

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT**  
**0570-0066**  
**Repowering Assistance Program**

**A. Justification**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.**

The Agency implemented the Repowering Assistance Program, Section 9004 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. The purpose of this program is to provide financial incentives to biorefineries in existence on the date of the enactment of the 2008 Farm Bill; to replace the use of fossil fuels used to produce heat or power at their facilities by installing new systems that use renewable biomass.

The Agency may make payments under this program to any biorefinery that meets the requirements of the program for a period determined by the Agency. The Agency will determine the amount of payments to be made to a biorefinery under this program with consideration given to:

- (1) the quantity of fossil fuel a renewable biomass system is replacing;
- (2) the percentage reduction in fossil fuel used by the biorefinery that will result from the installation of the renewable biomass system; and
- (3) the cost-effectiveness of the renewable biomass system.

Congress has appropriated mandatory funding for this program in the amount of \$10 million for FY 2018, to remain available until expended. In addition, there is authorization to appropriate an additional \$10 million for each of fiscal years 2019 and 2020 (discretionary). The maximum payment an applicant may receive will be 50 percent of the eligible project costs, up to the maximum amount announced in the Federal Register for the fiscal year. There is no minimum amount of payment that an applicant may receive.

**2. Explain how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used.**

Information gathered under this collection will be used to determine the eligibility of biorefineries to participate in the program. To be eligible for program payments, an applicant must submit a complete application for consideration of payment. Payments will be made based on ranking of applicants in relation to cost-effectiveness, availability of renewable biomass, and the reduction of fossil fuel usage resulting from the installation of a renewable biomass system. Applicants are required to provide relevant data to allow for technical analysis of their existing facilities to demonstrate significant replacement of fossil fuel by renewable biomass with reasonable costs and maximum efficiencies.

### **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS – NO FORM NUMBERS**

Feasibility Study. The applicant must submit an independent feasibility study by a qualified consultant demonstrating that the renewable biomass system of the biorefinery is feasible, taking into account the economic, technical and environmental aspects of the system. The study must include the following:

- executive summary, including the resume of the consultant and introduction/project overview (brief general overview of project location, size, etc.).
- economic feasibility determination, including information regarding project site; availability of trained or trainable labor; and availability of infrastructure and rail and road service to the site.
- technical feasibility determination, including sufficient information and analysis so that a determination may be made on the technical feasibility of achieving the levels of energy production that are projected in the statements and identification and estimation of project operation and development costs and specify the level of accuracy of these estimates and the assumptions on which these estimates have been based.
- financial feasibility determination, including reliability of the financial projections and assumptions on which the project is based including all sources of project capital; projected balance sheets and costs associated with project operations; cash flow projections for the life of the project; adequacy of raw materials and supplies; sensitivity analysis, including feedstock and energy costs, product/co-product prices; risks

related to the project; and continuity, maintenance and availability of other records and adequacy of management.

- management feasibility determination.
- recommendations for implementation.
- environmental aspects of the system.
- feedstock availability, including feedstock source management; estimates of feedstock volumes and costs; collection, pre-treatment, transportation, and storage; and impacts on existing manufacturing plants or other facilities that use similar feedstock.
- feasibility/plans of project to work with producer associations or cooperatives including estimated amount of annual feedstock.
- document that all and any woody biomass feedstock sourced from National Forest System lands or public lands cannot be used as a higher value wood-based product.

Request for Appeal. This requirement provides a mechanism for applicants to obtain review and additional consideration of Rural Development business programs decisions denying participation in the program or payments under the program.

Clarifying information. After the application is submitted and approved, the Agency shall require information from the eligible biorefinery to make payments.

FY2017 and FY 2018 application requests. Anticipated number of new applications for fiscal year 2017 and 2018.

Environmental Report. At a minimum, the ER will include a complete description of all components of the applicant's proposal and any connected actions, including its specific location on detailed site plans as well as location maps equivalent to a U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle map; and information from authoritative sources acceptable to the Agency confirming the presence or absence of sensitive environmental resources in the area that could be affected by the applicant's proposal. The ER submitted must be accurate, complete, and capable of verification. The Agency may request additional information as needed to make an environmental determination. The Agency's review will determine whether classification as a Categorical Exclusion (CE), Environmental Assessment (EA), or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is appropriate. This written report replaces the RD Form 1940-20 "Request for Environmental Information" approved under the discontinued OMB No. 0575-0094.

