



October 14, 2020

Kristine Jakeman
Elko County Clerk
550 Court Street
Elko, NV 89801
clerk@elkocountynv.net

Re: Drop boxes and more voting sites in Elko County

Dear County Clerk Jakeman:

On behalf of Nevada Native Vote Project and All Voting Is Local, we urge you to add additional in-person voting sites and drop box locations in locations that are more convenient and accessible to the Tribal communities in Elko county. Nevada Tribal communities have continually lacked voting access options in Nevada. All Voting is Local analyses shows that the average American Indian and Alaska Native resident is significantly farther from voting locations than white voters; specifically, Native American voters in the county travel an average of 45 minutes to a voting or drop off location, compared to just 18 minutes for the average white resident. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately affected Tribal communities, will make in-person voting an untenable option for some Native voters. And, in light of the widely reported issues with the United States Postal Service, many voters are not comfortable returning their vote-by-mail ballots by mail. Therefore, for Elko County's Native voters, we urge you to add more accessible voting options that are within reasonable distance to your county's Native voters.

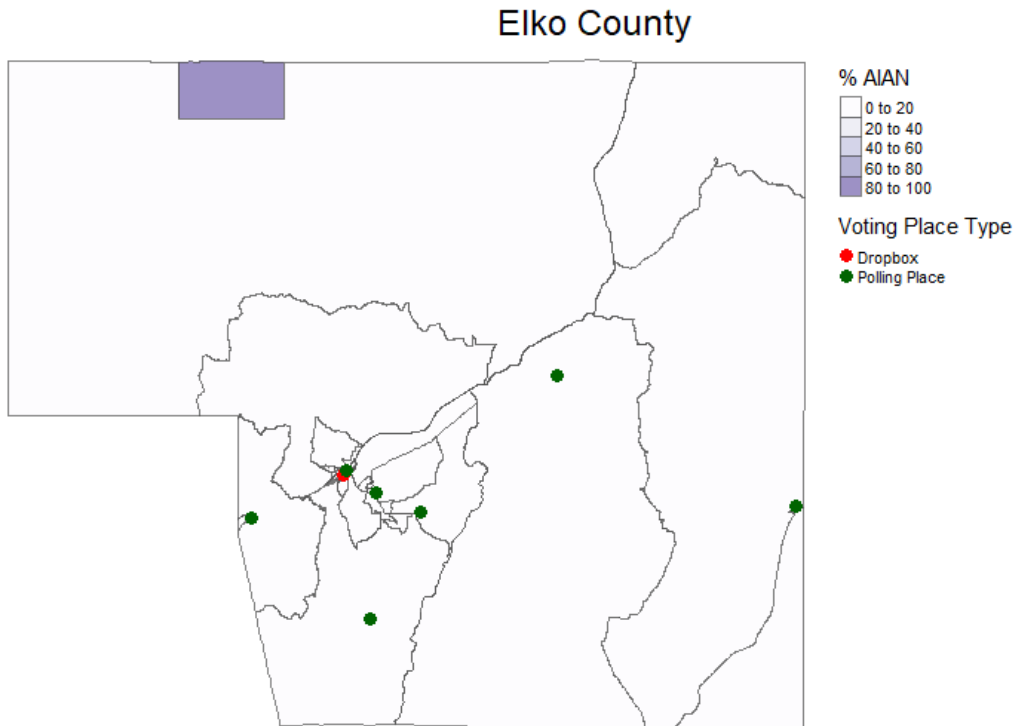
1. Many Tribal Voters who live on or near Duck Valley Reservation Lack Easy Access to a Drop Box Location, Early Voting Site, or Election Day Site.

Voters in and near the Duck Valley Reservation lack easy access to all voting sites and drop off locations, as shown in Map 1 below. The affected community, which is at risk of being disenfranchised, has about 1,098 Nevada Native residents, according to census data. Voters in this community who do not have an automobile are particularly at risk, because there are limited public transportation options available to residents (and in light of the COVID-19 crisis, many residents are uncomfortable utilizing public transportation). None of the current early voting and drop box sites are suitable for these Tribal communities.

- County-wide, American Indian and Alaska Native voters would need to travel an average of 45 minutes to reach drop boxes, in-person early vote, and in-person Election Day voting sites. The average time to access these opportunities is 18 minutes for white voters.

- Voters on or near the Duck Valley Reservation must drive 1 hour 45 minutes (99 miles) to reach the in-person locations at the Convention Center or the City Clerk’s Office in Elko.

Map 1: Elko County In-Person and Drop off Voting Sites



We urge you to place another in-person voting option for the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation and a drop box location on or near the Duck Valley Reservation, so that these voters can safely exercise their right to vote during this pandemic. There are numerous viable options that you could explore, including working with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation to find a suitable location for a drop box location on or near the reservation or working with the town of Mountain City, which is 31 minutes away by car from the Duck Valley Reservation, to establish an early vote or Election Day in-person voting option for the Duck Valley Tribal community, which would also benefit the Mountain City community.

As the 2020 general election is already underway in Nevada with vote-by-mail ballots being mailed out and early voting starting this week, it is important to take these commonsense and nonpartisan steps to guarantee that all of Elko County’s Native voters have access to early voting

sites and drop box locations, and to ensure that voters are not forced to choose between their health and their fundamental right to vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kerry Durmick". The script is cursive and fluid.

Kerry Durmick
All Voting Is Local

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Melendez". The script is cursive and fluid.

Brian Melendez
Nevada Native Vote Project

