. Anne County residents. We further note that MP Soroka’s objection is supported by MP Dane Lloyd, who currently represents the impacted parts of Lac Ste. Anne County.¹⁸

The proposed adjustments to the boundaries of Battle River-Crowfoot and Bow River are relatively minor. We believe they are consistent with section 15(1)(b) of the *EBRA*.

We further observe that the adjustments proposed by MP Soroka bring the population of each impacted riding closer to the electoral quota for Alberta.

The Proposed Name Change

We concur with MP Soroka’s request to change the name of the riding to Yellowhead for the reasons set out in his objection.

The Viersen and Warkentin Objections

MPs Viersen and Warkentin submitted identical objections. They propose that the Commission return to the Commission’s proposal as it applies to the division between the ridings of Grande Prairie and Peace River-Westlock (the “Original Proposal”).

We support the position of MPs Viersen and Warkentin.

Our Observations

As explained by MPs Viersen and Warkentin in their testimony at PROC, the Original Proposal better reflects communities of interest.

Uniting Mackenzie County within one federal riding better reflects communities of interest, having regard for: (1) a common municipal government; (2) one MLA who represents the

¹⁷ Evidence, Letter of Terrance Smith, President of Evansburg Entwistle Chamber of Commerce, 18 March 2023.

¹⁸ Objection to the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for Alberta by Gerald Soroka.

County; (3) common school districts; and (4) a regional hospital at High Level that services the County.¹⁹

The Original Proposal also unites Indigenous communities with common interests.²⁰

Moreover, the Town of High Level, which is surrounded by Mackenzie County, is more closely connected to the Town of Peace River than the City of Grande Prairie. In contrast, communities such as Crooked Creek, Goodwin and Sturgeon Lake are proximate to Grande Prairie. Many of its residents work and otherwise use services in Grande Prairie.²¹

The Commission's rationale for departing from the Original Proposal is to "reduce the discrepancy in size" between Peace River-Westlock and Grande Prairie.²² Significantly, however, both area MPs do not believe, by virtue of their objections, that this is an impediment to effectively represent residents.

Respectfully submitted,

John Nater, MP, Vice-Chair
Perth Wellington

Luc Berthold, MP
Megantic-L'Erable

Blaine Calkins, MP
Red Deer-Lacombe

Michael Cooper, MP
St. Albert-Edmonton

¹⁹ Evidence, Procedure and House Affairs Committee, 23 March 2023 (Chris Warkentin).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Alberta, p.25.

