



CT Planning Regions Proposed to Become County Equivalents

United States Census Bureau to accept public comments through February 12, 2021

(Hartford)—Today, the State of Connecticut and United States Census Bureau announce the proposal to adopt the State’s nine planning regions as county-equivalent geographic units for purposes of collecting, tabulating, and disseminating Census data. Each planning region is represented by a council of governments (COG), comprising the mayors and first selectmen of the member cities and towns, which meets regularly to plan, coordinate, and act on matters of mutual interest.

On December 14, 2020, notice will be published in the Federal Register to open the 60-day public comment period, with the expectation that, following the public comment period, the proposal would be adopted and go into effect for all official Census Bureau statistical and geospatial data products starting in 2023.

Governor Lamont said, “This is an early and important step to ensure that future Census data and products are provided in a format that is more meaningful and useful for our COGs, instead of along the eight county boundaries that haven’t served any functional purpose since 1960.” Census Bureau Director, Dr. Steven Dillingham, concurred that “The Census Bureau is very enthusiastic to work with its data users to deliver data in the most useful formats.”

Secretary Melissa McCaw of the Office of Policy and Management, who [initiated the request](#) to the Census Bureau on behalf of the nine COGs, noted that “This will only affect the reporting of Census data and products and will not have any significant impact on the operations or functions of state and local government. Furthermore, cities and towns share many of the same challenges when it comes to the efficient and cost-effective procurement of goods and services, so mayors and first selectmen, acting through their respective COG, will benefit from this change, which I believe is both appropriate and complementary to Connecticut’s strong Home Rule tradition.”

Sam Gold, Chairman of the Connecticut Association of Councils of Government, noted that “An added benefit of the proposed change is that COGs, acting on behalf of their member municipalities, will be able to apply for federal grants that are available to counties in other states – something that COGs are already authorized to do under existing state statutes. We strongly encourage our municipalities to offer supportive public commentary on this proposal to clearly demonstrate the benefits that will result.”

Michelle Riordan-Nold, Executive Director of the CT Data Collaborative, which also functions as the CT Census State Data Center, concluded that “We believe this change will be beneficial to the broader data user community in the state, as the COGs represent a more meaningful geographic hierarchy than the county boundaries. Data users will still be able to re-aggregate future Census data along county lines, if desired.”

For more information, visit the Census Bureau website on Substantial Changes to Counties and County Equivalent Entities page at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/technical-documentation/county-changes.html>, and review the Federal Register Notice at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/12/14/2020-27459/change-to-county-equivalents-in-the-state-of-connecticut>. A [FAQ document](#) is also available. The Federal Register 60-day comment period will run from December 14, 2020 to February 12, 2021.