

September 21, 2025

Jamie Collins
151 SE 16th St.
Bend, OR 97702

District Mapping Advisory Committee
Deschutes County

Dear Members of the District Mapping Advisory Committee,

I am writing today with deep concern about the constraints that have been imposed upon your Committee by the current County Commission. As you well know, you have been asked to deliver a plan for five geographic districts under an accelerated timeline — a mandate so narrowly defined and rushed that it risks undermining both the quality of your work and the public's trust in this process.

The bottom line: What I have witnessed so far in your public meetings has left me deeply concerned for our shared future here in Deschutes County.

Before returning home to Bend with my family last fall, I served two years overseas on active duty with the U.S. Coast Guard, assigned to diplomatic and security work across Latin America and the Caribbean. In that role, I saw firsthand the ways that elected leaders — often under the guise of procedural efficiency or “technical adjustments” — attempted to limit debate, narrow the scope of reform, and constrain citizen participation in order to keep themselves in power. These tactics, though sometimes subtle, erode the foundations of democratic accountability.

I never expected to encounter echoes of those same tactics here in Deschutes County. Yet the accelerated timeline and artificially constrained mandate handed to this Committee by the current Commission bear troubling similarities: a process designed not to expand democratic participation, but to limit it; not to increase trust in government, but to consolidate political advantage.

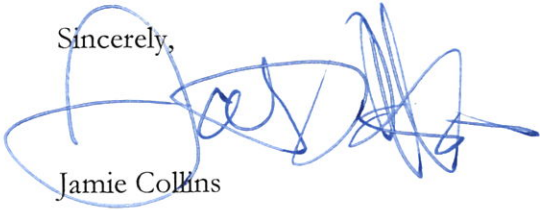
This is not the kind of democracy I served overseas to protect, and it is not what I came home to Bend to see replicated in my own community. Our county deserves a fair, transparent, and inclusive districting process that reflects the needs of all residents, not one that is manipulated to serve the interests of those already in power.

I strongly encourage the Committee to return to the Commission and urge them to broaden your mandate and extend your timeline. An expanded scope — such as allowing consideration of a blend of district-based and at-large seats — paired with a more deliberate process, would help ensure that your recommendations are not only technically sound but also truly reflective of the democratic principles that should guide this work.

I urge this Committee to resist being used as a tool for subversion. Your service is too important, and the stakes for the people of Deschutes County are too high. Please do everything in your power to insist upon a process that is deliberate, inclusive, and genuinely democratic.

Thank you for your work and for your commitment to representing the interests of the people of Deschutes County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Collins', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jamie Collins

Copy (by email):

Phil Chang, County Commissioner
Tony DeBone, County Commissioner
Patti Adair, County Commissioner