

To implement the statutory requirements of FSRIA, USDA will gather relevant product information on biobased products for which manufacturers and vendors seek certification to use the label. Participation in the Voluntary Labeling Program is entirely voluntary.

The information collected will enable USDA to evaluate the qualifications of biobased products to carry the USDA Certified Biobased Product label and to ensure that the label is used properly and in accordance with the requirements specified in 7 CFR part 3202. To the extent feasible, the information sought by USDA can be transmitted electronically using the website <http://www.biopreferred.gov>. If electronic transmission of information is not practical for some applicants, USDA will provide technical assistance to support the transmission of information to USDA.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2.4 hours per response.

Respondents: Manufacturers and vendors who wish to apply the "USDA Certified Biobased Product" label to their biobased products. Participation is voluntary.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 300.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.75.

Estimated Number of Responses: 825.
Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 1,988 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Katherine Anne Mathis, Rural Development Innovation Center—Regulations Management Division, at (202) 713-7565. Email: katherine.mathis@usda.gov.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Karama Neal,

Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA Rural Development.

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BILLING CODE 3410-XY-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

[DOCKET #: RBS-23-NONE-0016]

Notice of Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS) announces its intention to request a revision of a currently approved information collection package for Guidelines for Designating Biobased Products for Federal Procurement.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by September 25, 2023 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be submitted electronically by the Federal eRulemaking Portal, <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the "Search for dockets and documents on agency actions" box enter the Docket No. RBS-23-NONE-0016 and click the "Search" button. From the search results, click on or locate the document title: "Notice of Request of a Currently Approved Information Collection" and select the "Comment" button. Before inputting comments, commenters may review the "Commenter's Checklist" (optional). Insert comments under the "Comment" title, click "Browse" to attach files (if available), input email address and select "Submit Comment."

Information on using *Regulations.gov*, including instructions for accessing documents, submitting comments, and viewing the docket after the close of the comment period, is available through the site's "FAQ" link.

All comments will be available for public inspection online at the Federal eRulemaking Portal (<https://www.regulations.gov>).

Other Information: Additional information about Rural Development and its programs is available on the internet at <https://www.rd.usda.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Katherine Anne Mathis, Rural Development Innovation Center—Regulations Management Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250, Telephone: 202-713-7565, email: katherine.mathis@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR part 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies an information collection that the Agency is submitting to OMB for revision.

Comments are invited on (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance

of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) 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.

Title: Guidelines for Designating Biobased Products for Federal Procurement.

OMB Control Number: 0570-0073.

Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The USDA BioPreferred Program provides that qualifying biobased products that fall under product categories (generic groups of biobased products) that have been designated for preferred procurement by rule making are required to be purchased by Federal agencies in lieu of their fossil energy-based counterparts, with certain limited exceptions. Further, USDA is required by section 9002 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, as amended by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 and the Agricultural Act of 2014, and the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, to provide certain information on qualified biobased products to Federal agencies. To meet these statutory requirements, USDA will gather that information from manufacturers and vendors of biobased products. The information sought by USDA can be transmitted electronically using the website <http://www.biopreferred.gov>. If for any reason the requested information cannot be electronically transmitted, USDA will provide technical assistance to support the transmission of information to USDA. The information collected will enable USDA to meet statutory information requirements that will then permit USDA to designate product categories for preferred procurement under the BioPreferred Program. Once product categories are designated, manufacturers and vendors of qualifying biobased products that fall under these designated product categories will benefit from preferred procurement by Federal agencies.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 40 hours per response.

Respondents: Manufacturers and vendors of biobased products. Participation is voluntary.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 220.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: One per manufacturer or vendor.

