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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU RELEASES DENSITY DATA FOR RATE-OF-RETURN CARRIER STUDY AREAS

WC Docket No. 10-90

The Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) announces the release of rate-of-return study area density data.¹ Density will be used in implementing various reforms adopted by the Commission in the *Rate-of-Return Reform Order*.²

The Bureau used the study area boundaries submitted to the Bureau as of March 10, 2016 and overlaid 2010 census blocks to determine the land area for each study area. Where a study area boundary covered a portion of the census block, we multiplied the block's area, housing units, and population by the percentage of the block covered. We also calculated the state-level density for carriers with more than one study area in a state.

We note that there is a significant range in density among the 1,094 rate-of-return study areas, as shown below.

Housing Units Per Square Mile	Number of Study Areas
25 or greater	239
10-24.99	322
5.01-9.99	230
5 or less	303

For additional information on this proceeding, contact Suzanne Yelen (Suzanne.Yelen@fcc.gov) of the Wireline Competition Bureau, Industry Analysis & Technology Division, (202) 418-0626.

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¹ The housing unit, land area and density data are posted on the Industry and Technology Analysis Division's Study Area Boundary Data page, <https://www.fcc.gov/wireline-competition/industry-analysis-and-technology-division/general/study-area-boundary-data>, and available at <https://www.fcc.gov/file/3722/download>.

² For instance, the Commission adopted a regression methodology to limit operating expenses eligible for support under rate-of-return mechanisms that includes study area density and housing units per square miles as variables in the regression formula. *Connect America Fund et al.*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Report and Order et al., FCC 16-33, at 39-40, paras. 98-104 (rel. March 30, 2016) (*Rate-of-Return Reform Order*). The Commission also adopted defined performance and deployment obligations for rate-of-return carriers not electing model support that will be individually sized for each carrier taking into account the density characteristics of individual study areas, among other factors. *Id.* at 62-68, paras. 162-80. The deployment obligations for carriers that voluntarily elect to receive model-based support vary based on state-level density. *Id.* at 11-13, para. 25-26.