

Jessi Tracy

From: Patricia Sabalis <patsabalis@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 4:25 AM
To: Redistricting2022
Subject: [External] Feedback from Underhill BCA on LAB Alternate Map

[External]

To: Vermont General Assembly
Office of Legislative Counsel
Ann: Reapportionment
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

The towns of Jericho and Underhill have comprised a single district (CHI-3) with two House representatives for many decades. Historically, this arrangement has worked well for the citizens of both towns. Except for one 6-year period, the voters of CHI-3 have elected a representative from Jericho and one from Underhill.

In its Adopted Map, the Legislative Apportionment Board (LAB) had proposed to divide the towns into two single-member districts: CHI-4 (which includes Underhill and a neighboring segment of Jericho) and CHI-7 (which includes the rest of Jericho). The Underhill Board of Civil Authority believes that the towns of Underhill and Jericho should remain in a single district as proposed by the LAB Alternate Map. In reaching this conclusion, the BCA is mindful of the policies for creating districts set forth in 17 V.S.A. §1903(b): “(1) preservation of existing political subdivision lines; (2) recognition and maintenance of patterns of geography, social interaction, trade, political ties, and common interests; and (3) use of compact and contiguous territory.”

Maintaining the single district for Underhill and Jericho obviously preserves existing political subdivision lines and uses compact and contiguous territory. It also recognizes patterns of social interaction, trade, political ties, and common interests. For example, the towns of Jericho and Underhill have funded and continue to jointly fund important services for the towns: (1) the Underhill-Jericho Fire Department, which has facilities in both towns and volunteer firefighters from both towns; (2) the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library, which is governed by Trustees from both towns and hosts forums and programs of interest for the residents of both towns; and (3) the Jericho Underhill Land Trust, which also has a Board of Trustees from both towns and has preserved important lands including Jericho’s Mobbs Farm and Mills Riverside Park, and Underhill’s Casey’s Hill and Tomasi Meadow where residents from the towns enjoy hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, and mountain biking.

Residents of Jericho and Underhill serve on the Board of Trustees of the Jericho Underhill Park District. Finally, the Jericho Underhill Water District also serves residents in both towns.

Jericho and Underhill residents organize and participate in annual events like the Memorial Day parade and Harvest Market weekend. For over 65 years, the Jericho and Underhill Boy Scout troop 627 has served children from both towns. The Girl Scouts troop also includes children from both towns. Children from Jericho and Underhill attend Browns River Middle School.

Underhill and Jericho residents shop and dine together at centrally located businesses along the Route 15 and Park Street corridor (eg., Jericho Market, the aptly named Jerihill Ace hardware store, Jacobs Family Market, Jericho Farmers Market, and Jericho Cafe and Tavern).

For all of these reasons, the Underhill BCA recommendation is the same as the recommendation of the Jericho BCA — the single, two-member district (CHI-3) should be preserved.

Sincerely,

Patricia Sabalis
Chair, Underhill Board of Civil Authority

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