AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO



the counteroffer, either by the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Engineers or under the delegated authority to Division and District Engineers, will be entered on this record as soon as that information is available.

### § 644.84 Counteroffers.

(a) *Consideration of counteroffers.* In negotiations with landowners, if agreement cannot be reached with a landowner as to the purchase price established by the appraisal, the lowest price demanded by the landowner may be considered by the Division and District Engineer, and the Chief of the Real Estate Division, on the basis of the following factors:

(1) *Variations in appraisals.* In the usual case, the Corps will have the opinion of only one appraiser with respect to the market value of the particular tract of land. It must be recognized that the opinion of a second equally competent appraiser might be higher or lower than that of the appraiser who appraised the property. Hence in considering counteroffers of landowners, Division and District Engineers should keep in mind that two equally competent appraisals may reflect reasonably divergent opinions of value as to the same property. Instances requiring two appraisals are covered in § 644.82(d).

(2) *Built-in costs, prior counteroffers, settlements and liability risks of proceeding to trial.* It is recognized that there are certain Government administrative costs and liability risks involved when property is condemned by the United States and the land value is judicially determined. These items are definite in character but the attendant costs will vary. ''Built-in'' costs of proceeding to trial include, but are not limited to, the following items: Salaries of all Government personnel participating in trial preparation, pretrial hearings, and the actual trial; cost of an additional appraisal(s); witness fees of contract appraisers employed by the Corps of Engineers or the Department of Justice; travel costs of all Government personnel and consultants participating in trial preparation, pre-trial hearings, and the actual trial; and cost of preparing trial documents and exhibits. Consideration should also be given to prior counteroffers which have been accepted and settlements approved prior to trial. ''Liability risks'' of proceeding to trial are the amount of the anticipated award over and above the appraised value, taking into consideration probable testimony on behalf of the Government and the landowners, as well as the history of condemnation awards in the Federal court jurisdiction in which the lands are located, and the amount of interest on a deficiency judgment which would result from the anticipated award. Serious consideration of the above factors may justify a recommendation for authority to accept a counteroffer which otherwise would appear to liberal.

(3) *Non-compensable elements of value.* Elements of value based on consequential damages or speculative values, as defined by the Federal courts, may not be recognized in considering a landowner's counteroffer. However, even though a landowner's counteroffer might include non-compensable items of value, favorable consideration of the counteroffer may be given if it can be justified on the basis of variances in appraisals, built-in costs, and liability risks of proceeding to trial.

(4) *Value of reserved items.* The salvage value of improvements and the value of crops and/or timber reserved by the landowners, as provided in § 644.86 (g), (h), and (i), will not be included in the amount of the counteroffer in determining the excess of counteroffers over appraised values when applying the dollar and percentage limitations in the delegations of authority to Division and District Engineers for acceptance of counteroffers. The determination of the excess will be made on the basis of the appraised value of the interests being acquired (including the value of the reserved items) compared to the cash payment which will be made to the landowner if the Government accepts his counteroffer. However, this method of analyzing the counteroffer is intended for use only in determining the limitations of authority. The overall transaction must be in the interest of the United States and not afford an unwarranted windfall to the vendor.

(b) *Application and Limits of Delegated Authority.* The negotiating procedures

outlined herein will apply to all acquisitions by the Corps of Engineers for the Army (military and civil), Air Force, Department of Energy (DOE), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and other Federal agencies which utilize the services of the Corps for acquisition of real estate. Delegations of authority to Division and District Engineers and to the Chiefs of their Real Estate Divisions to accept offers in excess of the appriased valuation have been made. Offers which do not exceed the approved appraised value may be accepted by authorized Division and District personnel regardless of the amount. Other offers will be handled as outlined in the paragraphs which follow.

(c) *Exercise of Delegated Authority.* The approval of a counteroffer over the appraised value, but within the authority redelegated to Divisions and Districts, will be evidenced by the Division Engineer, the District Engineer, the Chief of the Real Estate Division, or the incumbent of the position to which redelegations have been made, in one of the following manners:

(1) Manually accepting, on behalf of the United States, the offer to sell, as provided in § 644.87; or

(2) Manually executing a dated notation of approval of the purchase price, to be placed in the tract file, preferably on the original of the Negotiator's Report (§ 644.83(g)).

(d) *Submission of Counteroffers to the Chief of Engineers.* Recommendations for the grant of authority to accept counteroffers which are considered reasonable, but which cannot be accepted by the Division Engineer, the District Engineer, or the Chief of the Real Estate Division, within the limitations of delegated authority, will be submitted to HQDA (DAEN-REA) WASH DC 20314 for consideration. Negotiator's Reports, prepared in accordance with § 644.83(g) will accompany this submission; the contents thereof need not be repeated in the transmittal letter or in forwarding indorsements. The assembly will consist of the forwarding correspondence and the Negotiator's Report, with any additional material needed to support the recommendation of the Division and District Engineer. An analysis should be made of this offer as compared with other counteroffers accepted for the project, as well as with results in condemnation cases settled before trial. Signed offers will not be forwarded unless they contain deviations requiring approval by the Chief of Engineers. Appraisal reports are helpful and may be necessary reference for proper consideration of the recommendation. In the event the appraisal report was approved by HQDA (DAEN-REA), the forwarding letter should refer to the approval correspondence and data. It will not be necessary to enclose copies of the appraisal report. Where only a portion of an ownership is required, information should be furnished in the Negotiator's Report or in the transmittal correspondence (1) as to whether or not the remainder portion is considered to be an uneconomic remnant and (2) if so, as to whether or not an offer was made to acquire the entire property. Further, a statement is required as to whether or not it is considered that the acquisition will have any adverse effect on the acquisition of the remaining land required for the project.

### § 644.85 General negotiation procedures.

(a) *Provisions of Military Construction Appropriation Act.* (1) Section 108 of the Military Construction Appropriation (MCA) Act of 1978 (Pub. L. 95–101) provides that no part of the funds provided in the Act shall be used for purchase of land or easements in excess of the value as determined by the Corps of Engineers, except:

(i) Where there is a determination of value by a Federal Court; or

(ii) Purchases negotiated by the Attorney General or his designee; or

(iii) Where the estimated value is less than $25,000; or

(iv) As otherwise determined by the Secretary of Defense to be in the public interest.

(2) The above wording, except for paragraph (a)(1)(iv) of this section, constitutes a limitation on accepting or submitting a recommendation for approval of a counteroffer in excess of the appraised value. Paragraph (a)(1)(iv) brings military acquisition within the general acquisition policy required under Pub. L. 91–646. Future MCA Acts