

Message from the Council on Provincial Electoral Boundaries

We need to have effective representation by our provincial government.

When considering the size of the constituency, population should not be the only factor. There are other very important factors such as geography, community interests, community identity, and fair representation from the rural area when determining the electoral boundaries.

Equal (by population), does not translate into effective.

Our municipality alone (not including our neighbouring communities that make up our constituency) is larger than the entire province of Prince Edward Island. How big do we want our rural constituencies to be? It takes some rural MLAs many hours to drive from one end of their constituency to the other. People want to have a personal touch with their MLA. They want to see their representatives at functions such as parades, Canada Day festivities, school functions, sports functions, hospital functions, and graduations to name a few. Rural MLAs have many of these to attend, and many times, several in one day. There are some urban MLAs who do not have these events to attend.

The average size of a constituency is 49,888. The Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency is about 19% below average. This is reasonable when you take into consideration that this constituency – the boundaries of which are the Municipal District of Bonnyville – also has three urban centres; the City of Cold Lake, the Town of Bonnyville, and the Village of Glendon; four hamlets, three First Nations and two Metis Settlements. Even if constituencies have 25% less population than the average, their boundaries should not be altered.

We do not want hybrid constituencies – when part of a rural is combined with an urban. This way the rural have less of a voice. Edmonton has 19 seats, while Calgary has 25 seats. This is over half of the 87 seats in the legislature. When you take in cities like Red Deer, Lethbridge, and others, the rural are under- represented already. Perhaps we should combine some of the urban constituencies – some MLAs can go from one end to the other in minutes.

Some will argue that people can stay in touch by means of technology. But there are many areas, especially in northern Alberta, where people do not have access to high speed internet. Rural Albertans want their MLA attending functions, not just having something read from an e-mail.

Deputy Reeve Mike Krywiak
Reeve Ed Rondeau