

Rural Statistical Areas: Proposal and Considerations

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Rural Statistical Areas

Background:

- Discussion began as a follow on to ACS Data Product Redesign Group (DPRG) Presentation
- One suggestion from DPRG was the establishment of rural geographies that meet the ACS 65,000 1-year population threshold
- Previous attempts at creating this geography failed

Rural Statistical Areas

Background:

- SDC Steering Committee members offered to engage with and assist the Census Bureau in evaluating and creating a stable rural geography
- Follow-on conference call in August for initial planning and idea generation

Rural Statistical Areas

Goal for project:

- Develop an objective process for identifying and grouping sub-state rural areas for purposes of tabulating and disseminating ACS 1-year data.
- Process should result in areas that are comparable from one state to another.
- Use counties as building blocks.

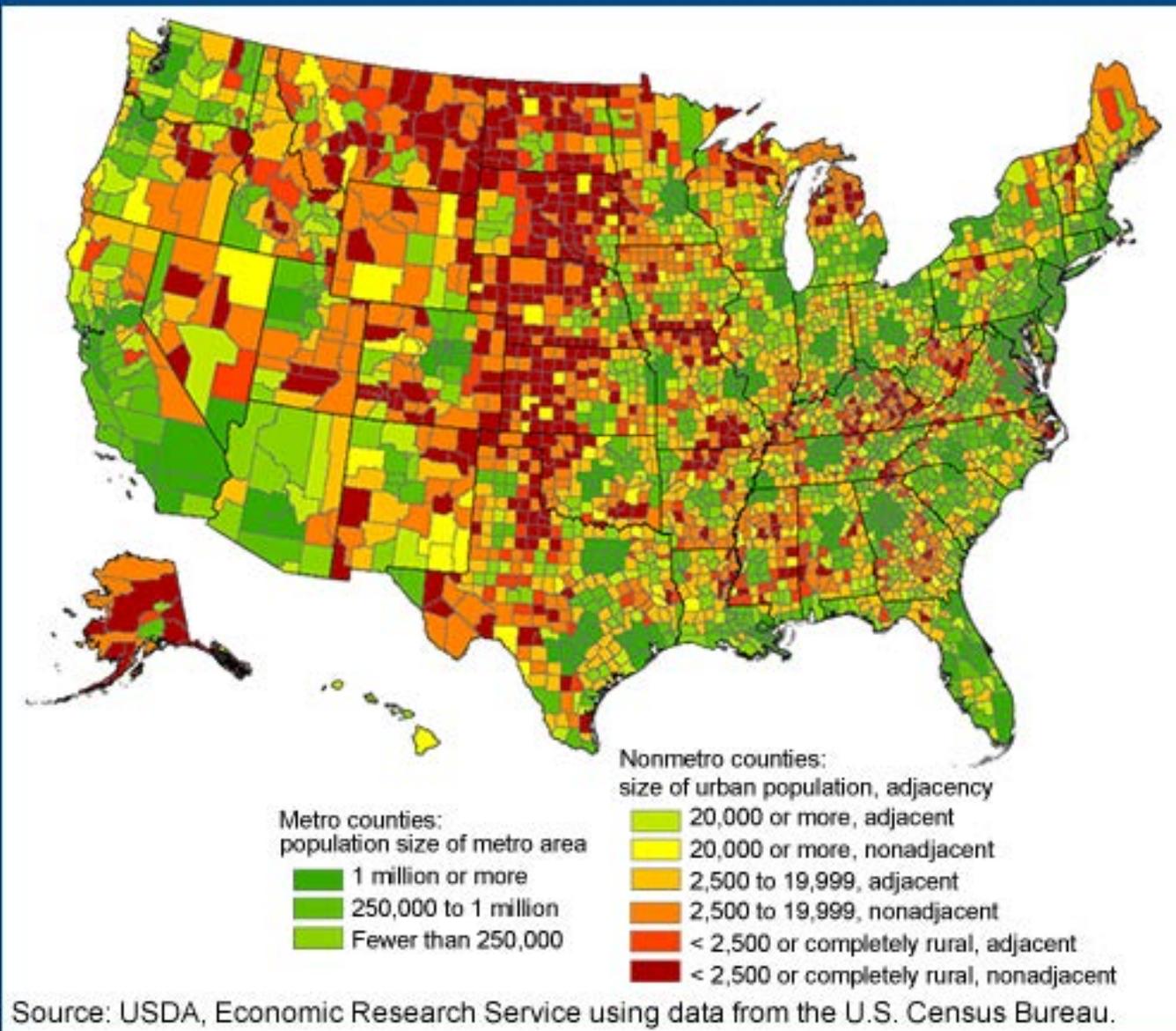
Rural Statistical Areas

- USDA/Economic Research Service Rural-Urban Continuum Codes (RUCCs) provide a 9-level classification that is commonly used with rural programs, research, and analysis.
- County-based.
- Classifies nonmetropolitan counties based on amount of urban population and adjacency or lack of adjacency to a metropolitan area.

Rural-Urban Continuum Codes

Code	Description
Metropolitan Counties	
1	Counties in metro areas of 1 million population or more
2	Counties in metro areas of 250,000 to 1 million population
3	Counties in metro areas of fewer than 250,000 population
Nonmetropolitan Counties	
4	Urban population of 20,000 or more, adjacent to a metro area
5	Urban population of 20,000 or more, not adjacent to a metro area
6	Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to a metro area
7	Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, not adjacent to a metro area
8	Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, adjacent to a metro area
9	Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, not adjacent to a metro area

2013 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes



Rural Statistical Areas

Questions to consider:

