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## Press Release

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### NEW PHOENIX CENTER STUDY EVALUATES ERRORS FROM FCC FORM 477'S DATA "ALL-IN" ASSUMPTION

*Analysis again finds that while the Form 477's overstatement of broadband availability is small, if one wants to know exact locations without broadband then the consequences of the "all-in" assumption can be severe*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Collection of the Federal Communications Commission's Form 477 data assumes that if a single location in a census block has broadband, then *all* locations in that block have broadband (the "all-in" assumption). As a consequence, the Form 477 data presumably overstate broadband availability, and the data have been heavily criticized for doing so.

In a new analysis released today entitled *Overstating Broadband Availability: An Assessment of the "All-In" Assumption for FCC 477 Data*, Phoenix Center Chief Economist Dr. George S. Ford again attempts to quantify how much these data overstate broadband availability. Consistent with past research, Dr. Ford finds that when the Form 477 data are analyzed at the state level, the Form 477's overstatement is small—less than four percentage points. Criticisms of these high-level statistics, therefore, are somewhat overblown.

That said, Dr. Ford also finds that if one wants to know the exact locations without broadband service availability, then the consequences of the Form 477's "all-in" assumption can be severe. In blocks that cover many square miles, the overstatement of availability can be very large. Thus, for subsidy allocation purposes, the Form 477 data are unreliable—at least for partially-served census blocks. Fortunately, several states and the federal government have begun collecting much more detailed data, and new broadband maps from the FCC are expected soon—both of which should improve subsidy allocation.

"With location-specific data, the effect of the Form 477's 'all-in' assumption may be directly quantified," says study author Phoenix Center Chief Economist Dr. George S. Ford. "At more aggregate levels, the overstatement of availability is small, but the Form 477 data is a poor source for identifying specific unserved locations. Hopefully, such concerns will soon be in the past."

A full copy of PHOENIX CENTER POLICY PERSPECTIVE NO. 22-04, *Overstating Broadband Availability: An Assessment of the "All-In" Assumption for FCC 477 Data*, may be downloaded free from the Phoenix Center's web page at: <https://www.phoenix-center.org/perspectives/Perspective22-04Final.pdf>.

*The Phoenix Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that studies broad public-policy issues related to governance, social and economic conditions, with a particular emphasis on the law and economics of the digital age.*