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News Release

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Redistricting Commission to unveil draft plans Sept. 13

Olympia — The Washington State Redistricting Commission has concluded its public forums and is generating first drafts of Commissioner plans for redrawing congressional and legislative districts statewide. The plans will be unveiled for the first time on Sept. 13, in Olympia. Development of the plans follows three months of input from the public about where the lines should go. The forums were conducted to help the Commissioners better understand the potential effects of changing the boundaries of legislative and congressional voting districts in those regions.

“I’m pleased to say that we heard from hundreds of people who gave us very thoughtful and useful feedback,” said Commission chair, Lura Powell. “It impressed me to see the time and effort many had taken to inform their opinions about redrawing district lines in their communities. This input is important to the work of the Commission as we develop new congressional and legislative district boundaries.”

From May through August, the Commission hosted 18 public forums statewide. About 1,000 people attended the forums in all. Attendance ranged from 25 people to more than 160, with average attendance around 50. In addition to the public testimony given at the forums, the Commission received more than 170 written comments by email, postal mail and comment forms. Staff mailed 38 “do-it-yourself” map kits and received 21 third-party plans by the August 15 deadline. All written comments received and the submitted third-party plans may be viewed on the Commission’s website, www.redistricting.wa.gov.

At its monthly meeting in Olympia, on September 13, 2011, the Commissioners will each make public their proposed plans for congressional and legislative districts. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. in Senate Hearing Room 1 of the Cherberg Building on the Capitol Campus. A brief period of public comment and a time for media questions will follow the Commissioners’ presentation of their draft plans. The meeting will be webcast and broadcast live by TVW, the state’s non-profit public affairs television network.

Draft plans available Sept. 13

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If you plan to attend the meeting and need auxiliary aids or services, including language interpretation, contact Heather Boe at 360-786-0770, or e-mail heather.boe@redistricting.wa.gov.

The unveiling of the plans marks the opening of the public comment period to collect peoples' reactions to the draft plans. Large-format versions of the plans will be on display in the Cherberg Building immediately following the meeting on Sept. 13 and will also be posted to the Commission's website by 2 p.m. that day. The Commission is taking comment on the draft plans through October 11. The comment period will wrap up with a public meeting in Olympia on Oct. 11. The Commission has set a goal of early November for release of the final congressional and legislative redistricting plan.

Washington voters established the Washington State Redistricting Commission in 1983 to ensure voting boundaries are established through a fair and bipartisan process. The Commission includes two Democrats and two Republicans as voting members and a non-voting, nonpartisan chair. Lura Powell, from Richland, serves as the Commission chair. Democratic appointees to the Commission are Tim Ceis, Seattle; and Dean Foster, Olympia. Republican members are former U.S. Sen. Slade Gorton, Bellevue; and Tom Huff, Gig Harbor.

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Redistricting Commission website: www.redistricting.wa.gov
Census Bureau: <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/>