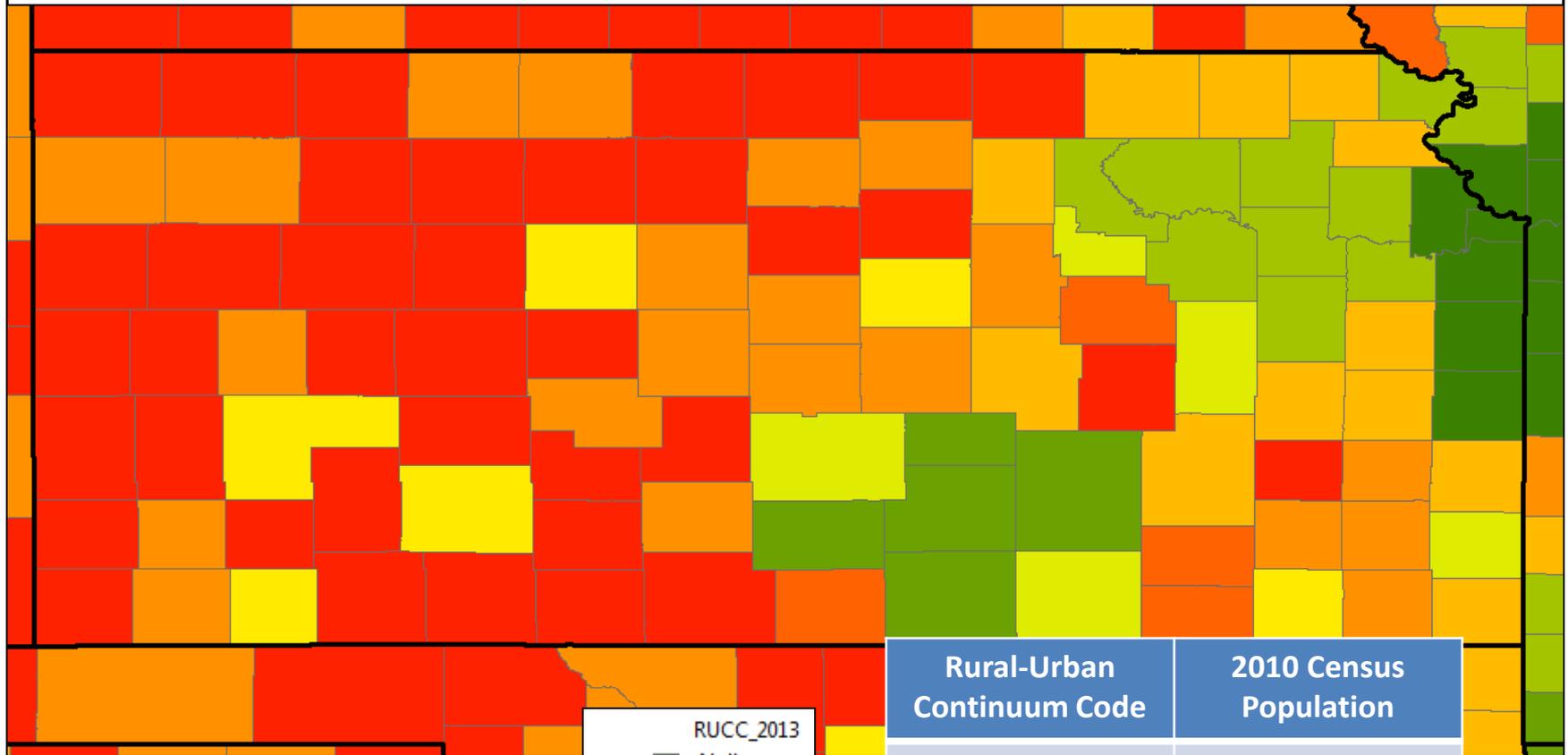
- What is the optimal population size for each area? How close to the minimum 65,000 population should each area be?
- Is contiguity a requirement?
- How should counties be grouped to form individual rural statistical areas?

Rural Statistical Areas

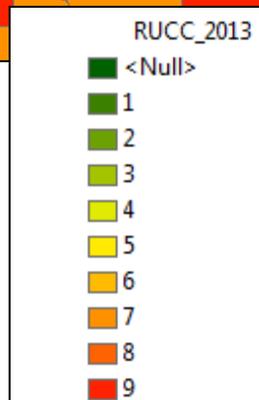
Potential methods for grouping counties:

- 1) Group based on specific RUCC category only. For example, all counties with RUCC 4 are grouped to form an RSA, and so forth.
- 2) Group based on adjacency/non-adjacency to an MSA; that is, group categories 4, 6, and 8 or 5, 7, and 9.
- 3) Group based on amount of urban population; that is, group categories 4 and 5; 6 and 7; 8 and 9.
- 4) Group to form contiguous regions, with RUCC codes guiding the aggregation process.

Kansas Rural-Urban Continuum Codes

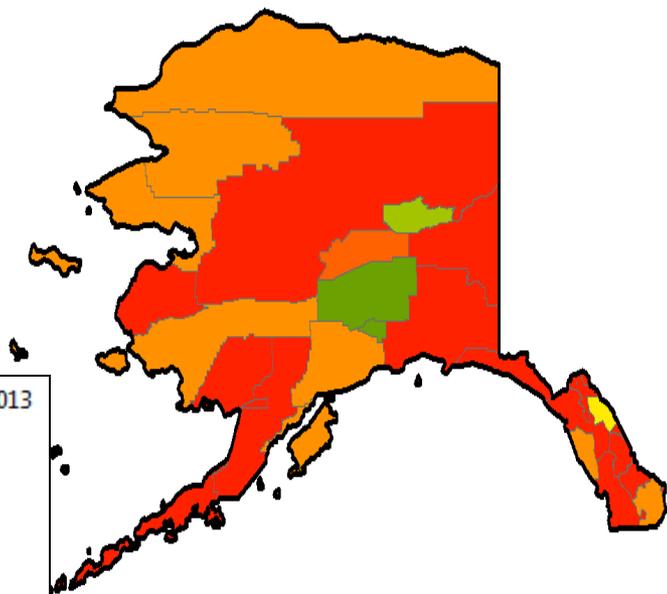


Rural-Urban Continuum Code	2010 Census Population
4	208,008
5	213,105
6	154,558
7	237,304
8	18,508
9	125,002



