

(ii) At least one of the merging parties is an active distribution borrower, all merging parties are either active distribution borrowers of former distribution borrowers, and the merger is effective after December 19, 1996.

[61 FR 66871, Dec. 19, 1996, as amended at 67 FR 58322, Sept. 16, 2002]

§ 1717.155 Transitional assistance affecting new and preexisting loans.

Requests for transitional assistance affecting new and preexisting loans must be received by RUS no later than 2 years after the effective date.

(a) *Section 12 deferments.* (1) Section 12 of the RE Act (7 U.S.C. 912) allows RUS to extend the time of payment of interest or principal of RUS loans. Section 12 deferments do not extend the final maturity of the loan; lower payments during the deferment period result in higher payments later. Therefore, RUS may approve a Section 12 deferment of loan payments of up to 5 years only if such deferments will help to avoid substantial increases in retail electric rates during the transition period, without placing borrowers in financial stress after the deferment period.

(2) Section 12 deferment may be available following any merger where at least one of the merging parties is an active borrower.

(b) *Coverage ratios.* Required levels for coverage ratios are set forth in 7 CFR 1710.114 and in the loan documents. RUS may approve a plan, on a case by case basis, that provides for a phase-in period for these coverage ratios of up to 5 years from the effective date. Under such a plan the successor would be permitted to project and achieve lower levels for one or more of these coverage ratios during the phase-in period.

(1) A phase-in plan for coverage ratios must provide a pro forma level for each ratio during each year of the phase-in period and be supported by a financial forecast covering a period of not less than 10 years from the effective date of the merger. The plan must demonstrate that a minimum TIER level of 1.00 will be achieved in each year, that trends will be generally favorable, that the borrower will achieve the levels required in its loan documents and RUS regulations by the end

of the phase-in period, and that these levels will be maintained in subsequent years.

(2) In reviewing phase-in plans for coverage ratios, RUS will review rates, rate disparity, and likely mitigating effects of the proposed phase-in plan.

(3) The borrower is responsible for obtaining approvals of supplemental lenders.

(4) Upon RUS approval of a phase-in plan, the levels in that plan will be substituted for the levels required in the borrower's preexisting loan documents and will be incorporated in any new loan or security documents.

(5) A phase in plan for coverage ratios may be available if:

(i) All parties to the merger are active distribution borrowers, or

(ii) At least one of the merging parties is an active distribution borrower, all merging parties are either active distribution borrowers or former distribution borrowers, and the merger is effective after December 19, 1996.

§ 1717.156 Transitional assistance affecting preexisting loans.

The fund advance period for an insured loan, which is the period during which RUS may advance loan funds to a borrower, terminates automatically after a specific period of time. See 7 CFR 1714.56. If, on the effective date the original fund advance period or the fund advance period as extended pursuant to 7 CFR 1714.56(c), on any preexisting RUS loan to any of the active borrowers involved in a merger has not terminated, such fund advance period shall be automatically lengthened by 2 years. On the borrower's request RUS will prepare documents necessary for the advance of loan funds. RUS will prepare documents for the borrower's execution that will reflect this extension and will provide the legal authority for RUS to advance funds to the successor.

§ 1717.157 Requests for transitional assistance.

(a) If the merger requires RUS approval, the borrower should, where possible, indicate that it desires transitional assistance at the time it requests approval of the merger. The formal request for transitional assistance