

Reports shall be mailed or delivered to the Director, Tobacco and Peanuts Division, STOP 0514, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0514.

(e) *Penalties.* A domestic manufacturer shall be liable for a penalty equal to twice the purchaser's no-net-cost assessment rate per pound for the applicable kind of tobacco for the relevant marketing year, if the manufacturer's purchases of either burley or flue-cured tobacco for the marketing year do not equal or exceed, as determined by the Director, 90 percent of their stated purchase intentions for that kind of tobacco for the relevant marketing year. The Director shall adjust the domestic manufacturer's intentions, however, to the extent, that producers have not produced the full amount of the national quota for the relevant marketing year for the particular kind of tobacco. The burden of establishing all purchases shall be with the domestic manufacturer and the Director may, in the case of indirect purchases for the manufacturer, require that the manufacturer obtain verification of the purchases by the dealer who made the purchase from the producer, at a regular auction market, or from the price support loan inventory, in order to assure that the tobacco is, to the manufacturer, a countable purchase. The Director may require such additional information as determined needed to enforce this subpart.

(f) *Penalty notice and penalty remittance.* Penalties will be assessed after notice and an opportunity for hearing before the Director. Remittances are to be made to the CCC and will be credited to the applicable producer loan association's no-net-cost fund or account as provided for in part 1464 of this title.

(g) *Maintenance and examination of records.* Each domestic manufacturer shall keep all relevant records of purchases, by kind, of burley and flue-cured tobacco for a period of at least 3 years. The Director, Office of Inspector General, or other duly authorized representative of the United States may examine such records, receipts, computer files, or other information held by a domestic manufacturer that may be used to verify or audit such manufacturer's reports. The reasonable cost of such examination or audit may be charged to the domestic manufacturer who is the subject of the examination or audit. All records examined or received under this part by officials of the Department of Agriculture shall be kept confidential to the extent required by law.

§§ 723.101 through 723.504 [Amended]

11. Sections 723.101 through 723.504 are amended by removing "ASC" wherever it appears and adding "FSA" in its place.

Signed at Washington, DC, on March 3, 1998.

Keith Kelly,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

[FR Doc. 98-6060 Filed 3-9-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 989

[FV98-989-1 IFR]

Raisins Produced From Grapes Grown in California; Final Free and Reserve Percentages for 1997-98 Crop Natural (Sun-Dried) Seedless and Zante Currant Raisins

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Interim final rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: This rule establishes final volume regulation percentages for 1997-98 crop Natural (sun-dried) Seedless (Naturals) and Zante Currant (Zantes) raisins covered under the Federal marketing order for California raisins. The order regulates the handling of raisins produced from grapes grown in California and is administered locally by the Raisin Administrative Committee (Committee). The volume regulation percentages are 66 percent free and 34 percent reserve for Naturals and 44 percent free and 56 percent reserve for Zantes. Free tonnage raisins may be sold by handlers to any market. Reserve raisins must be held in a pool for the account of the Committee and are disposed of through various programs authorized under the order. The volume regulation percentages are intended to help stabilize raisin supplies and prices and strengthen market conditions.

DATES: Effective August 1, 1997, through July 31, 1998. Comments received by May 11, 1998, will be considered prior to issuance of a final rule.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this rule. Comments must be sent to the Docket Clerk, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, room 2525-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456; Fax: (202) 205-6632. All comments should reference the docket number and the date and page number of this issue of the **Federal**

Register and will be made available for public inspection in the Office of the Docket Clerk during regular business hours.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Maureen T. Pello, Marketing Specialist, California Marketing Field Office, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 2202 Monterey Street, suite 102B, Fresno, California 93721; telephone: (209) 487-5901, Fax: (209) 487-5906; or George Kelhart, Technical Advisor, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, room 2525-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456; telephone: (202) 720-2491, or Fax: (202) 205-6632. Small businesses may request information on compliance with this regulation by contacting Jay Guerber, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, room 2525-S, Washington, DC 20090-6456; telephone (202) 720-2491; Fax: (202) 205-6632.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule is issued under Marketing Agreement and Order No. 989 (7 CFR part 989), both as amended, regulating the handling of raisins produced from grapes grown in California, hereinafter referred to as the "order." The order is effective under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), hereinafter referred to as the "Act."

