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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains regulatory documents having general applicability and legal effect, most of which are keyed to and codified in the Code of Federal Regulations, which is published under 50 titles pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 1510.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

7 CFR Part 1792

RIN 0572-AB47

Seismic Safety

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Services (RUS) is amending its regulation to update and simplify the requirements of the agency. This final rule provides RUS borrowers, grant recipients, Rural Telephone Bank (RTB) borrowers and the public with updated rules for compliance with seismic safety requirements for new building construction using RUS or RTB loan, grant or guaranteed funds or funds provided through lien accommodations or subordinations approved by RUS or RTB. These revisions will identify model codes and standards found to provide a required level of seismic safety.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 8, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Donald Heald, Structural Engineer, Transmission Branch, Electric Staff Division, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 1569, Washington, DC 20250-1569. Telephone: (202) 720-9102. Fax: (202) 720-7491.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

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 the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Executive Order 12372

This rule is excluded from the scope of Executive Order 12372,

Intergovernmental Consultation, which may require consultation with state and local offices. See the final rule related notice entitled "Department Programs and Activities Excluded from Executive Order 12372" (50 FR 47034).

Executive Order 12988

This rule has been reviewed in accordance with Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. RUS has determined that this rule meets the applicable standards provided in section 3 of the Executive Order. In addition, all State and local laws and regulations that are in conflict with this rule will be preempted; no retroactive effect will be given to this rule; and, in accordance with § 212(e) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6912(e)) administrative appeals procedure, if any are required, must be exhausted prior to initiating litigation against the Department or its agencies.

Regulatory Flexibility Act Certification

The Administrator of RUS has determined that this rule will not have significant impact on a substantial number of small entities defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). The RUS and RTB loan programs provide borrowers with loans at interest rates and terms that are more favorable than those generally available from the private sector. Borrowers, as a result of obtaining federal financing, receive economic benefits that exceed any direct cost associated with RUS regulations and requirements.

Information Collection and Recordkeeping Requirements

The reporting and recordkeeping requirements contained in this rule has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under OMB Control No. 0572-0099, pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Send questions or comments regarding this burden or any other aspect of these collections of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Stop 1522, Washington, DC 20250-1522.

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 programs covered by this rule are listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance programs under numbers 10.850, Rural Electrification Loans and Loan Guarantees; 10.851, Rural Telephone Loans and Loan Guarantees; 10.852, Rural Telephone Bank Loans; 10.760, Water and Waste Disposal System for Rural Communities; 10.764, Resource Conservation Development Loans, and 10.765, Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Loans.

This catalog is available on a subscription basis from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325. Telephone: (202) 512-1800.

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 sections 202 and 205 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

Background

RUS requires borrowers and grant recipients to meet applicable requirements mandated by Federal statutes and regulations to obtain RUS financing. One such requirement is compliance with building safety provisions of the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977, (42 U.S.C. 7701 *et seq.*) as implemented pursuant to Executive Order 12699, Seismic Safety of Federal and Federally Assisted or Regulated New Building Construction (3 CFR, 1990 Comp., pg. 269).

Subpart C of this part codifies the policies and requirements that RUS and RTB borrowers and grant recipients must meet for new building construction when using funds

provided or guaranteed by RUS or RTB (or when obtained through a lien accommodation or subordination approved by RUS or RTB).

The Executive Order requires all Federal agencies to ensure that any new building which is leased for federal users or purchased or constructed with federal assistance is designed and constructed in accordance with appropriate seismic design standards. Those standards must be equivalent to or exceed the seismic safety levels in the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) recommended provisions for the development of seismic regulations for new buildings. The Executive Order charges the Interagency Committee on Seismic Safety in Construction (ICSSC) with recommending appropriate and cost-effective seismic design, construction standards and practices.

The ICSSC has identified several model codes and standards that provide an acceptable level of seismic safety. The existing regulation in this subpart is revised to identify new model codes or standards which are equivalent to the 1994 NEHRP Recommended Provisions for the Development of Seismic Regulations for New Buildings.