Alaska RUCCs and Potential RSAs

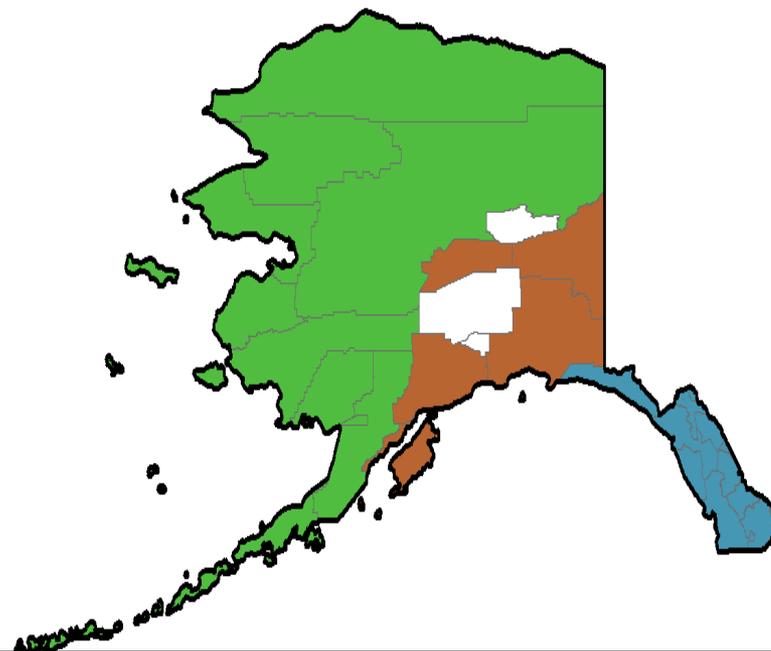
Alaska Rural-Urban Continuum Codes



RUC_2013

- <Null>
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9

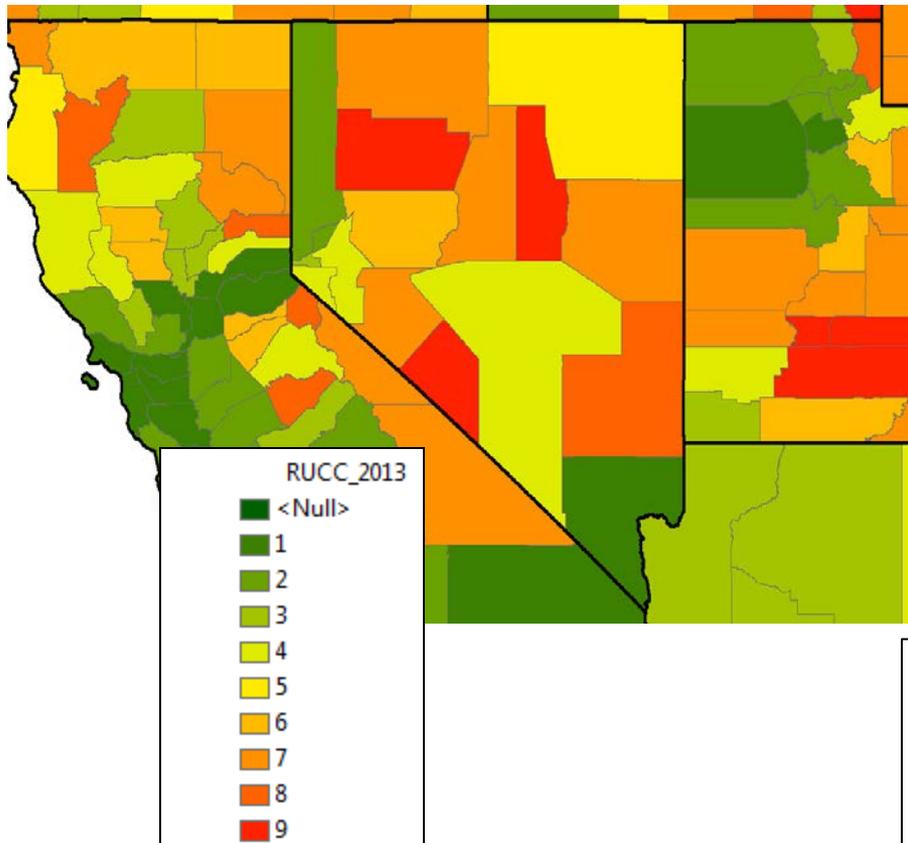
Alaska Potential Rural Statistical Areas



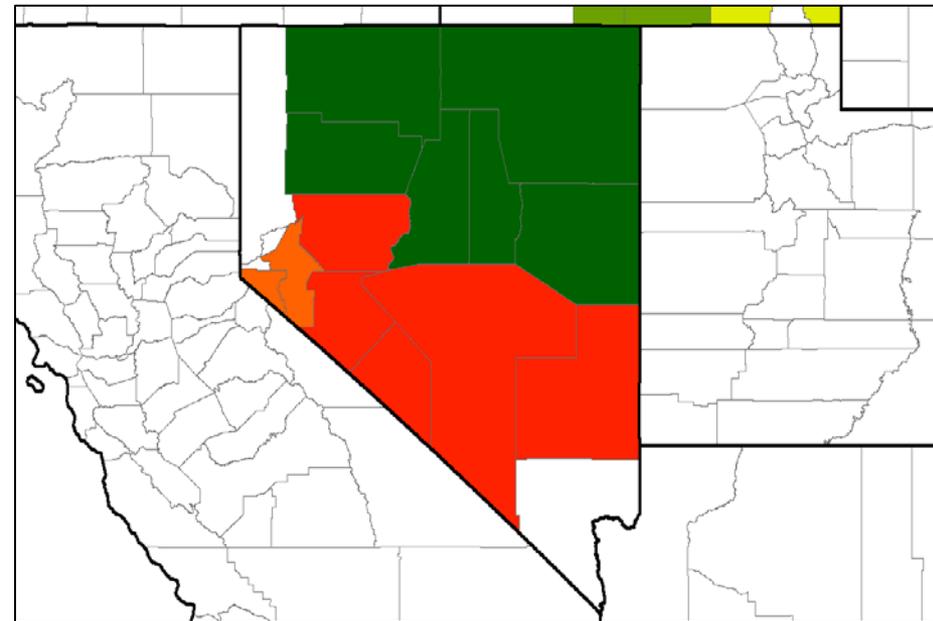
<u>RSA</u>	<u>2010 Population</u>
1-North and West	72,682
2-Central	87,483
3-Southeast	71,664