RD Instruction 1940-Q, Exhibit A-1, "Certification for Contracts, Grants and Loans". This form specifies that an applicant requesting funding in excess of \$100,000 agrees to certain restrictions on lobbying.

#### **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS - FORMS APPROVED WITH THIS DOCKET**

Applicants will be required to submit the following forms that have been developed for, are available from, USDA's Rural Development program offices:

Form RD 4288-4, "Repowering Assistance Program - Application" (OMB No.0570-0066). Applicants are required to submit this form, and any attachments that may be necessary as a result of space limitations of the forms, in order to apply for participation in this Program. This form requires the applicant to provide relevant data to allow for technical analysis of their existing facilities to demonstrate significant replacement of fossil fuel by renewable biomass with reasonable costs and maximum efficiencies. The Agency is requiring this form in order to ensure that only eligible biorefineries participate in this Program.

Form RD 4288-5, "Repowering Assistance Program - Agreement" (OMB No.0570-0066). This form constitutes the agreement between the Agency and the eligible biorefinery. This form lays out the terms and conditions associated with participation in this Program. This form is required because it provides the basis under which the Agency will make payments to participating biorefineries.

Form RD 4288-6, "Repowering Assistance Program - Payment Request" (OMB No.0570-0066). This is the form that participating Biorefineries submit when requesting payments. Information to be provided includes the amount of the request and documentation substantiating the expenditures for construction, as well as other requirements that document the amount of energy produced by the renewable biomass system. The information in this form will be used by the Agency to determine if the biorefinery is meeting the fossil fuel reduction and energy production requirements for the biorefinery.

RD 400-1, "Equal Opportunity Agreement" OMB No.0570-0018). Applicants are required to agree that they will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

RD 400-4, "Assurance Agreement" (OMB No.0575-0018). All applicants and recipients are required to complete this form to comply with Civil Rights Acts and laws.

AD-1047, "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters - Primary Covered Transactions" (OMB No.0505-0027) or other written documentation. This form certifies that the applicant is not presently debarred, suspended, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency.

AD-1048, "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions" (OMB No.0505-0027) or other written documentation. This form certifies that lower tier participants are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation by any Federal department or agency.

#### **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS - FORMS APPROVED UNDER OTHER OMB NUMBERS**

All applicants will be required to submit the following standard application form:

SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" (OMB No.4040-0013). All applicants are required to complete this form, regardless of their involvement in lobbying activities.

SF-271, "Outlay Report and request for Reimbursement for Construction Projects" (OMB No.4040-0011). This is the standard form used by the grantee to request advances or reimbursements of cash outlays.

#### **RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS**

Assistance payment recipients are required to keep records of information that verify compliance with program objectives. During construction, such records are associated with documents that identify the purposes for and the manner in which program funds were expended. These records are normally kept as part of the general business practice; therefore, no burden was attributed to these records.

After construction and when the project is completed, such records are associated with documenting the fossil fuel reduction and energy production requirements associated with the rule.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

The Agency strongly encourages applicants to submit as much material as possible electronically, which would allow the Agency to retrieve the applications electronically. Further, applicants who receive funding will be encouraged, but not required, to submit any subsequent reports that may be required electronically. However, the Agency will not totally require submission by electronic methods because some applicants may not have the technological expertise for electronic submission or may not have the equipment necessary for high technological information gathering. The Agency will prepare an application guide to help reduce the effort associated with preparing applications, which could be posted on the Agency's Web site along with all forms for the applicant to print off. All required forms along with instructions on completing them can be found on the USDA eForms website at <https://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eForms/welcomeAction.do?Home>.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

The Agency has developed forms for this program based on the specific needs of the program. The information being collected is not believed to duplicate that collected by any other Agency. However, if similar information is found to be available from another Federal agency, every effort is made to utilize that information as is or in an appropriately modified form for this program.