The Department of Agriculture (Department) is issuing this rule in conformance with Executive Order 12866.

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. Under the order provisions now in effect, final free and reserve percentages may be established for raisins acquired by handlers during the crop year. This rule establishes final free and reserve percentages for Natural and Zante raisins for the 1997-98 crop year, which began August 1, 1997, and ends July 31, 1998. This rule will not preempt any State or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule.

The Act provides that administrative proceedings must be exhausted before parties may file suit in court. Under section 608c(15)(A) of the Act, any handler subject to an order may file with the Secretary a petition stating that the order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with law and request a modification of the order or to be exempted therefrom. A handler is afforded the opportunity for

a hearing on the petition. After the hearing, the Secretary would rule on the petition. The Act provides that the district court of the United States in any district in which the handler is an inhabitant, or has his or her principal place of business, has jurisdiction in equity to review the Secretary's ruling on the petition, provided an action is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

This rule establishes final volume regulation percentages for 1997-98 crop Natural and Zante raisins covered under the order. The volume regulation percentages are 66 percent free and 34 percent reserve for Naturals and 44 percent free and 56 percent reserve for Zantes. Free tonnage raisins may be sold by handlers to any market. Reserve raisins must be held in a pool for the account of the Committee and are disposed of through various programs authorized under the order. For example, reserve raisins may be sold by

the Committee to handlers for free use or to replace part of the free tonnage raisins they exported; used in diversion programs; carried over as a hedge against a short crop the following year; or disposed of in other outlets not competitive with those for free tonnage raisins, such as government purchase, distilleries, or animal feed. The volume regulation percentages are intended to help stabilize raisin supplies and prices and strengthen market conditions. Final percentages were recommended by the Committee at a meeting on February 12, 1998.

Section 989.54 of the order prescribes the procedures and time frames to be followed in establishing volume regulation. This includes methodology used to calculate percentages. Pursuant to § 989.54(a) of the order, the Committee met on August 14, 1997, to review shipment and inventory data, and other matters relating to the supplies of raisins of all varietal types.

The Committee computed a trade demand for each varietal type for which a free tonnage percentage might be recommended. Trade demand is a computed formula specified in the order and, for each varietal type, is equal to 90 percent of the prior year's shipments of free tonnage and reserve tonnage raisins sold for free use into all market outlets, adjusted by subtracting the carryin on August 1 of the current crop year and by adding the desirable carryout at the end of that crop year. As specified in § 989.154, the desirable carryout for each varietal type is equal to the shipments of free tonnage raisins of the prior crop year during the months of August and September. In accordance with these provisions, the Committee computed and announced 1997-98 trade demands for Naturals and Zantes at 252,398 and 2,058 tons, respectively, as shown below.

COMPUTED TRADE DEMANDS
[Natural condition tons]

	Naturals	Zantes
Prior year's shipments	314,013	3,277
Multiplied by 90 percent	0.90	0.90
Equals adjusted base	282,612	2,949
Minus carryin inventory	92,769	1,679
Plus desirable carryout	62,555	788
Equals computed trade demand	252,398	2,058

As required under § 989.54(b) of the order, the Committee met on October 2, 1997, and announced a preliminary crop estimate of 353,583 tons for Naturals. With the crop estimate much higher than the trade demand of 252,398 tons, the Committee determined that volume regulation was warranted. The Committee announced preliminary free and reserve percentages for Naturals which released 65 percent of the computed trade demand since the field price had not yet been established. The preliminary percentages were 46 percent free and 54 percent reserve. The Committee authorized its staff to modify the preliminary percentages to release 85 percent of the trade demand when the field price was established. The field price was established on October 17, 1997, and the preliminary percentages were thus modified to 61 percent free and 39 percent reserve. As discussed later in this rule, the 353,583 ton crop estimate was subsequently revised to 381,484 tons, the largest crop since 1993-94. The production of Naturals has exceeded market needs during the current crop year, as in most seasons. Volume regulation in such a large crop

year should help stabilize prices and improve market conditions.