Nevada RUCCs and Potential RSAs

Nevada Rural-Urban
Continuum Codes

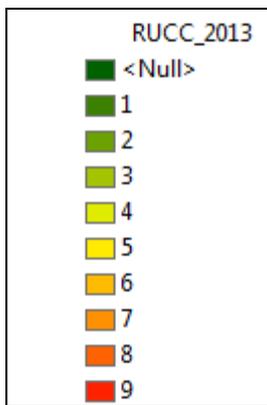
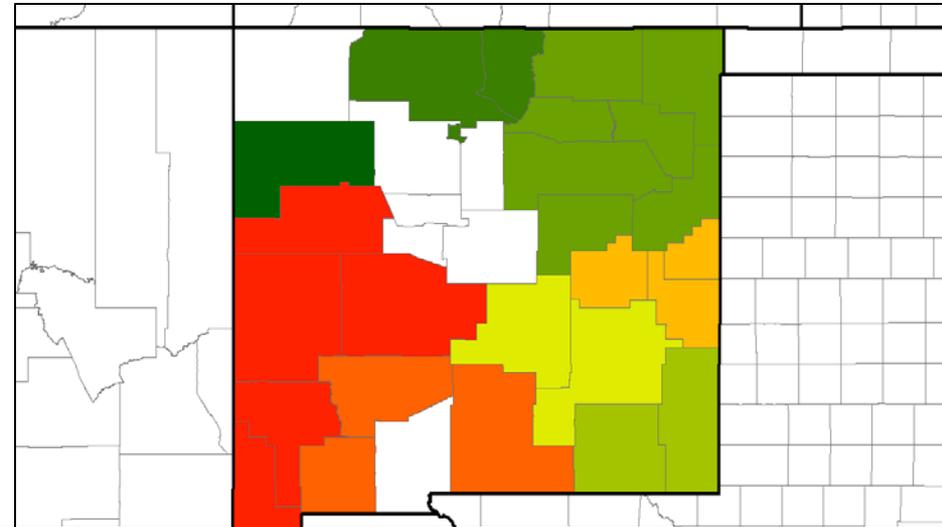
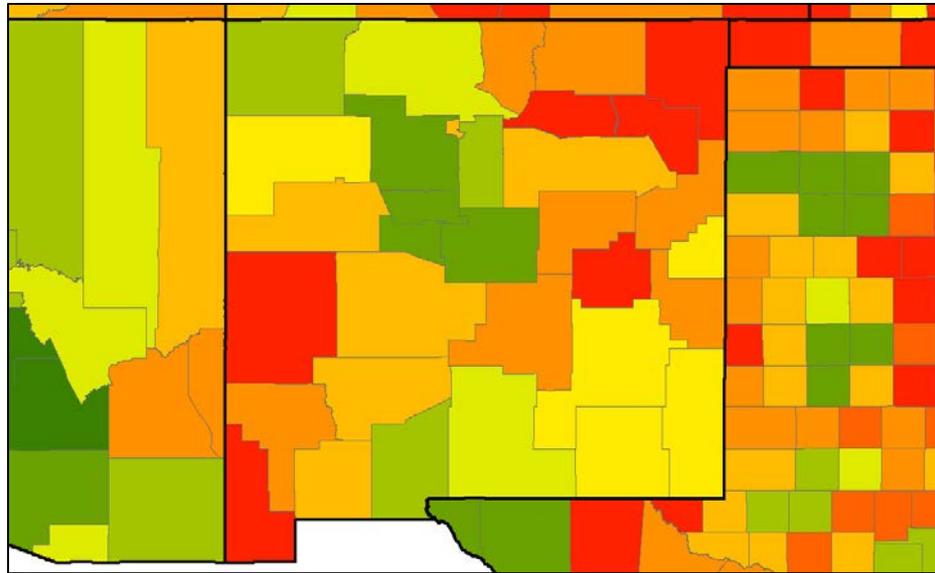


