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*We Bring Value-Added Census Data and Education to the User*

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December 7, 2009

Dr. Robert Groves, Director  
U.S. Bureau of the Census  
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Dr. Groves,

The Steering Committee of the State Data Center (SDC) Network would like to thank the Bureau for Jason Machowski's and Annette Davis' presentation on the 2010 Census Enhanced Planning Database at the 2009 SDC Annual Training Conference in mid-October 2009. The overall reaction from the group was extremely favorable, as we had been awaiting the deployment of this useful 2010 planning tool. The presentation identified some areas where the system could be expanded to enhance its usefulness by the SDC network.

We primarily have two concerns we would like to express. First, the only updated data in the system are the 2006 ACS 1-year data. The system would be greatly enhanced if it included the 2008 ACS 1-year data and/or the 2006-2008 ACS 3-year data. Including only the 2006 ACS 1-year data is a limitation of the system, since these data are now two years old and provide information only for those areas with populations of 65,000 or more, a relatively small set of communities. As far as the timeliness of the data, the 2008 ACS 1-year data are currently available and would be a better representation of the current make up of these more populated communities. In terms of geographic coverage, the 2006-2008 ACS 3-year data are also currently available and provide information for many more communities than are included in the 1-year data.

Since the structure of the ACS files has not changed significantly since the 2006 ACS 1-year data were released, we expect that updating the Planning Database system to include either the more recent 1-year data or the 3-year data should be relatively easy. Including either of these updates, preferably the 3-year data, would greatly improve the system's usefulness by local communities promoting the 2010 Census in their area.

**Therefore, we strongly encourage the Census Bureau to update the 2010 Census Enhanced Planning Database to include the 2006-2008 ACS 3-year data as quickly as possible.** This will expand the usefulness of the database to more communities. If including the 3-year data is not possible, we would recommend the inclusion of the 2008 ACS 1-year data in lieu of the 2006 data.

Our second concern is with the system's inability to map the block group hard-to-count scores. In order for these scores to be used by local communities in their 2010 Census promotion efforts, the local community should be able to visualize where the hard-to-count areas are located. Many local communities lack the GIS capabilities to map these data. **Again, we strongly encourage the Census Bureau to modify this system to allow users to view maps the block group hard-to-count scores.**

We provide these suggestions in the hope that they will improve the ability of local communities to assist the Census Bureau in promoting the 2010 Census. Thank you for considering them. If you or your staff have any questions regarding our suggestions, please relay these concerns to us through Franklin J. Ambrose, Chief, State and Governmental Programs, Customer Liaison and Marketing Services Office.

Sincerely,  
State Data Center Steering Committee

cc: Arnold Jackson, Associate Director for Decennial Census  
Barbara Harris, Chief, Customer Liaison and Marketing Services Office  
Frank Ambrose, Chief, State and Governmental Programs, CLMSO  
Annette Davis, Decennial Management Division  
Jason Machowski, Decennial Management Division