Also at its October 2, 1997, meeting, the Committee announced a preliminary crop estimate for Zantes at 4,812 tons. This compared to the trade demand of 2,058 tons. It was determined that a Zante reserve pool was warranted because estimated production exceeded the trade demand by a significant amount. The Committee computed preliminary percentages for Zantes at 36 percent free and 64 percent reserve which would have released 85 percent of the computed trade demand. However, as authorized under § 989.54(c), the Committee modified the computer preliminary percentages and established interim percentages to release slightly less than the full trade demand (98.8 percent) at 42.5 percent free and 57.5 reserve. Volume regulation for Zantes should also help stabilize prices and improve market conditions.

Also at that meeting, the Committee computed and announced preliminary crop estimates for Dipped Seedless, Oleate and Related Seedless, Golden Seedless, Sultana, Muscat, Monukka, and Other Seedless raisins. The

Committee computed preliminary volume regulation percentages for these varieties, but determined that such regulation was only warranted for Naturals and Zantes. It determined that the supplies of the other varietal types would be less than or close enough to the computed trade demands for each of these varietal types. As in past seasons, the Committee submitted its marketing policy to the Department for review.

The Committee met on February 12, 1998, and revised its crop estimates for both Naturals and Zantes as follows: for Naturals, the estimate was increased from 353,583 to 381,484 tons; and for Zantes, the estimate was increased from 4,812 to 4,955 tons. The Committee also announced interim percentages for Naturals at 65.75 percent free and 34.25 percent reserve. Regarding Zantes, the Committee modified its trade demand figure from 2,058 to 2,200 tons at an earlier meeting in November 1997. At its February meeting, the Committee revised its interim percentages for Zantes to 43.75 percent free and 56.25 percent reserve. As required under § 989.54(d) of the order, the Committee also recommended to the Secretary at its

February meeting final free and reserve percentages which, when applied to the final production estimate of a varietal

type, will tend to release the full trade demand for any varietal type. The Committee's calculations to arrive at

final percentages for Naturals and Zantes are shown in the table below.

FINAL VOLUME REGULATION PERCENTAGES
[Tonnage as natural condition weight]

	Naturals	Zantes
Trade demand	252,398	2,200
Divided by crop estimate	381,384	4,955
Equals free percentage	66	44
100 minus free percentage equals reserve percentage	34	56

In addition, the Department's "Guidelines for Fruit, Vegetable, and Speciality Crop Marketing Orders" (Guidelines) specify that 110 percent of recent years' sales should be made available to primary markets each season for marketing orders utilizing reserve pool authority. This goal will be met for Naturals and Zantes by the establishment of final percentages which release 100 percent of the trade demand and the offer of additional reserve raisins for sale to handlers under the "10 plus 10 offers." As specified in § 989.54(g), the 10 plus 10 offers are two offers of reserve pool raisins which are made available to handlers during each season. Handlers may sell their 10 plus 10 raisins to any market. For each such offer, a quantity of reserve raisins equal to 10 percent of the prior year's shipments is made available for free use.

For Naturals, the first 10 plus 10 offer was made available in December 1997 and about 31,000 tons of raisins were purchased by handlers. The second 10 plus 10 offer will be made available to handlers later in 1998 at which time about another 31,000 tons of reserve Naturals will be offered for sale to handlers. Adding the 62,000 tons of 10 plus 10 raisins to the 252,398 ton trade demand figure, plus 92,769 tons of 1996-97 carryin inventory equates to about 407,170 tons natural condition raisins or 381,750 tons packed raisins made available for free use, or to the primary market. This is 130 percent of the quantity of Naturals shipped in 1997 (314,013 natural condition tons or 294,406 packed tons).