Nevada Potential
Rural Statistical Areas



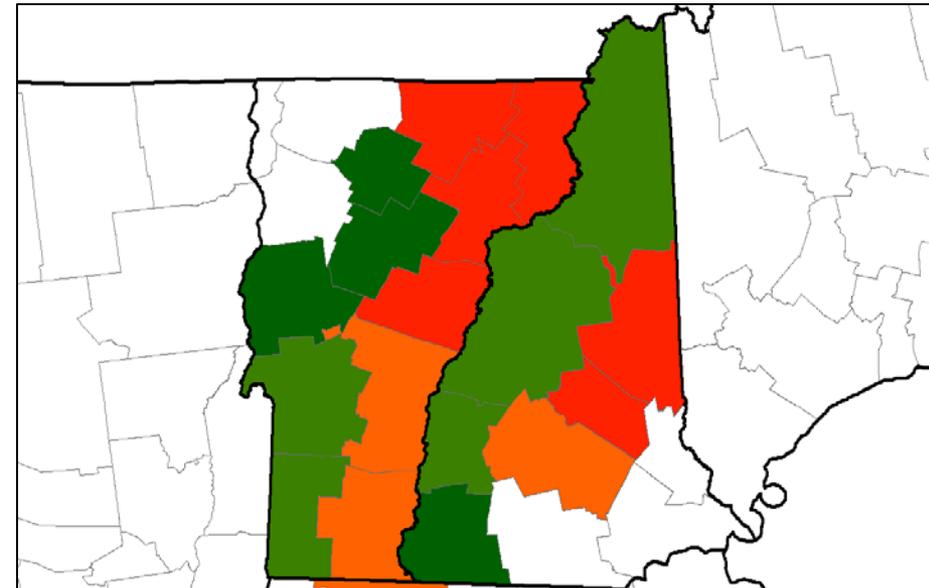
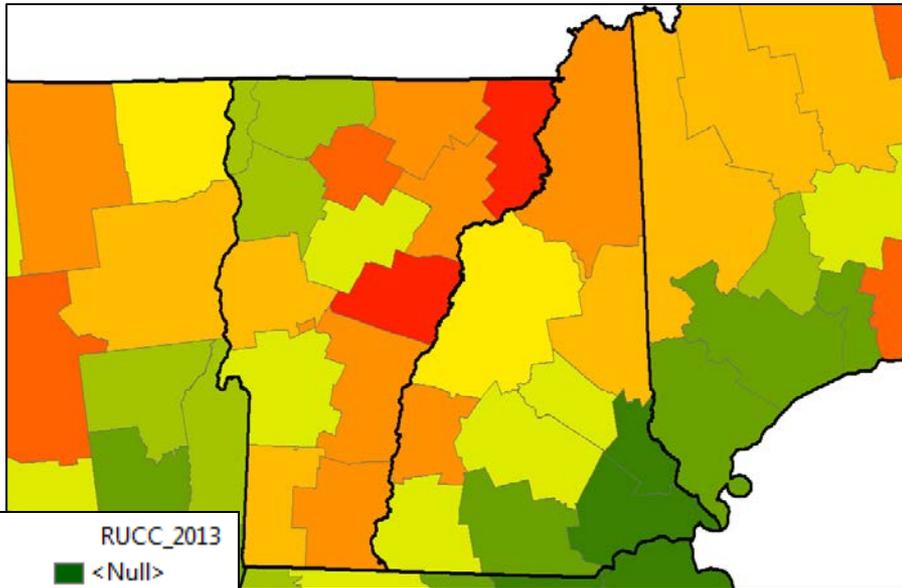
<u>RSA</u>	<u>2010 Population</u>
1-Douglas-Lyon	98,977
2-Churchill-Esmeralda- Lincoln-Mineral-Nye	79,723
3-Elko-Eureka-Humboldt- Lander-Pershing-White Pine	89,881

New Mexico RUCCs and Potential RSAs



<u>RSA</u>	<u>2010 Population</u>
1-Luna-Otero-Sierra	100,880
2-Catron-Cibola-Grant-Hidalgo-Socorro	83,212
3-McKinley	71,492
4-Los Alamos-Rio Arriba-Taos	91,133
5-Colfax-Guadalupe-Harding-Mora-Quay-San Miguel-Union	66,996
6-Eddy-Lea	118,556
7-Chaves-Lincoln	86,142
8-Curry-De Baca-Roosevelt	70,244

Vermont and New Hampshire RUCCs and Potential RSAs



RUCC_2013

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- 1
- 2
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RSA

2010 Population

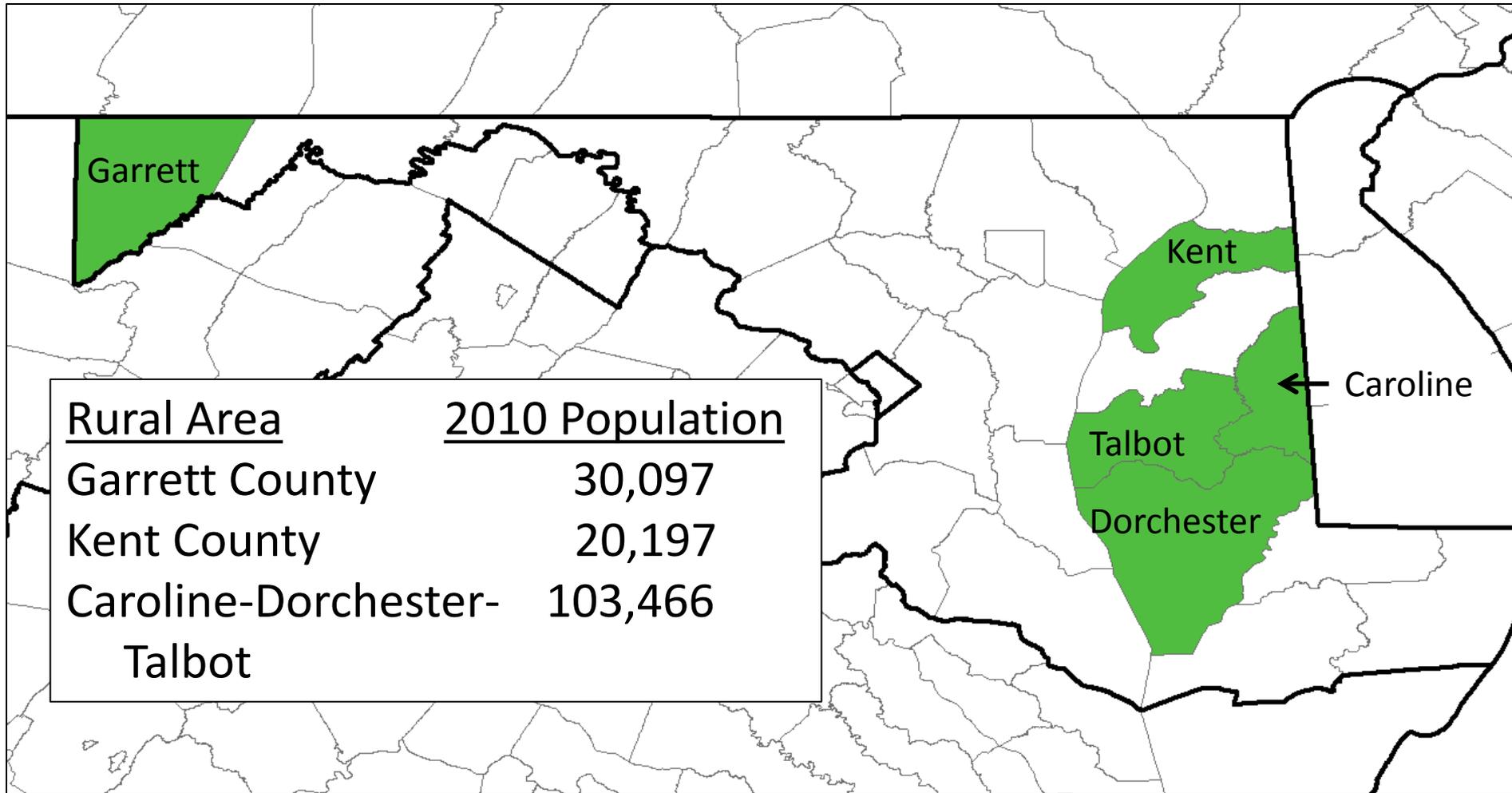
NH1-Merrimack	146,445
NH2-Belknap-Carroll	107,906
NH3-Cheshire	77,117
NH4-Coos-Grafton-Sullivan	165,915
VT1-Windham-Windsor	101,183
VT2-Caledonia-Essex-Orange-Orleans	93,700
VT3-Addison-Lamoille-Washington	86,142
VT4-Bennington-Rutland	98,767

