

Signed at Washington, D.C., January 22, 1998.

**Rich Allen,**

*Acting Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-2608 Filed 2-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-20-P

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Business—Cooperative Service

#### Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

**AGENCY:** Rural Business—Cooperative Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Proposed collection; comments requested.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Business-Cooperative Service's intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of the program for the Business and Industry Loan Program.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received on or before April 6, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Rick Bonnet, Senior Commercial Loan Specialist, RBS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 3221, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-3221, telephone (202) 720-1804 or E-mail "rbonnet@rurdev.usda.gov". The Federal Information Relay service on 1-800-887-8339 is available for TDD users.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Title:* Business and Industry Loan Program.

*OMB Number:* 0570-0014.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* September 1998.

*Type of Request:* Extension of a currently approved information collection and recordkeeping requirements.

*Abstract:* The B&I Program is authorized under Section 310-B of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, as amended. The purpose of the Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed and Direct Loan Programs is to improve, develop, or finance businesses, industry and employment and improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities, including pollution abatement and control. This purpose is achieved through bolstering the existing private credit structure either through the guaranteeing of quality loans made by lending institutions or making direct

loans, thereby providing lasting community benefits. B&I program authority is composed of direct loan authority and loan guarantee authority. The program is administered by the Agency through a State Director serving the State.

All reporting and recordkeeping burden estimates for making and servicing B&I Guaranteed Loans have been moved to the new B&I Guaranteed Loan Program regulations which are at 7 CFR 4279-A and B and 4287-B. The only burden remaining associated with 7 CFR 1980-E is a small portion of B&I Direct loanmaking. 7 CFR 1951-E is used for servicing B&I Direct and Community Facility loans. The Agency is currently developing new B&I Direct Loan Program regulations. When completed, 7 CFR 1980-E will be eliminated from the CFR. Because only the burden associated with 7 CFR 1980-E is included in this package, only a fraction of the total reporting and recordkeeping burden for making and servicing B&I Direct Loans is reflected.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to average 2.75 hours per response.

*Respondents:* Rural businesses, for-profit businesses, non-profit businesses, Indian tribes, and public bodies.

*Estimated number of respondents:* 200.

*Estimated number of responses per respondent:* 2.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 3,370 hours.

Copies of this information collection and recordkeeping can be obtained from Jean Mosley, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, (202) 720-9750.

*Comments:* Comments are invited on (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, minimize the burden of collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Jean Mosley, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 0743, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-0743. All responses to this notice will be

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

**Dayton J. Watkins,**

*Administrator, Rural Business—Cooperative Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-2555 Filed 2-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XY-U

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Utilities Service

#### Information Collection Activity; Comment Request

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended), the Rural Utilities Service's (RUS) invites comments on these information collections for which RUS intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by April 6, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Director, Program Support Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1522, Room 4036, South Building, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 720-9550. FAX: (202) 720-4120.

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

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether this proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Director, Program