

ERS Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title:	Do Opportunity Zones Work Better for Rural Communities? Early Impacts on Rural Employment		
Type of Report (ERR, EIB, EB)	ERR		
	☒	Influential Scientific Information	
Agency:	Economic Research Service USDA	☐	Highly Influential Scientific Assessment
Agency Contact:	Jeffrey Hopkins, jeffrey.w.hopkins@usda.gov		
Subject of Review:	Most rural counties (86 percent) experienced modest declines in poverty from 2007 through 2021, however for some rural counties (14 percent) persistent poverty has been an issue for decades (Davis et al. 2023). Employment options help families increase financial stability and rise above the poverty threshold. Place-based policy incentives that direct investment toward low-income rural areas can help address unique challenges these locations face such as limited access to credit, infrastructure, essential services, and jobs, as well as economic isolation from major economic centers. By offering tax incentives for capital asset owners to invest capital gains in Qualified Opportunity Funds, resources can be directed toward investments to improve designated Opportunity Zone rural areas.		
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	☒ Individual Reviewers
	☐	Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):	
Timing of Review (Est.):	Start:	2/26/2026	Completed:
Number of Reviewers:	☐	3 or fewer	☒ 4 to 10 ☐ More than 10
Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review:	Economists		
Reviewers selected by:	☒	Agency	☐ Designated Outside Organization
Opportunities for Public Comment?	☐	Yes	☒ No
If yes, briefly state how and when these opportunities will be provided:			
How:			
When:			
Peer Reviewers Provided with Public Comments?	☐	Yes	☒ No
Public Nominations Requested for Review Panel?	☐	Yes	☒ No