



November 23, 2021

Submitted via Email

Dear Commissioners,

We write to congratulate you on the success of your statewide hearings and remind you of the importance of also making the next stage of your mapping deliberations accessible to the public.

Our joint organizations wrote to you prior to the start of the hearings to urge you to broadcast your mapping deliberations. At that time, we understood that negotiations would not begin until after the public comment period had ended. Now that New Yorkers have let their voices be heard on redistricting, they deserve to have the opportunity to hear how those comments are being synthesized and debated by the Commission.

Making your negotiations accessible will give New Yorkers a greater understanding of the process for drawing new district lines and assure them of how reapportionment methods are being used. As noted in our prior letter, open meetings on mapping deliberations are not an uncommon practice for Commission-led redistricting efforts. Notably, the New York City Districting Commission held multiple public mapping meetings in 2012.

In addition to broadcasting mapping deliberations, our organizations urge you to come to a consensus on best maps for State Assembly, Senate, and Congressional districts. Although your Commission initially produced two sets of maps, our organizations believe that it is imperative for the Commission to collaboratively produce a single set of proposed maps to be sent to the legislature.

When voters voted to approve your Commission in 2014, they did so with the hope that it would be independent of the incumbent legislature and curtail extreme partisan gerrymandering. A failure of the Commission to vote on maps risks handing over the authority to draw district lines to the legislature at the expense of New York State residents.

Thousands of New Yorkers have submitted public comments and presented testimony at your summer listening sessions and fall hearings, now it is time for you to take those comments and publicly discuss the prioritization of communities of interest in relation to population, demographic data, and the state constitutional mandates for line drawing. New Yorkers are counting on you to imbibe confidence in this untested process by openly discussing public feedback and constitutional requirements for fair district lines, and coming to a clear consensus on maps to be sent to the legislature for approval.

We look forward to seeing your public deliberations.

Sincerely,

Laura Ladd Bierman
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Voters of New York
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Citizens Union of the
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