

(5) **IMPORTER.**—The term “importer” means any person who imports kiwifruit into the United States.

(6) **KIWIFRUIT.**—The term “kiwifruit” means all varieties of fresh kiwifruit grown in or imported into the United States.

(7) **MARKETING.**—The term “marketing” means the sale or other disposition of kiwifruit into interstate, foreign, or intrastate commerce by buying, marketing, distribution, or otherwise placing kiwifruit into commerce.

(8) **ORDER.**—The term “order” means a kiwifruit research, promotion, and consumer information order issued by the Secretary under section 554.

(9) **PERSON.**—The term “person” means any individual, group of individuals, partnership, corporation, association, cooperative, or other legal entity.

(10) **PROCESSING.**—The term “processing” means canning, fermenting, distilling, extracting, preserving, grinding, crushing, or in any manner changing the form of kiwifruit for the purpose of preparing the kiwifruit for market or marketing the kiwifruit.

(11) **PRODUCER.**—The term “producer” means any person who grows kiwifruit in the United States for sale in commerce.

(12) **PROMOTION.**—The term “promotion” means any action taken under this subtitle (including paid advertising) to present a favorable image of kiwifruit to the general public for the purpose of improving the competitive position of kiwifruit and stimulating the sale of kiwifruit.

(13) **RESEARCH.**—The term “research” means any type of research relating to the use, nutritional value, and marketing of kiwifruit conducted for the purpose of advancing the image, desirability, marketability, or quality of kiwifruit.

(14) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(15) **UNITED STATES.**—The term “United States” means the 50 States of the United States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 554. ISSUANCE OF ORDERS.

7 USC 7463.

(a) **ISSUANCE.**—To effectuate the purposes of this subtitle specified in section 552(b), the Secretary shall issue an order applicable to producers, handlers, and importers of kiwifruit. Any such order shall be national in scope. Not more than 1 order shall be in effect under this subtitle at any 1 time.

(b) **PROCEDURE.**—

(1) **PROPOSAL FOR ISSUANCE OF ORDER.**—Any person that will be affected by this subtitle may request the issuance of, and submit a proposal for, an order under this subtitle.

(2) **PROPOSED ORDER.**—Not later than 90 days after the receipt of a request and proposal for an order, the Secretary shall publish a proposed order and give due notice and opportunity for public comment on the proposed order.

Publication.

(3) **ISSUANCE OF ORDER.**—After notice and opportunity for public comment are provided under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall issue an order, taking into consideration the comments received and including in the order provisions necessary to ensure that the order is in conformity with this subtitle.

(c) AMENDMENTS.—The Secretary may amend any order issued under this section. The provisions of this subtitle applicable to an order shall be applicable to an amendment to an order.

7 USC 7464.

SEC. 555. NATIONAL KIWIFRUIT BOARD.

(a) MEMBERSHIP.—An order issued by the Secretary under section 554 shall provide for the establishment of a National Kiwifruit Board that consists of the following 11 members:

(1) 6 members who are producers (or representatives of producers) and who are not exempt from an assessment under section 556(b).

(2) 4 members who are importers (or representatives of importers) and who are not exempt from an assessment under section 556(b) or are exporters (or representatives of exporters).

(3) 1 member appointed from the general public.

(b) ADJUSTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the 11-member limit and to paragraph (2), the Secretary may adjust membership on the Board to accommodate changes in production and import levels of kiwifruit.

(2) NUMBER OF PRODUCER MEMBERS.—Producers shall comprise not less than 51 percent of the membership of the Board.

(c) APPOINTMENT AND NOMINATION.—

(1) APPOINTMENT.—The Secretary shall appoint the members of the Board from nominations submitted in accordance with this subsection.

(2) PRODUCERS.—The members referred to in subsection (a)(1) shall be appointed from individuals nominated by producers.

(3) IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS.—The members referred to in subsection (a)(2) shall be appointed from individuals nominated by importers or exporters.

(4) PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE.—The public representative shall be appointed from nominations submitted by other members of the Board.

(5) FAILURE TO NOMINATE.—If producers, importers, and exporters fail to nominate individuals for appointment, the Secretary may appoint members and alternates on a basis provided for in the order. If the Board fails to nominate a public representative, the member may be appointed by the Secretary without a nomination.

(d) ALTERNATES.—The Secretary shall appoint an alternate for each member of the Board. An alternate shall—

(1) be appointed in the same manner as the member for whom the individual is an alternate; and

(2) serve on the Board if the member is absent from a meeting or is disqualified under subsection (f).

(e) TERMS.—A member of the Board shall be appointed for a term of 3 years. No member may serve more than 2 consecutive 3-year terms, except that of the members first appointed—

(1) 5 members shall be appointed for a term of 2 years; and

(2) 6 members shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(f) DISQUALIFICATION.—If a member or alternate of the Board who was appointed as a producer, importer, exporter, or public representative member ceases to belong to the group for which

the member was appointed, the member or alternate shall be disqualified from serving on the Board.

(g) COMPENSATION.—A member or alternate of the Board shall serve without pay.

(h) GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES.—The Board shall—

(1) administer an order issued by the Secretary under section 554, and an amendment to the order, in accordance with the order and amendment and this subtitle;

(2) prescribe rules and regulations to carry out the order; Regulations.

(3) meet, organize, and select from among members of the Board a chairperson, other officers, and committees and subcommittees, as the Board determines appropriate;

(4) receive, investigate, and report to the Secretary accounts of violations of the order;

(5) make recommendations to the Secretary with respect to an amendment that should be made to the order; and

(6) employ or contract with a manager and staff to assist in administering the order, except that, to reduce administrative costs and increase efficiency, the Board shall seek, to the extent practicable, to employ or contract with personnel who are already associated with organizations involved in promoting kiwifruit that are chartered by a State, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 556. REQUIRED TERMS IN ORDER.

7 USC 7465.

(a) BUDGETS AND PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An order issued under section 554 shall provide for periodic budgets and plans in accordance with this subsection.

(2) BUDGETS.—The Board shall prepare and submit to the Secretary a budget prior to the beginning of the fiscal year of the anticipated expenses and disbursements of the Board in the administration of the order, including probable costs of research, promotion, and consumer information. A budget shall become effective on a 2/3-vote of a quorum of the Board and approval by the Secretary.

(3) PLANS.—Each budget shall include a plan for research, promotion, and consumer information regarding kiwifruit. A plan under this paragraph shall become effective on approval by the Secretary. The Board may enter into contracts and agreements, on approval by the Secretary, for—

(A) the development and carrying out of the plan; and

(B) the payment of the cost of the plan, with funds collected pursuant to this subtitle.

(b) ASSESSMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The order shall provide for the imposition and collection of assessments with regard to the production and importation of kiwifruit in accordance with this subsection.

(2) RATE.—The assessment rate shall be the rate that is recommended by a 2/3-vote of a quorum of the Board and approved by the Secretary, except that the rate shall not exceed \$0.10 per 7-pound tray of kiwifruit or an equivalent rate.

(3) COLLECTION BY FIRST HANDLERS.—Except as provided in paragraph (5), the first handler of kiwifruit shall—

(A) be responsible for the collection from the producer, and payment to the Board, of assessments required under this subsection; and

(B) maintain a separate record of the kiwifruit of each producer whose kiwifruit are so handled, including the kiwifruit owned by the handler.

(4) IMPORTERS.—The assessment on imported kiwifruit shall be paid by the importer to the United States Customs Service at the time of entry into the United States and shall be remitted to the Board.

(5) EXEMPTION FROM ASSESSMENT.—The following persons or activities are exempt from an assessment under this subsection:

(A) A producer who produces less than 500 pounds of kiwifruit per year.

(B) An importer who imports less than 10,000 pounds of kiwifruit per year.

(C) A sale of kiwifruit made directly from the producer to a consumer for a purpose other than resale.

(D) The production or importation of kiwifruit for processing.

(6) CLAIM OF EXEMPTION.—To claim an exemption under paragraph (5) for a particular year, a person shall—

(A) submit an application to the Board stating the basis for the exemption and certifying that the quantity of kiwifruit produced, imported, or sold by the person will not exceed any poundage limitation required for the exemption in the year; or

(B) be on a list of approved processors developed by the Board.

(c) USE OF ASSESSMENTS.—

(1) AUTHORIZED USES.—The order shall provide that funds paid to the Board as assessments under subsection (b) may be used by the Board—

(A) to pay for research, promotion, and consumer information described in the budget of the Board under subsection (a) and for other expenses incurred by the Board in the administration of an order;

(B) to pay such other expenses for the administration, maintenance, and functioning of the Board (including any enforcement efforts for the collection of assessments) as may be authorized by the Secretary, including interest and penalties for late payments; and

(C) to fund a reserve established under section 557(d).

(2) REQUIRED USES.—The order shall provide that funds paid to the Board as assessments under subsection (b) shall be used by the Board—

(A) to pay the expenses incurred by the Secretary, including salaries and expenses of Federal Government employees, in implementing and administering the order; and

(B) to reimburse the Secretary for any expenses incurred by the Secretary in conducting referenda under this subtitle.

(3) LIMITATION ON USE OF ASSESSMENTS.—Except for the first year of operation of the Board, expenses for the administra-

tion, maintenance, and functioning of the Board may not exceed 30 percent of the budget for a year.

(d) FALSE CLAIMS.—The order shall provide that any promotion funded with assessments collected under subsection (b) may not make—

- (1) any false claims on behalf of kiwifruit; and
- (2) any false statements with respect to the attributes or use of any product that competes with kiwifruit for sale in commerce.

(e) PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS.—The order shall provide that funds collected by the Board under this subtitle through assessments may not, in any manner, be used for the purpose of influencing legislation or governmental policy or action, except for making recommendations to the Secretary as provided for under this subtitle.

(f) BOOKS, RECORDS, AND REPORTS.—

(1) BOARD.—The order shall require the Board—

(A) to maintain books and records with respect to the receipt and disbursement of funds received by the Board;

(B) to submit to the Secretary from time to time such reports as the Secretary may require for appropriate accounting; and

(C) to submit to the Secretary at the end of each fiscal year a complete audit report by an independent auditor regarding the activities of the Board during the fiscal year.

(2) OTHERS.—To make information and data available to the Board and the Secretary that is appropriate or necessary for the effectuation, administration, or enforcement of this subtitle (or any order or regulation issued under this subtitle), the order shall require handlers and importers who are responsible for the collection, payment, or remittance of assessments under subsection (b)—

(A) to maintain and make available for inspection by the employees and agents of the Board and the Secretary such books and records as may be required by the order; and

(B) to file, at the times and in the manner and content prescribed by the order, reports regarding the collection, payment, or remittance of the assessments.

(g) CONFIDENTIALITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The order shall require that all information obtained pursuant to subsection (f)(2) be kept confidential by all officers, employees, and agents of the Department of Agriculture and of the Board. Only such information as the Secretary considers relevant shall be disclosed to the public and only in a suit or administrative hearing, brought at the request of the Secretary or to which the Secretary or any officer of the United States is a party, involving the order with respect to which the information was furnished or acquired.

(2) LIMITATIONS.—Nothing in this subsection prohibits—

(A) the issuance of general statements based on the reports of a number of handlers and importers subject to an order, if the statements do not identify the information furnished by any person; or

(B) the publication, by direction of the Secretary, of the name of any person violating an order issued under section 554(a), together with a statement of the particular provisions of the order violated by the person.

(3) PENALTY.—Any person who willfully violates this subsection, on conviction, shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or to imprisonment for not more than 1 year, or both, and, if the person is a member, officer, or agent of the Board or an employee of the Department of Agriculture, shall be removed from office.

(h) WITHHOLDING OF INFORMATION.—Nothing in this subtitle authorizes the withholding of information from Congress.

7 USC 7466.

SEC. 557. PERMISSIVE TERMS IN ORDER.

(a) PERMISSIVE TERMS.—On the recommendation of the Board and with the approval of the Secretary, an order issued under section 554 may include the terms and conditions specified in this section and such additional terms and conditions as the Secretary considers necessary to effectuate the other provisions of the order and are incidental to, and not inconsistent with, this subtitle.

(b) ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT AND REPORTING SCHEDULES.—The order may authorize the Board to designate different handler payment and reporting schedules to recognize differences in marketing practices and procedures.

(c) WORKING GROUPS.—The order may authorize the Board to convene working groups drawn from producers, handlers, importers, exporters, or the general public and utilize the expertise of the groups to assist in the development of research and marketing programs for kiwifruit.

(d) RESERVE FUNDS.—The order may authorize the Board to accumulate reserve funds from assessments collected pursuant to section 556(b) to permit an effective and continuous coordinated program of research, promotion, and consumer information in years in which production and assessment income may be reduced, except that any reserve fund may not exceed the amount budgeted for operation of this subtitle for 1 year.

(e) PROMOTION ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE UNITED STATES.—The order may authorize the Board to use, with the approval of the Secretary, funds collected under section 556(b) and funds from other sources for the development and expansion of sales in foreign markets of kiwifruit produced in the United States.

7 USC 7467.

SEC. 558. PETITION AND REVIEW.

(a) PETITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A person subject to an order may file with the Secretary a petition—

(A) stating that the order, a provision of the order, or an obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with law; and

(B) requesting a modification of the order or an exemption from the order.

(2) HEARINGS.—A person submitting a petition under paragraph (1) shall be given an opportunity for a hearing on the petition, in accordance with regulations issued by the Secretary.

(3) RULING.—After the hearing, the Secretary shall issue a ruling on the petition which shall be final if the petition is in accordance with law.

(4) **LIMITATION ON PETITION.**—Any petition filed under this subtitle challenging an order, or any obligation imposed in connection with an order, shall be filed not later than 2 years after the effective date of the order or imposition of the obligation.

(b) **REVIEW.**—

(1) **COMMENCEMENT OF ACTION.**—The district court of the United States for any district in which the person who is a petitioner under subsection (a) resides or carries on business is vested with jurisdiction to review the ruling on the petition of the person, if a complaint for that purpose is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of a ruling by the Secretary under subsection (a).

Courts.

(2) **PROCESS.**—Service of process in the proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

(3) **REMANDS.**—If the court determines that the ruling is not in accordance with law, the court shall remand the matter to the Secretary with directions—

(A) to make such ruling as the court shall determine to be in accordance with law; or

(B) to take such further action as, in the opinion of the court, the law requires.

(4) **ENFORCEMENT.**—The pendency of a proceeding instituted pursuant to subsection (a) shall not impede, hinder, or delay the Attorney General or the Secretary from obtaining relief pursuant to section 559.

SEC. 559. ENFORCEMENT.

Courts.
7 USC 7468.

(a) **JURISDICTION.**—A district court of the United States shall have jurisdiction specifically to enforce, and to prevent and restrain any person from violating, any order or regulation made or issued by the Secretary under this subtitle.

(b) **REFERRAL TO ATTORNEY GENERAL.**—A civil action authorized to be brought under this section shall be referred to the Attorney General for appropriate action, except that the Secretary is not required to refer to the Attorney General a violation of this subtitle, or any order or regulation issued under this subtitle, if the Secretary believes that the administration and enforcement of this subtitle would be adequately served by administrative action under subsection (c) or suitable written notice or warning to the person committing the violation.

(c) **CIVIL PENALTIES AND ORDERS.**—

(1) **CIVIL PENALTIES.**—Any person who willfully violates any provision of any order or regulation issued by the Secretary under this subtitle, or who fails or refuses to pay, collect, or remit any assessment or fee duly required of the person under the order or regulation, may be assessed a civil penalty by the Secretary of not less than \$500 nor more than \$5,000 for each such violation. Each violation shall be a separate offense.

(2) **CEASE-AND-DESIST ORDERS.**—In addition to or in lieu of the civil penalty, the Secretary may issue an order requiring the person to cease and desist from continuing the violation.

(3) **NOTICE AND HEARING.**—No order assessing a civil penalty or cease-and-desist order may be issued by the Secretary under this subsection unless the Secretary gives the person

against whom the order is issued notice and opportunity for a hearing on the record before the Secretary with respect to the violation.

(4) **FINALITY.**—The order of the Secretary assessing a penalty or imposing a cease-and-desist order shall be final and conclusive unless the person against whom the order is issued files an appeal of the order in the appropriate district court of the United States, in accordance with subsection (d).

(d) **REVIEW BY UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT.**—

(1) **COMMENCEMENT OF ACTION.**—Any person against whom a violation is found and a civil penalty assessed or cease-and-desist order issued under subsection (c) may obtain review of the penalty or cease-and-desist order in the district court of the United States for the district in which the person resides or carries on business, or the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, by—

(A) filing a notice of appeal in the court not later than 30 days after the date on which the penalty is assessed or cease-and-desist order issued; and

(B) simultaneously sending a copy of the notice by certified mail to the Secretary.