For Zantes, both Zante 10 plus 10 offers were made available simultaneously in November 1997 and 656 tons of raisins were purchased by handlers. Adding the 656 tons of 10 plus 10 raisins to the 2,200 ton trade demand figure, plus 1,679 tons of 1996-

97 carryin inventory equates to 4,535 tons natural condition raisins or about 3,970 tons packed raisins made available for free use, or to the primary market. This is 138 percent of the quantity of Zantes shipped in 1997 (3,277 natural condition tons or 2,868 packed tons).

In addition to the 10 plus 10 offers, § 989.67(j) of the order provides authority for sales of reserve raisins to handlers under certain conditions such as a national emergency, crop failure, change in economic or marketing conditions, or if free tonnage shipments in the current crop year exceed shipments of a comparable period of the prior crop year. Such reserve raisins may be sold by handlers to any market. These additional offers of reserve raisins would thus make even more raisins available to primary markets which is consistent with the Department's Guidelines.

Pursuant to requirements set forth in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has considered the economic impact of this action on small entities. Accordingly, AMS has prepared this initial regulatory flexibility analysis.

The purpose of the RFA is to fit regulatory actions to the scale of business subject to such actions in order that small businesses will not be unduly or disproportionately burdened. Marketing orders issued pursuant to the Act, and rules issued thereunder, are unique in that they are brought about through group action of essentially small entities acting on their own behalf. Thus, both statutes have small entity orientation and compatibility.

There are approximately 20 handlers of California raisins who are subject to regulation under the order and approximately 4,500 raisin producers in the regulated area. Small agricultural service firms have been defined by the

Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.601) as those having annual receipts of less than \$5,000,000, and small agricultural producers are defined as those having annual receipts of less than \$500,000. No more than 7 handlers, and a majority of producers, of California raisins may be classified as small entities. Thirteen of the 20 handlers subject to regulation have annual sales estimated to be at least \$5,000,000, and the remaining 7 handlers have sales less than \$5,000,000, excluding receipts from any other sources.

Pursuant to § 989.54(d) of the order, this rule establishes final volume regulation percentages for 1997-98 crop Natural and Zante raisins. The volume regulation percentages are 66 percent free and 34 percent reserve for Naturals and 44 percent free and 56 percent reserve for Zantes. Free tonnage raisins may be sold by handlers to any market. Reserve raisins must be held in a pool for the account of the Committee and are disposed of through certain programs authorized under the order. The volume regulation percentages are intended to help stabilize raisin supplies and prices and strengthen market conditions.

Many years of marketing experience led to the development of the current volume regulation procedures. These procedures have helped the industry address its marketing problems by keeping supplies in balance with domestic and export market needs, and strengthening market conditions. The current volume regulation procedures fully supply the domestic and export markets, provide for market expansion, and help prevent oversupplies in the domestic market.

In discussing the possibility of volume regulation for the 1997-98 crop year, the Committee considered the following factors:

	Naturals*	Zantes*
Estimated tonnage held by producers, handlers, and for the account of the Committee at the beginning of the crop year	92,769	1,679

	Naturals*	Zantes*
Estimated tonnage of standard raisins which will be produced in 1997-98	381,484	4,955
Trade demand for raisins in free tonnage outlets for 1997-98	252,398	2,200
Estimated desirable carryout at the end of the 1997-98 crop year for free tonnage	58,875	545

*Natural condition tons.

The Committee also considered the estimated world raisin supply and demand situation; the current prices being received and the probable level of prices to be received for raisins by producers and handlers; and the trend and level of consumer income.

The Committee's review resulted in the computation and announcement in October 1997 of volume regulation percentages for Naturals and Zantes. Naturals are the major commercial varietal type of raisin produced in California. Volume regulation has been implemented under the order for Naturals for the past several seasons. With the crop estimate of 381,484 tons, much higher than the computed trade demand of 252,398 tons, the Committee determined that volume regulation was warranted.

In comparison, Zante production is much smaller than that of Naturals. Volume regulation was last implemented for Zantes during the 1995-96 crop year. Volume regulation was warranted for Zantes this season because the crop estimate of 4,955 tons exceeded the trade demand of 2,200 tons by a significant amount.

