



PUBLIC NOTICE

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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES DEADLINE OF MARCH 1, 2021 FOR CERTAIN RATE-OF-RETURN CARRIERS RECEIVING CONNECT AMERICA FUND BROADBAND LOOP SUPPORT (CAF-BLS) TO REPORT BROADBAND LOCATION INFORMATION FOR PRE-EXISTING DEPLOYMENT

WC Docket No. 10-90

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) provides guidance to certain rate-of-return Connect America Fund recipients regarding their obligation to report geo-located broadband information and make deployment certifications to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). Specifically, those carriers receiving CAF-BLS that did not have High Cost Universal Service Broadband portal (HUBB) reporting obligations prior to the Commission's *2018 Rate-of-Return Reform Order*¹ will be required to submit geo-located broadband deployment information in the HUBB by March 1, 2021 for all locations to which broadband service of 25/3 Mbps or greater has been deployed since May 25, 2016.²

In the 2016 *Rate-of-Return Reform Order*, the Commission directed rate-of-return carriers to file geo-located broadband information in the HUBB for locations to which broadband had been newly deployed.³ However, the Commission did not set mandatory deployment obligations for those carriers that had deployed broadband of 10/1 Mbps to 80% or more of their study areas, as determined by FCC Form 477. Thus, those carriers were not required to report geo-located information in the HUBB.⁴ In December 2018, the Commission determined that carriers receiving CAF-BLS should deploy broadband with a speed of at least 25/3 Mbps and that all CAF-BLS carriers should be subject to deployment and HUBB reporting obligations.⁵ Because carriers that had deployed broadband of 10/1 Mbps to 80% or more of their study areas had not previously had HUBB reporting obligations, the Commission stated that such carriers would be provided an opportunity to certify 25/3 Mbps or greater locations deployed since May 25, 2016.⁶ Allowing such carriers until March 1, 2021 to complete their HUBB submissions

¹ *Connect America Fund, et al.*, WC Docket No. 10-90, et al., Report and Order, Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and Order on Reconsideration, 33 FCC Rcd 11893 (2018) (*2018 Rate-of-Return Reform Order*).

² The Commission has authority to collect this information pursuant to OMB Control No. 3060-1228. See 84 FR 61829 (Nov. 14, 2019).

³ See *Connect America Fund et al.*, Report and Order et al., 31 FCC Rcd 3087, 3163-3169, paras. 209-217 (2016) (*2016 Rate-of-Return Reform Order*).

⁴ *Id.* at 3152, para. 173. Carriers that had deployed broadband of 10/1 Mbps to 80% or more of their study areas were required to report deployment in FCC Form 481.

⁵ *2018 Rate-of-Return Reform Order*, 33 FCC Rcd at 11927, para. 111.

⁶ *Id.* Although the 25/3 Mbps deployment obligation five-year term runs from January 1, 2019 until December 31, 2023, the Commission determined that all new deployment since May 25, 2016, the effective date of the *2016 Rate-of-Return Reform Order*, should count toward each carrier's deployment obligation.

provides sufficient time to ensure that all pre-existing deployment since May 25, 2016 is properly geo-located.

For further information, please contact Suzanne Yelen (Suzanne.Yelen@fcc.gov) of the Wireline Competition Bureau, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, (202) 418-7400.

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