

May 21, 2020



John M Abowd, PhD
Associate Director and Chief Scientist
Research and Methodology
U.S. Census Bureau
4600 Silver Hill Road, Room 8H001
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Sir,

The National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) is the nation's state-led forum for geospatial coordination, advocacy and leadership. Our membership consists of geospatial leaders from across the nation. These individuals represent geospatial communities, coordinate geospatial solutions in their respective states, advise policy makers in location-based decision-making, and provide leadership in the development of framework data for the nation.

Conducting the decennial census and delivering quality data products are essential to the productivity and health of our state systems. The data are critical to state funding allocations, economic planning and development decisions, and public safety. The recent COVID-19 pandemic response efforts illustrate our need for and reliance on accurate and available census data. States are utilizing the statistical information to identify vulnerable populations, assess impacted communities, and develop safe reopening strategies.

NSGIC collaborates closely with the nation's State Data Centers and State Demographers. Through these partnerships we have become aware of the Census Bureau's move to a new Differential Privacy Disclosure Avoidance System (DAS). Our state representatives have surveyed their geospatial communities, and collective concern exists that implementing these new practices will negatively impact state programs and the ability to carry out statutory responsibilities, in effect harming the citizens the DAS aims to protect.

NSGIC has monitored the developments and feedback related to the Census Bureau's release of the 2010 demonstration products. We are encouraged by the Census Bureau's response to the feedback provided by the census data user community. The Bureau's willingness to explore adjustments to the DAS algorithm in order to minimize inaccuracies in the resulting data products shows that potential exists to meet privacy protection goals and continue to provide reliable data.

NSGIC has a strong network and an innate ability to collaboratively solve problems. Our organization is committed to finding solutions through our partnerships and innovative technologies. We are hopeful that opportunity awaits for the NSGIC community to collaborate with and provide feedback to the Census Bureau as the DAS adjustments are evaluated.

CC: Steven Dillingham, US Census Bureau Director; Karen Rogers, State of Wyoming, NSGIC President

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Molly Schar'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Molly Schar
Executive Director

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