

Colorado Reapportionment Commission

c/o Reapportionment Staff

1313 Sherman St., Office 122

Denver, CO 80203

BY email to:

June 16, 2011

Dear Members of the Reapportionment Commission:

As Mayor of the Town of New Castle, Colorado, I concur with the following statement, made by my colleague, Greg Russi. Please give our politically and culturally vibrant region the opportunity to keep working as well as it does presently;

"I believe it is extremely important that the Commission keep the boundaries of our 61st State House District similar to those which presently exist. I also believe it is extremely important that the Town of New Castle remain in the 61st House District. New Castle currently consists of Garfield County Precincts 13, 14, and 15.

The 61st House District has worked extremely well for its constituents in the past ten years. In the past ten years, we have elected one Republican, one Democrat, and another representative who finished her term as an Independent to the State General Assembly. It is divided evenly and fairly between voters of both parties and independents. Coloradans deserve competitive districts in the State Legislature. Local issues help hold our elected officials accountable to our needs, and in turn help create a more engaged public. Competitively drawn districts promote responsibility by legislators, and promote empowerment of citizens. A balanced district imitates the political landscape we now see in Colorado, and should be at the center of the reapportionment process.

New Castle (pop. approximately 4000) is a residential community whose residents work and shop primarily in Glenwood Springs. Most of our residents consider New Castle as a "bedroom community" or a suburb of Glenwood Springs. We read the same newspaper, work in the same offices, share the same community organizations, listen to the same radio stations, and shop in the same stores as our neighbors in Glenwood Springs and Carbondale. We are just eleven miles west of Glenwood Springs. We are essentially a part of the Glenwood Springs community, while our ties to the towns to the north and west of us are not as strong.

We are tied to Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, and Aspen by many communities of interest which we do not share with other parts of the State. We are members of the same transportation district, the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA), where we share transportation routes, regional planning, and regional funding mechanisms. We are the westernmost member of this District. The cities and towns to the west of us have

chosen not to be members of RFTA, but New Castle is an eager and active participant in our transportation district.

We share similar industries as the towns to the east of us, Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Basalt, and Aspen. While the gas extraction industry is very active to the west of our town, there is no active gas industry in New Castle, nor in the area to the north and east of our town. Our town's economy is much more focused on outdoors sporting, including the rafting, skiing, hiking, and camping opportunities for which Aspen, Carbondale, and Glenwood Springs are known. We are a gateway to the surrounding touring, camping, hiking, and fishing natural areas, including the Flat Tops Wilderness Area, which lies to the north of our Town. We are not an industrial base, as are the cities to the west of us.

Geologically, we are the western terminus of the Rocky Mountains, according to all Colorado biogeographical maps. Immediately to the west of us is the Grand Hogback, which separates the Rocky Mountains from the mesas and drier highlands to the west. This geology strongly effects the communities of interest in which we participate. As noted above, there is no natural gas drilling north and east of the Grand Hogback. The distinct geology and the industries it creates is the most natural division defining how we live our lives.

We believe that our interests are best served by being a part of the District which serves other mountain towns such as Gunnison, Crested Butte, Aspen, Basalt, Carbondale, and Glenwood Springs. We do not share nearly as many communities of interest with the counties to the north of us, such as Rio Blanco and Moffatt, which are more known for the cattle ranching and gas drilling industries which they encompass.

In short, the 61st House District is an area of similar interests. The mountain towns which comprise it, including New Castle, face similar economic concerns and political issues. I believe that western Colorado is best served by maintaining the 61st district as it was following the 2000 census. It has proved to be a very balanced district, producing leaders from both parties and independents who represent a discreet mountain town perspective. “ Greg Russi

Sincerely Yours,
Frank Breslin, mayor,
Town of New Castle

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Breslin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "F" and "B".