

Per Vermont Statutes Annotated 17 Sec. 1903(b), “the representative and senatorial districts shall be formed consistent with the following policies insofar as practicable:

- (1) preservation of existing political subdivision lines;
- (2) recognition and maintenance of patterns of geography, social interaction, trade, political ties, and common interests;
- (3) use of compact and contiguous territory.

In unanimous agreement, we find that the proposed adjustments to Shelburne’s legislative districts Chittenden 5-1 and 5-2 fail to meet these standards for the following reasons:

The Shelburne Road/ Route Seven corridor has been used as the principal line of division in establishing the town boundaries rather than the existing natural division of Munroe Brook. As a result the historic Village center is bisected, with east and west sides of the highway in separate districts. The Falls district is similarly divided between those who live on the north and south side of Falls Road. In addition, to better equalize the populations of the two districts, it is deemed necessary to carve out sections on the east side of Shelburne Road at both the north and south ends of the town. These actions split up neighborhoods and do not maintain the patterns of geography and social interaction referred to in (2) above resulting in confusion for residents. Furthermore, they do not further the goal referred to in (3) above for compact and contiguous territory.

Lake Champlain is an important feature of the Town of Shelburne and we feel it has benefitted from the broader representation afforded by being part of both districts whose legislators share in the responsibilities and communications related to its environmental health and future. The proposed boundaries place all of Shelburne’s considerable lakefront property in a single district (5-1). Again, this is driven by the Shelburne Road/Route Seven corridor as dividing line with no compelling rationale behind the change and without resulting in more compact or contiguous territory.

Finally, the current population size variable between Districts 5-1 (4,261) and 5-2 (4,250) is 11. The proposed population sizes, 4,282 and 4,229 respectively, will increase the variable to 53. Clearly, population equalization between the two districts will not be improved.

We therefore register our opposition to the proposed boundaries of Chittenden Districts 5-1 and 5-2 and request that the boundaries currently in existence be

maintained since they better address the underlying policies in the statute referenced above, and maintain the established historic patterns.

We further note that the boundary adjustments at issue are contained entirely within the Town of Shelburne and do not impact the eastern boundary shared with the Town of St. George, which is also part of District 5-2, nor with the Towns of South Burlington and Williston to the north or Charlotte and Hinesburg to the south. This is further evidence that there is no compelling reason to adjust the internal boundaries as proposed.

