

January 26, 2022

To the Vermont House Government Operations Committee

From the Weston Vermont Board of Civil Authority

Re: Reapportionment

The Weston Board of Civil Authority has met and considered the proposed District MSR-4, which would combine Weston with Plymouth, Ludlow, and Andover, and also considered New-WDH-WDR, which would combine Weston with Andover, Londonderry, and Jamaica.

The Weston Board of Civil Authority proposes a different configuration of the House District. We propose combining the towns of Weston, Londonderry, Winhall, Stratton and Landgrove as shown on this table.

Town	Population (2020 census)
Weston	623
Londonderry	1,919
Landgrove	177
Winhall	1,182
Stratton	440
Total	4,341

Rationale for the BCA proposed House District:

The Weston Board of Civil Authority has been guided by the provision in the Vermont Constitution which reads *"In establishing representative districts, which shall afford equality of representation, the General Assembly shall seek to maintain geographical compactness and contiguity..."* – Chapter II, §13, Vt. Constitution

Further guidance is in Title 17, section 1903 – Periodic Apportionment; standards, states in part: *"...representative and senatorial districts shall be formed consistent with the following policies insofar as practicable: ... Recognition and maintenance of patterns of geography, social interaction, trade, political ties and common interests"*.

The five towns that make up the Weston BCA proposed House District are geographically compact and contiguous – and the proposed district meets these criteria of *geography, social interaction, trade, political ties and common interests"*.

Moreover, as the table shows, the population of the Weston BCA Recommended District is 4,341. This is within 0.1% of the idealized sized district of 4,287 and clearly meets the standard of "substantial equality".

The five towns of the Weston BCA proposed district are contiguous, geographically compact, afford equality of representation and share a common economy, services, schools, health care and public services.

- **Geography:** Weston's orientation is to the south, along the valley of the West River, which originates in Weston and Landgrove. The Weston BCA proposed district is compact and contiguous, connected by a state highway road network of Route 100 and Route 30.

- **Social interaction:** Primary health care for the five towns that comprise the proposed district is centered on the Mountain Valley Health Center in Londonderry. The Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad serves Weston, Landgrove, Londonderry, Winhall and Stratton.
- **Trade:** Londonderry, just south of and adjacent to Weston on Route 100, has a shopping center, grocery store, butcher shop, restaurants, liquor store and gas stations. It is the central retail center hub for Weston and the mountain towns.
- **Political ties:** There are close political ties between the towns in the BCA proposed district. Winhall shares a common border with Londonderry and along with Londonderry has been a part of the current Windham-Bennington-Windsor District along with Weston since the 2000 Census. Weston, Landgrove and Londonderry are closely allied in The Flood Brook Union School, which serves as the elementary school for the three towns. (Stratton and Winhall are served by the Winhall Mountain School.) All of the Weston BCA proposed district towns are school choice towns and send the majority of their secondary students to Burr and Burton Academy in Manchester.

Weston, Londonderry, Landgrove and Winhall are all members of the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union. Other Weston political ties include joint governance of the Londonderry Recycling Center and Transfer Station, which serves the Towns of Londonderry, Landgrove, and Weston, plus Peru and Windham. Weston, Londonderry, Winhall and Stratton are all members of the Windham Regional Planning Commission, and are also served by the economic development efforts of the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation.

There are no political ties between Weston and Ludlow or Plymouth.

- **Common interests:** Weston is a mountain resort/vacation town. About half of Weston's residences are second homes. Second homes are a common interest that unites the towns of the Weston BCA proposed district. In the 2010 census, about 42% of Londonderry's housing units fell into the second home category; 78% of Winhall's, 93% of Stratton's and 53% of Landgrove's. 2020 census housing data is not available, but given the recent real estate market boom, the number of second homes has undoubtedly grown.

This prevalence of second/seasonal homes in the towns of the mountain resort region means the people of the Weston BCA proposed district have a strong interest in outdoor recreation and the well-being and success of the Stratton Mountain Resort and the Magic Mountain Ski Area. Seasonal home construction, renovation, maintenance and service are the backbone of the area economy, as is retail trade (e.g., the Vermont Country Store) and the hospitality industry.

If a new district is to be created, we strongly urge that it connect Weston with Londonderry and other towns to the south, and that the idea of connecting Weston with Ludlow and Plymouth, be abandoned.

Thank you for your consideration.

For the Board of Civil Authority Wayne Granquist, Chair