Raisin variety grapes can be marketed as fresh grapes, crushed for use in the production of wine or juice concentrate, or dried into raisins. Annual fluctuations in the fresh grape, wine, and concentrate markets, as well as weather related factors, cause fluctuations in raisin supply. These supply fluctuations can cause producer price instability and disorderly market conditions. Volume regulation is helpful to the raisin industry because it lessens the impact of such fluctuations and contributes to orderly marketing. For example, producer returns for Naturals have remained fairly steady over the last 5 crop years although production has varied. As shown in the table below, production over the last 5 years has varied from a low of 272,063 tons in 1996-97 and to a high of 387,007 tons in 1993-94, or 42 percent. According to Committee data, total producer return per ton, which includes proceeds from both free tonnage plus reserve pool raisins, has varied from a low of \$901 in 1992-93 to a high of \$1,049 in 1996-97, or 16 percent.

NATURAL SEEDLESS PRODUCER RETURNS

Crop year	Production (natural condition tons)	Producer returns
1996-97	272,063	\$1,049
1995-96	325,911	1,007
1994-95	378,427	928
1993-94	387,007	904
1992-93	371,516	901

Free and reserve percentages are established by variety, and only in years when the supply exceeds the trade demand by a large enough margin that the Committee believes volume regulation is necessary to maintain market stability. Accordingly, in assessing whether to apply volume regulation or, as an alternative, not to apply such regulation, the Committee recommended only two of the nine raisin varieties defined under the order for volume regulation this season.

The free and reserve percentages established by this rule release the full trade demand and apply uniformly to all handlers in the industry, regardless of size. Small and large raisin producers and handlers have been operating under volume regulation percentages every year since 1983-84. There are no known additional costs incurred by small handlers that are not incurred by large handlers. All handlers are regulated based on the quantity of raisins which they acquire from producers. While the level of benefits of this rulemaking are difficult to quantify, the stabilizing effects of the volume regulations impact both small and large handlers positively by helping them maintain and expand markets even though raisin supplies fluctuate widely from season to season. Likewise, price stability positively impacts small and large producers by allowing them to better anticipate the revenues their raisins will generate.

There are some reporting, recordkeeping and other compliance requirements under the order. The reporting and recordkeeping burdens are necessary for compliance purposes and for developing statistical data for maintenance of the program. The requirements are the same as those applied last season. Thus, this action will not impose any additional reporting or recordkeeping burdens on either

small or large handlers. The forms require information which is readily available from handler records and which can be provided without data processing equipment or trained statistical staff. As with other, similar marketing order programs, reports and forms are periodically studied to reduce or eliminate duplicate information collection burdens by industry and public sector agencies. In addition, the Department has not identified any relevant Federal rules that duplicate, overlap, or conflict with this rule. Finally, interested persons are invited to submit information on the regulatory and informational impacts of this action on small businesses.

Further, Committee and subcommittee meetings are widely publicized in advance and are held in a location central to the production area. The meetings are open to all industry members, including small business entities, and other interested persons who are encouraged to participate in the deliberations and voice their opinions on topics under discussion. Thus, Committee recommendations can be considered to represent the interests of small business entities in the industry.

After consideration of all relevant material presented, including the Committee's recommendation, and other information, it is found that this interim final rule, as hereinafter set forth, will tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act.

This rule invites comments for a 60-day period on the establishment of final volume regulation percentages for 1997-98 crop Natural and Zante raisins covered under the order. All comments received within the comment period will be considered prior to finalization of this rule.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553, it is also found and determined upon good cause that it is impracticable, unnecessary, and contrary to the public interest to give preliminary notice prior to putting this rule into effect, and that good cause exists for not postponing the effective date of this rule until 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register** because: (1) The relevant provisions of this part require that the percentages designated herein for the 1997-98 crop year apply to all Natural and Zante raisins acquired from the beginning of that crop year; (2) handlers are currently

marketing 1997-98 crop Natural and Zante raisins and this action should be taken promptly to achieve the intended purpose of making the full trade demand available to handlers; (3) handlers are aware of this action, which the Committee unanimously recommended at an open meeting, and need no additional time to comply with these percentages; and (4) this interim final rule provides a 60-day comment period and any comments received will be considered prior to finalization of this rule.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 989

Grapes, Marketing agreements, Raisins, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR part 989 is amended as follows:

PART 989—RAISINS PRODUCED FROM GRAPES GROWN IN CALIFORNIA

1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 989 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601-674.