(2) **RECORD.**—The Secretary shall promptly file in the court a certified copy of the record on which the Secretary found that the person committed the violation.

(3) **STANDARD OF REVIEW.**—A finding of the Secretary shall be set aside only if the finding is found to be unsupported by substantial evidence.

(e) **FAILURE TO OBEY CEASE-AND-DESIST ORDERS.**—Any person who fails to obey a cease-and-desist order issued by the Secretary after the cease-and-desist order has become final and unappealable, or after the appropriate United States district court has entered a final judgment in favor of the Secretary, shall be subject to a civil penalty assessed by the Secretary, after opportunity for a hearing and for judicial review under the procedures specified in subsections (c) and (d), of not more than \$500 for each offense. Each day during which the failure continues shall be considered a separate violation of the cease-and-desist order.

(f) **FAILURE TO PAY PENALTIES.**—If a person fails to pay an assessment of a civil penalty after the assessment has become a final and unappealable order issued by the Secretary, or after the appropriate United States district court has entered final judgment in favor of the Secretary, the Secretary shall refer the matter to the Attorney General for recovery of the amount assessed in the district court of the United States for any district in which the person resides or carries on business. In an action for recovery, the validity and appropriateness of the final order imposing the civil penalty shall not be subject to review.

7 USC 7469.

SEC. 560. INVESTIGATIONS AND POWER TO SUBPOENA.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may make such investigations as the Secretary considers necessary—

(1) for the effective carrying out of the responsibilities of the Secretary under this subtitle; or

(2) to determine whether a person subject to this subtitle has engaged or is engaging in any act that constitutes a violation of this subtitle, or any order, rule, or regulation issued under this subtitle.

(b) POWER TO SUBPOENA.—

(1) INVESTIGATIONS.—For the purpose of an investigation made under subsection (a), the Secretary may administer oaths and affirmations and may issue subpoenas to require the production of any records that are relevant to the inquiry. The production of any such records may be required from any place in the United States.

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS.—For the purpose of an administrative hearing held under section 558 or 559, the presiding officer is authorized to administer oaths and affirmations, subpoena witnesses, compel the attendance of witnesses, take evidence, and require the production of any records that are relevant to the inquiry. The attendance of witnesses and the production of any such records may be required from any place in the United States.

(c) AID OF COURTS.—In the case of contumacy by, or refusal to obey a subpoena to, any person, the Secretary may invoke the aid of any court of the United States within the jurisdiction of which the investigation or proceeding is carried on, or where the person resides or carries on business, to enforce a subpoena issued by the Secretary under subsection (b). The court may issue an order requiring the person to comply with the subpoena.

(d) CONTEMPT.—Any failure to obey the order of the court may be punished by the court as a contempt of the court.

(e) PROCESS.—Process in any such case may be served in the judicial district in which the person resides or carries on business or wherever the person may be found.

(f) HEARING SITE.—The site of any hearing held under section 558 or 559 shall be in the judicial district where the person affected by the hearing resides or has a principal place of business.

SEC. 561. REFERENDA.

7 USC 7470.

(a) INITIAL REFERENDUM.—

(1) REFERENDUM REQUIRED.—During the 60-day period immediately preceding the proposed effective date of an order issued under section 554, the Secretary shall conduct a referendum among kiwifruit producers and importers who will be subject to assessments under the order, to ascertain whether producers and importers approve the implementation of the order.

(2) APPROVAL OF ORDER.—The order shall become effective, as provided in section 554, if the Secretary determines that—

(A) the order has been approved by a majority of the producers and importers voting in the referendum; and

(B) the producers and importers favoring approval produce and import more than 50 percent of the total volume of kiwifruit produced and imported by persons voting in the referendum.

(b) SUBSEQUENT REFERENDA.—The Secretary may periodically conduct a referendum to determine if kiwifruit producers and importers favor the continuation, termination, or suspension of any order issued under section 554 that is in effect at the time of the referendum.

(c) REQUIRED REFERENDA.—The Secretary shall hold a referendum under subsection (b)—

(1) at the end of the 6-year period beginning on the effective date of the order and at the end of each subsequent 6-year period;

(2) at the request of the Board; or

(3) if not less than 30 percent of the kiwifruit producers and importers subject to assessments under the order submit a petition requesting the referendum.

(d) **VOTE.**—On completion of a referendum under subsection (b), the Secretary shall suspend or terminate the order that was subject to the referendum at the end of the marketing year if—

(1) the suspension or termination of the order is favored by not less than a majority of the producers and importers voting in the referendum; and

(2) the producers and importers produce and import more than 50 percent of the total volume of kiwifruit produced and imported by persons voting in the referendum.

(e) **CONFIDENTIALITY.**—The ballots and other information or reports that reveal, or tend to reveal, the vote of any person under this subtitle and the voting list shall be held strictly confidential and shall not be disclosed.

7 USC 7471.

SEC. 562. SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—If the Secretary finds that an order issued under section 554, or a provision of the order, obstructs or does not tend to effectuate the purposes of this subtitle, the Secretary shall suspend or terminate the operation of the order or provision.

(b) **LIMITATION.**—The suspension or termination of any order, or any provision of an order, shall not be considered an order under this subtitle.

7 USC 7472.

SEC. 563. REGULATIONS.

The Secretary may issue such regulations as are necessary to carry out this subtitle.

7 USC 7473.

SEC. 564. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated for each fiscal year such sums as are necessary to carry out this subtitle.

Subtitle E—Popcorn

Popcorn
Promotion,
Research, and
Consumer
Information Act.
7 USC 7401 note.

SEC. 571. SHORT TITLE.

This subtitle may be cited as the “Popcorn Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act”.

7 USC 7481.

SEC. 572. FINDINGS AND DECLARATION OF POLICY.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds that—

(1) popcorn is an important food that is a valuable part of the human diet;

(2) the production and processing of popcorn plays a significant role in the economy of the United States in that popcorn is processed by several popcorn processors, distributed through wholesale and retail outlets, and consumed by millions of people throughout the United States and foreign countries;

(3) popcorn must be of high quality, readily available, handled properly, and marketed efficiently to ensure that the benefits of popcorn are available to the people of the United States;

(4) the maintenance and expansion of existing markets and uses and the development of new markets and uses for popcorn are vital to the welfare of processors and persons concerned with marketing, using, and producing popcorn for the market, as well as to the agricultural economy of the United States;

(5) the cooperative development, financing, and implementation of a coordinated program of popcorn promotion, research, consumer information, and industry information is necessary to maintain and expand markets for popcorn; and

(6) popcorn moves in interstate and foreign commerce, and popcorn that does not move in those channels of commerce directly burdens or affects interstate commerce in popcorn.

(b) **POLICY.**—It is the policy of Congress that it is in the public interest to authorize the establishment, through the exercise of the powers provided in this subtitle, of an orderly procedure for developing, financing (through adequate assessments on unpopped popcorn processed domestically), and carrying out an effective, continuous, and coordinated program of promotion, research, consumer information, and industry information designed to—

(1) strengthen the position of the popcorn industry in the marketplace; and

(2) maintain and expand domestic and foreign markets and uses for popcorn.

(c) **PURPOSES.**—The purposes of this subtitle are to—

(1) maintain and expand the markets for all popcorn products in a manner that—

(A) is not designed to maintain or expand any individual share of a producer or processor of the market;

(B) does not compete with or replace individual advertising or promotion efforts designed to promote individual brand name or trade name popcorn products; and

(C) authorizes and funds programs that result in government speech promoting government objectives; and

(2) establish a nationally coordinated program for popcorn promotion, research, consumer information, and industry information.

(d) **STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.**—This subtitle treats processors equitably. Nothing in this subtitle—

(1) provides for the imposition of a trade barrier to the entry into the United States of imported popcorn for the domestic market; or

(2) provides for the control of production or otherwise limits the right of any individual processor to produce popcorn.

SEC. 573. DEFINITIONS.

7 USC 7482.

In this subtitle (unless the context otherwise requires):

(1) **BOARD.**—The term “Board” means the Popcorn Board established under section 575(b).

(2) **COMMERCE.**—The term “commerce” means interstate, foreign, or intrastate commerce.

(3) **CONSUMER INFORMATION.**—The term “consumer information” means information and programs that will assist consumers and other persons in making evaluations and decisions regarding the purchase, preparation, and use of popcorn.

(4) **DEPARTMENT.**—The term “Department” means the Department of Agriculture.

(5) **INDUSTRY INFORMATION.**—The term “industry information” means information or a program that will lead to the development of—

(A) new markets, new marketing strategies, or increased efficiency for the popcorn industry; or

(B) activities to enhance the image of the popcorn industry.

(6) **MARKETING.**—The term “marketing” means the sale or other disposition of unpopped popcorn for human consumption in a channel of commerce, but does not include a sale or disposition to or between processors.

(7) **ORDER.**—The term “order” means an order issued under section 574.

(8) **PERSON.**—The term “person” means an individual, group of individuals, partnership, corporation, association, or cooperative, or any other legal entity.

(9) **POPCORN.**—The term “popcorn” means unpopped popcorn (*Zea Mays* L) that is—

(A) commercially grown;

(B) processed in the United States by shelling, cleaning, or drying; and

(C) introduced into a channel of commerce.

(10) **PROCESS.**—The term “process” means to shell, clean, dry, and prepare popcorn for the market, but does not include packaging popcorn for the market without also engaging in another activity described in this paragraph.

(11) **PROCESSOR.**—The term “processor” means a person engaged in the preparation of unpopped popcorn for the market who owns or shares the ownership and risk of loss of the popcorn and who processes and distributes over 4,000,000 pounds of popcorn in the market per year.

(12) **PROMOTION.**—The term “promotion” means an action, including paid advertising, to enhance the image or desirability of popcorn.

(13) **RESEARCH.**—The term “research” means any type of study to advance the image, desirability, marketability, production, product development, quality, or nutritional value of popcorn.

(14) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(15) **STATE.**—The term “State” means each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia.

(16) **UNITED STATES.**—The term “United States” means all of the States.

7 USC 7483.

SEC. 574. ISSUANCE OF ORDERS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—To effectuate the policy described in section 572(b), the Secretary, subject to subsection (b), shall issue 1 or more orders applicable to processors. An order shall be applicable to all popcorn production and marketing areas in the United States. Not more than 1 order shall be in effect under this subtitle at any 1 time.

(b) **PROCEDURE.**—

(1) **PROPOSAL OR REQUEST FOR ISSUANCE.**—The Secretary may propose the issuance of an order, or an association of

processors or any other person that would be affected by an order may request the issuance of, and submit a proposal for, an order.

(2) NOTICE AND COMMENT CONCERNING PROPOSED ORDER.—
 Not later than 60 days after the receipt of a request and proposal for an order under paragraph (1), or at such time as the Secretary determines to propose an order, the Secretary shall publish a proposed order and give due notice and opportunity for public comment on the proposed order. Publication.

(3) ISSUANCE OF ORDER.—After notice and opportunity for public comment under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall issue an order, taking into consideration the comments received and including in the order such provisions as are necessary to ensure that the order conforms to this subtitle. The order shall be issued and become effective not later than 150 days after the date of publication of the proposed order.

(c) AMENDMENTS.—The Secretary, as appropriate, may amend an order. The provisions of this subtitle applicable to an order shall be applicable to any amendment to an order, except that an amendment to an order may not require a referendum to become effective.

SEC. 575. REQUIRED TERMS IN ORDERS.

7 USC 7484.

(a) IN GENERAL.—An order shall contain the terms and conditions specified in this section.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT AND MEMBERSHIP OF POPCORN BOARD.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The order shall provide for the establishment of, and appointment of members to, a Popcorn Board that shall consist of not fewer than 4 members and not more than 9 members.

(2) NOMINATIONS.—The members of the Board shall be processors appointed by the Secretary from nominations submitted by processors in a manner authorized by the Secretary, subject to paragraph (3). Not more than 1 member may be appointed to the Board from nominations submitted by any 1 processor.

(3) GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY.—In making appointments, the Secretary shall take into account, to the extent practicable, the geographical distribution of popcorn production throughout the United States.

(4) TERMS.—The term of appointment of each member of the Board shall be 3 years, except that the members appointed to the initial Board shall serve, proportionately, for terms of 2, 3, and 4 years, as determined by the Secretary.

(5) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES.—A member of the Board shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for the expenses of the member incurred in the performance of duties for the Board.

(c) POWERS AND DUTIES OF BOARD.—The order shall define the powers and duties of the Board, which shall include the power and duty—

(1) to administer the order in accordance with the terms and provisions of the order;

(2) to issue regulations to effectuate the terms and provisions of the order;

(3) to appoint members of the Board to serve on an executive committee;

paragraph (1). The contract shall include provisions comparable to the provisions required by paragraph (2).

(f) ASSESSMENTS.—

(1) PROCESSORS.—The order shall provide that each processor marketing popcorn in the United States or for export shall, in the manner prescribed in the order, pay assessments and remit the assessments to the Board.

(2) DIRECT MARKETERS.—A processor that markets popcorn produced by the processor directly to consumers shall pay and remit the assessments on the popcorn directly to the Board in the manner prescribed in the order.

(3) RATE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The rate of assessment prescribed in the order shall be a rate established by the Board but not more than \$.08 per hundredweight of popcorn.

(B) ADJUSTMENT OF RATE.—The order shall provide that the Board, with the approval of the Secretary, may raise or lower the rate of assessment annually up to a maximum of \$.08 per hundredweight of popcorn.

(4) USE OF ASSESSMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C) and subsection (c)(5), the order shall provide that the assessments collected shall be used by the Board—

(i) to pay expenses incurred in implementing and administering the order, with provision for a reasonable reserve; and

(ii) to cover such administrative costs as are incurred by the Secretary, except that the administrative costs incurred by the Secretary (other than any legal expenses incurred to defend and enforce the order) that may be reimbursed by the Board may not exceed 15 percent of the projected annual revenues of the Board.

(B) EXPENDITURES BASED ON SOURCE OF ASSESSMENTS.—In implementing plans and projects of promotion, research, consumer information, and industry information, the Board shall expend funds on—

(i) plans and projects for popcorn marketed in the United States or Canada in proportion to the amount of assessments collected on domestically marketed popcorn; and

(ii) plans and projects for exported popcorn in proportion to the amount of assessments collected on exported popcorn.

(C) NOTIFICATION.—If the administrative costs incurred by the Secretary that are reimbursed by the Board exceed 10 percent of the projected annual revenues of the Board, the Secretary shall notify as soon as practicable the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

(g) PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS.—The order shall prohibit any funds collected by the Board under the order from being used to influence government action or policy, other than the use of funds by the Board for the development and recommendation to the Secretary of amendments to the order.

(h) **BOOKS AND RECORDS OF THE BOARD.**—The order shall require the Board to—

Reports.

(1) maintain such books and records (which shall be available to the Secretary for inspection and audit) as the Secretary may prescribe;

(2) prepare and submit to the Secretary, from time to time, such reports as the Secretary may prescribe; and

(3) account for the receipt and disbursement of all funds entrusted to the Board.

(i) **BOOKS AND RECORDS OF PROCESSORS.**—

(1) **MAINTENANCE AND REPORTING OF INFORMATION.**—The order shall require that each processor of popcorn for the market shall—

Reports.

(A) maintain, and make available for inspection, such books and records as are required by the order; and

(B) file reports at such time, in such manner, and having such content as is prescribed in the order.

(2) **USE OF INFORMATION.**—The Secretary shall authorize the use of information regarding processors that may be accumulated under a law or regulation other than this subtitle or a regulation issued under this subtitle. The information shall be made available to the Secretary as appropriate for the administration or enforcement of this subtitle, the order, or any regulation issued under this subtitle.

(3) **CONFIDENTIALITY.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to subparagraphs (B), (C), and (D), all information obtained by the Secretary under paragraphs (1) and (2) shall be kept confidential by all officers, employees, and agents of the Board and the Department.

(B) **DISCLOSURE BY SECRETARY.**—Information referred to in subparagraph (A) may be disclosed if—

(i) the Secretary considers the information relevant;

(ii) the information is revealed in a suit or administrative hearing brought at the request of the Secretary, or to which the Secretary or any officer of the United States is a party; and

(iii) the information relates to the order.

(C) **DISCLOSURE TO OTHER AGENCY OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.**—

(i) **IN GENERAL.**—No information obtained under the authority of this subtitle may be made available to another agency or officer of the Federal Government for any purpose other than the implementation of this subtitle and any investigatory or enforcement activity necessary for the implementation of this subtitle.

(ii) **PENALTY.**—A person who knowingly violates this subparagraph shall, on conviction, be subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or to imprisonment for not more than 1 year, or both, and if an officer, employee, or agent of the Board or the Department, shall be removed from office or terminated from employment, as applicable.

