

EXCERPTS OF

Federal Communications Commission

DA 15-851

Released: July 23, 2015

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 Nos. 10-90, 14-192, 11-42 and 09-197

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2. 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, 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.”³

3. The list of census blocks where price cap carriers continue to have the federal ETC obligation to provide voice is available at: <https://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/price-cap-resources>.⁴ This list includes census blocks that the Connect America Cost Model (CAM v4.3) has deemed high-cost or extremely high-cost and that are not served by an unsubsidized competitor. Price cap carriers that decline the Phase II offer of model-based support will continue to have the high-cost obligation to serve these census blocks with voice service until they are replaced by another ETC that is required to offer voice and broadband service to fixed locations that meet the Commission’s public service obligations, or unless and until further relief is granted. 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.

Footnote 4 The Commission noted that it expected the Bureau would publish a list of the census blocks where the Commission had granted the limited forbearance in the *December 2014 Connect America Order*. See *December 2014 Connect America Order*, 29 FCC Rcd at 15670, para. 69 n.157. For administrative ease, we publish the list of census blocks where price cap carriers continue to have a high-cost voice obligation instead of the list where they do not have such an obligation, as the former list is significantly shorter than the latter list would be. There are more than 5.2 million blocks for which forbearance was granted, compared to more than 1 million where there remains a high-cost obligation.