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CFPB Publishes 2019 Final Lists of Rural and Rural or Underserved Counties

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The CFPB has published its [2019 final lists](#) of Rural and Rural or Underserved Counties on its website. The CFPB has previously posted lists of such counties for calendar years 2011-2018. The CFPB has also updated the rural and underserved areas [website tool](#) for 2019.

The lists and tool are relevant to exemptions from certain regulatory requirements of the Truth in Lending Act, including the following CFPB mortgage rules:

- Escrows Rule, which requires a creditor to establish an escrow account for certain first-lien higher-priced mortgage loans (HPMLs), but exempts HPMLs consummated during a calendar year (or next-to-last calendar year for loans where the application was received before April 1 of the current calendar year) if the creditor extended a first-lien covered transaction in the preceding calendar year secured by a property located in a rural-or-underserved area, and meets certain additional conditions.
- Ability to Repay and Qualified Mortgage Standards Rule, which treats certain balloon-payment mortgages as qualified mortgages if they are originated and held in portfolio by small creditors that meet the rural-or-underserved test above and certain additional conditions
- Home Ownership and Equity Protections Act of 1994 (HOEPA) rule, which generally bans balloon payments for mortgages that fall within HOEPA's high-cost mortgage coverage test, unless they meet the rural-or-underserved test and certain additional conditions
- Appraisals for HPMLs rule, which exempts HPMLs made in "rural" counties from its additional appraisal requirement

Note that if a creditor makes a first-lien mortgage loan secured by a property located in a rural or underserved area during 2019, the creditor will satisfy the rural and underserved test for the rules noted above during all of 2020 and for loan applications received before April 1, 2021.

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