(D) **GENERAL STATEMENTS.**—Nothing in this paragraph prohibits—

(i) the issuance of general statements based on the reports of a number of persons subject to an order or statistical data collected from the reports, if the statements do not identify the information provided by any person; or

(ii) the publication, by direction of the Secretary, of the name of a person violating the order, together with a statement of the particular provisions of the order violated by the person.

(j) OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The order shall contain such other terms and conditions, consistent with this subtitle, as are necessary to effectuate this subtitle, including regulations relating to the assessment of late payment charges.

SEC. 576. REFERENDA.

7 USC 7485.

(a) INITIAL REFERENDUM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Within the 60-day period immediately preceding the effective date of an order, as provided in section 574(b)(3), the Secretary shall conduct a referendum among processors who, during a representative period as determined by the Secretary, have been engaged in processing, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the order shall go into effect.

(2) APPROVAL OF ORDER.—The order shall become effective, as provided in section 574(b), only if the Secretary determines that the order has been approved by not less than a majority of the processors voting in the referendum and if the majority processed more than 50 percent of the popcorn certified as having been processed, during the representative period, by the processors voting.

(b) ADDITIONAL REFERENDA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not earlier than 3 years after the effective date of an order approved under subsection (a), on the request of the Board or a representative group of processors, as described in paragraph (2), the Secretary may conduct additional referenda to determine whether processors favor the suspension or termination of the order.

(2) REPRESENTATIVE GROUP OF PROCESSORS.—An additional referendum on an order shall be conducted if the referendum is requested by 30 percent or more of the number of processors who, during a representative period as determined by the Secretary, have been engaged in processing.

(3) DISAPPROVAL OF ORDER.—If the Secretary determines, in a referendum conducted under paragraph (1), that suspension or termination of the order is favored by at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of the processors voting in the referendum, the Secretary shall—

(A) suspend or terminate, as appropriate, collection of assessments under the order not later than 180 days after the date of determination; and

(B) suspend or terminate the order, as appropriate, in an orderly manner as soon as practicable after the date of determination.

(c) COSTS OF REFERENDUM.—The Secretary shall be reimbursed from assessments collected by the Board for any expenses incurred by the Secretary in connection with the conduct of any referendum under this section.

Termination
date.

(d) **METHOD OF CONDUCTING REFERENDUM.**—Subject to this section, a referendum conducted under this section shall be conducted in such manner as is determined by the Secretary.

(e) **CONFIDENTIALITY OF BALLOTS AND OTHER INFORMATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The ballots and other information or reports that reveal or tend to reveal the vote of any processor, or any business operation of a processor, shall be considered to be strictly confidential and shall not be disclosed.

(2) **PENALTY FOR VIOLATIONS.**—An officer or employee of the Department who knowingly violates paragraph (1) shall be subject to the penalties described in section 575(i)(3)(C)(ii).

7 USC 7486.

SEC. 577. PETITION AND REVIEW.

(a) **PETITION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—A person subject to an order may file with the Secretary a petition—

(A) stating that the order, a provision of the order, or an obligation imposed in connection with the order is not established in accordance with law; and

(B) requesting a modification of the order or obligation or an exemption from the order or obligation.

(2) **STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.**—A petition under paragraph (1) concerning an obligation may be filed not later than 2 years after the date of imposition of the obligation.

(3) **HEARINGS.**—The petitioner shall be given the opportunity for a hearing on a petition filed under paragraph (1), in accordance with regulations issued by the Secretary.

(4) **RULING.**—After a hearing under paragraph (3), the Secretary shall issue a ruling on the petition that is the subject of the hearing, which shall be final if the ruling is in accordance with applicable law.

Courts.

(b) **REVIEW.**—

(1) **COMMENCEMENT OF ACTION.**—The district court of the United States for any district in which a person who is a petitioner under subsection (a) resides or carries on business shall have jurisdiction to review a ruling on the petition, if the person files a complaint not later than 20 days after the date of issuance of the ruling under subsection (a)(4).

(2) **PROCESS.**—Service of process in a proceeding under paragraph (1) may be made on the Secretary by delivering a copy of the complaint to the Secretary.

(3) **REMANDS.**—If the court determines, under paragraph (1), that a ruling issued under subsection (a)(4) is not in accordance with applicable law, the court shall remand the matter to the Secretary with directions—

(A) to make such ruling as the court shall determine to be in accordance with law; or

(B) to take such further proceedings as, in the opinion of the court, the law requires.

(c) **ENFORCEMENT.**—The pendency of proceedings instituted under subsection (a) may not impede, hinder, or delay the Secretary or the Attorney General from taking action under section 578.

7 USC 7487.

SEC. 578. ENFORCEMENT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may issue an enforcement order to restrain or prevent any person from violating an order or regulation issued under this subtitle and may assess a civil penalty of not more than \$1,000 for each violation of the enforce-

ment order, after an opportunity for an administrative hearing, if the Secretary determines that the administration and enforcement of the order and this subtitle would be adequately served by such a procedure.

(b) JURISDICTION.—The district courts of the United States are vested with jurisdiction specifically to enforce, and to prevent and restrain any person from violating, an order or regulation issued under this subtitle.

Courts.

(c) REFERRAL TO ATTORNEY GENERAL.—A civil action authorized to be brought under this section shall be referred to the Attorney General for appropriate action.

SEC. 579. INVESTIGATIONS AND POWER TO SUBPOENA.

7 USC 7488.

(a) INVESTIGATIONS.—The Secretary may make such investigations as the Secretary considers necessary—

(1) for the effective administration of this subtitle; and

(2) to determine whether any person subject to this subtitle has engaged, or is about to engage, in an act that constitutes or will constitute a violation of this subtitle or of an order or regulation issued under this subtitle.

(b) OATHS, AFFIRMATIONS, AND SUBPOENAS.—For the purpose of an investigation under subsection (a), the Secretary may administer oaths and affirmations, subpoena witnesses, compel the attendance of witnesses, take evidence, and require the production of any records that are relevant to the inquiry. The attendance of witnesses and the production of records may be required from any place in the United States.

(c) AID OF COURTS.—

(1) REQUEST.—In the case of contumacy by, or refusal to obey a subpoena issued to, any person, the Secretary may request the aid of any court of the United States within the jurisdiction of which the investigation or proceeding is carried on, or where the person resides or carries on business, in requiring the attendance and testimony of the person and the production of records.

(2) ENFORCEMENT ORDER OF THE COURT.—The court may issue an enforcement order requiring the person to appear before the Secretary to produce records or to give testimony concerning the matter under investigation.

(3) CONTEMPT.—A failure to obey an enforcement order of the court under paragraph (2) may be punished by the court as a contempt of the court.

(4) PROCESS.—Process in a case under this subsection may be served in the judicial district in which the person resides or carries on business or wherever the person may be found.

SEC. 580. RELATION TO OTHER PROGRAMS.

7 USC 7489.

Nothing in this subtitle preempts or supersedes any other program relating to popcorn promotion organized and operated under the laws of the United States or any State.

SEC. 581. REGULATIONS.

7 USC 7490.

The Secretary may issue such regulations as are necessary to carry out this subtitle.

SEC. 582. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

7 USC 7491.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this subtitle. Amounts made available under

SEC. 602. PURPOSES OF LOANS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 303 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1923) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 303. PURPOSES OF LOANS.**“(a) ALLOWED PURPOSES.—**

“(1) DIRECT LOANS.—A farmer or rancher may use a direct loan made under this subtitle only for—

“(A) acquiring or enlarging a farm or ranch;

“(B) making capital improvements to a farm or ranch;

“(C) paying loan closing costs related to acquiring, enlarging, or improving a farm or ranch; or

“(D) paying for activities to promote soil and water conservation and protection described in section 304 on a farm or ranch.

“(2) GUARANTEED LOANS.—A farmer or rancher may use a loan guaranteed under this subtitle only for—

“(A) acquiring or enlarging a farm or ranch;

“(B) making capital improvements to a farm or ranch;

“(C) paying loan closing costs related to acquiring, enlarging, or improving a farm or ranch;

“(D) paying for activities to promote soil and water conservation and protection described in section 304 on a farm or ranch; or

“(E) refinancing indebtedness.

“(b) PREFERENCES.—In making or guaranteeing a loan under this subtitle for purchase of a farm or ranch, the Secretary shall give preference to a person who—

“(1) has a dependent family;

“(2) to the extent practicable, is able to make an initial down payment on the farm or ranch; or

“(3) is an owner of livestock or farm or ranch equipment that is necessary to successfully carry out farming or ranching operations.

“(c) HAZARD INSURANCE REQUIREMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—After the Secretary makes the determination required by paragraph (2), the Secretary may not make a loan to a farmer or rancher under this subtitle unless the farmer or rancher has, or agrees to obtain, hazard insurance on any real property to be acquired or improved with the loan.

“(2) DETERMINATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall determine the appropriate level of insurance to be required under paragraph (1).”

(b) TRANSITIONAL PROVISION.—Section 303(c)(1) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act shall not apply until the Secretary of Agriculture makes the determination required by section 303(c)(2) of the Act. 7 USC 1923 note.

SEC. 603. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION.

Section 304 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1924) is amended—

(1) by striking subsections (b) and (c);

(2) by striking “SEC. 304. (a)(1) Loans” and inserting the following:

“SEC. 304. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Loans”;

(3) by striking “(2) In making or insuring” and inserting the following:

“(b) PRIORITY.—In making or guaranteeing”;

(4) by striking “(3) The Secretary” and inserting the following:

“(c) LOAN MAXIMUM.—The Secretary”;

(5) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through (F) of subsection (a) (as amended by paragraph (2)) as paragraphs (1) through (6), respectively; and

(6) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (c) (as amended by paragraph (4)) as paragraphs (1) and (2), respectively.

SEC. 604. INTEREST RATE REQUIREMENTS.

Section 307(a)(3) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1927(a)(3)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by inserting “subparagraph (D) and in” after “Except as provided in”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(D) JOINT FINANCING ARRANGEMENT.—If a direct farm ownership loan is made under this subtitle as part of a joint financing arrangement and the amount of the direct farm ownership loan does not exceed 50 percent of the total principal amount financed under the arrangement, the interest rate on the direct farm ownership loan shall be at least 4 percent annually.”.

SEC. 605. INSURANCE OF LOANS.

Section 308 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1928) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 308. FULL FAITH AND CREDIT.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—A contract of insurance or guarantee executed by the Secretary under this title shall be an obligation supported by the full faith and credit of the United States.

“(b) CONTESTABILITY.—A contract of insurance or guarantee executed by the Secretary under this title shall be incontestable except for fraud or misrepresentation that the lender or any holder—

“(1) has actual knowledge of at the time the contract or guarantee is executed; or

“(2) participates in or condones.”.

SEC. 606. LOANS GUARANTEED.

Section 309(h) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1929(h)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(4) MAXIMUM GUARANTEE OF 90 PERCENT.—Except as provided in paragraphs (5) and (6), a loan guarantee under this title shall be for not more than 90 percent of the principal and interest due on the loan.

“(5) REFINANCED LOANS GUARANTEED AT 95 PERCENT.—The Secretary shall guarantee 95 percent of—

“(A) in the case of a loan that solely refinances a direct loan made under this title, the principal and interest due on the loan on the date of the refinancing; or

“(B) in the case of a loan that is used for multiple purposes, the portion of the loan that refinances the principal and interest due on a direct loan made under this title that is outstanding on the date the loan is guaranteed.

“(6) BEGINNING FARMER LOANS GUARANTEED UP TO 95 PERCENT.—The Secretary may guarantee not more than 95 percent of—

“(A) a farm ownership loan for acquiring a farm or ranch to a borrower who is participating in the down payment loan program under section 310E; or

“(B) an operating loan to a borrower who is participating in the down payment loan program under section 310E that is made during the period that the borrower has a direct loan outstanding under this subtitle for acquiring a farm or ranch.”.

Subtitle B—Operating Loans

SEC. 611. LIMITATION ON DIRECT OPERATING LOANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 311 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1941) is amended by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

“(c) DIRECT LOANS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (3), the Secretary may make a direct loan under this subtitle only to a farmer or rancher who—

“(A) is a qualified beginning farmer or rancher who has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 5 years;

“(B) has not received a previous direct operating loan made under this subtitle; or

“(C) has received a previous direct operating loan made under this subtitle during 6 or fewer years.

“(2) YOUTH LOANS.—In this subsection, the term ‘direct operating loan’ shall not include a loan made to a youth under subsection (b).

“(3) TRANSITION RULE.—If, as of the date of enactment of this paragraph, a farmer or rancher has received a direct operating loan under this subtitle during each of 4 or more previous years, the borrower shall be eligible to receive a direct operating loan under this subtitle during 3 additional years after the date of enactment of this paragraph.”.

(b) YOUTH ENTERPRISES NOT FARMING OR RANCHING.—Section 311(b) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1941(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(4) YOUTH ENTERPRISES NOT FARMING OR RANCHING.—The operation of an enterprise by a youth under this subsection shall not be considered the operation of a farm or ranch under this title.”.

SEC. 612. PURPOSES OF OPERATING LOANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 312 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1942) is amended to read as follows:

“(4) **TERMINATION OF DELINQUENT LOANS.**—If a borrower does not pay an installment on a line-of-credit loan on schedule, the borrower may not take an advance or draw on the line-of-credit, unless the Secretary determines that—

“(A) the borrower’s failure to pay on schedule was due to unusual conditions that the borrower could not control; and

“(B) the borrower will reduce the line-of-credit balance to the scheduled level at the end of—

“(i) the production cycle; or

“(ii) the marketing of the borrower’s agricultural products.

“(5) **AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES.**—A line-of-credit loan may be used to finance the production or marketing of an agricultural commodity that—

“(A) is eligible for a price support program of the Department of Agriculture; or

“(B) was eligible for a price support program of the Department of Agriculture on the day before the date of enactment of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996.”

SEC. 615. INSURANCE OF OPERATING LOANS.

Section 317 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1947) is repealed.

SEC. 616. SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FOR BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 318 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1948) is repealed.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**—Section 310F of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1936) is repealed.

SEC. 617. LIMITATION ON PERIOD FOR WHICH BORROWERS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR GUARANTEED ASSISTANCE.

Section 319 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1949) is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

“(b) **LIMITATION ON PERIOD BORROWERS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR GUARANTEED ASSISTANCE.**—

“(1) **GENERAL RULE.**—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary shall not guarantee a loan under this subtitle for a borrower for any year after the 15th year that a loan is made to, or a guarantee is provided with respect to, the borrower under this subtitle.

“(2) **TRANSITION RULE.**—If, as of October 28, 1992, a farmer or rancher has received a direct or guaranteed operating loan under this subtitle during each of 10 or more previous years, the borrower shall be eligible to receive a guaranteed operating loan under this subtitle during 5 additional years after October 28, 1992.”

Service, Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, or a successor agency, or"; and

(3) by inserting after "activities under the Housing Act of 1949." the following: "In the case of a security instrument entered into under the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 901 et seq.), the Secretary shall notify the Attorney General of the intent of the Secretary to exercise the authority of the Secretary under this paragraph." Notification.

SEC. 749. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 338 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1988) is amended—

- (1) by striking subsections (b), (c), (d), and (e); and
(2) by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (b).

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—

(1) The first sentence of section 309(g)(1) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1929(g)(1)) is amended by inserting after "section 338(c)" the following: "(before the amendment made by section 749(a)(1) of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996)".

(2) Section 343(b) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1991(b)) is amended by striking "338(f)," and inserting "338(b),".

SEC. 750. TESTIMONY BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

Section 345 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1993) is repealed.

SEC. 751. PROHIBITION ON USE OF LOANS FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES.

Section 363 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2006e) is amended by adding at the end the following: "This section shall not apply to a loan made or guaranteed under this title for a utility line."

SEC. 752. RURAL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFIED LENDERS PROGRAM.

The Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act is amended by inserting after section 363 (7 U.S.C. 2006e) the following:

"SEC. 364. RURAL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFIED LENDERS PROGRAM.

7 USC 2006f.

"(a) CERTIFIED LENDERS PROGRAM.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may establish a program under which the Secretary may guarantee a loan for any rural development program that is made by a lender certified by the Secretary.

"(2) CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary may certify a lender if the lender meets such criteria as the Secretary may prescribe in regulations, including the ability of the lender to properly make, service, and liquidate the guaranteed loans of the lender.

"(3) CONDITION OF CERTIFICATION.—As a condition of certification, the Secretary may require the lender to undertake to service the guaranteed loan using standards that are not less stringent than generally accepted banking standards concerning loan servicing that are used by prudent commercial or cooperative lenders.

