



**6712-01**

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

**47 CFR Part 54**

**[WC Docket No. 10-90, 16-271; FCC 16-115]**

**Connect America Fund, Connect America Fund – Alaska Plan**

**AGENCY:** Federal Communications Commission.

**ACTION:** Final rule; announcement of effective date.

**SUMMARY:** In this document, the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) announces that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved, for a period of three years, an information collection associated with the rules for the Connect America Fund contained in the Commission's Connect America Fund – Alaska Plan Order, FCC 16-115. This document is consistent with the Connect America Fund – Alaska Plan Order, which stated that the Commission would publish a document in the Federal Register announcing the effective date of the new information collection requirements.

**DATES:** The amendments regarding §§ 54.313(f)(1)(i), 54.313(f)(3) and 54.313(l) published at 81 FR 69696, October 7, 2016, are effective **[INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Alexander Minard, Wireline Competition Bureau at (202) 418-7400 or TTY (202) 418-0484. For additional information concerning the Paperwork Reduction Act information collection requirements contact Nicole Ongele at (202) 418-2991 or via email: [Nicole.Ongele@fcc.gov](mailto:Nicole.Ongele@fcc.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Commission submitted revised information collection requirements for review and approval by OMB, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, on May 30, 2018, which were approved by OMB on July 2, 2018. The information collection requirements are contained in the Commission's Connect America Fund – Alaska Plan Order, FCC 16-115, published at 81 FR 69696, October 7, 2016. The OMB

Control Number is 3060-0986. The Commission publishes this document as an announcement of the effective date of the rules published October 7, 2016. If you have any comments on the burden estimates listed below, or how the Commission can improve the collections and reduce any burdens caused thereby, please contact Nicole Ongele, Federal Communications Commission, Room 1-A620, 445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Washington, DC 20554. Please include the OMB Control Number, 3060-0986, in your correspondence. The Commission will also accept your comments via e-mail at [PRA@fcc.gov](mailto:PRA@fcc.gov).

To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an email to [fcc504@fcc.gov](mailto:fcc504@fcc.gov) or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice), (202) 418-0432 (TTY).

### **Synopsis**

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3507), the Commission is notifying the public that it received OMB approval on July 2, 2018, for the information collection requirements contained in 47 CFR 54.313(f)(1)(i), 54.313(f)(3) and 54.313(l), published at 81 FR 69696, October 7, 2016. Under 5 CFR part 1320, an agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a current, valid OMB Control Number.

No person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act that does not display a current, valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number is 3060-0986.

The foregoing notice is required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Pub. L. 104-13, October 1, 1995, and 44 U.S.C. 3507.

The total annual reporting burdens and costs for the respondents are as follows:

**OMB Control Number:** 3060-0986.

**OMB Approval Date:** July 2, 2018.

**OMB Expiration Date:** July 31, 2021.

**Title:** High-Cost Universal Service Support.

**Form Number:** FCC Form 481, FCC Form 505, FCC Form 507, FCC Form 508, FCC Form 509 and FCC Form 525.

**Type of Review:** Revision of a currently approved collection.

**Respondents:** Business or other for-profit, not-for-profit institutions and state, local or tribal government.

**Number of Respondents and Responses:** 1,877 respondents; 14,335 responses.

**Estimated Time per Response:** 0.5 - 15 hours.

**Frequency of Response:** On occasion, quarterly and annual reporting requirements, recordkeeping requirement and third party disclosure requirement.

**Obligation to Respond:** Required to obtain or retain benefits. Statutory authority for this information collection is contained in 47 U.S.C. 151-154, 155, 201-206, 214, 218-220, 251, 252, 254, 256, 303(r), 332, 403, 405, 410, and 1302.