**5. If the collection of information affects small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize the burden.**

The information collection required places little or nominal burden on small entities beyond that performed in normal business practice. The Agency is using industry-standardized data elements and documents, supplementing them with Government-wide forms that are familiar to many applicants.

**6. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted**

less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The information collected under this program is the minimum necessary to conform to the requirements of the program regulations established by law. Information is collected when needed and cannot be collected less frequently and still meets the requirements of the program. Failure to collect proper information could result in improper determinations of eligibility and improper payments.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause the collection of information to be conducted in a manner:**

- a. Requiring respondents to report information to the Agency more often than quarterly.
- b. Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it.
- c. Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document.
- d. Requiring respondents to retain records for more than 3 years.
- e. Not using statistical sampling.
- f. Requiring use of statistical data classification that has not be reviewed and approved by Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
- g. Requiring a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use.
- h. Requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permissible by law.

There are no special circumstances. The collection of information is consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

**8. Comments on Agency's notice in the Federal Register and efforts to consult with persons outside the Agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of the instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, a 60-day notice soliciting comments was published on August 8, 2017, [82 FR 37046].

No comments related to the potential burden of implementing the Repowering Assistance program were received. The following individuals were interviewed about the reasonableness of the forms involved and the amount of information being collected. None of the parties had any adverse comments and indicated that they thought the burden was reasonable for the program.

Rick Huszagh II - Down to Earth Energy -(770) 267-7891 Holly Aragi - Pine Island Farm - (413) 229-0104  
Bob Sourek - Bear Mountain Forrest Products - (917)678-3622

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

No payments or gifts will be provided to respondents.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or Agency policy.**

Confidentiality is not assured. Requests for release of records and information are processed in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

There is no collection of any information that would be considered sensitive in nature or commonly considered private.



**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.**

As shown in the attached spreadsheet, this submission is for 6 respondents with an estimated 41 responses and 462 burden hours.

Item	Responses	Burden Hours
Written Reporting Requirements	18	374
Form Reporting Requirements	21	79
Recordkeeping	3	9
Totals	41	462

**13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to the respondents or recordkeepings resulting from the collection of information.**

There are no capital/start-up costs or operation/maintenance costs associated with this collection.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government.**

The estimated wage of federal employees compiling the information is \$57.95 per hour. This wage is based on 2017 GS Grade 12, step 6 (DC location) plus 35% overhead and expenses. The 3-year average annual cost to the Government is estimated to be \$4,810. The breakdown of cost to the Government by activity is as follows:

Allocation of Federal Government Costs

Activity	Estimated 3-Year Govt Cost
Acknowledge and review applications	\$1,043
Evaluate and score applications	\$2,608
Inform applicants of selection results	\$1,043
Legal document preparation	\$2,028
Review payment requests and issue payments	\$4,172
Review of annual report (4288-6)	\$927

Monitoring and review of records	\$2,608
Total	\$14,430

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.**

Responses have decreased by 30 due to the program having few eligible applicants. However, burden hours have increased by 60 hours. A review of applications that were successful, and those that were not, enabled a far more robust analysis of the program burden. Also, responses and burden hours for the AD-1047 and 1048 are now accounted for in this collection; the new written environmental reporting requirement replaced the discontinued Environmental Report 1940-20 previously approved under 0575-0094.

**16. For collection of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.**

The results of this collection of information will not be published.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

These forms are used in other Rural Development information collections; therefore, it is not practical to include an OMB expiration date because of the different expiration dates for each collection. The public would have no way of knowing which burden package/expiration date applied to their particular program. RD is seeking approval to not display the OMB expiration date on these forms.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement in identified in item 19 of OMB 83-I.**

There are no exceptions to the certification. The Agency is able to certify compliance with all provisions under item 19.

**19. How is this information collection related to the Service Center Initiative (SCI)? Will the information collection be part of the one stop shopping concept?**

The SCI calls for changes to improve services to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) customers. One aspect is providing one stop service for greater customer convenience in accessing USDA programs, including access to required forms.