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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

December 27, 2016

The Department of Agriculture has submitted the following information collection requirement(s) to 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; and (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 [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] 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, N.W., Washington, D.C. 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, D.C. 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 Business-Cooperative Service

TITLE: Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program

OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 0570-0035

SUMMARY OF COLLECTION: The information collected is necessary to implement Section 313(b) (2) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 940(c)) that established a loan and grant program. Rural Business Service (RBS) mission is to improve the quality of life in rural America by financing community facilities and businesses, providing technical assistance and creating effective strategies for rural development. Under this program, zero interest loans and grants are provided to electric and telecommunications utilities that have borrowed funds from RUS. The purpose of the program is to encourage these electric and telecommunications utilities to promote rural economic development and job creation projects such as business start-up costs, business expansion, community development, and business incubator projects.

NEED AND USE OF THE INFORMATION: Various forms and narrative requirements will be used to collect the necessary information. RBS needs this collected information to select the projects it believes will provide the most long-term economic benefit to rural areas. The selection process is competitive and RBS has generally received more applications than it could fund. RBS also needs to make sure the funds are used for the intended purpose, and in the case of the loan, the funds will be repaid. RBS must determine that loans made from revolving loan funds established with grants are used for eligible purposes.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS: Not-for-profit Institutions; Business or other for-profit;

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 120

FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES: Reporting: On Occasion, Annually

TOTAL BURDEN HOURS: 4,781

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

TITLE: Rural Micro-Entrepreneur Assistance Program

OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 0570-0062

SUMMARY OF COLLECTION: Section 6022 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) authorizes the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP). The Secretary makes direct loans to rural microenterprise development organizations (MDOs) that are participating in the program (who are referred to as “microlenders”) for the purpose of capitalizing microloan revolving funds to provide fixed interest rate business loans of \$50,000 or less to microentrepreneurs, as defined in the 2008 Farm Bill.

NEED AND USE OF THE INFORMATION: The program provides rural microentrepreneurs with the skills necessary to establish new rural microenterprises; to provide continuing technical and financial assistance related to the successful operation of rural microenterprises; and to assist with the cost of providing other activities and services related to the successful operation of MDOs and rural microenterprises. Microlenders seeking loans and/or grants will have to submit applications that include specified information, certifications, and agreements to the Agency. This information will be used to determine applicant eligibility and to ensure that funds are used for authorized purposes.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS: Business or other for-profit; Not-for-profit Institutions; State, Local or Tribal governments

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 75

FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES: Reporting: Quarterly, Annually

TOTAL BURDEN HOURS: 3,254

Charlene Parker

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer

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