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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains regulatory documents having general applicability and legal effect, most of which are keyed to and codified in the Code of Federal Regulations, which is published under 50 titles pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 1510.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

7 CFR Part 1778

[0572-AB90]

Emergency and Imminent Community Water Assistance Grants

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Direct final rule.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is amending its regulation governing Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants (ECWAG). This action is needed to comply with requirements set forth in the 2002 Farm Bill. The intended effect is to amend the regulation so that it allows eligibility for the program to be extended to situations where an emergency is considered imminent.

DATES: This rule will become effective September 19, 2003, unless we receive written adverse comments or written notice of intent to submit adverse comments on or before September 4, 2003. If we receive such comments or notice, we will publish a timely document in the **Federal Register** withdrawing the rule. A second public comment period will not be held. Parties interested in commenting on this action should do so at this time.

ADDRESSES: Submit adverse written comments or notice of intent to submit adverse comments to F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1522, Room 5168, South Building, Washington, DC 20250, telephone number (202) 720-9550 or via facsimile transmission to (202) 720-4120. RUS requires a signed original and three copies of all comments (7 CFR Part 1700). All comments received will be

made available for inspection in room 4034, South Building, Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. (7 CFR part 1.27(b)). Comments regarding the information and recordkeeping requirement must be received by October 6, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robin Pulkkinen, Loan Specialist, Water and Environmental Programs, Rural Utilities Service, Room 2229 South Building, Stop 1570, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20250-1570. Telephone: (202) 720-9636, FAX: (202) 690-0649, E-mail: rpulkkin@rus.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Executive Order 12866

This proposed rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866 and, therefore, has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Executive Order 12988

This proposed rule has been reviewed in accordance with Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. RUS has determined that this proposed rule meets the applicable standards provided in section 3 of the Executive Order. In addition, all State and local laws and regulations that are in conflict with this rule will be pre-empted; no retroactive effect will be given to the rule; and in accordance with section 212(e) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. sec. 6912(e)), appeal procedures must be exhausted before an action against the Department or its agencies may be initiated.

Regulatory Flexibility Act Certification

RUS has determined that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities, as defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). The amendments reflect changes needed to comply with requirements set forth in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

Information Collection and Record Keeping Requirements

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), RUS invites comments on this information collection for which

RUS intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). These requirements have been approved by emergency clearance under OMB Control Number 0572-0110.

Comments on this notice must be received by October 6, 2003.

Comments are invited on (a) whether the 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 burden including the validity of the methodology and assumption 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 F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Stop 1522, Room 4034 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-1522.

Title: Emergency and Imminent Community Water Assistance Grants.

Type of Request: Reinstatement, with change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.6 hours per response.

Respondents: Not-for-profit institutions; State, Local or Tribal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 100.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.5.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 400 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Michele Brooks, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, at (202) 690-1078.

All responses to this information collection and recordkeeping notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.