

Testimony of Jim Barbour (Northeast Regional Hearing)

I am Jim Barbour, owner/operator of Barbour Farms, 1250 Barbour Hill Road Hallstead in Susquehanna county. We are 6 miles west of the last I81 Pa exit. Our water flows north into the Susquehanna while it is still in NY state. I am a third-generation farmer. We have grass fed American Aberdeen beef, organically fed hogs and we do 5 acres of vegetables and herbs for CSAs. I am the 1st Vice President of Susquehanna County Farm Bureau and serve on the state board and executive committee for PA Farm Bureau. I am the president of the North East Aberdeen Association that covers 11 states and serve on several National committees.

I am here today with a passionate concern for the future of Susquehanna County, a rural, agricultural, gas producing county. We need representation that understands who we are and what we do.

Population and politics seem to be the driving factors in redistricting. My concern is that Susquehanna County could, with our relatively low population compared to urban areas south of us, be redistricted in that direction and not have a voice that would be heard through the noise and needs of metropolitan areas.

I am also concerned with the possibility of being redistricted with the DRBC counties that could leave us the only gas producing county and again not be heard.

I strongly affirm that Susquehanna County needs to stay connected in a district that includes the other northern tier rural, agricultural, gas producing counties. I have been a proponent for gas production from the beginning. In those days there was a lot of fear and hysteria from lack of understanding and a lot of misleading information. Sadly, many outside of our area still fall into that mindset. We have a mile of pipeline on our farm. It is very well maintained and monitored. We have a compressor station in one of our fields. Noise is not an issue. The gas industry has saved many farms from going out of business and greatly bolstered our local economy.

There is a commonality among the northern tier rural gas producing counties. A commonality of issues and interests that must be represented by someone who understands our uniqueness. With whatever redistricting that takes place I believe that Susquehanna County, Bradford, Tioga, Potter, Wyoming, Sullivan, Lycoming, and Clinton counties most stay in the same district for the reasons given.

Thank you,
Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Barbour