



PUBLIC NOTICE

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DA 26-751
Released: July 20, 2026

WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU UPDATES LIST OF CENSUS BLOCKS WHERE PRICE CAP CARRIERS STILL HAVE FEDERAL HIGH-COST VOICE OBLIGATIONS

WC Docket No. 10-90

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) announces that we have updated the list of census blocks where price cap carriers continue to have a federal high-cost eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) obligation to provide voice service pursuant to section 214(e)(1) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, to reflect fixed terrestrial service availability data as of December 31, 2025.¹ The updated list is available at: <https://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/price-cap-resources>.

In the *December 2014 Connect America Order*, the Commission found that limited forbearance from section 214(e)(1)(A) obligations was warranted in discrete geographic areas.² In particular, the Commission granted limited forbearance “from enforcing a federal high-cost requirement that price cap carriers offer voice telephony service throughout their service areas pursuant to section 214(e)(1)(A) in three types of geographic areas: (1) census blocks that are determined to be low-cost, (2) all census blocks served by an unsubsidized competitor, as defined in the Commission’s rules,³ offering voice and broadband at speeds of 10/1 Mbps to all eligible locations, and (3) census blocks where a subsidized competitor – i.e., another ETC – is receiving federal high-cost support to deploy modern networks capable of providing voice and broadband to fixed locations.”⁴

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(1)(A); *Broadband Data Task Force Announces Opening of Eighth Broadband Data Collection Filing Window and Fabric Challenge Deadline*, WC Docket Nos. 11-10, 19-195, Public Notice, 40 FCC Rcd 10192 (BDTF 2025). See also FCC, *National Broadband Map*, <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home> (last visited July, 20, 2026) (National Broadband Map). The Broadband DATA Act requires the Commission to collect broadband Internet access service data from each “provider of fixed or mobile broadband Internet access service.” Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability Act, Pub. L. No. 116-130, 134 Stat. 228 (2020) (codified at 47 U.S.C. §§ 641-646), § 641(11).

² *Connect America Fund et al.*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Report and Order, 29 FCC Rcd 15644, 15663-71, paras. 50-70 (2014) (*December 2014 Connect America Order*).

³ See 47 CFR § 54.5 (defining an unsubsidized competitor as “a facilities-based provider of residential fixed voice and broadband service that does not receive high-cost support”). In determining areas that were eligible for Connect America Phase II support, the Commission excluded areas served by unsubsidized competitors offering terrestrial service. See, e.g., *December 2014 Connect America Order*, 29 FCC Rcd at 15671-72, paras. 73, 74 & n.169.

⁴ *December 2014 Connect America Order*, 29 FCC Rcd at 15663-64, para. 51 (footnotes omitted); see also 47 CFR § 54.201(d)(3).

In 2014, the Bureau released a list of census blocks where price cap carriers continue to have the federal high-cost ETC obligation to provide voice service.⁵ This list included census blocks that the Connect America Cost Model (CAM v.4.3) has deemed high-cost or extremely high-cost and that were not served by an unsubsidized competitor.⁶ The Bureau has periodically updated the list to remove census blocks where carriers have been authorized to receive high-cost support. The last update was made in January 2023 after the final Rural Digital Opportunity Fund authorization.⁷

Now that we have access to more granular broadband service availability data through the Broadband Data Collection (BDC), we have further updated the list to remove all census blocks served by an unsubsidized competitor, as defined in the Commission's rules, offering fixed terrestrial voice and broadband at speeds of 10/1 Mbps to all eligible locations based on BDC service availability data as of December 31, 2025.⁸ We also removed census blocks that were authorized support through the Puerto Rico Together Fund and the Connect USVI Fund.⁹

Price cap carriers no longer have the federal high-cost obligation to provide voice service in the census blocks that are not included on this list unless they have been authorized to receive support for the excluded census blocks through a high-cost support program.¹⁰

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⁵ *Wireline Competition Bureau Releases List of Census Blocks Where Price Cap Carriers Still Have Federal High-Cost Voice Obligations & Seeks to Refresh the Record on Pending Issues Regarding Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Designations and Obligations*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Public Notice, 30 FCC Rcd 7417 (WCB 2015).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Support Authorized for 1,764 Winning Bids; Etheric Communications LLC's Petition for Waiver of the June 7, 2021 Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Documentation Deadline Denied*, AU Docket No. 20-34 et al., Public Notice, 38 FCC Rcd 101 (WCB/OEA 2023).

⁸ See National Broadband Map.

⁹ See *Wireline Competition Bureau Authorizes Stage 2 Support for Puerto Rico Telephone Company and Liberty Communications of Puerto Rico*, WC Docket No. 18-143 et al., Public Notice, 36 FCC Rcd 9914 (WCB 2021); *Connect USVI Fund Stage 2 Support Authorized for Broadband VI*, WC Docket No. 18-143 et al., Public Notice, 36 FCC Rcd 9405 (WCB 2021). We also removed certain Massachusetts and Missouri census blocks that had been inadvertently added to the list after the Bureau corrected bid defaults for Time Warner Cable Information Services (Massachusetts) and Charter Fiberlink-Missouri. *Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Support for 2,061 Winning Bids Ready to Be Authorized; Bid Defaults Announced*, AU Docket No. 20-34 et al., Public Notice, 37 FCC Rcd 5748, 5753-54 n.44 (WCB/OEA 2022).

¹⁰ Price cap carriers remain obligated to maintain existing voice services to a given community or part of a community unless and until they receive authority under section 214(a) to discontinue that service. 47 U.S.C. § 214(a).