"(4) GUARANTEE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may guarantee not more than 80 percent of a loan made by a certified lender described in paragraph

(1), if the borrower of the loan meets the eligibility requirements and such other criteria for the loan guarantee that are established by the Secretary.

“(5) CERTIFICATIONS.—With respect to loans to be guaranteed, the Secretary may permit a certified lender to make appropriate certifications (as provided in regulations issued by the Secretary)—

“(A) relating to issues such as creditworthiness, repayment ability, adequacy of collateral, and feasibility of the operation; and

“(B) that the borrower is in compliance with all requirements of law, including regulations issued by the Secretary.

“(6) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—This subsection shall not affect the responsibility of the Secretary to determine eligibility, review financial information, and otherwise assess an application.

“(b) PREFERRED CERTIFIED LENDERS PROGRAM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may establish a preferred certified lenders program for lenders who establish their—

“(A) knowledge of, and experience under, the program established under subsection (a);

“(B) knowledge of the regulations concerning the particular guaranteed loan program; and

“(C) proficiency related to the certified lender program requirements.

“(2) ADDITIONAL LENDING INSTITUTIONS.—The Secretary may certify any lending institution as a preferred certified lender if the institution meets such additional criteria as the Secretary may prescribe by regulation.

“(3) REVOCATION OF DESIGNATION.—The designation of a lender as a preferred certified lender shall be revoked if the Secretary determines that the lender is not adhering to the rules and regulations applicable to the program or if the loss experiences of the preferred certified lender are greater than other preferred certified lenders, except that the suspension or revocation shall not affect any outstanding guarantee.

“(4) CONDITION OF CERTIFICATION.—As a condition of the preferred certification, the Secretary shall require the lender to undertake to service the loan guaranteed by the Secretary under this subsection using generally accepted banking standards concerning loan servicing employed by prudent commercial or cooperative lenders. The Secretary shall, at least annually, monitor the performance of each preferred certified lender to ensure that the conditions of the certification are being met.

“(5) EFFECT OF PREFERRED LENDER CERTIFICATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may—

“(A) guarantee not more than 80 percent of any approved loan made by a preferred certified lender as described in this subsection, if the borrower meets the eligibility requirements and such other criteria as may be applicable to loans guaranteed by the Secretary; and

“(B) permit preferred certified lenders to make all decisions, with respect to loans to be guaranteed by the Secretary under this subsection relating to creditworthiness, the closing, monitoring, collection, and liquidation of loans, and to accept appropriate certifications, as provided in regulations issued by the Secretary, that the borrower is

in compliance with all requirements of law and regulations issued by the Secretary.”.

SEC. 753. SYSTEM FOR DELIVERY OF CERTAIN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 365 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008) is repealed.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—

(1) Section 2375 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6613) is amended—

(A) in subsection (e), by striking “, as defined in section 365(b)(2) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act,”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(g) **DEFINITION OF DESIGNATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.**—In this section, the term ‘designated rural development program’ means a program carried out under section 304(b), 306(a), or 310B(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1924(b), 1926(a), and 1932(e)) for which funds are available at any time during the fiscal year.”.

(2) Paragraph (2) of section 233(b) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6943(b)) (as redesignated by section 747(b)(3)(B)) is amended by striking “sections 365 through 369 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008–2008d)” and inserting “section 369 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008d)”.

SEC. 754. STATE RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PANEL.

Section 366 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008a) is repealed.

SEC. 755. LIMITED TRANSFER AUTHORITY OF LOAN AMOUNTS.

Section 367 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008b) is repealed.

SEC. 756. ALLOCATION AND TRANSFER OF LOAN GUARANTEE AUTHORITY.

Section 368 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008c) is repealed.

SEC. 757. WATER SYSTEMS FOR RURAL AND NATIVE VILLAGES IN ALASKA.

The Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act is amended by inserting after section 306C (7 U.S.C. 1926c) the following:

“SEC. 306D. WATER SYSTEMS FOR RURAL AND NATIVE VILLAGES IN ALASKA. 7 USC 1926d.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may make grants to the State of Alaska for the benefit of rural or Native villages in Alaska to provide for the development and construction of water and wastewater systems to improve the health and sanitation conditions in those villages.

“(b) **MATCHING FUNDS.**—To be eligible to receive a grant under subsection (a), the State of Alaska shall provide equal matching funds from non-Federal sources.

“(c) **CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE OF ALASKA.**—The Secretary shall consult with the State of Alaska on a method of prioritizing

the allocation of grants under subsection (a) according to the needs of, and relative health and sanitation conditions in, each village.

“(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 1996 through 2002.”

SEC. 758. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO WATER AND WASTE DISPOSAL LOAN AND GRANT PROGRAMS.

7 USC 1926.

Section 306(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 926(a)) is amended by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

“(5) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Not earlier than 60 days before a preliminary application is filed for a loan under paragraph (1) or a grant under paragraph (2) for a water or waste disposal purpose, a notice of the intent of the applicant to apply for the loan or grant shall be published in a general circulation newspaper. The selection of engineers for a project design shall be done by a request for proposals by the applicant.”

SEC. 759. NATIONAL SHEEP INDUSTRY IMPROVEMENT CENTER.

The Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (as amended by section 649) is amended by adding at the end the following:

Goats.
7 USC 2008j.

“SEC. 375. NATIONAL SHEEP INDUSTRY IMPROVEMENT CENTER.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) BOARD.—The term ‘Board’ means the Board of Directors established under subsection (f).

“(2) CENTER.—The term ‘Center’ means the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center established under subsection (b).

“(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible entity’ means an entity that promotes the betterment of the United States sheep or goat industries and that is—

“(A) a public, private, or cooperative organization;

“(B) an association, including a corporation not operated for profit;

“(C) a federally recognized Indian Tribe; or

“(D) a public or quasi-public agency.

“(4) FUND.—The term ‘Fund’ means the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center Revolving Fund established under subsection (e).

“(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTER.—The Secretary shall establish a National Sheep Industry Improvement Center.

“(c) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the Center shall be to—

“(1) promote strategic development activities and collaborative efforts by private and State entities to maximize the impact of Federal assistance to strengthen and enhance production and marketing of sheep or goat products in the United States;

“(2) optimize the use of available human capital and resources within the sheep or goat industries;

“(3) provide assistance to meet the needs of the sheep or goat industry for infrastructure development, business development, production, resource development, and market and environmental research;

“(4) advance activities that empower and build the capacity of the United States sheep or goat industry to design unique

responses to the special needs of the sheep or goat industries on both a regional and national basis; and

“(5) adopt flexible and innovative approaches to solving the long-term needs of the United States sheep or goat industry.

“(d) STRATEGIC PLAN.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Center shall submit to the Secretary an annual strategic plan for the delivery of financial assistance provided by the Center.

“(2) REQUIREMENTS.—A strategic plan shall identify—

“(A) goals, methods, and a benchmark for measuring the success of carrying out the plan and how the plan relates to the national and regional goals of the Center;

“(B) the amount and sources of Federal and non-Federal funds that are available for carrying out the plan;

“(C) funding priorities;

“(D) selection criteria for funding; and

“(E) a method of distributing funding.

“(e) REVOLVING FUND.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Treasury the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center Revolving Fund. The Fund shall be available to the Center, without fiscal year limitation, to carry out the authorized programs and activities of the Center under this section.

“(2) CONTENTS OF FUND.—There shall be deposited in the Fund—

“(A) such amounts as may be appropriated, transferred, or otherwise made available to support programs and activities of the Center;

“(B) payments received from any source for products, services, or property furnished in connection with the activities of the Center;

“(C) fees and royalties collected by the Center from licensing or other arrangements relating to commercialization of products developed through projects funded, in whole or part, by grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements executed by the Center;

“(D) proceeds from the sale of assets, loans, and equity interests made in furtherance of the purposes of the Center;

“(E) donations or contributions accepted by the Center to support authorized programs and activities; and

“(F) any other funds acquired by the Center.

“(3) USE OF FUND.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Center may use amounts in the Fund to make grants and loans to eligible entities in accordance with a strategic plan submitted under subsection (d).

“(B) CONTINUED EXISTENCE.—The Center shall manage the Fund in a manner that ensures that sufficient amounts are available in the Fund to carry out subsection (c).

“(C) DIVERSE AREA.—The Center shall, to the maximum extent practicable, use the Fund to serve broad geographic areas and regions of diverse production.

“(D) VARIETY OF LOANS AND GRANTS.—The Center shall, to the maximum extent practicable, use the Fund to provide a variety of grants and intermediate- and long-term loans.

“(E) ADMINISTRATION.—The Center may not use more than 3 percent of the amounts in the Fund for a fiscal year for the administration of the Center.

“(F) INFLUENCING LEGISLATION.—None of the amounts in the Fund may be used to influence legislation.

“(G) ACCOUNTING.—To be eligible to receive amounts from the Fund, an entity must agree to account for the amounts using generally accepted accounting principles.

“(H) USES OF FUND.—The Center may use amounts in the Fund to—

“(i) participate with Federal and State agencies in financing activities that are in accordance with a strategic plan submitted under subsection (d), including participation with several States in a regional effort;

“(ii) participate with other public and private funding sources in financing activities that are in accordance with the strategic plan, including participation in a regional effort;

“(iii) provide security for, or make principal or interest payments on, revenue or general obligation bonds issued by a State, if the proceeds from the sale of the bonds are deposited in the Fund;

“(iv) accrue interest;

“(v) guarantee or purchase insurance for local obligations to improve credit market access or reduce interest rates for a project that is in accordance with the strategic plan; or

“(vi) sell assets, loans, and equity interests acquired in connection with the financing of projects funded by the Center.

“(4) LOANS.—

“(A) RATE.—A loan from the Fund may be made at an interest rate that is below the market rate or may be interest free.

“(B) TERM.—The term of a loan may not exceed the shorter of—

“(i) the useful life of the activity financed; or

“(ii) 40 years.

“(C) SOURCE OF REPAYMENT.—The Center may not make a loan from the Fund unless the recipient establishes an assured source of repayment.

“(D) PROCEEDS.—All payments of principal and interest on a loan made from the Fund shall be deposited into the Fund.

“(5) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—The Center shall use the Fund only to supplement and not to supplant Federal, State, and private funds expended for rural development.

“(6) FUNDING.—

“(A) DEPOSIT OF FUNDS.—All Federal and non-Federal amounts received by the Center to carry out this section shall be deposited in the Fund.

“(B) MANDATORY FUNDS.—Out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the Secretary of the Treasury shall provide to the Center not to exceed \$20,000,000 to carry out this section.

“(C) ADDITIONAL FUNDS.—In addition to any funds provided under subparagraph (B), there is authorized to be appropriated \$30,000,000 to carry out this section.

“(D) PRIVATIZATION.—No additional Federal funds shall be used to carry out this section beginning on the earlier of—

“(i) the date that is 10 years after the date of enactment of this section; or

“(ii) the day after a total of \$50,000,000 has been made available under subparagraphs (B) and (C) to carry out this section.

“(F) BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The management of the Center shall be vested in a Board of Directors.

“(2) POWERS.—The Board shall—

“(A) be responsible for the general supervision of the Center;

“(B) review any grant, loan, contract, or cooperative agreement to be made or entered into by the Center and any financial assistance provided to the Center;

“(C) make the final decision, by majority vote, on whether and how to provide assistance to an applicant; and

“(D) develop and establish a budget plan and a long-term operating plan to carry out the goals of the Center.

“(3) COMPOSITION.—The Board shall be composed of—

“(A) 7 voting members, of whom—

“(i) 4 members shall be active producers of sheep or goats in the United States;

“(ii) 2 members shall have expertise in finance and management; and

“(iii) 1 member shall have expertise in lamb, wool, goat, or goat product marketing; and

“(B) 2 nonvoting members, of whom—

“(i) 1 member shall be the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development; and

“(ii) 1 member shall be the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Research, Education, and Economics.

“(4) NOMINATION.—

“(A) NOMINATING BODY.—The Secretary shall appoint the voting members of the Board from nominations submitted by organizations described in subparagraph (B).

“(B) NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.—A national organization is described in this subparagraph if the organization—

“(i) consists primarily of active sheep or goat producers in the United States; and

“(ii) has as the primary interest of the organization the production of sheep or goats in the United States.

“(5) TERM OF OFFICE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the term of office of a voting member of the Board shall be 3 years.

“(B) STAGGERED INITIAL TERMS.—The initial voting members of the Board (other than the chairperson of the initially established Board) shall serve for staggered terms of 1, 2, and 3 years, as determined by the Secretary.

“(C) REELECTION.—A voting member may be reelected for not more than 1 additional term.

“(6) VACANCY.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—A vacancy on the Board shall be filled in the same manner as the original Board.

“(B) REELECTION.—A member elected to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term may be reelected for 1 full term.

“(7) CHAIRPERSON.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall select a chairperson from among the voting members of the Board.

“(B) TERM.—The term of office of the chairperson shall be 2 years.

“(8) ANNUAL MEETING.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall meet not less than once each fiscal year at the call of the chairperson or at the request of the executive director appointed under subsection (g)(1).

“(B) LOCATION.—The location of a meeting of the Board shall be established by the Board.

“(9) VOTING.—

“(A) QUORUM.—A quorum of the Board shall consist of a majority of the voting members.

“(B) MAJORITY VOTE.—A decision of the Board shall be made by a majority of the voting members of the Board.

“(10) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (D), a member of the Board shall not vote on any matter respecting any application, contract, claim, or other particular matter pending before the Board in which, to the knowledge of the member, an interest is held by—

“(i) the member;

“(ii) any spouse of the member;

“(iii) any child of the member;

“(iv) any partner of the member;

“(v) any organization in which the member is serving as an officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee;

or

“(vi) any person with whom the member is negotiating or has any arrangement concerning prospective employment or with whom the member has a financial interest.

“(B) REMOVAL.—Any action by a member of the Board that violates subparagraph (A) shall be cause for removal from the Board.

“(C) VALIDITY OF ACTION.—An action by a member of the Board that violates subparagraph (A) shall not impair or otherwise affect the validity of any otherwise lawful action by the Board.

“(D) DISCLOSURE.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—If a member of the Board makes a full disclosure of an interest and, prior to any participation by the member, the Board determines, by majority vote, that the interest is too remote or too inconsequential to affect the integrity of any participation by the member, the member may participate in the matter relating to the interest, except as provided in subparagraph (E)(iii).

“(ii) VOTE.—A member that discloses an interest under clause (i) shall not vote on a determination of whether the member may participate in the matter relating to the interest.

“(E) REMANDS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may vacate and remand to the Board for reconsideration any decision made pursuant to subsection (e)(3)(H) if the Secretary determines that there has been a violation of this paragraph or any conflict of interest provision of the bylaws of the Board with respect to the decision.

“(ii) REASONS.—In the case of any violation and remand of a funding decision to the Board under clause (i), the Secretary shall inform the Board of the reasons for the remand.

“(iii) CONFLICTED MEMBERS NOT TO VOTE ON REMANDED DECISIONS.—If a decision with respect to a matter is remanded to the Board by reason of a conflict of interest faced by a Board member, the member may not participate in any subsequent decision with respect to the matter.

“(11) COMPENSATION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—A member of the Board shall not receive any compensation by reason of service on the Board.

“(B) EXPENSES.—A member of the Board shall be reimbursed for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred by the member in the performance of a duty of the member.

“(12) BYLAWS.—The Board shall adopt, and may from time to time amend, any bylaw that is necessary for the proper management and functioning of the Center.

“(13) PUBLIC HEARINGS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Board shall hold public hearings on policy objectives of the program established under this section.

“(14) ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEM.—The Board shall provide a system of organization to fix responsibility and promote efficiency in carrying out the functions of the Board.

“(15) USE OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.—The Board may, with the consent of the Secretary, utilize the facilities of and the services of employees of the Department of Agriculture, without cost to the Center.

“(g) OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES.—

“(1) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall appoint an executive director to be the chief executive officer of the Center.

“(B) TENURE.—The executive director shall serve at the pleasure of the Board.

“(C) COMPENSATION.—Compensation for the executive director shall be established by the Board.

“(2) OTHER OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES.—The Board may select and appoint officers, attorneys, employees, and agents who shall be vested with such powers and duties as the Board may determine.

“(3) DELEGATION.—The Board may, by resolution, delegate to the chairperson, the executive director, or any other officer or employee any function, power, or duty of the Board other

than voting on a grant, loan, contract, agreement, budget, or annual strategic plan.

“(h) CONSULTATION.—To carry out this section, the Board may consult with—

- “(1) State departments of agriculture;
- “(2) Federal departments and agencies;
- “(3) nonprofit development corporations;
- “(4) colleges and universities;
- “(5) banking and other credit-related agencies;
- “(6) agriculture and agribusiness organizations; and
- “(7) regional planning and development organizations.

