



Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20250

May 30, 2023

THE HONORABLE JOHN BOOZMAN  
*Ranking Member*  
*Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry*  
*United States Senate*  
*328A Russell Senate Office Building*  
*Washington, DC 20510*

Dear Ranking Member Boozman:

In accordance with Section 333D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983d), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is notifying Congress of its intent to launch the Application Fast Track Pilot Program (AFT) to evaluate a process to improve the efficiency of Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs.

AFT will expedite the processing of FSA Direct Operating Loans (OL) and Farm Ownership Loans (FO) to family farmers and ranchers by providing an alternative underwriting process for applicants that meet certain financial benchmarks. AFT is modeled after practices already used successfully by lenders in the private sector to streamline the financial viability evaluation of certain operations while minimizing the risk of loan default. Under AFT, the feasibility evaluation for each loan application will involve an initial assessment based on financial benchmarking. Applications that satisfy certain benchmark thresholds will be determined to meet the AFT standards, which have been determined to provide FSA adequate assurance of an applicant's ability to successfully repay the FSA loan. Applications meeting AFT standards will not be subject to the time-consuming traditional feasibility evaluation. Importantly, if a loan application does not satisfy the AFT benchmarking criteria, the application will continue to be evaluated in accordance with the underwriting process in existing loan making regulations.

While the AFT tool is similar in concept to many evaluation methods adopted by other lenders in the private sector, it is specifically optimized for FSA customers. FSA developed the AFT tool after thorough evaluation of hundreds of financial factors, ratios and ranges from a dataset of more than 100,000 actual FSA borrower accounts. The analysis resulted in the AFT tool that predicts default with a 94 percent accuracy and is estimated to directly expedite 25 percent of applications. FSA is excited to pilot this tool to validate projected processing time and customer service improvements without jeopardizing portfolio performance. AFT will be available in

THE HONORABLE JOHN BOOZMAN

*Page 2*

selected pilot office locations beginning approximately 60 days after this notification and will be available in all locations nationwide beginning January 1, 2024. The pilot is intended to run through September 30, 2024.

A similar letter is being sent to Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow.

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas J. Vilsack

THOMAS J. VILSACK

*Secretary*



Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20250

May 30, 2023

THE HONORABLE DEBBIE STABENOW  
*Chairwoman*  
*Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry*  
*United States Senate*  
*328A Russell Senate Office Building*  
*Washington, DC 20510*

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow:

In accordance with Section 333D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983d), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is notifying Congress of its intent to launch the Application Fast Track Pilot Program (AFT) to evaluate a process to improve the efficiency of Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs.

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THE HONORABLE DEBBIE STABENOW

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A similar letter is being sent to Ranking Member John Boozman.

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas J. Vilsack

THOMAS J. VILSACK  
*Secretary*



Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20250

May 30, 2023

THE HONORABLE DAVID SCOTT  
*Ranking Member*  
*House Committee on Agriculture*  
*U.S. House of Representatives*  
*1010 Longworth House Office Building*  
*Washington, DC 20515*

Dear Ranking Member Scott:

In accordance with Section 333D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983d), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is notifying Congress of its intent to launch the Application Fast Track Pilot Program (AFT) to evaluate a process to improve the efficiency of Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs.

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THE HONORABLE DAVID SCOTT

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A similar letter is being sent to Chairman Glenn Thompson.

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas J. Vilsack

THOMAS J. VILSACK

*Secretary*



Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20250

May 30, 2023

THE HONORABLE GLENN THOMPSON  
*Chairman*  
*House Committee on Agriculture*  
*U.S. House of Representatives*  
*1301 Longworth House Office Building*  
*Washington, DC 20515*

Dear Chairman Thompson:

In accordance with Section 333D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983d), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is notifying Congress of its intent to launch the Application Fast Track Pilot Program (AFT) to evaluate a process to improve the efficiency of Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs.

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THE HONORABLE GLENN THOMPSON

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A similar letter is being sent to Ranking Member David Scott.

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas J. Vilsack

THOMAS J. VILSACK

*Secretary*



Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20250

May 30, 2023

THE HONORABLE SANFORD BISHOP, JR.  
*Ranking Member*  
*House Committee on Appropriations*  
*Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,*  
*Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies*  
*U.S. House of Representatives*  
*1036 Longworth House Office Building*  
*Washington, DC 20515*

Dear Ranking Member Bishop:

In accordance with Section 333D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983d), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is notifying Congress of its intent to launch the Application Fast Track Pilot Program (AFT) to evaluate a process to improve the efficiency of Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs.

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THE HONORABLE SANFORD BISHOP, JR.  
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A similar letter is being sent to Chairman Andy Harris.

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas J. Vilsack

THOMAS J. VILSACK  
*Secretary*



Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20250

May 30, 2023

THE HONORABLE ANDY HARRIS, M.D.  
*Chairman*  
*House Committee on Appropriations*  
*Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,*  
*Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies*  
*U.S. House of Representatives*  
*2362-A Rayburn House Office Building*  
*Washington, DC 20515*

Dear Chairman Harris:

In accordance with Section 333D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983d), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is notifying Congress of its intent to launch the Application Fast Track Pilot Program (AFT) to evaluate a process to improve the efficiency of Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs.

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THE HONORABLE ANDY HARRIS, M.D.

*Page 2*

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A similar letter is being sent to Ranking Member Sanford Bishop, Jr.

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas J. Vilsack

THOMAS J. VILSACK  
*Secretary*



Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20250

May 30, 2023

THE HONORABLE MARTIN HEINRICH  
*Chairman*  
*Senate Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development,*  
*Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies*  
*United States Senate*  
*129 Dirksen Senate Office Building*  
*Washington, DC 20510*

Dear Chairman Heinrich:

In accordance with Section 333D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983d), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is notifying Congress of its intent to launch the Application Fast Track Pilot Program (AFT) to evaluate a process to improve the efficiency of Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs.

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THE HONORABLE MARTIN HEINRICH

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A similar letter is being sent to Ranking Member John Hoeven.

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas J. Vilsack

THOMAS J. VILSACK

*Secretary*



Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20250

May 30, 2023

THE HONORABLE JOHN HOEVEN  
*Ranking Member*  
*Senate Committee on Appropriations*  
*Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,*  
*Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies*  
*United States Senate*  
*125 Hart Senate Office Building*  
*Washington, DC 20510*

Dear Ranking Member Hoeven:

In accordance with Section 333D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983d), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is notifying Congress of its intent to launch the Application Fast Track Pilot Program (AFT) to evaluate a process to improve the efficiency of Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs.

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Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas J. Vilsack

THOMAS J. VILSACK

*Secretary*