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7 CFR Ch. XVII (1-1-03 Edition)

(4) Loan closing and servicing activities that do not alter the purpose, operation, location, or design of the proposal as originally approved, such as subordinations, amendments and revisions to approved actions, and the provision of additional financial assistance for cost overruns.

§ 1794.22 Categorically excluded proposals requiring an ER.

(a) *Electric and telecommunications programs.* Applications for financial assistance for the types of proposed actions listed in this section normally require the submission of an ER and are subject to the requirements of § 1794.32. Proposed actions within this classification are:

(1) Construction of electric power lines and associated facilities designed for or capable of operation at a nominal voltage of either:

(i) Less than 69 kilovolts (kV);

(ii) Less than 230 kV if no more than 25 miles (40.2 kilometers) of line are involved; or

(iii) 230 kV or greater involving no more than three miles (4.8 kilometers) of line;

(2) Construction of buried and aerial telecommunications lines, cables, and related facilities;

(3) Construction of microwave facilities, SCADA, and energy management systems involving no more than five acres (2 hectares) of physical disturbance at any single site;

(4) Construction of cooperative or company headquarters, maintenance facilities, or other buildings involving no more than 10 acres (4 hectares) of physical disturbance or fenced property;

(5) Changes to existing transmission lines that involve less than 20 percent pole replacement, or the complete rebuilding of existing distribution lines within the same ROW. Changes to existing transmission lines that require 20 percent or greater pole replacement will be considered the same as new construction;

(6) Changes or additions to existing substations, switching stations, telecommunications switching or multiplexing centers, or external changes to buildings or small structures requiring one acre (0.4 hectare) or more but no

more than five acres (2 hectares) of new physically disturbed land or fenced property;

(7) Construction of substations, switching stations, or telecommunications switching or multiplexing centers requiring no more than five acres (2 hectares) of new physically disturbed land or fenced property;

(8) Construction of diesel electric generating facilities of five megawatts (MW) (nameplate rating) or less either at an existing generation or substation sites. This category also applies to a diesel electric generating facility of five MW or less that is located at or adjacent to an existing landfill site and supplied with refuse derived fuel. All new associated facilities and related electric power lines shall be covered in the ER;

(9) Additions to or the replacement of existing generating units at a hydroelectric facility or dam which result in no change in the normal maximum surface area or normal maximum surface elevation of the existing impoundment. All new associated facilities and related electric power lines shall be covered in the ER;

(10) Construction of new water supply wells and associated pipelines not located within the boundaries of an existing well field or generating station site; and

(11) Purchase of existing facilities or a portion thereof where use or operation will remain unchanged. The results of a facility environmental audit can be substituted for the ER.

(b) *Water and waste program.* For certain proposed actions, applications for financial assistance normally require the submittal of an ER as part of the PER. These types of actions are subject to the requirements of § 1794.32. Proposed actions within this classification are:

(1) Rehabilitation of existing facilities, functional replacement or rehabilitation of equipment, or the construction of new ancillary facilities adjacent or appurtenant to existing facilities, including but not limited to, replacement of utilities such as water or sewer lines and appurtenances for existing users with modest or moderate growth potential, reconstruction of curbs and sidewalks, street repaving,

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and building modifications, renovations, and improvements;

(2) Facility improvements to meet current needs with a modest change in use, size, capacity, purpose or location from the original facility. The proposed action must be designed for predominantly residential use with other new or expanded users being small-scale, commercial enterprises having limited secondary impacts;

(3) Construction of new facilities that are designed to serve not more than 500 EDUs and with modest growth potential. The proposed action must be designed for predominantly residential use with other users being small-scale, commercial enterprises having limited secondary impacts;

(4) The extension, enlargement or construction of interceptors, collection, transmission or distribution lines within a one-mile (1.6-kilometer) limit from existing service areas estimated from any boundary listed as follows:

(i) The corporate limits of the community being served;

(ii) If there are developed areas immediately contiguous to the corporate limits of a community, the limits of these developed areas; or

(iii) If an unincorporated area is to be served, the limits of the developed areas;

(5) Installation of new water supply wells or water storage facilities that are required by a regulatory authority or standard engineering practice as a backup to existing production well(s) or as reserve for fire protection;

(6) Actions described in §1794.21(c)(4) which alter the purpose, operation, location, or design of the proposed action as originally approved, and such alteration is equivalent in magnitude or type as described in paragraphs (b)(1) through (b)(5) of this section; and

(7) The lease or disposal of real property by RUS, which may result in a change in use of the real property in the reasonably foreseeable future and such change, is equivalent in magnitude or type as described in paragraphs (b)(1) through (b)(5).

(c) *Specialized criteria for not granting a CE for water and waste projects.* An EA must be prepared if a proposed action normally classified as a CE meets any of the following:

(1) Will either create a new or relocate an existing discharge to or a withdrawal from surface or ground waters;

(2) Will result in substantial increases in the volume or the loading of pollutants from an existing discharge to receiving waters;

(3) Will cause a substantial increase in the volume of withdrawal from surface or ground waters at an existing site; or

(4) Would provide capacity to serve more than 500 EDUs or a 30 percent increase in the existing population whichever is larger.

§ 1794.23 Proposals normally requiring an EA.

RUS will normally prepare an EA for all proposed actions which are neither categorical exclusions (§§1794.21 and 1794.22) nor normally requiring an EIS (§1794.25). For certain actions within this class, scoping and document procedures contained in §§1794.50 through 1794.54 shall be followed (see §1794.24). The following are proposed actions which normally require an EA and shall be subject to the requirements of §§1794.40 through 1794.44.

(a) *General.* Issuance or modification of RUS regulations concerning environmental matters.

(b) *Telecommunications and water and waste programs.* An EA shall be prepared for applications for financial assistance for all proposed actions not specifically defined as a CE or otherwise specifically categorized by the Administrator on a case-by-case basis.

(c) *Electric program.* Applications for financial assistance for certain proposed actions normally require the preparation of an EA. Proposed actions falling within this classification are:

(1) Construction of combustion turbine or diesel generating facilities of 50 MW (nameplate rating) or less at a new site (no existing generating capacity) except for items covered by §1794.22(a)(8). All new associated facilities and related electric power lines shall be covered in the EA;

(2) Construction of combustion turbine or diesel generating facilities of 100 MW (nameplate rating) or less at an existing generating site, except for items covered by §1794.22(a)(8). All new