



# PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500  
Internet: <https://www.fcc.gov>  
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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## FCC ANNOUNCES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TASK FORCE FOR REVIEWING CONNECTIVITY AND TECHNOLOGY NEEDS OF PRECISION AGRICULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES AND SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Federal Communications Commission (Commission) announces the formation of a new federal advisory committee, the Task Force for Reviewing Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States (Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force or Task Force), upon approval by the General Services Administration (GSA). The Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force will perform duties and will submit reports consistent with sections 12511(b)(3)(A) and (b)(5) of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, Pub. L. 115-334, 132 Stat 4490. By this *Public Notice*, we seek nominations for membership on and a Chairperson to the Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force. The Commission intends to establish the Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force for an initial period of two (2) years.<sup>1</sup>

**Nominations for membership to the Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force should be submitted to the FCC no later than July 17, 2019.** Procedures for submitting nominations are set forth below.

### MISSION

In consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretary), or a designee of the Secretary, and in collaboration with public and private stakeholders in the agriculture and technology fields, the Task Force will:

- identify and measure current gaps in the availability of broadband Internet access service on agricultural land;
- develop policy recommendations to promote the rapid, expanded deployment of broadband Internet access service on unserved agricultural land, with a goal of achieving reliable capabilities on 95 percent of agricultural land in the United States by 2025;
- promote effective policy and regulatory solutions that encourage the adoption of broadband Internet access service on farms and ranches and promote precision agriculture;
- recommend specific new rules or amendments to existing rules of the Commission that the Commission should issue to achieve the goals and purposes of the policy recommendations described in the second bullet in this list;
- recommend specific steps that the Commission should take to obtain reliable and standardized data measurements of the availability of broadband Internet access service as may be necessary to target funding support, from future programs of the Commission dedicated to the deployment of broadband Internet access service, to unserved agricultural land in need of broadband Internet access service; and

<sup>1</sup> The Commission will renew the Task Force every two (2) years until the Task Force terminates on January 1, 2025.

- recommend specific steps that the Commission should consider to ensure that the expertise of the Secretary and available farm data are reflected in future programs of the Commission dedicated to the infrastructure deployment of broadband Internet access service and to direct available funding to unserved agricultural land where needed.

In addition, not later than one (1) year after the date on which the Commission officially establishes the Task Force, and annually thereafter, the Task Force will submit to the Chairman of the Commission a report, which shall be made public, that details:

- the status of fixed and mobile broadband Internet access service coverage of agricultural land;
- the projected future connectivity needs of agricultural operations, farmers, and ranchers; and
- the steps being taken to accurately measure the availability of broadband Internet access service on agricultural land and the limitations of current, as of the date of the report, measurement processes.

The Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force will be organized under, and will operate in accordance with, the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).<sup>2</sup> As permitted by FACA, the Task Force is authorized to facilitate its work through informal subcommittees, or other subgroups of the Task Force, which shall report their activities and recommendations to the Task Force as a whole.

#### WHO MAY APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Commission seeks applications from:

- agricultural producers representing diverse geographic regions and farm sizes, including owners and operators of farms of less than 100 acres;
- agricultural producers representing tribal agriculture;
- Internet service providers, including regional or rural fixed and mobile broadband Internet access service providers and telecommunications infrastructure providers;
- representatives from the electric cooperative industry;
- representatives from the satellite industry;
- representatives from precision agriculture equipment manufacturers, including drone manufacturers, manufacturers of autonomous agricultural machinery, and manufacturers of farming robotics technologies;
- representatives from State and local governments; and
- representatives with relevant expertise in broadband network data collection, geospatial analysis, and coverage mapping.

Voting members of the Task Force shall be selected by the Chairman of the Commission, in consultation with the Secretary and appropriate Commission staff. The Task Force shall be composed of not more than 15 voting members. The Secretary, or a designee of the Secretary, shall serve as an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the Task Force.

Voting members will be selected to balance the expertise and viewpoints that are necessary to address effectively the issues to be considered by the Task Force and are appointed as representatives from one of the above groups above. As appropriate, members may also be appointed for their individual expertise as “Special Government Employees.” Because Task Force members seeking to serve in their

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<sup>2</sup> 5 U.S.C. App. 2.

individual capacities for their individual expertise may not be registered federal lobbyists, such nominees who are registered federal lobbyists will not be considered.

#### **OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS AND TASK FORCE MEETINGS**

Members will serve at the discretion of the Chairman of the Commission. Members must be willing to commit to a two (2)-year term of service from the date of establishment of the Task Force and should be willing and able to attend at least three (3) one- or two-day plenary Task Force meetings per year during the Task Force's term. Members also will be expected to participate in deliberations of at least one (1) subcommittee or other subgroup, if any are established. The time commitment for participation in any subcommittee or other subgroup may be substantial. However, subcommittee or other subgroup meetings may be conducted informally, using suitable technology to facilitate the meetings, subject to oversight by the Designated Federal Officer of the Task Force.

Meetings of the full Task Force shall be open to the public and timely notice of each meeting shall be published in the Federal Register and shall be further publicized through other appropriate vehicles. All such meetings will be held at the Commission's headquarters in Washington, D.C. and will be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

#### **APPLICATION PROCEDURE, DEADLINE AND MEMBER APPOINTMENTS**

**All nominations should be received by the Commission as soon as possible, but no later than July 17, 2019.**

No specific nomination form is required; however, each nomination must include the following information:

- Name, title, and organization of the nominee and a description of the organization, sector or other interest the nominee will represent;
- Nominee's mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number;
- A statement summarizing the nominee's qualifications and reasons why the nominee should be appointed to the Task Force;
- A statement, if the nominee will represent a specific organization, describing the organization as well as the benefit of having the organization represented on the Task Force; and
- A statement confirming that the nominee, if seeking appointment for the individual's expertise and not as a representative of an organization or entity, is not a registered federal lobbyist.

For applicants seeking to represent an organization or company, the applicant's nomination to the Task Force must be confirmed by an authorized person (*e.g.*, organization or company official) that such organization or company wants the nominated person to represent it on the Task Force. For example, this confirmation may be in the following format: "I am [insert official's name], the [insert official's title] at the [insert name of organization - *e.g.*, company, government entity, trade association, *etc.*], with responsibilities for [concise description of position]. My organization would like [insert proposed member's name], who is currently [an employee of/consultant/attorney to the company] to serve as our representative on the Commission's Task Force for Reviewing Connectivity and Technology Need of Precision Agriculture in the United States."

This *Public Notice* is not intended to be the exclusive method by which the Commission will solicit nominations to identify qualified candidates; however, all candidates for membership on the Task Force will be subject to the same evaluation criteria.

All nominations, including the requisite statements listed above, should be submitted by e-mail to [PrecisionAgTF@fcc.gov](mailto:PrecisionAgTF@fcc.gov).

**ACCESSIBLE FORMATS**

To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to [fcc504@fcc.gov](mailto:fcc504@fcc.gov) or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice), 202-418-0432 (TTY).

For additional information about the Task Force, please contact Jesse Jachman, Designated Federal Officer of the Task Force, at (202)418-2668, or [Jesse.Jachman@fcc.gov](mailto:Jesse.Jachman@fcc.gov); Erin Boone, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, at (202)418-0736, or [Erin.Boone@fcc.gov](mailto:Erin.Boone@fcc.gov); or Celia Lewis, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, at (202)418-7456, or [Celia.Lewis@fcc.gov](mailto:Celia.Lewis@fcc.gov).

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