“(i) OVERSIGHT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall review and monitor compliance by the Board and the Center with this section.

“(2) SANCTIONS.—If, following notice and opportunity for a hearing, the Secretary finds that the Board or the Center is not in compliance with this section, the Secretary may—

- “(A) cease making deposits to the Fund;
- “(B) suspend the authority of the Center to withdraw funds from the Fund; or
- “(C) impose other appropriate sanctions, including recoupment of money improperly expended for purposes prohibited or not authorized by this Act and disqualification from receipt of financial assistance under this section.

“(3) RESCISSION OF SANCTIONS.—The Secretary shall rescind sanctions imposed under paragraph (2) on a finding by the Secretary that there is no longer any failure by the Board or the Center to comply with this section or that the noncompliance will be promptly corrected.”

SEC. 759A. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.

Section 607(b) of the Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 2204b(b)) is amended by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following:

“(4) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding chapter 63 of title 31, United States Code, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and any other organization or individual to improve the coordination and effectiveness of Federal programs, services, and actions affecting rural areas, including the establishment and financing of inter-agency groups, if the Secretary determines that the objectives of the agreement will serve the mutual interest of the parties in rural development activities.

“(B) COOPERATORS.—Each cooperator, including each Federal agency, to the extent that funds are otherwise available, may participate in any cooperative agreement or working group established pursuant to this paragraph by contributing funds or other resources to the Secretary to carry out the agreement or functions of the group.”

SEC. 759B. ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANTS TO BROADCASTING SYSTEMS.

Section 310B(f) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(f)) (as redesignated by section 747(a)(6)) is amended by striking “SYSTEMS.—The” and inserting “SYSTEMS.—

“(1) DEFINITION OF STATEWIDE.—In this subsection, the term ‘statewide’ means having a coverage area of not less

than 90 percent of the population of a State and not less than 80 percent of the rural land area of the State (as determined by the Secretary).

“(2) GRANTS.—The”.

CHAPTER 2—RURAL COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

SEC. 761. RURAL COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM.

The Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“Subtitle E—Rural Community Advancement Program

“SEC. 381A. DEFINITIONS.

7 USC 2009.

“In this subtitle:

“(1) RURAL AND RURAL AREA.—The terms ‘rural’ and ‘rural area’ mean, subject to section 306(a)(7), a city, town, or unincorporated area that has a population of 50,000 inhabitants or less, other than an urbanized area immediately adjacent to a city, town, or unincorporated area that has a population in excess of 50,000 inhabitants.

“(2) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

“(3) STATE DIRECTOR.—The term ‘State director’ means, with respect to a State, the Director of the Rural Economic and Community Development State Office.

“SEC. 381B. ESTABLISHMENT.

7 USC 2009a.

“The Secretary shall establish a rural community advancement program to provide grants, loans, loan guarantees, and other assistance to meet the rural development needs of local communities in States and federally recognized Indian tribes.

“SEC. 381C. NATIONAL OBJECTIVES.

7 USC 2009b.

“The national objectives of the program established under this subtitle shall be to—

“(1) promote strategic development activities and collaborative efforts by State and local communities, and federally recognized Indian tribes, to maximize the impact of Federal assistance;

“(2) optimize the use of resources;

“(3) provide assistance in a manner that reflects the complexity of rural needs, including the needs for business development, health care, education, infrastructure, cultural resources, the environment, and housing;

“(4) advance activities that empower, and build the capacity of, State and local communities to design unique responses to the special needs of the State and local communities, and federally recognized Indian tribes, for rural development assistance; and

“(5) adopt flexible and innovative approaches to solving rural development problems.

7 USC 2009c.

“SEC. 381D. STRATEGIC PLANS.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall direct each of the Directors of Rural Economic and Community Development State Offices to prepare a strategic plan—

“(1) for each State for the delivery of assistance under this subtitle in the State; and

“(2) for each federally recognized Indian tribe for the delivery of assistance under this subtitle to the Indian tribe.

“(b) ASSISTANCE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Financial assistance for rural development provided under this subtitle for a State or a federally recognized Indian tribe shall be used only for orderly community development that is consistent with the strategic plan of the State or Indian tribe.

“(2) RURAL AREA.—Assistance under this subtitle may only be provided in a rural area.

“(3) SMALL COMMUNITIES.—In carrying out this subtitle in a State, the Secretary shall give priority to communities with the smallest populations and lowest per capita income.

“(c) REVIEW.—The Secretary shall review the strategic plan of each State and federally recognized Indian tribe not later than 60 days after receiving the plan, and at least once every 5 years thereafter.

“(d) CONTENTS.—A strategic plan of a State or federally recognized Indian tribe under this section shall be a plan that—

“(1) coordinates economic, human, and community development plans and related activities proposed for an affected area;

“(2) provides that the State or federally recognized Indian tribe, as appropriate, and an affected community (including local institutions and organizations that have contributed to the planning process) shall act as full partners in the process of developing and implementing the plan;

“(3) identifies goals, methods, and benchmarks for measuring the success of carrying out the plan and how the plan relates to local or regional ecosystems;

“(4) in the case of a State, provides for the involvement, in the preparation of the plan, of State, local, private, and public persons, State rural development councils, federally recognized Indian tribes in the State, and community-based organizations;

“(5) identifies the amount and source of Federal and non-Federal resources that are available for carrying out the plan; and

“(6) includes such other information as may be required by the Secretary.

7 USC 2009d.

“SEC. 381E. RURAL DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND.

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a trust fund which shall be known as the Rural Development Trust Fund (in this subtitle referred to as the ‘Trust Fund’).

“(b) ACCOUNTS.—There are established in the Trust Fund the following accounts:

“(1) The rural community facilities account.

“(2) The rural utilities account.

“(3) The rural business and cooperative development account.

“(4) The national reserve account.

“(5) The federally recognized Indian tribe account.

“(c) DEPOSITS INTO ACCOUNTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, each fiscal year—

“(1) all amounts made available to carry out the authorities described in subsection (d)(1) for the fiscal year shall be deposited into the rural community facilities account of the Trust Fund;

“(2) all amounts made available to carry out the authorities described in subsection (d)(2) for the fiscal year shall be deposited into the rural utilities account of the Trust Fund; and

“(3) all amounts made available to carry out the authorities described in subsection (d)(3) for the fiscal year shall be deposited into the rural business and cooperative development account of the Trust Fund.

“(d) FUNCTION CATEGORIES.—The function categories described in this subsection are the following:

“(1) RURAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES.—The rural community development category consists of all amounts made available for—

“(A) community facility direct and guaranteed loans under section 306(a)(1); or

“(B) community facility grants under section 306(a)(19).

“(2) RURAL UTILITIES.—The rural utilities category consists of all amounts made available for—

“(A) water or waste disposal grants or direct or guaranteed loans under paragraph (1) or (2) of section 306(a);

“(B) rural water or wastewater technical assistance and training grants under section 306(a)(14);

“(C) emergency community water assistance grants under section 306A; or

“(D) solid waste management grants under section 310B(b).

“(3) RURAL BUSINESS AND COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT.—The rural business and cooperative development category consists of all amounts made available for—

“(A) rural business opportunity grants under section 306(a)(11)(A);

“(B) business and industry guaranteed loans under section 310B(a)(1); or

“(C) rural business enterprise grants or rural educational network grants under section 310B(c).

“(e) NATIONAL RESERVE ACCOUNT.—

“(1) TRANSFERS INTO ACCOUNT.—

“(A) INITIAL TRANSFER.—Each fiscal year, the Secretary shall transfer to the national reserve account of the Trust Fund from each account specified in subsection (c) not more than the applicable percentage of the amount deposited in each such account for the fiscal year under subsection (c).

“(B) REPOOLING OF UNOBLIGATED FUNDS ALLOCATED AMONG THE STATES.—Not earlier than July 15 of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall transfer to the national reserve account from each account specified in subsection (c) any amount in the account that is allocated for any

State, and has not been obligated by the State director or obligated for specific approved projects in the State.

“(2) USE.—The Secretary may use amounts in the national reserve account of the Trust Fund, pursuant to any authority described in subsection (d)—

“(A) in the case of a fiscal year other than fiscal year 2001 or 2002—

“(i) to meet situations of exceptional need;

“(ii) to meet emergency situations; or

“(iii) to provide funds to entities whose applications for funds provided under this subtitle have been approved and who have not received funds sufficient to meet the needs of the projects described in the applications; or

“(B) in the case of fiscal years 2001 and 2002—

“(i) to meet situations of exceptional need; or

“(ii) to meet emergency situations.

“(3) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE DEFINED.—In paragraph (1), the term ‘applicable percentage’ means, with respect to a fiscal year—

“(A) 15 percent for fiscal year 1997;

“(B) 12.5 percent for fiscal year 1998;

“(C) 10 percent for fiscal year 1999;

“(D) 7.5 percent for fiscal year 2000;

“(E) 5 percent for fiscal year 2001; and

“(F) 5 percent for fiscal year 2002.

“(f) FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED INDIAN TRIBE ACCOUNT.—

“(1) TRANSFERS INTO ACCOUNT.—Each fiscal year, the Secretary shall transfer to the federally recognized Indian tribe account of the Trust Fund 3 percent of the amount deposited into the Trust Fund for the fiscal year under subsection (d).

“(2) USE OF FUNDS.—The Secretary shall make available to federally recognized Indian tribes the amounts in the federally recognized Indian tribe account for use pursuant to any authority described in subsection (d).

“(g) ALLOCATION AMONG STATES.—The Secretary shall allocate the amounts in each account specified in subsection (c) among the States in a fair, reasonable, and appropriate manner that takes into consideration rural population, levels of income, unemployment, and other relevant factors, as determined by the Secretary.

“(h) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR STATES.—The Secretary shall make available to each State the total amount allocated for the State under subsection (g) of this section that remains after applying section 381G.

7 USC 2009e.

“SEC. 381F. TRANSFERS OF FUNDS.

“(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—Subject to subsection (b) of this section, the State Director of any State may, during any fiscal year, transfer from each account specified in section 381E(c) a total of not more than 25 percent of the amount in the account that is allocated for the State for the fiscal year to any other account in which amounts are allocated for the State for the fiscal year.

“(b) LIMITATION.—Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, a transfer otherwise authorized by subsection (a) of this section to be made during a fiscal year may not be made to the extent that the sum of the amount to be transferred and all amounts

so transferred by State directors under subsection (a) of this section during the fiscal year exceeds 10 percent of the total amount made available to carry out the authorities described in section 381E(d) for the fiscal year.

“(c) EXCEPTIONS.—Subsections (a) and (b) shall not apply to a transfer of funds by a State director if the State director certifies to the Secretary that—

“(1) there is an approved application for a project in the function category to which the funds are to be transferred but funds are not available for the project in the function category; and

“(2)(A) there is no such approved application in the function category from which the funds are to be transferred; or

“(B) the community that would benefit from the project has a smaller population and a lesser per capita income than any community that would benefit from a project in the function category from which the funds are to be transferred.

“SEC. 381G. GRANTS TO STATES.

7 USC 2009f.

“(a) SIMPLE GRANTS.—

“(1) MANDATORY GRANT.—The Secretary shall make a grant to any eligible State for any fiscal year for which the State requests a grant under this section in an amount equal to 5 percent of the total amount allocated for the State under section 381E(g).

“(2) PERMISSIVE GRANT.—Before July 15 of each fiscal year, the Secretary may make a grant to any State to defray the cost of any subsidy associated with a guarantee provided by an eligible public entity of the State under section 381H in an amount that does not exceed 5 percent of the total amount allocated for the State under section 381E(g).

“(3) SOURCE OF FUNDS.—The Secretary shall make grants to a State under paragraphs (1) and (2) from amounts allocated for the State in the accounts specified in section 381E(c), by reducing each such allocated amount by the same percentage.

“(b) MATCHING GRANTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary shall make a grant to any eligible State for any fiscal year for which the State requests a grant under this section in an amount equal to 5 percent of the amount allocated for the State for the fiscal year under section 381E(h).

“(2) ELIGIBILITY.—A State shall be eligible for a grant under paragraph (1) if the State makes commitments to the Secretary to—

“(A) expend from non-Federal sources in accordance with subsection (c) an amount that is not less than 200 percent of the amount of the grant; and

“(B) maintain the amounts paid to the State under this subsection and the amount referred to in subparagraph (A) in an account separate from all other State funds until expended in accordance with subsection (c).

“(3) SOURCE OF FUNDS.—If the Secretary makes a grant under paragraph (1) before July 15 of the fiscal year, the grant shall be made from amounts allocated for the State in the accounts specified in section 381E(c) for the fiscal year, by reducing each allocated amount by the same percentage.

“(c) USE OF FUNDS.—A State to which funds are provided under this section shall use the funds in rural areas for any activity authorized under the authorities described in section 381E(d) in accordance with the State strategic plan referred to in section 381D.

“(d) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—The State shall provide assurances to the Secretary that funds provided to the State under this section will be used only to supplement, not to supplant, the amount of Federal, State, and local funds otherwise expended for rural development assistance in the State.

“(e) APPEALS.—The Secretary shall provide to a State an opportunity to appeal any action taken with respect to the State under this section.

“(f) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Federal funds shall not be used for any administrative costs incurred by a State in carrying out this subtitle.

“(g) EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS BY STATE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Payments to a State from a grant under this section for a fiscal year shall be obligated by the State in the fiscal year or in the succeeding fiscal year. A State shall obligate funds under this section to provide assistance to rural areas.

“(2) FAILURE TO OBLIGATE.—If a State fails to obligate payments in accordance with paragraph (1), the Secretary shall make an equal reduction in the amount of payments provided to the State under this section for the immediately succeeding fiscal year.

“(3) NONCOMPLIANCE.—

“(A) REVIEW.—The Secretary shall review and monitor State compliance with this section.

“(B) PENALTY.—If the Secretary finds that there has been misuse of grant funds provided under this section, or noncompliance with any of the terms and conditions of a grant, after reasonable notice and opportunity for a hearing—

“(i) the Secretary shall notify the State of the finding; and

“(ii) no further payments to the State shall be made with respect to the programs funded under this section until the Secretary is satisfied that there is no longer any failure to comply or that the noncompliance will be promptly corrected.

“(C) OTHER SANCTIONS.—In the case of a finding of noncompliance made pursuant to subparagraph (B), the Secretary may, in addition to, or in lieu of, imposing the sanctions described in subparagraph (B), impose other appropriate sanctions, including recoupment of money improperly expended for purposes prohibited or not authorized by this section and disqualification from the receipt of financial assistance under this section.

“(h) NO ENTITLEMENT TO CONTRACT, GRANT, OR ASSISTANCE.—Nothing in this subtitle—

“(1) entitles any person to assistance or a contract or grant;

or

“(2) limits the right of a State to impose additional limitations or conditions on assistance or a contract or grant under this section.

“SEC. 381H. GUARANTEE AND COMMITMENT TO GUARANTEE LOANS. 7 USC 2009g.

“(a) **DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE PUBLIC ENTITY.**—In this section, the term ‘eligible public entity’ means any unit of general local government.

“(b) **GUARANTEE AND COMMITMENT.**—The Secretary, on such terms and conditions as the Secretary may prescribe, may guarantee and make commitments to guarantee notes or other obligations issued by eligible public entities, or by public agencies designated by the eligible public entities, for the purposes of financing rural development activities authorized and funded under section 381G.

“(c) **LIMITATION.**—The Secretary may not make a guarantee or commitment to guarantee with respect to a note or other obligation if the total amount of outstanding notes or obligations guaranteed under this section (excluding any amount repaid under the contract entered into under subsection (e)(1)(A)) for issuers in the State would exceed an amount equal to 5 times the sum of the total amount of grants made to the State under section 381G.

“(d) **PAYMENT OF PRINCIPAL, INTEREST, AND COSTS.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of this subtitle, a State to which a grant is made under section 381G may use the grant (including program income derived from the grant) to pay principal and interest due (including such servicing, underwriting, or other costs as may be specified in regulations of the Secretary) on any note or other obligation guaranteed under this section.

“(e) **REPAYMENT CONTRACT; SECURITY.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—To ensure the repayment of notes or other obligations and charges incurred under this section and as a condition for receiving the guarantees, the Secretary shall require the issuer to—

“(A) enter into a contract, in a form acceptable to the Secretary, for repayment of notes or other obligations guaranteed under this section;

“(B) pledge any grant for which the issuer may become eligible under this subtitle; and

“(C) furnish, at the discretion of the Secretary, such other security as may be considered appropriate by the Secretary in making the guarantees.

“(2) **SECURITY.**—To assist in ensuring the repayment of notes or other obligations and charges incurred under this section, a State shall pledge any grant for which the State may become eligible under this subtitle as security for notes or other obligations and charges issued under this section by any eligible public entity in the State.

