



September 25, 2026

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Re: 60-Day Extension Request for Response to Federal Register Notice 2026-18481, Decennial Census of the Population of Americans; Proposed Residence Criteria and Proposed Regulations for Demographic Questions

The undersigned organizations representing metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning organizations, and regional/rural development organizations across the United States, respectfully request a 60-day extension through December 12, 2026, of the public comment period for the Census Bureau's proposed rule, Decennial Census of the Population of Americans; Proposed Residence Criteria and Proposed Regulations for Demographic Questions (Federal Register Notice 2026-18481). The current comment period closes on October 13, 2026.

The proposed rule addresses important aspects of the decennial census, including residence criteria used to determine how individuals are counted and regulations governing certain demographic questions included on the decennial census questionnaire. Given the importance of Census data across a wide range of federal, state, regional, and local programs, additional time would allow stakeholders to review the proposal and assess its administrative and programmatic implications.

State and local governments and regional organizations rely on Census data for a broad range of planning, funding, and service-delivery purposes. Population and demographic data can inform eligibility for and distribution of federal formula funding and competitive grant programs, including program eligibility thresholds, measures of need, demographic and socioeconomic criteria, and other factors used in federal funding decisions. Census data also supports infrastructure investment, housing and community development, economic development, public health, emergency management, and other essential government functions.

Transportation programs illustrate this reliance in more detail. Census data informs federal transportation planning and funding processes, including metropolitan planning organization designations, transportation management area thresholds, funding distributions and suballocations, transit and other formula programs, competitive grant applications, and long-range regional planning. Because these data are used across multiple programs and levels of government, stakeholders would benefit from more time to assess how the proposed changes could affect existing planning, funding, and administrative processes.

A 60-day extension would allow state, local, and regional organizations to coordinate with our members and partners, review the proposal across relevant program areas, and provide the Department of Census Bureau with thoughtful, well-informed feedback on implementation and practical considerations.



We appreciate the Department and Census Bureau's consideration of this request and the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule.

Respectfully,

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Organizations

Joe McKinney
Executive Director
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Organizations

Erich Zimmermann
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