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from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington DC 20402, or from another source as identified. Costs for these publications are established in conformance with 7 CFR part 1.

§ 1700.3 Requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

Department of Agriculture procedures for requests for official records under the Freedom of Information Act are found at 7 CFR part 1. Requests must be in writing and may be submitted in person or by mail to United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Room 0164-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0742, Washington, DC 20250-0742; or by FAX to 202-720-1915. As set forth in 7 CFR 1.16, fees may be charged for processing of requests for records. An appeal of the agency determination concerning the request for official records shall be made in writing to the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Room 4051-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 1510, Washington, DC 20250-1500.

§ 1700.4 Public comments on proposed rules.

RUS requires that all persons submitting comments to a proposed rule or other document published by the agency in the FEDERAL REGISTER submit, in hard copy, a signed original and three copies of their comments to the address shown in the preamble to the proposed rule. Copies of comments submitted are available to the public in conformance with 7 CFR part 1.

§§ 1700.5-1700.24 [Reserved]

Subpart B—Agency Organization and Functions

§ 1700.25 Office of the Administrator.

The Administrator, who also serves as Governor of the RTB, is appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Under Secretary, Rural Development delegated to the Administrator, in 7 CFR part 2, responsibility for administering the programs and activities of RUS and RTB. The Administrator is aided directly by Deputy Administrators and

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by Assistant Administrators for the electric program, telecommunications program, the water and environmental programs, and program accounting and regulatory analysis, and by other staff offices. The work of the agency is carried out as described in this part.

§ 1700.26 Deputy Administrators.

Deputy Administrators aid and assist the Administrator. The Deputy Administrator, Program Policy and Telecommunications, provides overall policy direction to all RUS programs and directs and coordinates the telecommunications programs. The Deputy Administrator, Water and Environmental Programs, directs and coordinates the agency's water and waste disposal programs. The Deputy Administrators review agency policies in these areas and, as necessary, implement changes, and participate with the Administrator and other officials in planning and formulating the programs and activities of the agency, including the making and servicing of loans and grants.

§ 1700.27 Electric Program.

RUS, through the Electric Program, makes loans and loan guarantees for rural electrification and the furnishing of electric service to persons in rural areas.

(a) *The Assistant Administrator, Electric Program*, directs and coordinates the rural electrification programs, participating with the Administrator, and others, in planning and formulating the programs and activities of the agency, and performs other activities as the Administrator may prescribe from time to time.

(b) *Primary point of contact with borrowers.* Two regional divisions, one for the Northern Region and one for the Southern Region, are the primary points of contact between RUS and its electric distribution borrowers. Each office administers the rural electric program for its assigned geographical area through headquarters staff and general field representatives. The Power Supply Division is the primary point of contact between RUS and its electric power supply borrowers.

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(c) *Staff office.* The Electric Staff Division is responsible for engineering aspects of RUS' standards, specifications and other requirements for design, construction, and technical operation and maintenance of RUS borrowers' electric systems. The Electric Staff Division oversees the activities of Technical Standards Committees "A" and "B", Electric, which determine whether engineering specifications, drawings, material and equipment are acceptable for use in RUS borrowers' electric systems. The Office of the Assistant Administrator prepares analyses of loan making activities and the business and regulatory environment of RUS borrowers and recommends policies and procedures.

§ 1700.28 Telecommunications Program.

RUS and RTB, through the Telecommunications Program, make loans and loan guarantees to furnish and improve telecommunications service in rural areas.

(a) *The Assistant Administrator, Telecommunications Program,* directs and coordinates the rural telecommunications programs, including the distance learning and telemedicine program, and in conjunction with the Administrator and Deputy Administrator, and others, the planning and formulating of programs and activities of the agency, and performs other activities as the Administrator may prescribe from time to time.

(b) *Primary point of contact with borrowers.* Area offices are the primary points of contact between RUS and all telecommunications program borrowers. Each office administers the rural telecommunications program for its assigned geographical area with assistance of field representatives located in areas assigned to them.

(c) *Staff offices.* The Telecommunications Staff Division is responsible for engineering aspects of design, construction, and technical operation and maintenance of rural telecommunications systems and facilities, including the activities of Technical Standards Committees "A" and "B", Telecommunications, which determine whether engineering specifications, drawings, material, and equipment are

acceptable for use in RUS financed telecommunications systems. The Advanced Telecommunications Services office prepares analyses of loan making activities and the business and regulatory environment of RUS borrowers and recommends policies and procedures.

[63 FR 16085, Apr. 2, 1998; 63 FR 18307, Apr. 15, 1998]

§ 1700.29 Water and Environmental Programs.

RUS, through the Water and Environmental Programs, provides loan and grant funds for water and waste disposal projects serving the most financially needy rural communities.

(a) *The Assistant Administrator, Water and Environmental Programs,* develops and institutes plans, procedures, and policies for the effective, efficient, and orderly management of Water and Environmental Programs responsibilities; provides leadership to ensure execution of policies and procedures by the Water and Waste Disposal programs and support functions; and performs other activities as the Administrator or Deputy Administrator may prescribe from time to time.

(b) *Primary point of contact.* The State Rural Development Offices are the primary points of contact between RUS and loan and grant recipients.

(c) *The Engineering and Environmental Staff* is responsible for engineering staff activities at all stages of Water and Waste Disposal programs implementation, including review of preliminary engineering plans and specifications, procurement practices, contract awards, construction monitoring, and system operation and maintenance. This staff develops agency engineering practices, policies, guidelines, and technical data relating to the construction and operation of water and waste disposal systems, and for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, and other environmental requirements as they apply to all agency programs and activities.

§ 1700.30 Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program.

RUS, through the Telecommunications Program, makes grants and