



CITY OF CORNER BROOK

SUBMISSION

TO

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to present comments with respect to the proposed boundary changes to the electoral districts in Newfoundland and Labrador. As a Council we fully recognize the difficult task the Commission faces in balancing many competing objectives.

Our Council clearly understands the mandate of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. Our presentation today will focus on the proposed districts for Corner Brook and how we feel it will impact our constituents.

At the outset I would like to voice our opposition to the reduction of seats from forty-eight to forty. I believe the reduction of seats will have a detrimental impact on rural Newfoundland and particularly communities outside the Avalon Peninsula. It is our overall recommendation that the status quo of forty eight seats in the House of Assembly remain in place. Given that the Commission has submitted a proposal to divide the province into forty districts we submit the following feedback.

Under the proposed electoral boundaries districts the City of Corner Brook will be divided among three electoral districts:

- **Corner Brook District:** Corner Brook residents represent 100 % of the population of this district. This will certainly be advantageous for the residents in this district as constituents will have one member representing the concerns for Corner Brook residents only
- **Humber North District:** Corner Brook residents make up approximately 31% of the Humber North District which is a very small percentage of the overall district. The remainder of the district is made up of residents from the North Shore of the Bay of Islands (36%) and the Humber Valley area up to Pynns Brook(34%):

## Proposed Electoral District of Humber North

Number of Municipalities	Areas in square Kilometers	Population(Based on 2011 Census)	Percentage of Population of the Proposed District
Cox's Cove	7.21	660	5.5
Hughes Brook	1.60	231	1.9
Gillams	6.70	407	3.4
Irishtown-Summerside	11.89	1428	12
Mclvers	12.06	546	4.46
Meadows	3.79	649	5.5
Pasadena	49.16	3352	28
Steady Brook	1.22	408	3.4
Humber Village	4.37	177	1.5
Little Rapids	5.83	233	2
Pynns Brook	8.06	107	1

Humbermouth (CB East)		3664	31
Total Population*		<b>11,862</b>	
Land Area: 1,635 km2			

\*11, 862 Population calculated from 2011 census, variation from 12, 269 listed in legal description of Humber North as provided by the Commission

**Humber South- Bay St. George District:** Corner Brook residents represent close to 25% of the population of this district. The remainder of the district encompasses communities in the South Shore of the Bay of Islands (26%), Massey Drive (11%) and communities in the Bay St. George Region (38%).

## Proposed Electoral District of Humber South – St. George’s:

Number of Municipalities	Areas in square Kilometers	Population (Based on 2011 Census)	Percentage of Population of the Proposed District
Humber Arm South	65.06	1681	12.96
Lark Harbour	12.92	510	3.93
Mount Moriah	15.71	785	6.05
York Harbour	13.90	347	2.67
Bay St. George South	121.60	1229	9.47
St. George’s	25.83	1207	9.30
Stephenville Crossing	31.20	1875	14.45
Flat Bay	4.43	229	1.77
Mattis Point	6.49	129	0.99
St. Teresa	9.16	156	1.20
Black Duck	3.31	77	0.59
Barachois Brook	6.32	124	0.96
Journojs	---	---	---
Gallants	---	---	---
Massey Drive	2.48	1412	10.88
Curling	---	3,213	24.8
Total Population		12,976	
Total Land Area :		– Land Area: 8,240 km2	

## Analysis of the Proposed Districts:

Constituents look to their provincial government representatives to promote their interests through the legislative process and to provide assistance in the dealing with provincial bureaucracy. We believe the geographical area proposed for **Humber South – Bay St. George** is physically too large (total land area of 8,240 km2) and the community interest of the district is too diverse, particularly as it pertains to the Bay St. George area.

- Communities in the South Shore of the Bay of Islands make up approximately 26% of the district

- Massey Drive residents represent 11% of the district
- Corner Brook residents from the Curling Area represent 25% of the district
- The population of the Bay St. George Area make up approximately 35% of the district

The Curling area of Corner Brook along with the south shore area of the Bay of Islands has very *limited* links or ties with the Bay St. George area, and the areas of common connections are diverse between these communities. In terms of accessing government services residents in the Curling and Bay of Islands area access government services in the Corner Brook Area, while residents of Bay St. Georges utilize government services in the Stephenville area.

As it exists now under the existing forty eight district electoral structure we often find it difficult to be able to arrange meetings with the Premier or the district MHA given the many demands on their time. Given the larger geographical distribution of the Humber South - Bay St. George district the geographical distance will be even larger, which will make the MHA's less physically accessible to their constituent. The situation becomes even more challenging when you consider the adverse weather conditions we often face in our province.

