

ERS Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title: Characterizing Rugged Terrain in the United States and its Role in Rurality

Type of Report (ERR, EIB, EB) EIB
 Influential Scientific Information

Agency: Economic Research Service [] Highly Influential Scientific Assessment
USDA

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Subject of Review: It often takes more time for residents living in areas of rugged terrain to travel to hospitals, schools, social services, grocery stores, and other critical destinations compared to those living in more urban locations. To analyze how rugged terrain impacts rural well-being, we develop a new, national representation of variable topography for census tracts. This representation, the Terrain Ruggedness Scale (TRS), characterizes the relative topographic variation along roads in the United States. We then analyze population and population density across varying levels of topography, rurality, and regions in the United States to understand how the confluence of challenges to maintaining individual and community well-being found in rugged, rural locations is distributed across the Nation. Population and population density decrease as the land becomes more rugged, while the share of people living in rural locations becomes larger. Residents living in rugged regions with large rural populations, such as the Appalachian Mountains and Interior Uplands, may have additional challenges maintaining their well-being, when compared with residents living in flatter, more urban regions, such as the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.

Purpose of Review: The purpose of the review is to ensure the high-quality of the economic analysis, transparent explanation of methods, objective interpretation of results, and effective communication to the intended audience.

Type of Review: [] Panel Review [X] Individual Reviewers
[] Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):

Timing of Review (Est.): Start: 1/11/2023 Completed: 05/15/2023

Number of Reviewers: [] 3 or fewer [X] 4 to 10 [] More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Economists

Reviewers selected by: [X] Agency [] Designated Outside Organization

Opportunities for Public Comment? [] Yes [X] No
If yes, briefly state how and when these opportunities will be provided:
How:
When:

Peer Reviewers Provided with Public Comments? [] Yes [X] No
Public Nominations Requested for Review Panel? [] Yes [X] No

