

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 11, 2021

The Honorable Rob Fairweather
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Acting Director Fairweather:

On January 19, 2021, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published a notice and a request for public comment on multiple recommendations from the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area Standards Review Committee (the Committee)¹. We write in response to this notice and to highlight a pressing concern with one of the Committee's recommendations.

As you well know, OMB periodically reviews its criteria used to delineate Census Bureau data and determine the standards of categorizing metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs). These standards were last updated in 2010 and, according to the public notice, OMB directed the Committee to again review these MSA standards and develop recommendations. Of the six recommendations developed by the Committee, the recommendation to increase the urban area population needed to qualify as an MSA from 50,000 to 100,000 is of immediate and utmost concern.

Though these MSA standards and other Census Bureau data being deliberated as part of these recommendations are intended to affect OMB's statistical and data collection activities, the recommendations would also affect eligibility for certain federal programs and grant opportunities. If the recommendation to increase the required urbanized area population from 50,000 to 100,000 is accepted and the MSA classification is revoked, 144 communities nationwide could lose eligibility for certain federal programs².

As OMB continues to consider the Committee's recommendations and review the public comments on this notice, we strongly encourage you to reject any increase in the minimum urbanized area population needed to qualify as an MSA. Adhering to this recommendation has the potential to harm communities across the nation, which we hope you take into account while considering these recommendations.

¹ Recommendations From the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area Standards Review Committee to the Office of Management and Budget Concerning Changes to the 2010 Standards for Delineating Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas. 86 FR 5263. <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-00988>

² Recommendations from the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area Standards Review Committee. OMB-2021-0001. <https://www.regulations.gov/document/OMB-2021-0001-0003>

Sincerely,



John Thune
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



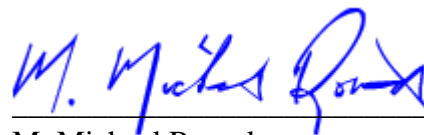
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



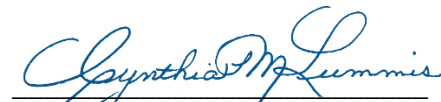
Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



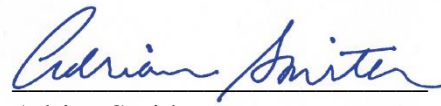
Cynthia Lummis
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



Adrian Smith
Member of Congress