

ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

APRIL N.M. BASKIN
Chairwoman
2nd District Legislator



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January 18, 2022

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
250 Broadway, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10007

RE: CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING FOR BUFFALO/NIAGARA REGION

Honorable Commissioners:

It was an honor to testify before your commission last August. I know that in the Buffalo-Niagara region, much of the attention was focused in a few areas:

1. Strong opposition to any re-establishment of a district connecting any municipality within the Buffalo/Niagara Region to the city of Rochester and/or its surrounding communities (known in its 2003-2012 iteration as the "Earmuff" district); and
2. Strong support for the city of Buffalo to remain united in one single congressional district along with immediately surrounding suburban communities; and
3. Strong support for Niagara Falls to remain included within a district with the city of Buffalo.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to commission members for addressing our community's concerns. Despite not reaching agreement on a single set of maps, commissioners from both political parties proposed a map for the 26th Congressional District which met the above criteria.

As you know, the best congressional districts are compact and contiguous, combining residents of shared interests and communities of concern. The maps released on January 3, 2022 for the 26th Congressional District do an excellent job of meeting these criteria. Moreover, these districts, by maintaining inclusion of the city of Niagara Falls as well as the entirety of the cities of Buffalo and Lackawanna along with other first-ring Buffalo suburbs, ensure the maximum voting strength of persons of color.

Following this week's rejection of the January 3 maps by the State Legislature, we know that your commission will have another opportunity to draw maps for further legislative consideration. As Chair of the Erie County Legislature, I strongly encourage commissioners to draw a map once again for the 26th Congressional District that meets the three objectives numbered above, maintaining one compact, densely urban/suburban district that combines Niagara Falls and Buffalo, and does not connect the Buffalo/Niagara region to any areas in Monroe County. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "April Baskin".

April N. M. Baskin
Chair, Erie County Legislature

cc: Hon. Carl Heastie, Speaker, NYS Assembly (NYS Capitol, Albany, NY 12248)
Hon. Andrea Stewart Cousins, Maj Leader, NYS Senate (NYS Capitol, Albany, NY 12248)
Legislative Task Force on Redistricting, (250 Broadway, Ste. 2100, New York, NY 10007)