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#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

#### **Background**

This solicitation is issued pursuant to enactment of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 Act), which established the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program under Title IX, Section 9006. The 2002 Act requires the Secretary of Agriculture to create a program to make direct loans, loan guarantees, and grants to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements. The program is designed to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy costs and consumption and help meet the nation's critical energy needs. The 2002 Act also mandates the maximum percentage RBS will provide in funding for these types of projects. The RBS grant will not exceed 25 percent of the eligible project costs and will be made only to those who demonstrate financial need. Due to the time constraints for implementing this program, RBS has decided to institute only the grant program for FY 2003.