



**United States Department of Agriculture
Rural Development**

TO: Vlad Dorjets
Senior Desk Officer
Office of Management and Budget

FROM: Lisa Mensah *Tommy Heering on behalf of Lisa Mensah*
Under Secretary
Rural Development

SUBJECT: Request for Emergency Approval of a New Information Collection
Request for Strategic Economic and Community Development
Priority Rule

Rural Development (RD) is requesting emergency review and approval for a new information collection, including approval to use a new form, RD 1980-88 to collect this information. This new information collection addresses application and reporting requirements for the Strategic Economic and Community Development rule being published on May 20, 2015. This rule implements a priority, authorized under Section 6025 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill), for projects that support strategic economic and community development plans. This priority affects a number of Rural Development programs.

We are requesting emergency approval because RD will not be able to implement this priority including the associated notice of solicitation of applications in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, as the use of normal clearance procedures is reasonable likely to prevent or disrupt the collection of information from applicants to submit the new form with their application prior to the first deadline of June 30, 2015. The 60 day notice for comments is embedded in the rule. Due to the need to consider comments received and then issue another notice in the Federal Register for an additional thirty days of comment, RD would not be able to complete the information collection process before the deadline for applicants to receive these priority points in FY 2015.

RD considers it imperative to begin accepting applications this fiscal year for projects that support economic and community development plans. The regional economic development priority being implemented through the Section 6025 rule is an important priority to this Administration and the Secretary of Agriculture. In fact, on Wednesday at this week's 10th Annual Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Rural Development Conference in Memphis, TN, Secretary Tom Vilsack leads the American delegation on behalf of the Obama Administration emphasizing that "Rural communities are critical for our economic future" and wherein the Secretary is planning an announcement on the Section 6025, Strategic Economic and Community Development rule.

1400 Independence Ave, S.W. · Washington DC 20250-0700
Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>

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Vlad Dorjets
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To effectively implement the regional development priority in FY 2015, RD is requesting OMB approve this information collection, including the use of the new form, by May 29, 2015.

In compliance with OMB regulations (5 CFR Part 1320), which implement the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13), the information collection and recordkeeping requirements that may be imposed by this action are submitted to OMB for emergency review and approval.

Attached are the Supporting Statement and spreadsheet, as well as the new form, RD Form 1980-88, Strategic Economic and Community Development (Section 6025) Priority.