As referenced earlier the community interest within the Humber South-Bay St. George district is very diverse from the Curling/Bay of Islands area. While the entire area is in Western Newfoundland the regional issues between Bay St. George and the Curling/Bay of Islands area are varied. ***In our opinion redefinition of this district makes sense from a geographical, economic and cultural perspective.***

While the various community interest found within the **Humber North** electoral district are fairly common, it is our recommendation that this district also be redistributed.

- Communities in the Humber Valley Area make up 34% of the district
- Communities in the North Shore of the Bay of Islands make up 32% of the district
- Corner Brook residents from the Humbermouth Area make up 30% of the district

We are very pleased to see a **“Corner Brook”** district in the proposed electoral boundaries as it will allow an MHA to solely dedicate their time to issues facing Corner Brook. As the regional service center for Western Newfoundland we believe it is important that an MHA is solely dedicated to Corner Brook, the largest municipality in Western Newfoundland. With a representative dedicated to Corner Brook this individual can better represent the needs of our community, and lobby for increased services and economic activity. We believe by strengthening Corner Brook as a regional services center, it will benefit all communities in Western Newfoundland.

In terms of the boundary alignment for Corner Brook we do however have concern as outlined below:

- the Corner Brook watershed lies outside our boundary
- Major industries important to our economic activity lie outside our boundary. These industries include:
  - Corner Brook Pulp and Paper,
  - two Business/Industrial Parks (Watson’s Pond and Country Road)
  - Corner Brook Port Corporation

Corner Brook’s early growth is largely attributed to the paper mill. The historical significance of the mill’s operations helped define Corner Brook as a City and continues to be a major employer in our community. We strongly feel the mill should be located with the electoral boundary of Corner Brook.

Having the mill, the industrial parks, and the Corner Brook Port Corporation situated in a district where the representation of Corner Brook constituents is a minority is alarming. We feel consideration should be given to redefining the boundaries so that these key industries remain in the Corner Brook boundary, or in a district where Corner Brook represents a majority of the district. I would also like to highlight that in reviewing the proposed electoral boundaries the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper building is in Humber North district and the mill yard for Corner Brook Pulp and Paper is in Humber South-Bay St. George district.

In addition, the Corner Brook watershed is also proposed to be located in the Humber South Bay-St. George District. Again, given the small percentage of the Corner Brook population in the Humber South Bay-St. George District we have concern with this situation. Given the importance of the watershed to our community it is important that the watershed be situated in a district with a majority representation of the Corner Brook population.

While we are pleased that residents of Corner Brook will continue to have three MHA represent residents of Corner Brook, we believe the allocation of Corner Brook residents in Humber North and Humber South-Bay St. George is too small in the respective regions. It will be very difficult for an MHA in Humber North and Humber South - Bay St. George to lobby for the Corner Brook residents in their district when the majority of the constituents in the respective districts are from outside the Corner Brook area.

**Recommendation:**

As outlined above as a Council we have some concerns with the alignment of the electoral districts as proposed

If an MHA is to have the time and resources to effectively represent their constituents we believe factors other than population should be taken into consideration including:

- The geography of the electoral district
- The number of kilometers of paved roads
- A constituents physical accessibility to their MHA and the MHA accessibility to constituents during the various seasons
- Commuting time to and from - Travel
- The availability of provincial government services in the constituency
- The number of municipalities, regional districts, and First Nations included within the electoral district
- The various community interest found within an electoral district, including ethnic, religious and cultural groups and the number of language spoken

There will always be competing struggle of achieving relative voter parity and ensuring effective representative when trying to predict trends in population growth and therefore the Commission should not be looking at population alone. While right to vote is important, it is not the only factor which should be taken into account when determining effective representation. In fact it is obvious that this factor has been taken into consideration given that the Electoral Boundaries Act mandates that the Commission divide the Labrador portion of the Province into four proposed districts taking into consideration their historical boundaries.

Currently the four proposed districts in Labrador have a very widely negative quotient deviation:

- Cartwright -L'Anse au Clair Quotient Deviation: -71.6%with a population of 3845 peoples and an area of 26,375 km<sup>2</sup>
- Torngat Mountains: Quotient Deviation: -73.8% with a population of 3,548 peoples and an area of 112,590 km<sup>2</sup>
- Labrador West: Quotient Deviation: -31.8% with a population of 9,238 peoples and an area of 60,370 km<sup>2</sup>
- Lake Melville: Quotient Deviation: -25.5% with a population of 10,097 and an area of 95,680 km<sup>2</sup>.

