

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION SUBMITS PROPOSALS
FOR CARIBOO-THOMPSON ELECTORAL DISTRICTS**

VANCOUVER – The B.C. Electoral Boundaries Commission today submitted to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly a 454-page preliminary report that includes proposals for new electoral district areas, boundaries and names for the Cariboo-Thompson.

“Our goal was to propose electoral districts that provide effective representation in the Legislative Assembly for all British Columbians,” Justice Bruce Cohen, commission chair, said. “In examining Cariboo-Thompson’s electoral districts, the commission considered many important factors, including population shifts, the different needs of urban and rural residents and regional community interests.”

In proposing boundaries, the commission is required, by law, to achieve representation by population but to deviate from that to reflect the province’s history and geography, its growth, the distribution of population, community interests as well as transportation and communication challenges.

Following consideration of the required criteria, the commission proposes four Cariboo-Thompson electoral districts under the current single-member-plurality voting system, down from five, and one electoral district under the proposed BC-STV electoral district system. The proposed BC-STV districts would have four Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs).

“During our public consultations, some people said splitting Williams Lake was not a welcome decision while some residents of communities west of Kamloops expressed frustration at having to travel to Williams Lake to meet with their MLA,” Justice Cohen added. “The commission has made proposals that address these concerns.”

The commission will hold public hearings in Williams Lake on Oct. 22, Kamloops on Oct. 23 and Merritt on Oct. 24 so members of the public can comment on the electoral-boundary proposals. Information on the hearings can be found at www.bc-ebc.ca

Province-wide, the B.C. Electoral Boundaries Commission has proposed an increase of two electoral districts, bringing the proposed number to 81. The commission has also proposed boundaries for 20 B.C. single transferable vote (BC-STV) electoral districts with between two and six members for a total of 81 MLAs.

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Backgrounder attached

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Proposed Cariboo-Thompson Electoral Districts August 2007 Backgrounder

Media Note: Information presented in this media backgrounder is for the sole purpose of providing the media with a quick reference guide and is not intended to comprehensively cover all of the details and subtleties of the commission's report. For a copy of the report, maps and more information on the proposed electoral districts, visit the commission's web site at www.bc-ebc.ca

Background

The province is currently divided into 79 electoral districts. One representative (member of the legislative assembly or MLA) elected from each district sits in the Legislative Assembly in Victoria.

The number of people one MLA should represent is determined by taking the total population of the province and dividing it by the current number of MLAs: 4,113,487 (B.C. population – 2006 Census) ÷ 79 (current number of MLAs) = 52,069 people per MLA. This result is called the provincial electoral quotient.

Under B.C. law, the number of people in an electoral district can be as much as 25 percent higher or 25 percent lower than the electoral quotient. This is called the deviation. In very special circumstances, like those that can occur in remote areas where there are large areas of land and very few residents, the deviation can be more than plus or minus 25 percent.

Cariboo-Thomson Regional Summary

The region the commission defined as the Cariboo-Thompson currently has five electoral districts:

- Cariboo North
- Cariboo South
- Yale-Lillooet
- Kamloops
- Kamloops-North Thompson

The Cariboo-Thompson is a complex and diverse region with a rich history. In reality, this area is actually made up of several distinct regions: to the north, the Cariboo; to the west, the Chilcotin; to the south, the Southern Interior, the Fraser Canyon, and the Similkameen; and to the northeast, the two Thompson River valleys.

In examining Cariboo-Thompson’s electoral districts, the commission considered many important factors, including population shifts, the different needs of urban and rural residents, and regional community interests.

Aside from the two current Kamloops-based electoral districts whose populations are close to the provincial electoral quotient, the other three electoral districts in the region fall below the minimum population levels required by law with deviations ranging from minus 28 percent to minus 34 percent. Even by dividing Kamloops between three electoral districts—which the commission felt was an unacceptable option—the average deviation among all five districts would still be minus 20 percent.

Therefore, the commission has concluded that the population of the Cariboo-Thompson region cannot support five electoral districts. Its regional population of 189,128 is much more appropriate to four electoral districts.

Cariboo-Thompson SMP Electoral Districts

Electoral District	Sq. km.	Population	Deviation*
Cariboo-Chilcotin	75,184	45,104	-11.2%
Cariboo-Fraser	35,477	42,170	-17%
Kamloops-South Thompson	3,854	51,812	+2%
Kamloops-North Thompson	21,694	50,042	-1.5%

- based on 81 electoral districts, with a provincial electoral quotient of 50,784

Cariboo-Thompson BC-STV Electoral District

Proposed SMP districts	Area in sq. km.	Population	Deviation
Cariboo-Chilcotin	75,184	45,104	-11.2%
Cariboo-Fraser	35,477	42,170	-17%
Kamloops-South Thompson	3,854	51,812	+2%
Kamloops-North Thompson	21,694	50,042	-1.5%
Number of MLAs: 4	136,209	189,128	-6.7%