




United States Department of Agriculture

March 9, 2020

TO: Elke Hodson Marten
Senior Desk Officer
Office of Management and Budget

THROUGH: Ruth Brown
USDA Information Collection Officer

FROM: Mark B. Brodziski
Acting Administrator 
Rural Business-Cooperative Service

SUBJECT: Request for Emergency Approval of a New Information Collection Request for Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIP) Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) announcement

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS), a Rural Development agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is requesting emergency review and approval of a new information collection for the Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIP). The CCC and RBCS is expecting to publish the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) in the *Federal Register* on May 1, 2020. The CCC and RBCS is expecting to have the grantees begin their application submissions on May 1, 2020. In lieu of the time sensitive application window commencing on May 1, 2020, and to effectively implement the program prior to the close of FY 2020, the CCC and RBCS is requesting OMB approve this information collection no later than April 10, 2020. The White House and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Perdue have indicated that timely implementation of the HBIIP is a priority prior to the end of FY 2020.

Under this NOFA, the CCC and the RBCS will announce the availability of up to \$100 million in competitive grants to eligible entities for activities designed to expand the sales and use of renewable fuels under HBIIP. Cost-share grants of up to 50 percent of eligible project costs but not more than \$5 million will be made available to assist transportation fueling and biodiesel distribution facilities. The HBIIP is authorized by the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act of 1948 (Charter Act), (62 Stat. 1070; 15 U.S.C. §714. Charter Act). The program will be administered under the general supervision of RBCS.

Approval of an emergency approval for this new collection is important because HBIIP will not be able to be implemented, as the use of normal clearance procedures is likely to prevent the collection of information from applicants which, in turn, will have negative consequences on the

intended recipients. The 60-day notice for comments is included in the NOFA and comments on the HBIIIP information collection request is requested in order to submit the regular request to obtain a 3-year approval from OMB after receiving the 6-month OMB emergency approval. Due to the need to consider comments received and then issue another notice for the *Federal Register* for an additional thirty days of comment, RBCS would not be able to complete the information collection process. Please note that after the 60-day comment period closes, RD will submit the collection package for a 3-year approval addressing any comments received.

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

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Michele Brooks, Director, Regulations Management Division, Innovation Center, Rural Development by telephone at (202) 690-1078 or by email at Michele.Brooks@usda.gov. or MaryPat Daskal, Management Analyst, Regulations Management Division, Innovation Center, Rural Development by telephone at (202) 720-7853.

Thank you in advance for your quick review and response to us.

Attachments