

My name is Clark J. Seaman.

I am the Republican Committee Chairman of Hamilton County.

I write today in support of the existing Assembly redistricting maps, which I believe are drawn in accordance with the laws of this State, whereas the proposed IRC draft plan appears to be drawn in violation of the current law.

Under the State Constitution, the Assembly map should promote the maintenance of existing districts, pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities, and towns, and of communities of interest. Under the current map, Hamilton County is completely contained within the 118<sup>th</sup> Assembly District.

However, under the IRC's draft plan, Hamilton County is now split between the 115<sup>th</sup> and 118<sup>th</sup> Districts. It would seem that dividing up Hamilton County violates the principle of keeping counties intact.

Hamilton County is the core county of the Adirondack Region, yet the draft plan combines its Adirondack community with Cooperstown in the Catskills. A 5,000 plus community in the Adirondacks deserves to be kept intact to ensure its voice is consistent with the fact that it is one of the largest counties in the state and the only one without a stop light.

Under the Constitution, each district shall be as compact in form as practicable and consist of contiguous territory. In the current Assembly Map, the 118<sup>th</sup> Assembly District is as compactly drawn as possible. In the draft plan, the districts look like a jigsaw puzzle with Hamilton County divided in the middle.

Districts cannot be drawn to discourage competition or for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring incumbents. It would appear that the draft IRC map was drawn to disfavor incumbency since the current representative of the 118<sup>th</sup> District has been drawn out of his district and placed into another district. The current Assembly map is a better example of one that promotes competition and consistency in representation when compared to the IRC plan.

I hope the Commission will keep in mind that the invalidation of the Assembly Redistricting maps was based on a flawed process. The Court determined that the maps drawn by the NYS Legislature didn't follow the Constitutional process and didn't come from the Commission. However, the Assembly Maps drawn by the Legislature did a better job of respecting municipal boundaries, particularly County Boundaries in our area. Hamilton County should be treated as an important unit and kept intact. All the Hamilton County Towns have far more in common with each other than they do with Plattsburgh or Cooperstown, just as two examples of what happens in splitting the County up in the new maps.

As previously noted, Hamilton County is the only county without a traffic light. With a population of just over 5000, it is the least populated county east of the Mississippi. It is also one of only two Counties that is located wholly within the Adirondack Park BlueLine. With redistricting comes the risk that we can become the "unwanted stepchild" of any new district. Dividing the county in two creates the greater risk that we will become the "unwanted stepchildren" of two separate districts. I strongly urge the Commission to reconsider this plan and leave Hamilton County intact within the existing 118<sup>th</sup> District.

Questions for the Commission:

Can you please provide an outline of the input and meetings that took place prior to the release of the draft map on December 1, 2022?

How many times did the Commission meet prior to releasing a draft map?

How is this draft map different from the 2021 draft plan which was resoundingly rejected by the Legislature?

Can you outline the IRC's next steps between the conclusion of the public hearings and the release of the first plan which is expected in April of this year?