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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCIES: Rural Housing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; comments requested.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service (RHS), intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of compliance with Civil Rights laws.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Angilla Denton, Equal Opportunity Specialist, Rural Development, Civil Rights Staff, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 0703, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250-0703, Telephone (202) 692-4109 (voice).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: 7 CFR 1901-E, Civil Rights Compliance Requirements.

OMB Number: 0575-0018.

Expiration Date of Approval: February 28, 2015.

Type of Request: Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection.

Abstract: The information collection under OMB Number 0575-0018 enables the RHS, Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS), and Rural Utilities Service (RHS), to effectively monitor a recipient's compliance with the civil rights laws, and to determine whether or not service and benefits are being provided to beneficiaries on an equal opportunity basis.

The RBS, RHS, and RUS are required to provide Federal financial assistance through its housing and community and business programs on an equal opportunity basis. The laws implemented in 7 CFR part 1901, subpart E, require the recipients of RBS, RHS, and RUS Federal financial assistance to collect various types of information, including information on participants in certain of these agencies' programs, by race, color, and national origin.

The information collected and maintained by the recipients of certain programs from RBS, RHS, and RUS is used internally by these agencies for monitoring compliance with the civil rights laws and regulations. This

information is made available to USDA officials, officials of other Federal agencies, and to Congress for reporting purposes. Without the required information, RBS, RHS, RUS and its recipients will lack the necessary documentation to demonstrate that their programs are being administered in a nondiscriminatory manner, and in full compliance with the civil rights laws. In addition, the RBS, RHS, RUS and their recipients would be vulnerable in lawsuits alleging discrimination in the affected programs of these agencies, and would be without appropriate data and documentation to defend themselves by demonstrating that services and benefits are being provided to beneficiaries on an equal opportunity basis.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 7.5 hours per response.

Respondents: Recipients of RBS, RHS, and RUS Federal financial assistance, loan, and loan guarantee programs.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 27,000.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.72.

Estimated Number of Responses: 73,559.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 550,276.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Jeanne Jacobs, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, Support Services Division, at (202) 692-0040.

COMMENTS:

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Rural Development, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agencies' estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Jeanne Jacobs, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, Support Services Division, Rural Development U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 0742, Washington, DC 20250-0742. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: November 24, 2014.

Tony Hernandez,
Administrator,
Rural Housing Service.

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