



ALL INDIAN PUEBLO COUNCIL Office of the Chairman

Chairman Chandler Sanchez Vice Chairman Charlie Dorame Secretary/Treasurer Leroy Arquero

August 1, 2011

Co-Chairs of Legislative Redistricting Committee
Honorable Linda Lopez and
Honorable Mary Helen Garcia

Re: Honoring Pueblos' Request during August 3rd Congressional Redistricting Hearing

Dear Senator Lopez and Representative Garcia,

Greetings! On behalf of the All Indian Pueblo Council, I write to thank you for scheduling a full day meeting of the Redistricting Committee at Acoma Pueblo. In addition, I wanted to share with you some overarching principles that we believe are important for the committee to consider regarding the congressional redistricting concept maps.

As a backdrop to our comments, the Pueblos of New Mexico are constituents of every congressional district and of 10 Senate and 14 House Districts. Our members recognize the importance of participating in the redistricting process - especially given the historic electoral discrimination Native Americans have suffered in New Mexico. As you know, until 1962, not all Native Americans in New Mexico were allowed to vote, and just recently the federal court extended the consent decree in Sandoval County affecting the Pueblos and Tribes in that County because the ongoing violations of section 203 of the Voting Rights Act had still not been remedied despite 17 years of court oversight. Although Native Americans represent 9.4% of the State's population, we only represent 4 % of the State Representatives, 4.7% of the State Senators and have never had the opportunity to vote on or elect a Native American congressional representative in the general elections.

Governors of the AIPC reviewed the conceptual plans for the congressional districts discussed at the June 20, 2011 legislative redistricting committee meeting in Santa Fe. The Pueblos' individual leaders will provide specific feedback on the plans. Some of the overarching principles regarding congressional redistricting we wanted to convey in advance of the August 3, 2011 meeting are as follows:

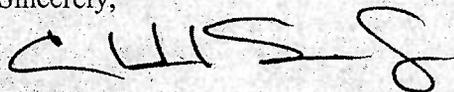
- The tribal governments within each of the congressional districts have extensive interaction with the federal government because of the trust responsibility. Accordingly, the relations that Pueblos develop with the congressional delegation are extremely important. Given the unique relationship Tribes have with the federal government, we hope that the redistricting committee will honor the individual tribal requests for inclusion in the three congressional districts.

- Only the Tribes can speak as to the communities of interest that impact them. In the 2001 redistricting, non-tribal interests attempted to state that they knew what was best for us.
- Regarding the congressional districts, you will likely hear from several of the Pueblos that they prefer to remain in the district they have been in for the last decade. Others may wish to enact some changes.
- The Pueblos do not believe that it is feasible, under classic redistricting principles, to place all Pueblos in a single district. Since it is impossible to create a majority Native American congressional district, it is not advisable to pack all the tribes into a single district because tribes have built communities of interest in each of the three districts. The individual Pueblo requests would likely lead to Pueblo representation in each of the three districts. We hope you honor those requests.
- Some Pueblos have sufficiently large enough lands or lands located along the boundaries, that they could be included in more than one congressional district. Since the Pueblo governments themselves are in the best position to determine whether their best interests are served by maintaining the reservation in a single district, or splitting the reservation into two districts, we hope you will honor any such requests to split the reservation or, conversely, to keep the reservations intact within one district.

As discussed above, these comments refer primarily to the Congressional concept plans that were unveiled in June. The Pueblo leadership will raise the specific Voting Rights Act issues that we believe will apply to the redistricting of the State Senate and State House districts at the August 3, 2011 meeting. We urge you to schedule a presentation on these Voting Rights Act legal concerns from our perspective during the hearing.

We respectfully request that you adopt the attached agenda which reflects the government to government nature of the hearing – providing a specific space for the Pueblo and Tribal perspective and leadership presentations. We look forward to our meeting with your committee on August 3, 2011 and to a productive working relationship with the committee and the Legislature during the redistricting process.

Sincerely,



Chandler Sanchez
Chairman

Attachment

cc: Governor Susana Martinez
Legislative Redistricting Committee
Speaker Ben Ray Lujan
President Pro Tem Jennings
Brian Sanderoff, Research and Polling
Pueblo Governors
Navajo Nation
Jicarilla Apache Tribe
Mescalero Apache Tribe

