

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 Renita Bolden, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, Support Services Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, STOP 0742, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., 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: May 22, 2003.

Arthur A. Garcia,

Administrator, Rural Housing Service.

Dated: May 22, 2003.

John Rosso,

Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

Dated: May 28, 2003.

Hilda Gay Legg,

Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

Dated: May 28, 2003.

James R. Little,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Rural Utilities Service

Rural Business-Cooperative Service Farm Service Agency

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCIES: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, Rural Utilities Service, and Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection: comments request.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service (RHS), the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS), Rural Utilities Service (RUS), and the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of compliance with applicable acts for planning and performing construction and other development work.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by August 4, 2003 to be assured consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Samuel J. Hodges III, Architect, Program Support Staff, RHS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 0761, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0761, Telephone (202) 720-9653.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: RD 1924-A, "Planning and Performing Construction and Other Development".

OMB Number: 0575-0042.

Expiration Date of Approval: October 31, 2003.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The information collection under OMB Number 0575-0042 enables the Agencies to effectively administer the policies, methods, and responsibilities in the planning and performing of construction and other development work for the related construction programs.

Section 501 of Title V of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to extend financial assistance to construct, improve, repair, replace, or rehabilitate dwellings; farm buildings; and/or related facilities to provide decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions and adequate farm buildings and other structures in rural areas.

Section 506 of the act requires that all new buildings and repairs shall be constructed in accordance with plans and specifications as required by the Secretary and that such construction be supervised and inspected.

Section 509 of the act grants the Secretary the power to determine and prescribe the standards of adequate farm housing and other buildings. The Housing and Urban-Rural Recovery Act of 1983 amended section 509 (a) and section 515 to require residential buildings and related facilities comply with the standards prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, or in any of the nationally recognized model building codes.

Similar authorizations are contained in sections 303, 304, 306, and 339 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, as amended.

In several sections of both acts, loan limitations are established as percentages of development cost, requiring careful monitoring of those costs. Also, the Secretary is authorized to prescribe regulations to ensure that Federal funds are not wasted or

dissipated and that construction will be undertaken economically and will not be of elaborate or extravagant design or materials.

Other information collection is required to conform to numerous Public Laws applying to all Federal agencies, such as: Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968, Davis-Bacon Act, Historic Preservation Act, Environmental Policy Act; and to conform to Executive Orders governing use of Federal funds. This information is cleared through the appropriate enforcing Agency or other executive Department.

The Agencies provide forms and/or guidelines to assist in the collection and submission of information; however, most of the information may be collected and submitted in the form and content which is accepted and typically used in normal conduct of planning and performing development work in private industry when a private lender is financing the activity. The information is usually submitted via hand delivery or U.S. Postal Service to the appropriate Agency office.

The information is used by the Agencies to determine whether a loan/grant can be approved, to ensure that the Agency has adequate security for the loans financed, to provide for sound construction and development work, and to determine that the requirements of the applicable acts have been met. The information is also used to monitor compliance with the terms and conditions of the Agencies' loan/grant programs and to monitor the prudent use of Federal funds.

If the information were not collected and submitted, the Agencies would not have control over the type and quality of construction and development work planned and performed with Federal funds. The Agencies would not be assured that the security provided for loans is adequate, nor would the Agencies be certain that decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling or other adequate structures were being provided to rural residents as required by the different acts.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .33 hours per response.

Respondents: Individuals or households, farms, business or other for-profit, non-profit institutions, and small businesses or organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 25,340.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 12.00.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 94,924 hours.