“(f) **PLEGGED GRANTS FOR REPAYMENTS.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of this subtitle, the Secretary may apply grants pledged pursuant to paragraphs (1)(B) and (2) of subsection (e) to any repayments due the United States as a result of the guarantees.

“(g) **OUTSTANDING OBLIGATIONS.**—The total amount of outstanding obligations guaranteed on a cumulative basis by the Secretary pursuant to subsection (b) shall not at any time exceed such amount as may be authorized to be appropriated for such purpose for any fiscal year.

“(h) **PURCHASE OF GUARANTEED OBLIGATIONS BY FEDERAL FINANCING BANK.**—Notes or other obligations guaranteed under this section may not be purchased by the Federal Financing Bank.

“(i) **FULL FAITH AND CREDIT.**—The full faith and credit of the United States is pledged to the payment of all guarantees made under this section. Any such guarantee made by the Secretary shall be conclusive evidence of the eligibility of the obligations for the guarantee with respect to principal and interest. The validity of the guarantee shall be incontestable in the hands of a holder of the guaranteed obligations.

7 USC 2009h.

“SEC. 381I. LOCAL INVOLVEMENT.

“An application for assistance under this subtitle shall include evidence of significant community support for the project for which the assistance is requested. In the case of assistance for a community facilities or infrastructure project, the evidence shall be in the form of a certification of support for the project from each affected general purpose local government.

7 USC 2009i.

“SEC. 381J. INTERSTATE COLLABORATION.

“The Secretary shall permit the establishment of voluntary pooling arrangements among States, and regional fund-sharing agreements, to carry out projects receiving assistance under this subtitle.

7 USC 2009j.

“SEC. 381K. ANNUAL REPORT.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, in collaboration with State, local, public, and private entities, State rural development councils, and community-based organizations, shall prepare an annual report that contains evaluations, assessments, and performance outcomes concerning the rural community advancement programs carried out under this subtitle.

“(b) **SUBMISSION.**—Not later than March 1 of each year, the Secretary shall—

“(1) submit the report required by subsection (a) to Congress and the chief executives of the States participating in the program established under this subtitle; and

“(2) make the report available to State and local participants.

7 USC 2009k.

“SEC. 381L. RURAL DEVELOPMENT INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall provide leadership within the Executive branch for, and assume responsibility for, establishing an interagency working group chaired by the Secretary.

“(b) **DUTIES.**—The working group shall establish policy for, coordinate, make recommendations with respect to, and evaluate the performance of, all Federal rural development efforts.

7 USC 2009l.

“SEC. 381M. DUTIES OF RURAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STATE OFFICES.

“In carrying out this subtitle, the Director of a Rural Economic and Community Development State Office shall—

“(1) to the maximum extent practicable, ensure that the State strategic plan referred to in section 381D is implemented;

“(2) coordinate community development objectives within the State;

“(3) establish links between local, State, and field office program administrators of the Department of Agriculture;

“(4) ensure that recipient communities comply with applicable Federal and State laws and requirements; and

“(5) integrate State development programs with assistance under this subtitle.

“SEC. 381N. ELECTRONIC TRANSFER.

7 USC 2009m.

“The Secretary shall transfer funds in accordance with this subtitle through electronic transfer as soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this subtitle.

“SEC. 381O. RURAL VENTURE CAPITAL DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

7 USC 2009n.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may designate for each fiscal year up to 10 community development venture capital organizations to demonstrate the utility of guarantees to attract increased private investment in rural private business enterprises.

“(b) RURAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT POOL.—

“(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—To be eligible to participate in the demonstration program, an organization referred to in subsection (a) shall establish a rural business private investment pool (referred to in this subsection as a ‘pool’) for the purpose of making equity investments in rural private business enterprises.

“(2) **GUARANTEE.**—From amounts in the national reserve account of the Trust Fund, the Secretary shall guarantee the funds in a pool against loss, except that the guarantee shall not exceed an amount equal to 30 percent of the total funds in the pool.

“(3) **AMOUNT.**—The Secretary shall issue guarantees covering not more than \$15,000,000 of contingent liabilities for each of fiscal years 1996 through 2002.

“(4) **TERM.**—The term of a guarantee provided under this subsection shall not exceed 10 years.

“(5) **SUBMISSION OF PLAN.**—To be eligible to participate in the demonstration program, an organization referred to in subsection (a) shall submit a plan that describes—

“(A) potential sources and uses of the pool to be established by the organization;

“(B) the utility of the guarantee authority in attracting capital for the pool; and

“(C) on selection, mechanisms for notifying State, local, and private nonprofit business development organizations and businesses of the existence of the pool.

“(6) COMPETITION.—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall conduct a competition for the designation and establishment of pools.

“(B) **PRIORITY.**—In conducting the competition, the Secretary shall give priority to organizations that—

“(i) have a demonstrated record of performance, or have a board and executive director with experience, in venture capital, small business equity investment, or community development finance;

“(ii) propose to serve low-income communities;

“(iii) propose to maintain an average investment of not more than \$500,000 from the pool of the organization;

“(iv) invest funds statewide or in a multicounty region; and

“(v) propose to target job opportunities resulting from the investments primarily to economically dis-

advantaged individuals, as determined by the Secretary.

“(C) GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY.—To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall designate organizations in diverse geographic areas.”.

7 USC 2204b
note.

SEC. 762. SIMPLIFIED, UNIFORM APPLICATION FOR ASSISTANCE FROM ALL FEDERAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall develop a streamlined, simplified, and uniform application which shall be used in applying for assistance under all of the following:

(1) Sections 304(b), 306, 306A, 306C, 306D, 310B, and 375 and subtitle E of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1924(b), 1926, 1926a, 1926c, 1926d, and 1932).

(2) Subtitle G of title XVI and sections 2281, 2333, and 2381 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5901-5908, 5177a, 950aaa-2, and 3125b).

(3) Subtitle C of title IX of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act Amendments of 1991 (Public Law 102-237: 7 U.S.C. 5930 note).

(4) Section 1323(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-198; 7 U.S.C. 1932 note).

(5) Title V and section 603(c) of the Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 2661-2669 and 2204a(c)).

(6) Sections 5 and 311 and title IV of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 905, 940a, and 941-950b).

SEC. 763. COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANT PROGRAM.

Section 306(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)) (as amended by section 741(a)(5)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(19) COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANT PROGRAM.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make grants, in a total amount not to exceed \$10,000,000 for any fiscal year, to associations, units of general local government, nonprofit corporations, and federally recognized Indian tribes to provide the Federal share of the cost of developing specific essential community facilities in rural areas.

“(B) FEDERAL SHARE.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clauses (ii) and (iii), the Secretary shall, by regulation, establish the amount of the Federal share of the cost of the facility under this paragraph.

“(ii) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant provided under this paragraph for a facility shall not exceed 75 percent of the cost of developing the facility.

“(iii) GRADUATED SCALE.—The Secretary shall provide for a graduated scale for the amount of the Federal share provided under this paragraph, with higher Federal shares for facilities in communities that have lower community population and income levels, as determined by the Secretary.”.

Subtitle C—Amendments to the Rural Electrification Act of 1936

SEC. 771. PURPOSES; INVESTIGATIONS AND REPORTS.

Section 2 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 902) is amended—

(1) by striking “SEC. 2. (a) The Secretary of Agriculture is” and inserting the following:

“SEC. 2. GENERAL AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE.

“(a) LOANS.—The Secretary of Agriculture (referred to in this Act as the ‘Secretary’) is”;

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking “and the furnishing” the first place it appears and all that follows through “central station service”; and

(B) by striking “systems; to make” and all that follows and inserting “systems.”; and

(3) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

“(b) INVESTIGATIONS AND REPORTS.—The Secretary may make, or cause to be made, studies, investigations, and reports regarding matters, including financial, technological, and regulatory matters, affecting the condition and progress of electric, telecommunications, and economic development in rural areas, and publish and disseminate information with respect to the matters.”

SEC. 772. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 903) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

“There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.”

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 301(a) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 931(a)) is amended—

(A) by striking “(a)” the first place the term appears; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking “notwithstanding section 3(a) of title I.”

(2) Section 302(b)(2) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 932(b)(2)) is amended by striking “pursuant to section 3(a) of this Act”.

(3) The last sentence of section 406(a) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 946(a)) is amended by striking “pursuant to section 3(a) of this Act”.

SEC. 773. LOANS FOR ELECTRICAL PLANTS AND TRANSMISSION LINES.

Section 4 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 904) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence—

(A) by striking “for the furnishing of” and all that follows through “central station service and”; and

(B) by striking “the provisions of sections 3(d) and 3(e) but without regard to the 25 per centum limitation therein contained,” and inserting “section 3.”;

(2) in the second sentence, by striking “: *Provided further, That all*” and all that follows through “loan: *And provided further, That*” and inserting “; except that”; and
 (3) in the third sentence, by striking “and section 5”.

SEC. 774. LOANS FOR ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING EQUIPMENT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 5 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 905) is repealed.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 12(a) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 912(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking “: *Provided, however, That*” and inserting “; except that,”; and

(2) by striking “, and with respect to any loan made under section 5,” and all that follows through “section 3”.

SEC. 775. TESTIMONY ON BUDGET REQUESTS.

Section 6 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 906) is amended by striking the second sentence.

SEC. 776. TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS OF ADMINISTRATION CREATED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER.

Section 8 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 908) is repealed.

SEC. 777. ANNUAL REPORT.

Section 10 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 910) is repealed.

SEC. 778. PROHIBITION ON RESTRICTING WATER AND WASTE FACILITY SERVICES TO ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS.

The Rural Electrification Act of 1936 is amended by inserting after section 16 (7 U.S.C. 916) the following:

7 USC 917.

“SEC. 17. PROHIBITION ON RESTRICTING WATER AND WASTE FACILITY SERVICES TO ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS.

“(a) **PROHIBITION.**—Assistance under any rural development program administered by the Secretary or any agency of the Department of Agriculture shall not be conditioned on any requirement that the recipient of the assistance accept or receive electric service from any particular utility, supplier, or cooperative.

Regulations.

“(b) **ENSURING COMPLIANCE.**—The Secretary shall establish, by regulation, adequate safeguards to ensure that assistance under any rural development program is not subject to such a condition. The safeguards shall include periodic certifications and audits, and appropriate measures and sanctions against any person violating, or attempting to violate subsection (a).

“(c) **DEFINITION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.**—In this section, the term ‘rural development program’ means the following:

“(1) Sections 304(b), 306, 306A, 306C, 306D, 310B, and 375 and subtitle E of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1924(b), 1926, 1926a, 1926c, 1926d, and 1932).

“(2) Subtitle G of title XVI and sections 2281, 2333, and 2381 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5901–5908, 5177a, 950aaa–2, and 3125b).

“(3) Subtitle C of title IX of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act Amendments of 1991 (Public Law 102–237; 7 U.S.C. 5930 note).

“(4) Section 1323(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-198; 7 U.S.C. 1932 note).

“(5) Title V and section 603(c) of the Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 2661-2669 and 2204a(c)).

“(6) Sections 5 and 311 and title IV of this Act (7 U.S.C. 905, 940a, and 941-950b).

“(d) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, the Secretary shall issue final regulations to ensure compliance with subsection (a).”

SEC. 779. TELEPHONE LOAN TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

Section 309 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 939) is amended—

- (1) in subsection (a), by striking “(a) IN GENERAL.—”; and
- (2) by striking subsection (b).

SEC. 780. PRIVATIZATION PROGRAM.

Section 311 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 940a) is repealed.

SEC. 781. RURAL BUSINESS INCUBATOR FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 502 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950aa-1) is repealed.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 501 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950aa) is amended—

- (1) in paragraph (5), by inserting “and” at the end;
- (2) in paragraph (6), by striking “; and” at the end and inserting a period; and
- (3) by striking paragraph (7).

Subtitle D—Miscellaneous Rural Development Provisions

SEC. 791. INTEREST RATE FORMULA.

(a) BANKHEAD-JONES FARM TENANT ACT.—Section 32(e) of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act (7 U.S.C. 1011) is amended by striking the fifth sentence and inserting the following: “A loan under this subsection shall be made under a contract that provides, under such terms and conditions as the Secretary considers appropriate, for the repayment of the loan in not more than 30 years, with interest at a rate not to exceed the current market yield for outstanding municipal obligations with remaining periods to maturity comparable to the average maturity for the loan, adjusted to the nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ of 1 percent.”

(b) WATERSHED PROTECTION AND FLOOD PREVENTION ACT.—Section 8 of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (16 U.S.C. 1006a) is amended by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: “A loan or advance under this section shall be made under a contract or agreement that provides, under such terms and conditions as the Secretary considers appropriate, for the repayment of the loan or advance in not more than 50 years from the date when the principal benefits of the works of improvement first become available, with interest at a rate not to exceed the current market yield for outstanding municipal obliga-

tions with remaining periods to maturity comparable to the average maturity for the loan, adjusted to the nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ of 1 percent.”.

SEC. 792. GRANTS FOR FINANCIALLY STRESSED FARMERS, DIS-LOCATED FARMERS, AND RURAL FAMILIES.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 502 of the Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 2662) is amended by striking subsection (f).

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—

(1) Section 2389 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-624; 7 U.S.C. 2662 note) is amended by striking subsection (d).

(2) Section 503(c) of the Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 2663(c)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “(1)”;

(ii) by striking “section 502(e)” and all that follows through “shall be distributed” and inserting “subsections (e), (h), and (i) of section 502 shall be distributed”; and

(iii) by striking “objectives of” and all that follows through “title” and inserting “objectives of subsections (e), (h), and (i) of section 502”; and

(B) by striking paragraph (2).

7 USC 2204f.

SEC. 793. FUND FOR RURAL AMERICA.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—There is established in the Treasury of the United States an account to be known as the Fund for Rural America (referred to in this section as the “Account”) to provide funds for activities described in subsection (c).

(b) **FUNDING.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—On January 1, 1997, October 1, 1998, and October 1, 1999, out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the Secretary of the Treasury shall transfer \$100,000,000 to the Account.

(2) **ENTITLEMENT.**—The Secretary of Agriculture (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”)—

(A) shall be entitled to receive the funds transferred to the Account under paragraph (1);

(B) shall accept the funds; and

(C) shall use the funds to carry out this section.

(3) **PURPOSES.**—Subject to subsection (d), of the amounts transferred to the Account for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall make available—

(A) for activities described in subsection (c)(1), not less than $\frac{1}{3}$ and not more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the funds in the Account; and

(B) for activities described in subsection (c)(2), all funds in the Account not made available by the Secretary for activities described in subsection (c)(1).

(c) **ACTIVITIES.**—

(1) **RURAL DEVELOPMENT.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may use the funds in the Account for a rural development activity—

(i) authorized under the Housing Act of 1949 for—

(I) direct loans to low-income borrowers under section 502 (42 U.S.C. 1472);

(II) loans for financial assistance for housing for domestic farm laborers under section 514 (42 U.S.C. 1484);

(III) financial assistance for housing for domestic farm laborers under section 516 (42 U.S.C. 1486);

(IV) payments for elderly who are not now receiving rental assistance under section 521 (42 U.S.C. 1490a);

(V) grants and contracts for mutual and self-help housing under section 523(b)(1)(A) (42 U.S.C. 1490c(b)(1)(A)); or

(VI) grants for rural housing preservation under section 533 (42 U.S.C. 1490m); or

(ii) conducted under any rural development program, including a program authorized under—

(I) the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq.);

(II) subtitle G of title XVI and title XXIII of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990;

(III) title V of the Rural Development Act of 1971 (7 U.S.C. 2661 et seq.); or

(IV) section 1323(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-198; 7 U.S.C. 1932 note).

(B) LIMITATION ON PROGRAMS FUNDED.—The Secretary may not expend funds made available to carry out activities described in subparagraph (A) for any activity that did not receive appropriations for fiscal year 1995. Funds expended under this section for any program purpose shall be spent in accordance with and subject to the applicable program limitations, restrictions, and priorities found in the underlying program authority and this Act.

(C) LIMITATION ON HOUSING ASSISTANCE.—Not more than 20 percent of the funds made available to carry out activities described in subparagraph (A) shall be made available to carry out activities described in subparagraph (A)(i).

(D) DISCLOSURE OF ALLOCATION.—For any fiscal year, the Secretary shall not disclose the allocation of funds under this section for any activity described in subparagraph (A) until the date that is 1 day after the date of enactment of legislation authorizing appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for any period in the fiscal year.

