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November 24, 2021

Testimony to the Independent Redistricting Commission Submitted on Behalf of Lewis County

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Lawrence Dolhof, Chairman of the Lewis County Board of Legislators, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the residents of Lewis County.

Lewis County is home to 27,000 residents, and many more seasonal homeowners who enjoy the bountiful outdoor recreational opportunities in our community.

I write today to participate in New York's newly implemented independent redistricting process and the effects redistricting will have on our community.

As a small, rural community, Lewis County already struggles to be heard in Albany. Dividing our county into multiple legislative districts would dilute what little influence we have to affect policy in Albany. Between the DEC and the Adirondack Park Agency, over 60% of Lewis County is owned or controlled by the State of New York. It is essential that the voices of our people are effectively heard.

Maintaining the communities of Lewis County within a single legislative district would ensure our elected leaders understand our issues and are focused on advocating for them at the state and federal level. The continuity of these communities is critical to the ability of my community to provide services or receive assistance from my current representatives.

Of particular importance is Lewis County Health System, one of the few County-owned hospitals and health systems in the State. Nothing has been more impactful over the last year than the DOH's policies regarding health care systems and their employees. The ability to advocate directly and succinctly on behalf of the health system is of paramount importance to the financial health of the County government, as well as the economic health of the community as a whole.

Forcing Lewis County to generate advocacy from multiple representatives, each with a core electorate from a different city in the North Country, Central New York, or the Mohawk Valley would be extremely unfortunate. We believe that our current representation is fully committed to



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listening to our community's concerns; there is no reason to adjust the current districts in our County.

Thank you to the Independent Redistricting Commission for allowing Lewis County to submit testimony. On behalf of the Lewis County Board of Legislators, and the entire Lewis County community, we again ask that you consider the needs of rural communities like ours so that there may continue to be adequate and fair representation.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Dolhof
Chairman, Lewis County Board of Legislators