

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

Draft Model Adjudication Rules; Comment Request

AGENCY: Administrative Conference of the United States.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Office of the Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States is revising its 1993 Model Adjudication Rules and is inviting public comment on the draft revised Rules. The current draft of the revised Rules is available at <https://www.acus.gov/model-rules/model-adjudication-rules>.

DATES: Comments must be received no later than 10:00 a.m. (EDT), Friday, February 23, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Persons who wish to comment on the current draft of the revised Model Adjudication Rules may do so by submitting a written statement either online by clicking "Submit a comment" near the bottom of the project web page found at <https://www.acus.gov/research-projects/office-chairman-model-adjudication-rules-working-group> or by U.S. Mail addressed to Revised Model Adjudication Rules Comments, Administrative Conference of the United States, Suite 706 South, 1120 20th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel Sheffner, Attorney Advisor, Administrative Conference of the United States, 1120 20th Street NW, Suite 706 South, Washington, DC 20036; Telephone (202) 480-2080.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Administrative Conference Act, 5 U.S.C. 591-596, established the Administrative Conference of the United States. The Conference studies the efficiency, adequacy, and fairness of the administrative procedures used by Federal agencies and makes

recommendations for improvements to agencies, the President, Congress, and the Judicial Conference of the United States.

The Office of the Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States has established a working group—the Model Adjudication Rules Working Group—to review and revise the Conference's Model Adjudication Rules. Released in 1993 by a similar working group of the Conference, the Model Adjudication Rules were designed for use by federal agencies to amend or develop their procedural rules for hearings conducted under the Administrative Procedure Act.

Numerous agencies have relied on the Conference's 1993 Model Rules to improve existing adjudicative schemes; and newer agencies, like the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, have relied on them to design new procedures. Significant changes in adjudicative practices and procedures since 1993—including use of electronic case management and video hearings—necessitate a careful review and revision of the Model Adjudication Rules. In reviewing and revising the Model Rules, the Working Group has relied on the Conference's extensive empirical research of adjudicative practices reflected in the Federal Administrative Adjudication Database, available at <https://acus.law.stanford.edu/>; amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure since 1993; and input from agency officials, academics, practitioners, and other stakeholders.

Additional information about the Administrative Conference's Model Adjudication Rules, including the draft Rules, meeting agendas, a listing of the working group members tasked with revising the Rules, and other related information, can be found on the Conference's website at <https://www.acus.gov/research-projects/office-chairman-model-adjudication-rules-working-group>.

Dated: January 17, 2018.

Shawne McGibbon,

General Counsel.

[FR Doc. 2018-01045 Filed 1-19-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6110-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

January 17, 2018.

The Department of Agriculture has submitted the following information collection requirement(s) to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Comments are requested regarding (1) 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; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; (4) 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 regarding this information collection received by February 21, 2018 will be considered. Written comments should be addressed to: Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), New Executive Office Building, 725 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20502. Commenters are encouraged to submit their comments to OMB via email to: OIRA_Submission@OMB.EOP.GOV or fax (202) 395-5806 and to Departmental Clearance Office, USDA, OCIO, Mail Stop 7602, Washington, DC 20250-7602. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling (202) 720-8958.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number and the agency informs potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information that such persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Rural Utilities Service

Title: RUS Electric Loan Application and Related Reporting Burdens.

OMB Control Number: 0572-0032.

Summary of Collection: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) was established in 1994 by the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103-354, 108 stat. 3178, 7 U.S.C. 6941 *et seq.*) as successor to the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) with respect to certain programs, including the electric loan and loan guarantee program authorized under the Rural Electrification Act (RE Act) of 1936. The RE Act authorizes and empowers the Administrator of RUS to make and guarantee loans to furnish and improve electric service in rural areas. These loans are amortized over a period of up to 35 years and secured by the borrower's electric assets and/or revenue. RUS will collect information including studies and reports to support borrower loan applications.

