

Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title: An Update of Census Tract Measures of Low-Income and Low Supermarket Access

Type of Report
(ERR, EIB, EB,
TB, SOR.) EB

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

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Subject of Review: Limited access to supermarkets or other sources of healthy and affordable food may make it harder for some Americans to eat a healthy diet. Income, transportation, and distance may be barriers to food access for many Americans. This brief provides updated estimates of ERS' Food Access Research Atlas census tract measures of low-income and low-supermarket access in the United States with 2015 data on the location of supermarkets along with 2010-2014 data on household vehicle access and family income from the American Community Survey. The number of tracts classified as low-income (LI) increased 5.43 percent from 2010. The number of tracts that are classified as low access (LA) solely by proximity to the nearest supermarket decreased from 2010 to 2015—in other words, fewer tracts had a significant number or share of people more than 0.5 or 1.0 mile from the nearest supermarket in urban areas, or if it was a rural area, more than 10 or 20 miles from the nearest supermarket. For these proximity only measures the increase in low-income tracts outnumbered the decrease in low access tracts so that there was a small net increase in the number of tracts that are both low-income and low-access (LILA) in 2015 compared with 2010 (an increase of 704 for the LILA 0.5 and 10 measure; 236 for the LILA 1 and 10 measure; and 306 for the LILA 1 and 20 measure). In contrast to the proximity only measures, there was an increase in the number of low access tracts for the LILA Vehicle Access and 20 miles measure, which in addition to proximity, considers the number of housing units without a vehicle that are more than 0.5 miles from the nearest supermarket. This increase largely reflects lower levels of vehicle access across all housing units relative to the 2010 estimates. Combined with the increase in LI tracts, this resulted in a net increase of 372 new LILA tracts using the Vehicle Access and 20 miles measure.

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: 08/16/16 End: X/X/16 Withdrawn: X/X/16

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

Organization's Name:

