



SINCE 1891

WEAVER BROS. LAND & TIMBER COMPANY

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March 23, 2011

Honorable Rick Gallot, Chair
House and Governmental Affairs Committee
Louisiana House of Representatives
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Dear Chairman Gallot:

I am writing to urge you to keep District 23 intact, with only minimum reapportionment. Dividing east from west at Cane River Lake would separate Natchitoches as never before, with a loss in economic prosperity and citizen engagement. This loss impacts us and also the rest of the state.

Rick Nowlin has represented this district well, in rural and urban settings and in the larger state. The proposed change would dilute his effectiveness and our representation. He deserves another term representing this highly diverse population and the larger interests of Louisiana people.

Natchitoches has a three-hundred-year history as an inclusive, pluralistic society. It has been a multicultural melting pot of people—French, Spanish, Indian, Creole, African-American, Anglo-Saxon—who get along well. A divided district would sever the close relationship between the Cane River area and the west side of town, forged in the past three centuries.

An example of cooperation is the deliberate location of the Parish Library Board of Control, of which I am president, to locate on the west side of the river; this keeps reading opportunities in walking distance of some less privileged youth and adults. A single representative has been a large contributor to this kind of harmony.

Natchitoches has a unique role in the state's tourism industry. It is recognized nation-wide as a historic, "romantic" destination and also a retiree-friendly community. Accordingly, east and west Natchitoches must work together on endeavors such as home tours, cultural attractions, festivals such as the Christmas Festival, and Main Street enterprise. A divided town and parish would destroy this unified identity and negatively impact the economic prosperity of our people.

Natchitoches Parish is a major player in the forest products industry. I am proud that Weaver Bros. paid equal wages for equal work, against Jim Crow laws in the early days of this century. Rick Nowlin has been a friend to business interests and to hard-working men and women of this area.

Please continue District 23 with its predominant Natchitoches identity. To lose this is to lose a piece of Louisiana's heritage: Natchitoches, the oldest town in the Louisiana Purchase.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


Burton D. Weaver, Jr.
General Partner

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Hale". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "K" and "H".

Ken Hale
President, NSU Foundation
President/CEO Bank of Montgomery