Need and Use of the Information: RUS will collect information to determine the eligibility of applicants for loans and loan guarantees under the RE Act; monitor the compliance of borrowers with debt covenants and regulatory requirements in order to protect loan security; ensure that borrowers use loan funds for purposes consistent with the statutory goals of the RE Act; and obtain information on the progress of rural electrification and evaluate the success of RUS program activities. Without the information RUS would be unable to accomplish statutory goals.

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

Number of Respondents: 625.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion; Annually.

Total Burden Hours: 52,130.

Ruth Brown,

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 2018-01004 Filed 1-19-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2017-0102]

Third-Party Inspection Programs Under the Animal Welfare Act; Public Meetings

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health

Inspection Service (APHIS) will host a series of public meetings to solicit data and information from the public to aid in the development of criteria for recognizing the use of third-party inspection and certification programs as a positive factor when determining APHIS inspection frequencies at facilities licensed or registered under the Animal Welfare Act.

DATES: The meetings will be held in Santa Clara, CA, on January 18, 2018; Riverdale, MD, on February 8, 2018; Kansas City, MO, on February 22, 2018, and Tampa, FL, on March 8, 2018. The public meetings will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., local time, except for the meeting in Maryland, which will be held from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., local time. A virtual listening session will be held on March 14, 2018, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. EST. We will accept written statements regarding the use of third-party inspection and certification programs until March 21, 2018.

ADDRESSES: The public meetings will be held at the following locations:

- *January 18:* Santa Clara Marriott, 2700 Mission College Boulevard, Santa Clara, CA 95054;
- *February 8:* USDA Center at Riverdale, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737;
- *February 22:* USDA, Beacon Building, 6501 Beacon Road, Kansas City, MO 64133; and
- *March 8:* Renaissance Tampa Hotel International Plaza, 4200 Jim Walter Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33607.

You may also submit written statements using one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2017-0102>.

- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:* Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2017-0102, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Mike Tuck, Management Analyst, Animal Care, APHIS, USDA 4700 River Road Unit 84, Riverdale, MD 20737; (301) 851-3747; James.M.Tuck@aphis.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is announcing a series of meetings to solicit data and information from the public to aid in the development of criteria for recognizing the use of third-party inspection and certification programs as a positive factor when determining APHIS inspection frequencies at facilities licensed or registered under the Animal

Welfare Act (AWA). APHIS already recognizes inspections performed by other government agencies with animal welfare oversight and accreditation by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums as a positive factor when determining the frequency of Federal inspections through the use of a risk-based inspection system, and APHIS is seeking public comment on expanding this consideration to include other types of third-party inspections and certifications.

The risk-based inspection system, initiated in 1998, uses several objective criteria, including but not limited to past compliance history, to determine the minimum inspection frequency at each licensed and registered facility. With this system, APHIS has been able to provide more in-depth inspections and improve its interactions with licensees and registrants—an approach that APHIS firmly believes makes better use of its inspection resources.

The public may submit their comments in response to this notice in writing and/or at in-person and virtual listening sessions. The meetings will be held in various locations across the country and will include an internet-based virtual meeting to facilitate attendance. Participants will have the opportunity to offer written and oral comments.

Specifically, APHIS is seeking data and information regarding the following topics and questions:

1. APHIS is considering recognizing the use of qualified, third-party programs when determining APHIS inspection frequencies at regulated facilities. Would a potential reduction in the frequency of APHIS inspections be a sufficient incentive for regulated facilities to use third-party programs to support compliance under the AWA? Are there other incentives that could be offered to attract participation of regulated entities in the program? Please explain.

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of voluntary, third-party programs to support compliance under the AWA? What potential benefits and costs might accrue to regulated facilities that elect to use a third-party program? What are the risks associated with using a third-party program?

3. Are third-party programs likely to be effective in practice? Is there potential for a well-functioning market for third-party programs to develop? Please explain. What existing third-party programs are already used by regulated facilities to help support their AWA compliance?

4. When assessing whether to recognize a third-party program, what