If special consideration can be granted to one region of the province it is only fair to factor in considerations to the entire province. Is it fair that a district with a population of 13,000 gets representation equal to that of a district 70% smaller? And those districts on the Island proper must be forced into a quotient that will have a disadvantageous affect to the communities and their surrounding areas. If the deviation is allowed for Labrador, it should be allowed for areas and communities to maintain deeply held economic, social and historical ties.

***In a 1991 ruling by Justice McLachlan as a member of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Saskatchewan reference case. She wrote:***

***“...deviations from absolute voter parity may be justified on the grounds of practical impossibility or; the provision of more effective representation. Beyond this, dilution of one citizen’s vote as compared; with another’s should not be countenanced. I adhere to the proposition asserted in Dixon, at p. 414, that “only those deviations should be admitted which can be justified on the ground that they; contribute to better government of the populace as a whole, giving due weight to regional issues; within the populace and geographic factors within the territory governed.”***

In determining boundaries it is important to consider the geographical region, the number of seats and the interest of the people of each region.

## **Recommendation # 1 – Status Quo of Existing 48 Electoral Districts**

## **Recommendation # 2 – Redistribution of the Humber South-Bay St. George and Humber North District**

It is recommended to redistribute the communities in the Humber South - Bay St George District and the Humber North district as a new district. **Consideration would have to be given to renaming this district, we would suggest the Humber Region.** The proposed realigned district would include the following communities:

- the Corner Brook population assigned to Humber South - Bay St. George District and Humber North District under the proposed new electoral district
- Communities on the south and north side of the Bay of islands

Communities in the Humber Valley area currently assigned to the Humber North district up to the southern Pasadena municipal boundary.

The District profile would be as follows:

Number of Municipalities	Areas in square Kilometers	Population Based on 2011 Census	Percentage of Population of the Proposed District
Humber Arm South	65.06	1681	11.3
Lark Harbour	12.92	510	3.93
Mount Moriah	15.71	785	5.3
York Harbour	13.90	347	2.3
Gallant	---	---	---
Cox's Cove	7.21	660	4.4
Hughes Brook	1.60	231	1.5
Gillams	6.70	407	2.7
Irishtown-Summerside	11.89	1428	9.6
Mclvers	12.06	546	3.7
Meadows	3.79	649	4.3
Steady Brook	1.22	408	2.7
Humber Village	4.37	177	1.2
Little Rapids	5.83	233	1.6
Humber Mouth	---	3664	24.5
Curling	---	3213	21.5
<b>Total Population:14,939</b>			

This represents a minimum population quotient deviant especially compared to districts in Labrador

- Corner Brook represents 46% of the district
- Bay of Islands represents 48% of the District
- Humber Valley represents 5% of the District

The rationale for this district is quite relevant given the strong history, geography, tourism and economic links of these communities and the strong area of community interest.

In 2016 Corner Brook will celebrate 60 years of unifying the four towns that formed Corner Brook. It has taken this long for residents from all four towns to see them as part of Corner Brook. To disconnect the area of Curling and Humbermouth from the greater Corner Brook area will amplify any lingering feeling of disconnect between Curling and the rest of Corner Brook. At least by amalgamating the Curling and Humbermouth areas in one district, it will strengthen and highlight the historical significance of these two areas of the City and their contribution to the development of Corner Brook.

Note: Under this configuration Massey Drive has not been allocated to any district. We would suggest it be allocated to the Corner Brook District in order to ensure both districts remain within the parameters of the population quotient as defined under the Electoral Boundaries Act.

## **CONCLUSION**

The City of Corner Brook has submitted two recommendations for the Commission's consideration; the prime recommendation being to maintain the status quo of forty-eight electoral districts. If the final decision is to amend the electoral districts the City of Corner Brook recommends alterations to the electoral district proposed for the Corner Brook area. We recommend two districts each of which would have the preponderance of population from Corner Brook and include city assets in a Corner Brook district. We feel it is important to ensure major Corner Brook industries are located in a district with majority Corner Brook representation. These industries include:

- Corner Brook Pulp and Paper
- The Corner Brook Port
- Watson's Pond Business Park
- Country Road Business Park

We also strongly feel that Corner Brook Watershed should be included in the district with the majority Corner Brook representation.

We would like to thank the Commission for the opportunity present our submission. We look forward to continue dialogue on this very important issue.



# APPENDIX 1

## MAP

### PROPOSED REALIGNED BOUNDARY

1. Lark Harbour
2. York Harbour
3. Humber Arm South
4. Mount Moriah
5. Corner Brook Part 1 (Curling)
6. Corner Brook Part 2 (Humbermouth)
7. Massey Drive
8. Gallants
9. Steady Brook
10. Little Rapids
11. Humber Village
12. Hughes Brook
13. Irishtown - Summerside
14. Meadows
15. Gillams
16. McIvers
17. Cox's Cove