Rural Statistical Areas

Under this approach:

- Four states lack “rural” counties: Delaware, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia
- Contiguous RSAs cannot be formed for all “rural” counties in Maryland and Massachusetts.
- Predominantly rural counties located within metropolitan areas are not included in RSAs.

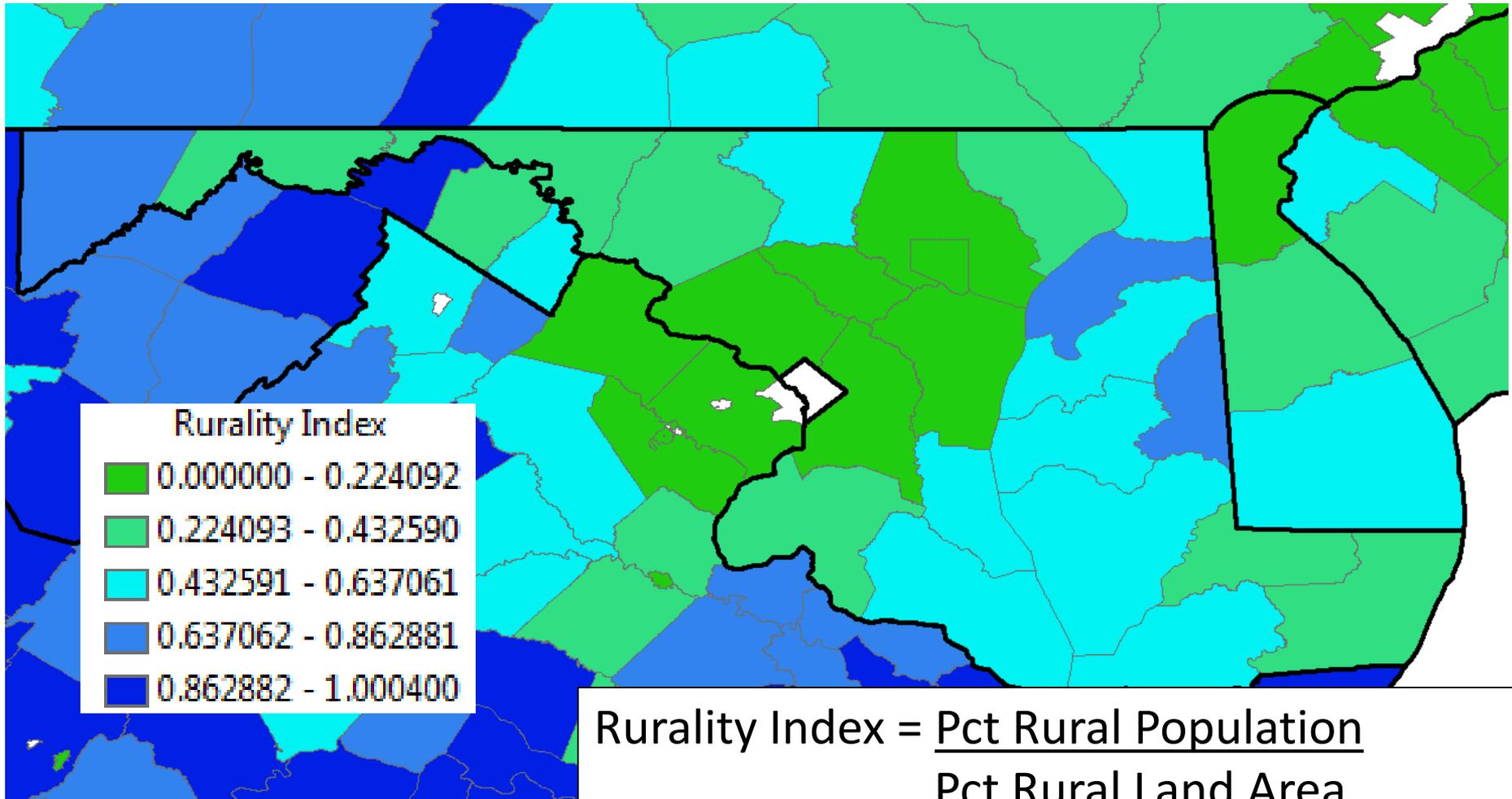
Maryland Potential Rural Statistical Areas



