

*SUBMISSION TO:*  
**LA COMMISSION DE LA REPRÉSENTATION ÉLECTORALE**

*CONCERNING:*  
**PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ELECTORAL MAP**

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Let me begin by extending my gratitude to the Commission for providing this opportunity to present my views.

In reviewing the proposal of the Commission, I began with a belief that the delimitation of ridings had a disparity particular to the issue of rural communities versus urban centres. Specifically, that ridings in regions far from urban centres would be provided representation with a much smaller quantity of electors thus allowing the voice of the rural elector to have greater influence in the National Assembly.

Continuing the review of the proposal dispelled my initial belief. The magnitude of the effort to meet the requirements of the election act is impressive, to say the least.

However, reviewing the proposal and the Election Act together caused me to realize that regardless of the effort, the Commission cannot meet its guiding principle of “*equality of the votes of electors*” in seeking a delimitation that provides effective representation because, the requirements of the process itself are flawed.

The requirement of the Election Act that the quantity of electors in a riding may deviate by  $\pm 25\%$  of the average is the main flaw. In Section 16, the Election Act simply states the number, without providing justification or referring to any study by the provincial government to substantiate this number.

There are only two values provided by Section 16 of the Election Act; one is given by the means to achieve the average, and the other is the  $\pm 25\%$  deviation. I had expected an in-depth reason behind it, not what appears to be a completely arbitrary number.

While this committee cannot act outside the requirements of the Election Act, you can choose to ensure each riding is within  $\pm 20\%$ , or even  $\pm 15\%$  of the average as a first step toward achieving the principle of equality among voters.

The second flaw in the process is Section 15 of the Election Act. In defining that an electoral division can be established by including demographic information, the Election Act is permitting the commission to use information to create groups and attach status upon them. This would seem to violate Section 10 of the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, which seeks to avoid having distinctions be made by anyone, least of all bodies of the Québec government.

I urge this commission to revise its mission statement to include a statement of awareness that it is created by the legislative authority of the Québec government and, therefore, is required to act in accordance with the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms in its methods of creating an electoral map and its result.

The fundamentals of how we are governed are just as important as the fundamental of the equality of the vote.

Thank you, again.