

#### 5. Steps Taken To Minimize Significant Economic Impact on Small Entities, and Significant Alternatives Considered

15. The RFA requires an agency to describe any significant alternatives that it has considered in reaching its proposed approach impacting small business, which may include the following four alternatives (among others): (1) The establishment of differing compliance and reporting requirements or timetables that take into account the resources available to small entities; (2) the clarification, consolidation, or simplification of compliance or reporting requirements under the rule for small entities; (3) the use of performance, rather than design, standards; and (4) an exemption from coverage of the rule, or part thereof, for small entities.

16. In this *FNPRM*, we seek comment on a new definition of rural area. If a new definition is adopted, this could change the size of the overall pool of eligible applicants for universal service support for rural health care providers. We also seek comment on whether to provide additional support to mobile rural health clinics that utilize satellite services. In seeking to minimize the burdens imposed on small entities where doing so does not compromise the goals of the universal service mechanism, we invite comment on definitions and proposals for additional support for mobile rural health clinics that might be made less burdensome for small entities. In addition, we seek comment on ways to streamline further the application process and expand outreach efforts. If the application process is streamlined further, this could ease the burden on small entities associated with the application process. Additionally, outreach efforts would better inform such businesses about the benefits of the rural health care program and potentially increase small business participation in the program.

#### 6. Federal Rules That May Duplicate, Overlap, or Conflict With the Proposed Rules

17. None.

#### B. Initial Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 Analysis

18. This *FNPRM* contained proposed information collections. The Commission, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork burdens, invites the general public and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to comment on the information collections contained in this *FNPRM*, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Public and

agency comments are due February 23, 2004. It will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review under the PRA. PRA comments should address: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Commission's burden estimates; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on the respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

#### C. Comment Filing Procedures

19. We invite comment on the issues and questions set forth in the *FNPRM* and Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis contained herein. Pursuant to applicable procedures set forth in sections 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission's rules, interested parties may file comments on or before February 23, 2004, and reply comments on or before April 7, 2004. All filings should refer to WC Docket No. 02-60. Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) or by filing paper copies.

20. Comments filed through the ECFS can be sent as an electronic file via the Internet to <http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html>. Generally, only one copy of an electronic submission must be filed. If multiple docket or rulemaking numbers appear in the caption of this proceeding, however, commenters must transmit one electronic copy of the comments to each docket or rulemaking number referenced in the caption. In completing the transmittal screen, commenters should include their full name, U.S. Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit an electronic comment by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions for e-mail comments, commenters should send an e-mail to [ecfs@fcc.gov](mailto:ecfs@fcc.gov), and should include the following words in the body of the message, "get form <your e-mail address>." A sample form and directions will be sent in reply.

21. Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, commenters must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number. Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by

first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail (although we continue to experience delays in receiving U.S. Postal Service mail). The Commission's contractor, Natek, Inc., will receive hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary at 236 Massachusetts Avenue, NE., Suite 110, Washington, DC 20002. The filing hours at this location are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes must be disposed of before entering the building. Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743. U.S. Postal Service first-class mail, Express Mail, and Priority Mail should be addressed to 445 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20554. All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Marlene H. Dortch, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

22. Parties also must send three paper copies of their filing to Sheryl Todd, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, SW., Room 5-B540, Washington, DC 20554. In addition, commenters must send diskette copies to the Commission's copy contractor, Qualex International, Portals II, 445 12th Street, SW., Room CY-B402, Washington, DC 20054.

#### III. Ordering Clauses

23. Pursuant to the authority contained in sections 1, 4(i), 4(j), 201-205, 214, 254, and 403 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, this *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* is adopted.

24. The Commission's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Reference Information Center, shall send a copy of this *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, including the Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.

#### List of Subjects in 47 CFR Part 54

Libraries, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Schools, Telecommunications, Telephone.

Federal Communications Commission.

**Marlene H. Dortch,**  
Secretary.

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