

RHS, RBS, RUS, FSA, USDA

“Environmental Assessment for Class I actions,” or by so stating this result in the environmental assessment for Class II Actions (exhibit H), depending upon whichever format is applicable to the action under review.

5. For those actions that would be located within the system, one of the following two steps must be taken:

a. If the environmental reviewer concludes that the action does not meet the criteria for an exception, as listed in exhibit L, the reviewer shall so inform the approving official and a final determination made in the manner indicated in §1940.316 of this subpart. If this determination is consistent with the environmental reviewer’s conclusion, the action must be denied by the approving official and the affected applicant or party informed of the reason for denial. If it is determined that the action may qualify for an exception, the steps identified in Item b immediately below must be implemented prior to a decision on this question.

b. If the environmental reviewer concludes that the proposed action may meet the exception criteria, the approving official must be so informed. Whenever the approving official agrees or makes a similar determination as a result of the review conducted in Item a immediately above, consultation shall be initiated with the Secretary of the Interior by either the State Director or the Administrator for a National Office activity. FmHA or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354 shall request the Secretary’s views as to whether the exception criteria are met and shall provide the Secretary with the following information:

- (1) A detailed description of the action and its location;
- (2) A description of the affected environment within the System and the impacts of the proposed action;
- (3) The applicable exception criteria and FmHA or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354’s reasons for believing they apply to this action; and
- (4) If a Section 6(a)(6) exception is claimed, FmHA or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354’s reasons for believing the action to be consistent with the purposes of the Act.

Should the Secretary concur in the exception criteria being met, that portion of the environmental assessment relating to compliance with the Act shall be completed and the corresponding documentation attached. Should the Secretary not concur, a final decision on the approval or denial of the action must be made by the Administrator.

Pt. 1940, Subpt. G, Exh. H

**EXHIBIT G TO SUBPART G OF PART 1940
[RESERVED]**

**EXHIBIT H TO SUBPART G OF PART 1940—
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
CLASS II ACTIONS**

In completing this assessment, it is important to understand the comprehensive nature of the impacts which must be analyzed. Consideration must be given to all potential impacts associated with the construction of the project, its operation and maintenance, the operation of all identified primary beneficiaries, and the attainment of the project’s major objectives, whether they be an increased housing stock, community improvement, economic development, or greater agricultural productivity. This last category, the attainment of the project’s major objectives, often induces or supports changes in population densities, land uses, community services, transportation systems and resource consumption. The scope of the assessment is broadened even further when there are related activities involved. The impacts of these activities must also be assessed.

The preparer will consult as indicated in §1940.318(b) of this subpart with appropriate experts from Federal, State, and local agencies, universities, and other organizations or groups whose views could be helpful in the assessment of potential impacts. In so doing, each discussion which is utilized in reaching a conclusion with respect to the degree of an impact will be summarized in the assessment as accurately as possible and include the name, title, phone number, and organization of the individual contacted, plus the date of contact. Related correspondence should be attached to the assessment.

The FmHA or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354 environmental assessment shall be prepared in the following format. It shall address the listed items and questions and contain as attachments the indicated descriptive materials, as well as the environmental information submitted by the applicant, Form FmHA or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354 1940-20, “Request for Environmental Information.”

The assessment has been designed to cover the wide variety of projects and environments with which the Agency deals. Consequently, not every issue or potential impact raised in the assessment may be relevant to each project. The purpose of the format is to give the preparer an understanding of a standard range of impacts, environmental factors, and issues which may be encountered. In preparing an assessment, each topic heading identified by a Roman numeral and each environmental factor listed under topic heading IV, such as air quality, for example, must be addressed.

The amount of analysis and material that must be provided will depend upon the type