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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Information Collection Activity; Comment Request

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) invites comments on the following information collection for which RUS intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michele Brooks, Team Lead, Regulatory Team, Rural Development Innovation Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., STOP 1522, Room 5164, South Building, Washington, DC 20250–1522. Telephone: (202) 690–1078. Fax: (202) 720–8435 or email Michele.Brooks@ wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) regulation (5 CFR 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104–13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies an information collection that RUS is submitting to OMB for revision.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency’s estimate of the burden of the 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 respondents, 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: Michele Brooks, Team Lead, Regulations Team, Rural Development Innovation Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture,

STOP 1522, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20250–1522. Telephone: (202) 690–1078, Fax: (202) 720–8435 or email: Michele.Brooks@wdc.usda.gov.

Title: Advance of Loan Funds and Budgetary Control and Other Related Burdens.

OMB Control Number: 0572–0015.

Type of Request: Extension of currently approved collection.

Abstract: The Rural Utilities Service administers the electric loan and loan guarantee program authorized under the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 901 et seq.) In order to protect and ensure the Government’s security interest in loans, and in exercise of due diligence, electric borrowers furnish information to RUS regarding the condition, financial or otherwise, related to expenditure of loan funds. This Information Collection is necessary to comply with applicable provisions of the RUS loan contract. RUS Borrowers submit requisitions to RUS for funds for project costs incurred. Insured loan funds will be advanced only for projects which are included in the RUS approved borrowers workplan

or approved amendment and in an approved loan, as amended. The process of loan advances establishes the beginning of the audit trail of the use of loan funds which is required to subsequent RUS compliance audits.

The RUS Form 595 is used as a requisition for advances of funds. The form helps to assure that loan funds are advanced only for the budget purposes and amount approved by RUS. According to the applicable provisions of the RUS loan contract, borrowers must certify with each request for funds to be approved for advance, which such funds are for projects previously approved. When a prospective borrower requests and is granted a RUS loan, a loan contract is established between the Federal government, acting through the RUS Administrator, and the borrower. At the time this contract is entered into, the borrower must provide RUS with a list of projects for which loan funds will be spent, along with an itemized list of the estimated costs of these projects. Thus, the borrower receives a loan based upon estimated cost figures.

RUS Form 219, Inventory of Work Orders, is one of the documents the borrower submits to RUS to support actual expenditures and an advance of loan funds. The form also serves as a connecting link and provides an audit trail that originates with the advance of funds and terminates with evidence supporting the propriety of expenditures for construction or retirement projects.

Estimate of Burden: The Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.56 hours per response.

Respondents: Not-for-profit institutions; Business or other for profit.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 600.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 15.5.

Estimated Number of Total Responses: 9,320

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 14,570 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from MaryPat Daskal, Regulations Team, Rural Development Innovation Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture, (202) 720-7853, Fax: (202) 720-8435 or email: MaryPat.Daskal@wdc.usda.gov. 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: May 29, 2018.

Christopher A. McLean,
Acting Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

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