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And Just Like That, America Becomes More Rural.

Census update of a century-old definition highlights the arbitrary nature of urban-rural distinction

With so much attention on the U.S.'s urban-rural divide, you might soon hear that the rural population in 2020 was much larger than in 2010.

That isn't because people moved en masse to the country during the pandemic. It's because the U.S. Census Bureau is updating its definition of an urban area, from one with 2,500 people to one with 5,000. That reclassified 4.2 million people, living in 1,140 areas of the U.S., from urban to rural.

This has real-world consequences: Access to many federal and state programs is based on whether an area is defined as rural or urban.

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The Wall Street Journal

By Josh Zumbrun

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