2. Section 989.251 is added to Subpart—Supplementary Regulations to read as follows:

Note: This section will not appear in the annual Code of Federal Regulations.

§ 989.251 Final free and reserve percentages for the 1997-98 crop year.

The final percentages for standard Natural (sun-dried) Seedless and Zante Currant raisins acquired by handlers during the crop year beginning on August 1, 1997, which shall be free tonnage and reserve tonnage, respectively, are designated as follows:

Varietal type	Free percentage	Reserve percentage
Natural (sun-dried) seedless	66	34
Zante currant	44	56

Dated: March 4, 1998.

Robert C. Keeney,

Deputy Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs.

[FR Doc. 98-6107 Filed 3-9-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

7 CFR Part 1728

Electric Transmission Specifications and Drawings (34.5 kV to 69 kV and 115 kV to 230 kV) for Use on RUS Financed Electric Systems

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is amending its regulations by revising RUS Bulletin 50-2, Transmission Specifications and Drawings 34.5 kV to 69 kV and Bulletin 50-1, Electric Transmission Specifications and Drawings 115 kV to 230 kV. These bulletins have been renumbered to Bulletin 1728F-810 and Bulletin 1728F-811 respectively. These specifications and drawings are incorporated by reference in the CFR. RUS made changes to improve and clarify the bulletins. RUS borrowers and other users of RUS electric transmission line specifications suggested corrections to several drawings. RUS and RUS borrowers have also suggested modifications to clarify and modify some of the drawings. RUS also reformatted these bulletins in accordance with RUS's publications and directives system.

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 9, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Donald G. Heald, Transmission Engineer, Electric Staff Division, Rural Utilities Service, Room 1246-S, STOP 1569, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1569. Telephone (202) 720-9102.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Executive Order 12372

This rule is excluded from the scope of Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Consultation, which may require consultation with State and local officials. A Final Rule-related notice entitled, "Department Programs and Activities Excluded from Executive Order 12372," (50 FR 47034) exempted RUS loans and loan guarantees from coverage under this order.

Executive Order 12866

This rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866 and therefore has not been reviewed by OMB.

Executive Order 12778

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12778, Civil Justice Reform. RUS has determined that this

rule meets the applicable standards provided in sec. 3. of the Executive Order.

Regulatory Flexibility Act Certification

The Administrator of RUS has determined that a rule relating to the RUS electric loan program is not a rule as defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) and, therefore, the Regulatory Flexibility Act does not apply to this final rule.

Information Collection and Recordkeeping Requirements

This rule contains no reporting or recordkeeping provisions requiring Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35.)

National Environmental Policy Act Certification

The Administrator of RUS has determined that this rule will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment as defined by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*). Therefore, this action does not require an environmental impact statement or assessment.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

The program described by this proposed rule is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Programs under number 10.850, Rural Electrification Loans and Loan Guarantees. This catalog is available on a subscription basis from the Superintendent of Documents, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325.

Unfunded Mandates

This rule contains no Federal mandates (under the regulatory provision of Title II of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act) for State, local, and tribal governments or the private sector. Thus, this rule is not subject to the requirements of section 202 and 205 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

Background

RUS amends 7 CFR chapter XVII, part 1728, Electric Standards and Specifications for Materials and Construction, by revising RUS Bulletin 50-1, Electric Transmission Specifications and Drawings, 115 kV to 230 kV, and RUS Bulletin 50-2, Electric Transmission Specifications and Drawings, 34.5 kV to 69 kV, and renumbering them as Bulletins 1728F-811 and 1728F-810, respectively.