(2) RESEARCH.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may use the funds in the Account for research, extension, and education grants to—

(i) increase international competitiveness, efficiency, and farm profitability;

(ii) reduce economic and health risks;

(iii) conserve and enhance natural resources;

(iv) develop new crops, new crop uses, and new agricultural applications of biotechnology;

(v) enhance animal agricultural resources;

(vi) preserve plant and animal germplasm;

(vii) increase economic opportunities in farming and rural communities; and
(viii) expand locally-owned value-added processing.

(B) ELIGIBLE GRANTEE.—The Secretary may make a grant under this paragraph to—

(i) a Federal research agency;
(ii) a national laboratory;
(iii) a college or university or a research foundation maintained by a college or university; or
(iv) a private research organization with an established and demonstrated capacity to perform research or technology transfer.

(C) USE OF GRANT.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—A grant made under this paragraph may be used by a grantee for 1 or more of the following uses:

(I) Outcome-oriented research at the discovery end of the spectrum to provide breakthrough results.

(II) Exploratory and advanced development and technology with well-identified outcomes.

(III) A national, regional, or multi-State program oriented primarily toward extension programs and education programs demonstrating and supporting the competitiveness of United States agriculture.

(ii) SMALLER INSTITUTIONS.—Of the amounts made available for activities described in this paragraph, not less than 15 percent shall be awarded to colleges, universities, or research foundations eligible for a grant under subparagraph (B)(iii) that rank in the lowest 1/3 of such colleges, universities, and foundations on the basis of Federal research funds received under a provision of law other than this section.

(D) ADMINISTRATION.—

(i) PRIORITY.—In administering this paragraph, the Secretary shall—

(I) establish criteria for allocating grants based on the priorities in subparagraph (A) and in consultation with the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board established under section 1408 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3123);

(II) seek and accept proposals for grants;

(III) determine the relevance and merit of proposals through a system of peer review and review by the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board; and

(IV) award grants on the basis of merit, quality, and relevance to advancing the purposes of federally supported agricultural research, extension, and education provided in section 1402 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3101).

(ii) **COMPETITIVE BASIS.**—A grant under this paragraph shall be awarded on a competitive basis.

(iii) **TERMS.**—A grant under this paragraph shall have a term that does not exceed 5 years.

(iv) **MATCHING FUNDS.**—As a condition of making a grant under this paragraph, the Secretary shall require the funding of the grant with equal matching funds from a non-Federal source if the grant is—

(I) for applied research that is commodity-specific; and

(II) not of national scope.

(v) **DELEGATION.**—The Secretary shall administer this section through the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture.

(vi) **AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.**—Funds shall be available for obligation under this paragraph for a 2-year period.

(vii) **ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.**—The Secretary may use not more than 4 percent of the funds made available for activities described in this paragraph for administrative costs incurred by the Secretary in carrying out this paragraph.

(viii) **BUILDINGS.**—Funds made available for activities described in this paragraph shall not be used for the construction of a new building or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing building (including site grading and improvement and architect fees).

(d) **LIMITATIONS.**—Amounts in the Account may not be used for an activity described in subsection (c) for a fiscal year if the program funding level for the fiscal year for the activity is less than 90 percent of the amount appropriated for the activity for fiscal year 1996, adjusted for inflation.

SEC. 794. UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR RURAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RENAMED THE UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 231 of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6941) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking “**ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY**”; and

(2) by striking “Economic and Community” each place such term appears in subsections (a), (b), and (c).

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**—Section 5314 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking “Economic and Community”.

Subtitle C—Emergency Loans

SEC. 621. HAZARD INSURANCE REQUIREMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 321 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1961) is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

“(b) HAZARD INSURANCE REQUIREMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—After the Secretary makes the determination required by paragraph (2), the Secretary may not make a loan to a farmer or rancher under this subtitle to cover a property loss unless the farmer or rancher had hazard insurance that insured the property at the time of the loss.

“(2) DETERMINATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Secretary shall determine the appropriate level of insurance to be required under paragraph (1).”

(b) TRANSITIONAL PROVISION.—Section 321(b)(1) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act shall not apply until the Secretary of Agriculture makes the determination required by section 321(b)(2) of the Act.

7 USC 1961 note.

SEC. 622. NARROWING OF AUTHORITY TO WAIVE APPLICATION OF THE CREDIT ELSEWHERE TEST.

The second proviso of section 322(b) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1962(b)) is amended by striking “\$300,000 or less” and inserting “\$100,000 or less”.

SEC. 623. LINKING OF EMERGENCY LOANS FOR CROP OR LIVESTOCK CHANGES TO NATURAL DISASTERS.

Section 323 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1963) is amended by inserting “that are necessitated by a natural disaster, major disaster, or emergency and that are” after “livestock changes”.

SEC. 624. MAXIMUM EMERGENCY LOAN INDEBTEDNESS.

Section 324 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1964) is amended by striking “SEC. 324. (a) No loan” and all that follows through the end of subsection (a) and inserting the following:

“SEC. 324. TERMS OF LOANS.

“(a) MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF LOAN.—The Secretary may not make a loan under this subtitle to a borrower who has suffered a loss in an amount that—

“(1) exceeds the actual loss caused by a disaster; or

“(2) would cause the total indebtedness of the borrower under this subtitle to exceed \$500,000.”

SEC. 625. ESTABLISHMENT OF DATE FOR EMERGENCY LOAN ASSET VALUATION.

The last sentence of section 324(d) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1964(d)) is amended by striking “value the assets” and all that follows through the period and inserting “establish the value of the assets as of the day before the occurrence of the natural disaster, major disaster, or emergency that is the basis for a request for assistance under

this subtitle or the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.).”

SEC. 626. INSURANCE OF EMERGENCY LOANS.

Section 328 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1968) is repealed.

Subtitle D—Administrative Provisions

SEC. 631. TEMPORARY AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS.

Section 331 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1981) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) TEMPORARY AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS.—

“(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) ELIGIBLE FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term ‘eligible financial institution’ means a financial institution with substantial experience in farm, ranch, or aquaculture lending that is regulated by the Comptroller of the Currency, the Farm Credit Administration, or a similar regulatory body.

“(B) PILOT PROJECT.—The term ‘pilot project’ includes services related to borrower loan documentation, financial information, credit history, and appraisals of real estate and chattel.

“(2) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may enter into a contract with an eligible financial institution for servicing a farmer program loan under this title, including 1 or more pilot projects.

“(3) REPORT.—Not later than September 30, 1997, and September 30 of each year thereafter, the Secretary shall report to Congress on—

“(A) the Secretary’s experience in using contracts under paragraph (2); and

“(B) recommendations for legislation related to this subsection, if any.

“(4) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this subsection shall limit the authority of the Secretary or an eligible financial institution to contract for any services under this Act or any other law.

“(5) SUNSET PROVISION.—This subsection shall be effective until September 30, 2002.”

SEC. 632. USE OF COLLECTION AGENCIES.

Section 331 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1981) (as amended by section 631) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) PRIVATE COLLECTION AGENCY.—The Secretary may use a private collection agency to collect a claim or obligation described in subsection (b)(5).”

SEC. 633. NOTICE OF LOAN SERVICE PROGRAMS.

Section 331D(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1981d(a)) is amended by striking “180 days delinquent in” and inserting “90 days past due on”.

SEC. 634. CLARIFICATION OF WRITTEN STATEMENT REQUIRED OF BORROWERS.

Section 333(1)(B) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983(1)(B)) is amended by striking "a written statement showing the applicant's net worth" and inserting "an appropriate written financial statement".

SEC. 635. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CREDIT HISTORY, BUSINESS OPERATION, AND CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY OF A BORROWER.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 333 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) as paragraphs (3), (4), and (5), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

"(2) except with respect to a loan under section 306, 310B, or 314, the county or area committee established under section 8(b)(5)(B) of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C. 590h(b)(5)(B)) to certify in writing—

"(A) that an annual review of the credit history and business operation of the borrower has been conducted; and

"(B) that a review of the continued eligibility of the borrower for the loan has been conducted;".

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**—The third sentence of section 310B(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(a)) is amended by striking "(3) of" and inserting "(4) of".

SEC. 636. EXTENSION OF VETERANS PREFERENCE.

Section 333 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983) (as amended by section 635(a)) is amended by striking paragraph (5) and inserting the following:

"(5) the application of a person who is a veteran of any war, as defined in section 101(12) of title 38, United States Code, for a loan under subtitle A or B to be given preference over a similar application from a person who is not a veteran of any war, if the applications are on file in a county or area office at the same time."

SEC. 637. VERIFICATION OF THE CREDIT ELSEWHERE TEST.

Section 333A(f)(4) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983a(f)(4)) is amended—

(1) by striking "(4) With" and all that follows through "seasoned" and inserting the following:

"(4) **VERIFICATION.**—

"(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall provide a prospectus of a seasoned"; and

(2) by striking "If the Secretary" and inserting the following:

"(B) **NOTIFICATION.**—The Secretary shall notify each borrower of a loan that a prospectus has been provided to a lender under subparagraph (A).

"(C) **CREDIT EXTENDED.**—If the Secretary".

SEC. 638. SALE OF PROPERTY.

Section 335 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1985) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by striking “subsection (e)” and inserting “subsections (c) and (e)”;

(2) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

“(c) SALE OF PROPERTY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to this subsection and subsection (e)(1)(A), the Secretary shall offer to sell real property that is acquired by the Secretary under this title using the following order and method of sale:

“(A) ADVERTISEMENT.—Not later than 15 days after acquiring real property, the Secretary shall publicly advertise the property for sale.

“(B) BEGINNING FARMER OR RANCHER.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 75 days after acquiring real property, the Secretary shall offer to sell the property to a qualified beginning farmer or rancher at current market value based on a current appraisal.

“(ii) RANDOM SELECTION.—If more than 1 qualified beginning farmer or rancher offers to purchase the property, the Secretary shall select between the qualified applicants on a random basis.

“(iii) APPEAL OF RANDOM SELECTION.—A random selection or denial by the Secretary of a beginning farmer or rancher for farm inventory property under this subparagraph shall be final and not administratively appealable.

“(C) PUBLIC SALE.—If no acceptable offer is received from a qualified beginning farmer or rancher under subparagraph (B) not later than 75 days after acquiring the real property, the Secretary shall, not later than 30 days after the 75-day period, sell the property after public notice at a public sale, and, if no acceptable bid is received, by negotiated sale, at the best price obtainable.

“(2) TRANSITIONAL RULES.—

“(A) PREVIOUS LEASE.—In the case of real property acquired prior to the date of enactment of this subparagraph that the Secretary leased prior to the date of enactment of this subparagraph, not later than 60 days after the lease expires, the Secretary shall offer to sell the property in accordance with paragraph (1).

“(B) PREVIOUSLY IN INVENTORY.—In the case of real property acquired prior to the date of enactment of this subparagraph that the Secretary has not leased, not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this subparagraph, the Secretary shall offer to sell the property in accordance with paragraph (1).

“(3) INTEREST.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), any conveyance of real property under this subsection shall include all of the interest of the United States in the property, including mineral rights.

“(B) CONSERVATION.—The Secretary may for conservation purposes grant or sell an easement, restriction, development right, or similar legal right to real property to a State, a political subdivision of a State, or a private nonprofit organization separately from the underlying fee or other rights to the property owned by the United States.

“(4) OTHER LAW.—The Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (40 U.S.C. 471 et seq.) shall not apply to any exercise of authority under this title.

“(5) LEASE OF PROPERTY.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary may not lease any real property acquired under this title.

“(B) EXCEPTION.—

“(i) BEGINNING FARMER OR RANCHER.—The Secretary may lease or contract to sell to a beginning farmer or rancher a farm or ranch acquired by the Secretary under this title if the beginning farmer or rancher qualifies for a credit sale or direct farm ownership loan under subtitle A but credit sale authority for loans or direct farm ownership loan funds, respectively, are not available.

“(ii) TERM.—The term of a lease or contract to sell to a beginning farmer or rancher under clause (i) shall be until the earlier of—

“(I) the date that is 18 months after the date of the lease or sale; or

“(II) the date that direct farm ownership loan funds or credit sale authority for loans becomes available to the beginning farmer or rancher.

“(iii) INCOME-PRODUCING CAPABILITY.—In determining the rental rate on real property leased under this subparagraph, the Secretary shall consider the income-producing capability of the property during the term that the property is leased.

“(6) EXPEDITED DETERMINATION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—On the request of an applicant, not later than 30 days after denial of the applicant's application, the appropriate State director shall provide an expedited review and determination of whether the applicant is a beginning farmer or rancher for the purpose of acquiring farm inventory property.

“(B) APPEAL.—The determination of a State Director under subparagraph (A) shall be final and not administratively appealable.

“(C) EFFECTS OF DETERMINATIONS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall maintain statistical data on the number and results of determinations made under subparagraph (A) and the effect of the determinations on—

“(I) selling farm inventory property to beginning farmers and ranchers; and

“(II) disposing of real property in inventory.

“(ii) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary shall notify the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate if the Secretary determines that the review process under subparagraph (A) is adversely affecting the selling of farm inventory property to beginning farmers or ranchers or the disposing of real property in inventory.”; and

(3) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

Records.

- (i) by striking subparagraphs (A) through (C);
- (ii) by redesignating subparagraphs (D) through (G) as subparagraphs (A) through (D), respectively;
- (iii) in subparagraph (A) (as redesignated by clause (ii))—

(I) in clause (i)—

(aa) in the matter preceding subclause (I), by striking “(G)” and inserting “(D)”;

(bb) by striking subclause (I) and inserting the following:

“(I) the Secretary acquires property under this title that is located within an Indian reservation; and”;

(cc) in subclause (II), by striking “, and” at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(dd) by striking subclause (III); and

(II) in clause (iii), by striking “The Secretary shall” and all that follows through “of subparagraph (A),” and inserting “Not later than 90 days after acquiring the property, the Secretary shall”; and

(iv) in subparagraph (D) (as redesignated by clause

(ii))—

(I) in clause (i), by striking “(D)” in the matter following subclause (IV) and inserting “(A)”;

(II) in clause (iii)(I), by striking “subparagraphs (C)(i), (C)(ii), and (D)” and inserting “subparagraph (A)”;

(III) by striking clause (v) and inserting the following:

“(v) FORECLOSURE PROCEDURES.—

“(I) NOTICE TO BORROWER.—If an Indian borrower-owner does not voluntarily convey to the Secretary real property described in clause (i), not less than 30 days before a foreclosure sale of the property, the Secretary shall provide the Indian borrower-owner with the option of—

“(aa) requiring the Secretary to assign the loan and security instruments to the Secretary of the Interior, if the Secretary of the Interior agrees to an assignment releasing the Secretary of Agriculture from all further responsibility for collection of any amounts with regard to the loan secured by the real property; or

“(bb) requiring the Secretary to assign the loan and security instruments to the tribe having jurisdiction over the reservation in which the real property is located, if the tribe agrees to the assignment.

“(II) NOTICE TO TRIBE.—If an Indian borrower-owner does not voluntarily convey to the Secretary real property described in clause (i), not less than 30 days before a foreclosure sale of the property, the Secretary shall provide written notice to the Indian tribe that has jurisdiction over the reservation in which the real property is located of—

“(aa) the sale;

Native
Americans.

“(bb) the fair market value of the property;
and

“(cc) the requirements of this subparagraph.

“(III) ASSUMED LOANS.—If an Indian tribe assumes a loan under subclause (I)—

“(aa) the Secretary shall not foreclose the loan because of any default that occurred prior to the date of the assumption;

“(bb) the loan shall be for the lesser of the outstanding principal and interest of the loan or the fair market value of the property; and

“(cc) the loan shall be treated as though the loan was made under Public Law 91-229 (25 U.S.C. 488 et seq.).”;

(B) by striking paragraph (3);

(C) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by striking subparagraph (B);

(ii) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) in clause (i), by striking “(i)”; and

(II) by redesignating clause (ii) as subparagraph (B); and

(iii) in subparagraph (B) (as redesignated by clause (ii)(II)), by striking “clause (i)” and inserting “subparagraph (A)”;

(D) by striking paragraphs (5), (6), and (9); and

(E) by redesignating paragraphs (4), (7), (8), and (10) as paragraphs (3), (4), (5), and (6), respectively.

SEC. 639. EASEMENTS ON INVENTORIED PROPERTY.

Section 335(g) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1985(g)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “(g)(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) through (5)” and inserting the following:

“(g) EASEMENTS ON INVENTORIED PROPERTY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2)”; and

(B) by striking “, as determined” and all that follows through “3801 et seq.”;

(2) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

“(2) LIMITATION.—The Secretary shall not establish a wetland conservation easement on an inventoried property that—

“(A) was cropland on the date the property entered the inventory of the Secretary; or

“(B) was used for farming at any time during the period beginning on the date 5 years before the property entered the inventory of the Secretary and ending on the date the property entered the inventory of the Secretary.”;

(3) by striking paragraphs (3), (4), (5), and (8);

(4) by striking “(6) The Secretary” and inserting the following:

“(3) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary”; and

(5) by striking “(7) The appraised” and inserting the following:

“(4) APPRAISED VALUE.—The appraised”.

