



**Fostering Excellence in GIS**

[www.URISA.org](http://www.URISA.org)

July 17, 2015

To: James Treat, US Census Bureau, [James.B.Treat@census.gov](mailto:James.B.Treat@census.gov)  
John Thompson, Director, US Census Bureau, [John.H.Thompson@census.gov](mailto:John.H.Thompson@census.gov)  
Katherine Wallman, Chief Statistician, Office of Management and Budget, [Katherine\\_K.\\_Wallman@omb.eop.gov](mailto:Katherine_K._Wallman@omb.eop.gov)

URISA is an international organization of more than 2,000 public servants, researchers, analysts, and decision-makers. These members work at different levels of government and in the private and academic realms to make sound long term decisions, solve challenges, and enhance quality of life from the household to the global community level. URISA supports these efforts with leadership, resources, networks, and opportunities for professionals using Geographic Information Systems and other technologies to understand the social and physical landscapes of our world.

Good data are key to understanding the complicated dynamics that affect these landscapes and our quality of life. Good data are key to making responsible and far-reaching decisions for the future. URISA's members rely on good data for these decisions.

Ironically, good data are becoming increasingly scarce just as we have made great strides in our ability to use sophisticated analytical tools, including GIS, to improve decision making. **URISA therefore has a keen interest in the question of funding for the American Community Survey (ACS) 3-year data products.**

This spring, after learning of the plan to eliminate the 3-year ACS products, URISA polled its members to inform its position on the issue. Respondents reported that they use the 3-year products regularly and attest to the great value of these products for a variety of applications.

Our members describe their need for population data that can illustrate how communities as small as 20,000 people are changing over time spans as narrow as 3 years. When economic swings occur, we cannot afford to wait ten years to have two (5-year) datasets that illustrate the socio-economic changes experienced by our communities. URISA members use 3-year ACS datasets on a daily basis. While the 5-year and 1-year ACS data products are extremely valuable and other data products prove useful as well, there is no substitute for the ACS 3-year products to support community indicator projects, overlay maps of changing demographics with resources to understand equity in investments, or identify the primary languages spoken at home so that government programs can translate information and provide services to those most in need. URISA members need 3-year ACS data to comply with federally mandated programs like Title VI.

URISA urges you to fully fund and maintain the 3-year American Community Survey data products in addition to the 1-year and 5-year products which, together, provide invaluable insight into ever-changing populations at different time and geographic scales. These three different sets of products provide a unique means of understanding our communities so that we can make decisions that sustain and improve quality of life for all.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Anderson', with a long, sweeping underline.

Carl Anderson, URISA President, [carl.anderson@vadose.org](mailto:carl.anderson@vadose.org)