

Written Submission

on the 2025 Electoral Boundaries Commission Interim Report

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Submission/Message

The Northwest Territories has a population of 44,731, which is significantly smaller than the average population per riding for MLAs in other parts of Canada (40,000–100,000 people). While the Commission has proposed increasing the number of electoral districts to address representation disparities, it is important to consider the economic implications of adding more districts and a declining population. As a small territory with an unstable economy, increasing the number of districts may lead to higher administrative costs, including salaries for additional MLAs, operational expenses, staffing and infrastructure needs. This could place a significant financial strain on the territory's limited resources.

Maintaining the current 19 district model would be more practical and cost effective. This approach would help balance the need for effective representation while avoiding unnecessary financial burdens.

Additionally, the Commission has proposed renaming some districts to better reflect Indigenous languages, culture, and geography. While this is a meaningful gesture, it is important to consider the costs associated with renaming districts, such as updating maps, signage, official documents, and communication materials. Keeping the current names of districts would save money and ensure a smoother transition to any new boundaries, avoiding confusion among residents and reducing administrative expenses. Changing district names can also be very challenging because some boundaries are not clearly defined. Indigenous languages and dialects vary across regions, and names can have different meanings. One example of this complexity is the ongoing discussion around changing the name of Great Slave Lake. Reaching agreement on appropriate names could be a long and difficult process.

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In conclusion, given the small population and economic challenges of the Northwest Territories, it may be more practical to retain the current number of districts and their names, while making minor adjustments to boundaries to address representation disparities maybe in Yellowknife. This approach would be more cost effective and ensure that resources are allocated to other pressing needs in the territory. I recommend no changes at this time, as I believe all ridings, including Yellowknife and Ingraham Trail, are currently represented fairly and appropriately.