A proposed rule was published May 26, 2000, at 65 FR 34125, with the comment period ending July 25, 2000. No comments were received in response to the proposed rule.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 1792

Buildings and facilities, Electric power, Grant programs, Loan programs, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Rural area, Seismic safety, Telephone.

For reasons contained in the preamble, chapter XVII of title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations is amended to read as follows:

PART 1792—COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER FEDERAL STATUTES, REGULATIONS, AND EXECUTIVE ORDERS

1. The authority citation for this part is revised to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*, 1921 *et seq.*, 6941 *et seq.*, and 42 U.S.C. 7701 *et seq.*

Subpart C—Seismic Safety

2. Section 1792.101 is amended by revising paragraph (b) and removing paragraphs (c), (d), and (e), to read as follows:

§ 1792.101 General.

* * * * *

(b) This subpart identifies acceptable seismic standards which must be

employed in new building construction funded by loans, grants, or guarantees made by the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) or the Rural Telephone Bank (RTB) (or through lien accommodations or subordinations approved by RUS or RTB).

3. Section 1792.102 is amended by revising the definitions for “RUS” and “Seismic,” removing “REA,” and adding the definition of “Model Code” to read as follows:

§ 1792.102 Definitions.

* * * * *

Model Code—A building code developed for the adoption of local or state authorities or to be used as the basis of a local or state building code.

* * * * *

RUS—Rural Utilities Service, and for the purposes of this subpart, shall include the Rural Telephone Bank. For the purposes of RTB borrowers, as used in this subpart, RUS means RTB and Administrator means Governor.

Seismic—Related to or caused by earthquakes.

* * * * *

4. Sections 1792.103 and 1792.104 are revised to read as follows:

§ 1792.103 Seismic design and construction standards for new buildings.

(a) In the design and construction of federally assisted buildings, the borrowers and grant recipients must utilize the seismic provisions of the most recent edition of those standards and practices that are substantially equivalent to or exceed the seismic safety level in the most recent or immediately preceding edition of the NEHRP Recommended Provisions for the Development of Seismic Regulation for New Buildings.

(b) Each of the following model codes or standards has been found to provide a level of seismic safety substantially equivalent to that provided by the use of the 1994 NEHRP Recommended Provisions and appropriate for federally assisted new building construction:

(1) 1997 International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO) Uniform Building Code. Copies are available from ICBO, Austin Regional Office, 9300 Jollyville Road, Suite 101, Austin, Texas 78759-7455.

(2) 1995 American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) 7, *Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures*. Copies are available from ASCE, 345 East 47th Street, New York, New York 10017-2398.

(c) The NEHRP Recommended Provisions for the Development of Seismic Regulations for New Buildings is available from the Office of

Earthquakes and Natural Hazards, Federal Emergency Management Agency, 500 C Street, SW., Washington, DC 20472.

§ 1792.104 Seismic acknowledgments.

For each applicable building, borrowers and grant recipients must provide RUS a written acknowledgment from a registered architect or engineer responsible for the design stating that seismic provisions pursuant to § 1792.103(b) will be used in the design of the building. This acknowledgement will include the identification and date of the model code or standard that is used for the seismic design of the building project and the seismic factor for the building location.

Dated: December 1, 2000.

Jill Long Thompson,

Under Secretary, Rural Development.

[FR Doc. 00-31296 Filed 12-7-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

18 CFR Part 11

[Docket No. RM86-2-000]

Update of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Fees Schedule for Annual Charges for the Use of Government Lands

November 28, 2000.

AGENCY: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Final rule; update of Federal land use fees.

SUMMARY: On May 8, 1987, the Commission issued its final rule amending Part 11 of its regulations (Order No. 469, 52 FR 18201 (May 14, 1987)). The final rule revised the billing procedures for annual charges for administering Part I of the Federal Power Act, the billing procedures for charges for Federal dam and land use, and the methodology for assessing Federal land use charges.

In accordance with the Commission's regulations, the Commission by its designee, the Executive Director, is updating its schedule of fees for the use of government lands. The yearly update is based on the most recent schedule of fees for the use of linear rights-of-way prepared by the United States Forest Service. Since the next fiscal year will cover the period from October 1, 2000, through September 30, 2001, the fees in