**Total Annual Burden:** 63,486 hours.

**Total Annual Cost:** No Cost.

**Privacy Act Impact Assessment:** No impact(s).

**Nature and Extent of Confidentiality:** The Commission notes that USAC must preserve the confidentiality of all data obtained from respondents; must not use the data except for purposes of administering the universal service programs; and must not disclose data in company-specific form unless directed to do so by the Commission. Privately-held rate-of-return carriers may file the financial information they disclose in FCC Form 481 pursuant to a protective order.

**Needs and Uses:** On November 18, 2011, the Commission adopted an order reforming its high-cost universal service support mechanisms. Connect America Fund; A National Broadband Plan for Our Future; Establish Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers; High-Cost Universal Service Support; Developing a Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime; Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service; Lifeline and Link-Up; Universal Service Reform –

Mobility Fund, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 07-135, 05-337, 03-109; GN Docket No. 09-51; CC Docket Nos. 01-92, 96-45; WT Docket No. 10-208, Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 26 FCC Rcd 17663 (2011) (USF/ICC Transformation Order), and the Commission and Wireline Competition Bureau have since adopted a number of orders that implement the USF/ICC Transformation Order; see also Connect America Fund et al., WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Third Order on Reconsideration, 27 FCC Rcd 5622 (2012); Connect America Fund et al., WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Order, 27 FCC Rcd 605 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2012); Connect America Fund et al., WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Fifth Order on Reconsideration, 27 FCC Rcd 14549 (2012); Connect America Fund et al., WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Order, 28 FCC Rcd 2051 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2013); Connect America Fund et al., WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Order, 28 FCC Rcd 7227 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2013); Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90, Report and Order, 28 FCC Rcd 7766 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2013); Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90, Report and Order, 28 FCC Rcd 7211 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2013); Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90, Report and Order, 28 FCC Rcd 10488 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2013); Connect America Fund et al., WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Report and Order, Order and Order on Reconsideration and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 31 FCC Rcd 3087 (2016). The Commission has received OMB approval for most of the information collections required by these orders. At a later date, the Commission plans to submit additional revisions for OMB review to address other reforms adopted in the orders (e.g., 47 C.F.R. 54.313(a)(6)).

More recently, on August 23, 2016, the Commission adopted the Alaska Plan Order. See Connect America Fund et al., WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 16-271; WT Docket No. 10-208, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 31 FCC Rcd 10139 (2016) (Alaska Plan Order). In that order, the Commission adopted a plan for providing Alaskan rate-of-return carriers and competitive eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) the option to obtain a fixed level of funding for a defined term in exchange for committing to deployment obligations that are tailored to each Alaskan carrier's circumstances. ETCs receiving support pursuant to the Alaska

Plan must comply with the Commission's existing high-cost reporting and oversight mechanisms, with certain exceptions and modifications.

On July 7, 2017, the Commission adopted the ETC Reporting Streamlining Order. See Connect America Fund; ETC Annual Reports and Certifications, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 14-58, Report and Order, 32 FCC Rcd 5944 (2017) (ETC Reporting Streamlining Order). In that order, the Commission streamlined the annual reporting requirements for ETCs by eliminating rules duplicative of other reporting requirements or that are no longer necessary.

Further, since the previous filing deadline associated with this collection, changing circumstances have made filing certain information no longer necessary or required under the rules. For instance, the final Connect America Phase I incremental support deployment deadlines were in early 2017, so there are no longer any reporting obligations associated with that support.

Moreover, because the Connect America Phase II challenge process has ended, the Commission removed Form 505 from this collection. The Commission also moved FCC Form 507, FCC Form 508, FCC Form 509 and the accompanying instructions to information collection 3060-0233.

The Commission therefore revises this information collection, as well as Form 481 and its accompanying instructions, to reflect these new or modified requirements. The Commission also implemented a number of non-substantive changes to the Form 481 and accompanying instructions. Any increased burdens for particular reporting requirements are associated with ETCs newly subject to those requirements as a condition of receiving high-cost support.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION.

Marlene Dortch,  
Secretary,

Office of the Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2018-15171 Filed: 7/16/2018 8:45 am; Publication Date: 7/17/2018]