Rural Statistical Areas: Next Steps

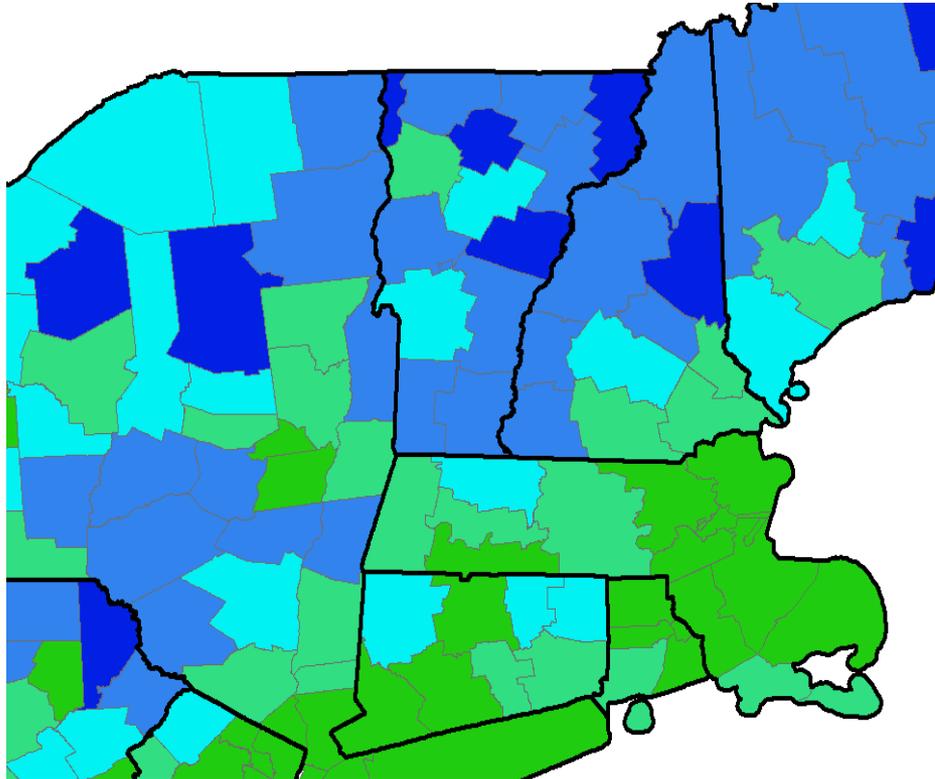
- Does this approach merit moving forward with application in all states and delineation of potential RSAs?
- Should other methods for classifying rural counties be considered? If so, what are those approaches and how will counties be grouped?
- As an alternative, perhaps consider a rurality index, classifying counties based on percentage of rural population and rural land area, ignoring metro/non-metro status.

Rurality Index, Maryland



Rurality Index = $\frac{\text{Pct Rural Population}}{\text{Pct Rural Land Area}}$
1 = entirely rural