SEC. 640. DEFINITIONS.

Section 343(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1991(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (11)—

(A) in the text preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “applicant—” and inserting “applicant, regardless of whether the applicant is participating in a program under section 310E—”; and

(B) in subparagraph (F)—

(i) by striking “15 percent” and inserting “25 percent”; and

(ii) by inserting before the semicolon at the end the following: “, except that this subparagraph shall not apply to a loan made or guaranteed under subtitle B”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(12) DEBT FORGIVENESS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term ‘debt forgiveness’ means reducing or terminating a farmer program loan made or guaranteed under this title, in a manner that results in a loss to the Secretary, through—

“(i) writing down or writing off a loan under section 353;

“(ii) compromising, adjusting, reducing, or charging-off a debt or claim under section 331;

“(iii) paying a loss on a guaranteed loan under section 357; or

“(iv) discharging a debt as a result of bankruptcy.

“(B) LOAN RESTRUCTURING.—The term ‘debt forgiveness’ does not include consolidation, rescheduling, reamortization, or deferral.”.

SEC. 641. AUTHORIZATION FOR LOANS.

Section 346 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1994) is amended—

(1) in the second sentence of subsection (a), by striking “with or without” and all that follows through “administration”; and

(2) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

“(b) AUTHORIZATION FOR LOANS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make or guarantee loans under subtitles A and B from the Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund provided for in section 309 in not more than the following amounts:

“(A) FISCAL YEAR 1996.—For fiscal year 1996, \$3,085,000,000, of which—

“(i) \$585,000,000 shall be for direct loans, of which—

“(I) \$85,000,000 shall be for farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$500,000,000 shall be for operating loans under subtitle B; and

“(ii) \$2,500,000,000 shall be for guaranteed loans, of which—

“(I) \$600,000,000 shall be for guarantees of farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$1,900,000,000 shall be for guarantees of operating loans under subtitle B.

“(B) FISCAL YEAR 1997.—For fiscal year 1997, \$3,165,000,000, of which—

“(i) \$585,000,000 shall be for direct loans, of which—

“(I) \$85,000,000 shall be for farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$500,000,000 shall be for operating loans under subtitle B; and

“(ii) \$2,580,000,000 shall be for guaranteed loans, of which—

“(I) \$630,000,000 shall be for guarantees of farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$1,950,000,000 shall be for guarantees of operating loans under subtitle B.

“(C) FISCAL YEAR 1998.—For fiscal year 1998, \$3,245,000,000, of which—

“(i) \$585,000,000 shall be for direct loans, of which—

“(I) \$85,000,000 shall be for farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$500,000,000 shall be for operating loans under subtitle B; and

“(ii) \$2,660,000,000 shall be for guaranteed loans, of which—

“(I) \$660,000,000 shall be for guarantees of farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$2,000,000,000 shall be for guarantees of operating loans under subtitle B.

“(D) FISCAL YEAR 1999.—For fiscal year 1999, \$3,325,000,000, of which—

“(i) \$585,000,000 shall be for direct loans, of which—

“(I) \$85,000,000 shall be for farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$500,000,000 shall be for operating loans under subtitle B; and

“(ii) \$2,740,000,000 shall be for guaranteed loans, of which—

“(I) \$690,000,000 shall be for guarantees of farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$2,050,000,000 shall be for guarantees of operating loans under subtitle B.

“(E) FISCAL YEAR 2000.—For fiscal year 2000, \$3,435,000,000, of which—

“(i) \$585,000,000 shall be for direct loans, of which—

“(I) \$85,000,000 shall be for farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$500,000,000 shall be for operating loans under subtitle B; and

“(ii) \$2,850,000,000 shall be for guaranteed loans, of which—

“(I) \$750,000,000 shall be for guarantees of farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$2,100,000,000 shall be for guarantees of operating loans under subtitle B.

“(F) FISCAL YEAR 2001.—For fiscal year 2001, \$3,435,000,000, of which—

“(i) \$585,000,000 shall be for direct loans, of which—

“(I) \$85,000,000 shall be for farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$500,000,000 shall be for operating loans under subtitle B; and

“(ii) \$2,850,000,000 shall be for guaranteed loans, of which—

“(I) \$750,000,000 shall be for guarantees of farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$2,100,000,000 shall be for guarantees of operating loans under subtitle B.

“(G) FISCAL YEAR 2002.—For fiscal year 2002, \$3,435,000,000, of which—

“(i) \$585,000,000 shall be for direct loans, of which—

“(I) \$85,000,000 shall be for farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$500,000,000 shall be for operating loans under subtitle B; and

“(ii) \$2,850,000,000 shall be for guaranteed loans, of which—

“(I) \$750,000,000 shall be for guarantees of farm ownership loans under subtitle A; and

“(II) \$2,100,000,000 shall be for guarantees of operating loans under subtitle B.

“(2) BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS.—

“(A) DIRECT LOANS.—

“(i) FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—Of the amounts made available under paragraph (1) for direct farm ownership loans, the Secretary shall reserve 70 percent for qualified beginning farmers and ranchers.

“(II) DOWN PAYMENT LOANS.—Of the amounts reserved for a fiscal year under subclause (I), the Secretary shall reserve 60 percent for the down payment loan program under section 310E until April 1 of the fiscal year.

“(ii) OPERATING LOANS.—Of the amounts made available under paragraph (1) for direct operating loans, the Secretary shall reserve for qualified beginning farmers and ranchers—

“(I) for each of fiscal years 1996 through 1998, 25 percent;

“(II) for fiscal year 1999, 30 percent; and

“(III) for each of fiscal years 2000 through 2002, 35 percent.

“(iii) FUNDS RESERVED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 1.—Except as provided in clause (i)(II), funds reserved for qualified beginning farmers or ranchers under this subparagraph for a fiscal year shall be reserved only until September 1 of the fiscal year.

“(B) GUARANTEED LOANS.—

“(i) FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS.—Of the amounts made available under paragraph (1) for guarantees of farm ownership loans, the Secretary shall reserve 25 percent for qualified beginning farmers and ranchers.

“(ii) OPERATING LOANS.—Of the amounts made available under paragraph (1) for guarantees of operating loans, the Secretary shall reserve 40 percent for qualified beginning farmers and ranchers.

“(iii) FUNDS RESERVED UNTIL APRIL 1.—Funds reserved for qualified beginning farmers or ranchers under this subparagraph for a fiscal year shall be reserved only until April 1 of the fiscal year.

“(C) RESERVED FUNDS FOR ALL QUALIFIED BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS.—If a qualified beginning farmer or rancher meets the eligibility criteria for receiving a direct or guaranteed loan under section 302, 310E, or 311, the Secretary shall make or guarantee the loan if sufficient funds reserved under this paragraph are available to make or guarantee the loan.

“(3) TRANSFER FOR DOWN PAYMENT LOANS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), subject to subparagraph (B)—

“(i) beginning on August 1 of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall use available unsubsidized guaranteed farm operating loan funds to provide direct farm ownership loans approved by the Secretary to qualified beginning farmers and ranchers under the down payment loan program established under section 310E, if sufficient direct farm ownership loan funds are not otherwise available; and

“(ii) beginning on September 1 of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall use available unsubsidized guaranteed farm operating loan funds to provide direct farm ownership loans approved by the Secretary to qualified beginning farmers and ranchers, if sufficient direct farm ownership loan funds are not otherwise available.

Effective date.

“(B) LIMITATION.—The Secretary shall limit the transfer of funds under subparagraph (A) so that all guaranteed farm operating loans that have been approved, or will be approved, by the Secretary during the fiscal year will be made to the extent of available amounts.

“(4) TRANSFER FOR CREDIT SALES OF FARM INVENTORY PROPERTY.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C), beginning on September 1 of each fiscal year, the Secretary may use available funds made available under subtitle C for the fiscal year to fund the credit sale of farm real estate in the inventory of the Secretary.

“(B) SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS.—The transfer authority provided under subparagraph (A) shall not apply to any funds made available to the Secretary for any fiscal year under an Act making supplemental appropriations.

“(C) LIMITATION.—The Secretary shall limit the transfer of funds under subparagraph (A) so that all emergency disaster loans that have been approved, or will be approved,

by the Secretary during the fiscal year will be made to the extent of available amounts.”

SEC. 642. CONTRACTS ON LOAN SECURITY PROPERTIES.

Section 349 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1997) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:
“(b) **CONTRACTS ON LOAN SECURITY PROPERTIES.**—Subject to subsection (c), the Secretary may enter into a contract related to real property for conservation, recreation, or wildlife purposes.”;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking “(c) Such easement” and all that follows through “if—” and inserting the following:

“(c) **LIMITATIONS.**—The Secretary may enter into a contract under subsection (b) if—”;

(B) in paragraph (2), by adding “and” at the end;

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking subparagraph (B);

(ii) by striking “(3)(A)(i)” and inserting “(3)(A)”;

(iii) by striking “Farmers Home Administration” and inserting “Secretary”;

(iv) by striking “(ii) such easement” and inserting “(B) such contract”; and

(v) by striking “; or” and inserting a period; and

(D) by striking paragraph (4);

(3) in subsection (d), by striking “easement” each place it appears and inserting “contract”;

(4) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “purchase any such easement from the borrower—” and inserting “reduce or forgive the outstanding debt of a borrower—”;

(ii) by striking “easement” each place it appears and inserting “contract”; and

(iii) by striking “Farmers Home Administration” each place it appears and inserting “Secretary”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “easement is acquired” and inserting “contract is entered into”;

(5) in subsection (f)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “acquire easements” and inserting “enter into contracts”; and

(B) in paragraphs (2) and (3), by striking “easements” each place it appears and inserting “contracts”; and

(6) in subsection (g), by striking “an easement acquired” and inserting “a contract entered into”.

SEC. 643. LIST OF CERTIFIED LENDERS AND INVENTORY PROPERTY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 351 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1999) is amended—

(1) in subsection (f)—

(A) by striking “Each Farmers Home Administration county supervisor” and inserting “The Secretary”;

(B) by striking “approved lenders” and inserting “lenders”; and

(C) by striking “the Farmers Home Administration”; and

(2) by striking subsection (h).

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 1320 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-198; 7 U.S.C. 1999 note) is amended by striking “Effective only” and all that follows through “1995, the” and inserting “The”.

SEC. 644. HOMESTEAD PROPERTY.

Section 352(c) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2000(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(A), by striking “90” each place it appears and inserting “30”; and

(2) in paragraph (6)—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking “Within 30” and all that follows through “title,” and insert “Not later than the date of acquisition of the property securing a loan made under this title (or, in the case of real property in inventory on the date of enactment of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, not later than 5 days after the date of enactment of the Act);” and

(B) by striking the second sentence.

SEC. 645. RESTRUCTURING.

Section 353 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2001) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following:

“(C) CASH FLOW MARGIN.—For the purpose of assessing under subparagraph (A) the ability of a borrower to meet debt obligations and continue farming operations, the Secretary shall assume that the borrower needs up to 110 percent of the amount indicated for payment of farm operating expenses, debt service obligations, and family living expenses.”; and

(B) by striking paragraph (6) and inserting the following:

“(6) TERMINATION OF LOAN OBLIGATIONS.—The obligations of a borrower to the Secretary under a loan shall terminate if—

“(A) the borrower satisfies the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b);

“(B) the value of the restructured loan is less than the recovery value; and

“(C) not later than 90 days after receipt of the notification described in paragraph (4)(B), the borrower pays (or obtains third-party financing to pay) the Secretary an amount equal to the current market value.”;

(2) by striking subsection (k); and

(3) by redesignating subsections (l) through (p) as subsections (k) through (o), respectively.

SEC. 646. TRANSFER OF INVENTORY LAND FOR CONSERVATION PURPOSES.

Section 354 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2002) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “The Secretary, without reimbursement,” and inserting the following:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), the Secretary”;
 (2) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:
 “(2) that is eligible to be disposed of in accordance with
 section 335; and”; and
 (3) by adding at the end the following:

“(b) CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may not transfer any property
 or interest in property under subsection (a) unless—

“(1) at least 2 public notices are given of the transfer;
 “(2) if requested, at least 1 public meeting is held prior
 to the transfer; and

“(3) the Governor and at least 1 elected county official
 of the State and county where the property is located are
 consulted prior to the transfer.”.

SEC. 647. IMPLEMENTATION OF TARGET PARTICIPATION RATES.

Section 355 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development
 Act (7 U.S.C. 2003) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(f) IMPLEMENTATION CONSISTENT WITH SUPREME COURT HOLD-
 ING.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this
 subsection, the Secretary shall ensure that the implementation
 of this section is consistent with the holding of the Supreme Court
 in *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Federico Pena, Secretary of
 Transportation*, 115 S. Ct. 2097 (1995).”.

SEC. 648. DELINQUENT BORROWERS.

(a) PAYMENT OF INTEREST AS A CONDITION OF LOAN SERVICING
 FOR BORROWERS.—The Consolidated Farm and Rural Development
 Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
 the following:

7 USC 2008g.

“SEC. 372. PAYMENT OF INTEREST AS A CONDITION OF LOAN SERVIC-
 ING FOR BORROWERS.

“The Secretary may not reschedule or reamortize a loan for
 a borrower under this title who has not requested consideration
 under section 331D(e) unless the borrower pays a portion, as deter-
 mined by the Secretary, of the interest due on the loan.”.

(b) LOAN AND LOAN SERVICING LIMITATIONS.—The Consolidated
 Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq.) (as amend-
 ed by subsection (a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

7 USC 2008h.

“SEC. 373. LOAN AND LOAN SERVICING LIMITATIONS.

“(a) DELINQUENT BORROWERS PROHIBITED FROM OBTAINING
 DIRECT OPERATING LOANS.—The Secretary may not make a direct
 operating loan under subtitle B to a borrower who is delinquent
 on any loan made or guaranteed under this title.

“(b) LOANS PROHIBITED FOR BORROWERS THAT HAVE RECEIVED
 DEBT FORGIVENESS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2),
 the Secretary may not make or guarantee a loan under this
 title to a borrower who received debt forgiveness on a loan
 made or guaranteed under this title.

“(2) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary may make a direct or
 guaranteed farm operating loan for paying annual farm or
 ranch operating expenses of a borrower who was restructured
 with a write-down under section 353.

“(c) NO MORE THAN 1 DEBT FORGIVENESS FOR A BORROWER
 ON A DIRECT LOAN.—The Secretary may not provide to a borrower
 debt forgiveness on a direct loan made under this title if the

borrower has received debt forgiveness on another direct loan made under this title.”

SEC. 649. SHORT FORM CERTIFICATION OF FARM PROGRAM BORROWER COMPLIANCE.

The Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq.) (as amended by section 648) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 374. SHORT FORM CERTIFICATION OF FARM PROGRAM BORROWER COMPLIANCE. 7 USC 2008i.

“The Secretary shall develop and utilize a consolidated short form for farm program borrowers to use in certifying compliance with any applicable provision of law (including a regulation) that serves as an eligibility prerequisite for a loan made under this title.”

SEC. 650. CREDIT STUDY.

7 USC 2001 note.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Agriculture shall conduct a study and report to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate on the demand for and availability of credit in rural areas for agriculture, housing, and rural development.

Reports.

(b) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of the study shall be to ensure that Congress has current and comprehensive information to consider as Congress deliberates on rural credit needs and the availability of credit to satisfy the needs of rural areas of the United States.

(c) **ITEMS IN STUDY.**—In conducting the study, the Secretary shall base the study on the most current available data and analyze—

(1) rural demand for credit from the Farm Credit System, the ability of the Farm Credit System to meet the demand, and the extent to which the Farm Credit System provides loans to satisfy the demand;

(2) rural demand for credit from the United States banking system, the ability of banks to meet the demand, and the extent to which banks provide loans to satisfy the demand;

(3) rural demand for credit from the Secretary, the ability of the Secretary to meet the demand, and the extent to which the Secretary provides loans to satisfy the demand;

(4) rural demand for credit from other Federal agencies, the ability of the agencies to meet the demand, and the extent to which the agencies provide loans to satisfy the demand;

(5) what measure or measures exist to gauge the overall demand for rural credit, the extent to which rural demand for credit is satisfied, and what the measures have demonstrated;

(6) a comparison of the interest rates and terms charged by the Farm Credit System Farm Credit Banks, production credit associations, and banks for cooperatives with the rates and terms charged by the banks of the United States for credit of comparable risk and maturity;

(7) the advantages and disadvantages of the modernization and expansion proposals of the Farm Credit System on the Farm Credit System, the United States banking system, rural