Estimated Number of Responses: 220.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 8,800 hours, one time only. Manufacturers and vendors are only asked to respond once for each stand-alone product or product family. Therefore, there is no ongoing annual paperwork burden on respondents unless they wish to add additional stand-alone products or product families. Furthermore, their participation in the BioPreferred Program is entirely voluntary.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Katherine Anne Mathis, Rural Development Innovation Center—Regulations Management Division, at (202) 713-7565. Email: katherine.mathis@usda.gov.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Karama Neal,

Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA Rural Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

[DOCKET #: RUS-23-ELECTRIC-0005]

Empowering Rural America (New ERA) Program

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; announcement of the opening of the online application window for the New ERA Program.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service, a Rural Development agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), hereinafter referred to as “RUS” or “the Agency” announced its intent to solicit Letters of Interest (LOI) for applications under the Empowering Rural America (New ERA) Program in a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on May 16, 2023, in the **Federal Register**. In addition, the NOFO also announced the eligibility requirements, application process and deadlines, and the criteria that RUS will use to assess New ERA Applications. The New ERA funds will be used to assist Eligible Entities in achieving the greatest

reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions while advancing the long-term resiliency, reliability, and affordability of rural electric systems. This Notice announces an update on how to submit an LOI, additional information that must be submitted and an extension of time to submit LOIs.

DATES: The Agency will begin accepting LOIs for the New ERA Program beginning at 11:59 a.m. Eastern Time (ET) on July 31, 2023, and until 11:59 p.m. ET on September 15, 2023. Letters of Interest will not be accepted after 11:59 p.m. ET on September 15, 2023.

ADDRESSES: All LOIs must be submitted to RUS electronically at www.grants.gov. Additional information and resources are available at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs/empowering-rural-america-new-era-program>. The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 funding for Rural Development website is located at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/inflation-reduction-act>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Christopher McLean, Assistant Administrator, Electric Program, Rural Utilities Service, Rural Development, United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, STOP 1568, Washington, DC 20250-1560; Telephone: 202-690-4492. Email to: SM.RD.RUS.IRA.Questions@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: The New ERA Program is authorized under the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (Pub. L. 117-169, “IRA”), Subtitle C, Section 22004.

Overview

Federal Awarding Agency Name: Rural Utilities Service.

Funding Opportunity Title: Empowering Rural America (New ERA) Program.

Announcement Type: Announcement of the Opening of the On-Line Application Window for the New ERA Program.

Assistance Listing Number: 10.758.

Funding Opportunity Number: RUS-NewERA-2023

LOI submission information: RUS will accept electronic submission of LOIs through Grants.gov. RUS will not accept paper, facsimile, or email transmission.

I. Background

On August 16, 2022, The Biden Harris Administration and the United State Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 which authorized the New ERA Program. The goal of the New ERA Program is to provide financial assistance to Eligible Entities to achieve

the greatest reductions in GHG emissions through the cooperatives’ voluntary transformation of rural electric systems in a way that promotes resiliency and reliability of rural electric systems and affordability for their members.

On May 16, 2023, the Agency published a NOFO in the **Federal Register** (88 FR 31218) that solicited LOIs for applications under the New ERA Program and announced the application process as well as provided deadlines for applications from Eligible Entities. The NOFO also informed potential Applicants that the Agency would finalize the specific requirements of submitting an LOI through the on-line application window by a separate notice in the **Federal Register** and on the RUS website at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs/empowering-rural-america-new-era-program>. In response to stakeholder requests, RUS is extending the deadline for accepting LOI submissions from August 31, 2023, to September 15, 2023, to provide stakeholders more time to prepare their LOIs.

II. Letter of Interest Requirements and Submission

A. Letter of Interest Requirements

The Agency has added the requirement to submit an Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424) to the list of items needed for a complete LOI in order to accept the LOI’s through Grants.gov. In addition to the SF 424, Applicants will still be required to provide the information included in Section D.2.i. of the NOFO that published in the **Federal Register** on May 16, 2023, (88 FR 31218). The RUS New ERA website will include an LOI Guide at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs/empowering-rural-america-new-era-program>. The LOI Guide will provide details on the submission of the LOI on Grants.gov, including how to provide attachments. In addition, the LOI Guide will detail how Applicants should use the RUS geospatial mapping tool to draw the service areas associated with each New ERA project and then upload Shapefiles to Grants.gov as part of an LOI Application. The LOI Guide will also indicate where to attach the additional requirements for the LOI, such as a copy of the Applicant’s balance sheet and income statements.

B. Letter of Interest Submission

1. Application of General Assistance. Prior to official submission of an LOI, Applicants may request general assistance from the Agency if such