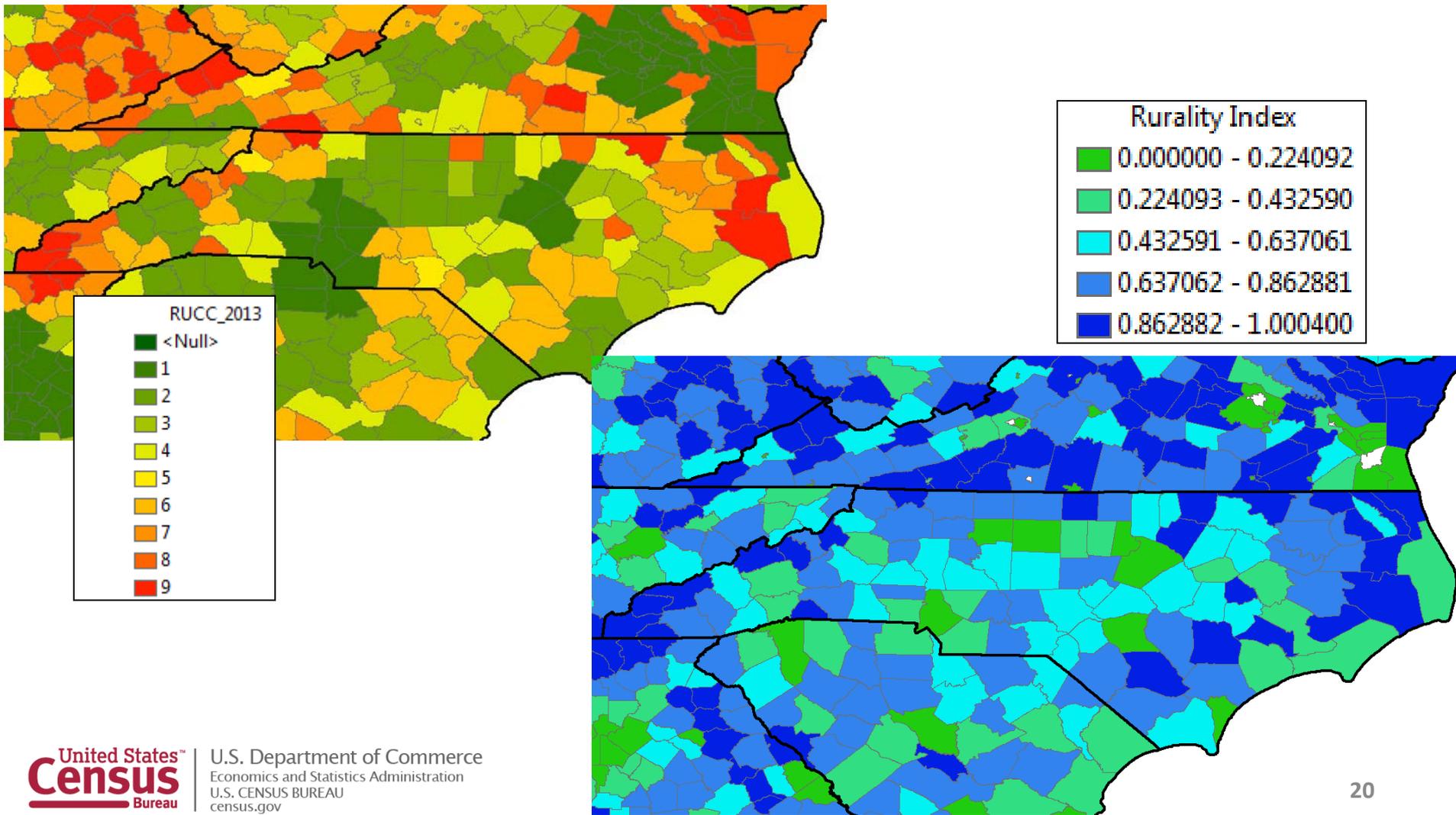
Rurality Index: New England



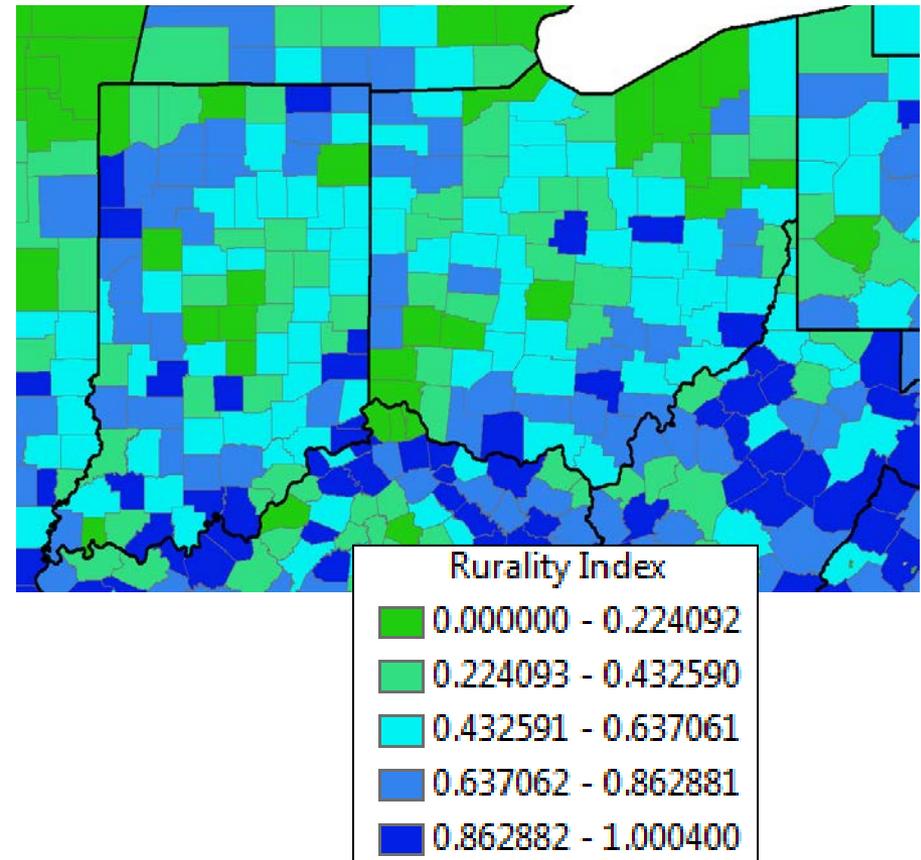
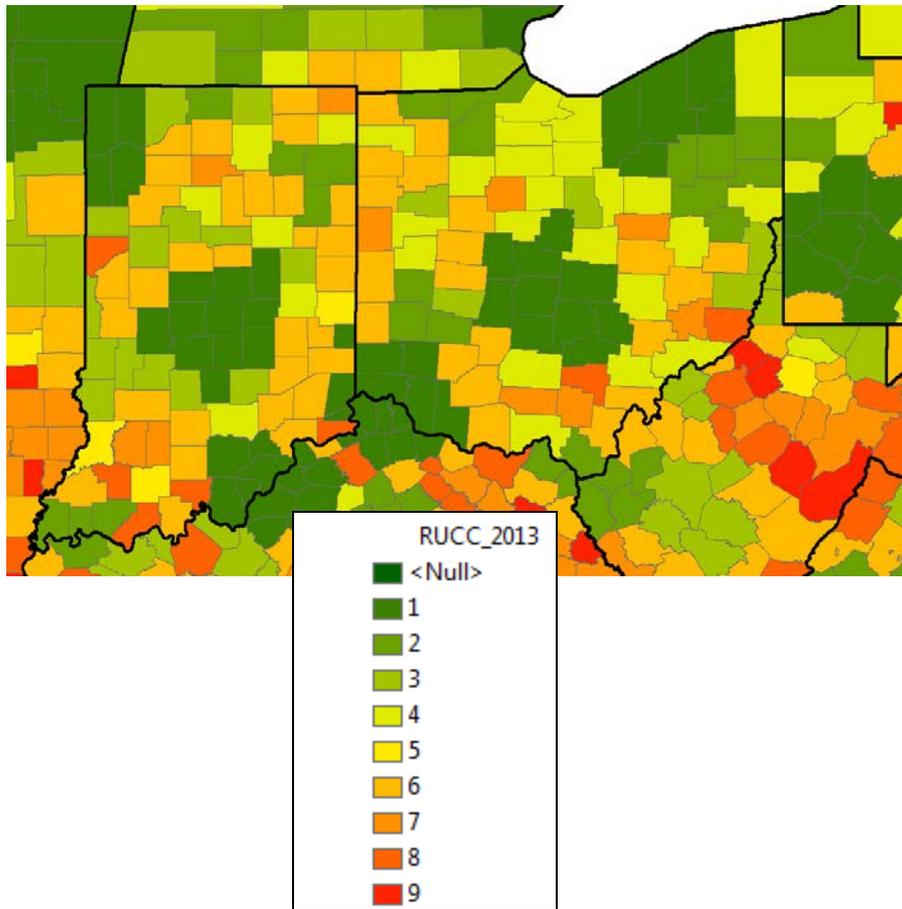
With a Rurality Index approach:

- Connecticut gains two rural counties.
- New Hampshire and Vermont counties become more similar in terms of rurality.
- Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket—the two island counties in Massachusetts—“look” more like Barnstable County.

North Carolina: Rural-Urban Continuum Codes and Rurality Index



Indiana and Ohio: Rural-Urban Continuum Codes and Rurality Index



Questions?

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