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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request; 30-Day Federal Register Notice; National Agricultural Statistics Service

Title: Fast Track Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

OMB Control Number: 0535—New.

Summary of Collection: Executive Order 12862 directs Federal agencies to provide service to the public that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector. Improving National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) programs requires ongoing assessment of service delivery, by which we mean systematic review of the operation of a program, the quality, usability, and ease of accessing our surveys and public information compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the continuous improvement of the program.

Need and Use of the Information: The information collection activity will garner qualitative customer and stakeholder feedback in an efficient, timely manner, in accordance with the Administration's commitment to improving service delivery. By qualitative feedback we mean information that provides useful insights on perceptions and opinions, but are not statistical surveys that yield quantitative results that can be generalized to the population of study. This feedback will provide insights into customer or stakeholder perceptions, experiences and expectations, provide an early warning of issues with service, or focus attention on areas where communication, training or changes in operations might improve delivery of products or services. These collections will allow for ongoing, collaborative and actionable communications between NASS and its customers and stakeholders. It will allow feedback to

contribute directly to the improvement of program management.

Feedback collected under this generic clearance will provide useful information, but it will not yield data that can be generalized to the overall population. This type of generic clearance for qualitative information will not be used for quantitative information collections that are designed to yield reliably actionable results, such as monitoring trends over time or documenting program performance. Such data uses require more rigorous designs that address: The target population to which generalizations will be made, the sampling frame, the sample design (including stratification and clustering), the precision requirements or power calculations that justify the proposed sample size, the expected response rate, methods for assessing potential non-response bias, the protocols for data collection, and any testing procedures that were or will be undertaken prior fielding the study. Depending on the degree of influence the results are likely to have, such collections may still be eligible for submission for other generic mechanisms that are designed to yield quantitative results.

Description of Respondents: Farms; Business or other for-profit; Not-for-profit Institutions and State, Local or Tribal Government.

Number of Respondents: 120,000.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion.

Total Burden Hours: 8,375.

Charlene Parker,

*Departmental Information Collection
Clearance Officer.*

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Announcement of Loan Refinancing Procedures, and Deadlines for the Refinancing of Federal Financing Bank Loans Pilot Program (Refinancing Program)

AGENCY: Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service (RUS), USDA.

ACTION: Notice of solicitation for letters of intent.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is soliciting Letters of Intent and opening a window for a pilot program to refinance a loan, or any part thereof, consisting of one or more whole but not partial advance(s), made under a loan by the Federal Financing Bank (FFB) and guaranteed by RUS. RUS is announcing the process for the Refinancing of Federal Financing Bank Loans Pilot Program (Refinancing Program) made to RUS Electric Program borrowers operating as an electric utility (Eligible entity). This notice describes the eligibility requirements, the process and deadlines, and the criteria that will be used by RUS to assess refinancing requests from Eligible entities with outstanding FFB debt. The Refinancing Program will refinance a higher interest rate loan or a portion thereof *i.e.*, one or more advance under a FFB loan at the interest rate available as of the date of the advance of the new FFB loan used to refinance the outstanding FFB loan. A new FFB loan will be advanced to prepay the FFB loan. A maximum amount for refinancing per Eligible entity is also being announced. The new FFB loan will be made for the amount identified solely by FFB and RUS to prepay the outstanding FFB loan together with the required prepayment premium, if applicable. In order to maximize the Refinancing Program and the benefits to electric consumers, the Eligible entity will have the option of paying the prepayment premium or rolling the amount into the new FFB loan. The Refinancing Program is made available under Section 749 of the Public Law 115-31, Consolidated Appropriations, Act 2017 (section 749).

DATES: To be considered for this program, borrowers must submit their documentation no later than the dates set forth herein. Failure to comply with the following deadlines will prevent RUS from considering the borrower for the Refinancing Program.

Step 1: To be considered for the Refinancing Program an Eligible entity must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI), as provided herein, in an electronic Portable Document Format (PDF) by electronic mail (email) to REFINANCE-EP@RD.usda.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. (EST) on November 17, 2017. Late or incomplete Letters of Intent will not be considered by RUS for this