

Board of Civil Authority Feedback for House Government Operations

Current District Configuration: Jamaica, Londonderry, Stratton, Weston, and Winhall

House Government Operations Proposed District: Andover, Jamaica, Londonderry and Weston

Rationale for leaving the District presented by House Government Operations:

The district presented by House Government Operations was considered using 4 criteria:

- 1) Chapter 11, §13, Vt. Constitution: "In establishing representative district, which shall afford equality of representation, the General Assembly shall seek to maintain geographical compactness and contiguity..."

Although there are significant shared boundaries between all of the Towns in the proposed district, the district looks compact on a map. The mountainous geography of the district creates some separation between towns that makes winter travel challenging.

- 2) 17 V.S.A. §1903 (b)(1) preservation of existing political subdivision lines.

Londonderry has School Choice at the High school level which is not the case in Andover or Jamaica. Weston is in the same school district as Londonderry. Andover and Jamaica are both in different school districts and Supervisory Unions. If "school choice" is not the prevailing norm in the district it puts Londonderry at a disadvantage because our Representative should advocate to maintain School Choice.

- 3) 17 V.S.A. §1903 (b)(2) recognition and maintenance of patterns of geography, social interaction, trade, political ties, and common interests.

The Gov Ops proposed District has substantial geological barriers which make winter travel between Andover and Jamaica challenging. There is a distinct lack of social interaction, trade, and political ties between Londonderry and Andover, and Jamaica to a degree. The clearest example of this is that Londonderry is in a different School District from Andover and Jamaica. Aside from being in a different School District, Londonderry is a part of a Non-operating School District for high school students which leaves Londonderry at a significant disadvantage if half of their district does not have School Choice. Although there is similarity around the Ski Resorts being an economic driver in the District, Londonderry is far more connected to the ski resorts to the South and West of Londonderry because of the geography and State Highways locations within the region. Andover is more connected to Okemo to the north. Shared resources such as Fire Departments, Rescue services or Trash disposal that are shared between Londonderry and Weston but not Andover or Jamaica.

- 4) 17 V.S.A. §1903 (b)(3) use of compact and contiguous territory.

The same comments about geography, means of travel and contiguous borders that were considered under criteria #1 are applicable to this standard in State Statute.

BCA Recommended District Configurations:

Option 1: Windham-Bennington-Windsor (Landgrove, Londonderry, Stratton, Weston, Winhall) single seat district

Options 2: Windham-Bennington-Windsor (Landgrove, Londonderry, Peru, Weston, Winhall)
single seat district

Rationale for the Districts being recommended by the BCA:

The Same 4 criteria were considered for the Districts being recommended by the BCA

- 1) Chapter 11, §13, Vt. Constitution: "In establishing representative district, which shall afford equality of representation, the General Assembly shall seek to maintain geographical compactness and contiguity..."

The Districts being recommended are geographically compact and each town has contiguous borders with other towns in the district. There are two major State Highways, one heading East-West and one heading North-South, that make travel between each of the Towns manageable year-round. The districts are bounded by mountainous terrain to the North, South, East, and West which is why the region is referred to as The Mountain Towns. Both Option 1 and Option 2 are made up of Towns generally considered to be in the Mountain Towns Region.

- 2) 17 V.S.A. §1903 (b)(1) preservation of existing political subdivision lines.

The recommended Districts keep the majority of the existing Windham-Bennington-Windsor Towns within the same representative district. In Option 1 there are 4 of the 5 towns in the current district remaining. In Option 2 the two additional towns of Peru and Landgrove are in the Taconic and Green School District with Londonderry and Weston. Most local elementary and middle school students within the Taconic and Green attend Flood Brook School in Londonderry. All the Towns in Option 1 and Option 2 are sending towns to Burr and Burton Academy, even if they are in different Supervisory Unions. All the towns within the proposed District have School Choice for at least a portion of their student population.

- 3) 17 V.S.A. §1903 (b)(2) recognition and maintenance of patterns of geography, social interaction, trade, political ties, and common interests.

The BCA's proposed districts recognize and maintain patterns of geography in that it groups The Mountain Towns together, is compact and has many contiguous border connections and easy means of travel within the district on State Highways. The following are all examples of social interaction, trade, political ties, and common interests for both the current Windham-Bennington-Windsor District and the districts being proposed here: The ski industry fuels the region's economy. Ski resorts in the area include Magic Mountain & Viking Nordic Center (Londonderry), Bromley Mountain and Wild Wings Nordic Center (Peru) and Stratton Mountain Resort (Winhall and Stratton). Stratton Mountain Resort is a major employer in our community. The surrounding towns act as the Bedroom Communities for many of Stratton's employees. The Resort owns and operates an employee housing facility in Londonderry. The JISP program for our student population is held at Stratton, Wild Wings and Bromley. Weston, Londonderry, Peru and Landgrove all share a transfer station. All the towns have school choice for at least part of their student population and Weston, Londonderry, Peru and Landgrove are in the same school district. Weston, Londonderry, Peru, Landgrove and Winhall are in the same supervisory union. Most high school students in the district attend Burr & Burton Academy which leads to shared transportation both with bussing and amongst families carpooling. This is an important factor when looking at Option 1 because Stratton and Winhall share student transportation resources despite being

in two different Supervisory Unions. School choice is a major economic driver for the region and draws families with children to become residents in the area. This trend is demonstrated by the significant increase in residential population in the current house district during the covid 19 real estate boom. The Mountain Towns region saw an increase in student counts, in particular in Winhall which has School Choice K-12. Local public and independent schools saw increased enrollment. Early childhood education and childcare programs in the region are centered in Londonderry, Weston and at Stratton Mountain Resort. Children from many neighboring towns utilize the following programs in the area: West River Montessori, The Little School, The Collaborative and Stratton Mountain Childcare. Londonderry has the only large grocery store which serves the Mountain Towns. There is a State Highway garage in Londonderry that covers most of the Mountain Town Region. Landgrove shares a zip code and post office with Londonderry and Peru is on Londonderry's mail delivery route. South Londonderry, Winhall and Stratton are on the same mail delivery route out of the South Londonderry Post Office. Landgrove shares fire protection with Londonderry. The Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad covers Weston, Londonderry, Landgrove and Peru. The Mountain Towns are all served by the Mountain Valley Medical Center in Londonderry. The Otis Clinic on Stratton Mountain also serves the area Town's healthcare needs. There is an emergency shelter at Flood Brook School in Londonderry that would serve all the Mountain Towns in the event of an emergency. Londonderry's Emergency Management coordinator has made a point of coordinating closely with other Mountain Town personnel during an emergency.

4) 17 V.S.A. §1903 (b)(3) use of compact and contiguous territory.

The same comments about the region being surrounding by mountain ranges, existing easy means of travel and ample contiguous borders that were considered under criteria #1 are applicable to this standard in State Statute.

Londonderry's BCA respectfully asks that you keep our Vermont House of Representatives District as intact as possible given the steep population increase that happened in our Community during the 2020 Census. That population increase, district wide, happened for a reason. We are an economic block driven by the ski resorts that surround us and the shared circumstance of having School Choice. The region known as the Mountain Towns has shared local resources and made decisions in consultation with one another for decades. Please respect the will of the people in our Community and create a District inclusive of the Towns that already function together as a unit. In a geographically isolated area Londonderry is the population center with the most resources available. School Choice exists in a minority of School Districts in the State yet is a unifying factor for our region. The outdoor recreation opportunities in all of our Towns drive our economy as a block of Towns. We want a House District that reflects the Mountain Town Community we live in everyday.