This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request; 30-Day Federal Register Notice; National Agricultural Statistics Service

Title: Fast Track Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

OMB Control Number: 0535—New.

Summary of Collection: Executive Order 12862 directs Federal agencies to provide service to the public that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector. Improving National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) programs requires ongoing assessment of service delivery, by which we mean systematic review of the operation of a program, the quality, usability, and ease of accessing our surveys and public information compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the continuous improvement of the program.

Need and Use of the Information: The information collection activity will garner qualitative customer and stakeholder feedback in an efficient, timely manner, in accordance with the Administration’s commitment to improving service delivery. By qualitative feedback we mean information that provides useful insights on perceptions and opinions, but are not statistical surveys that yield quantitative results that can be generalized to the population of study. This feedback will provide insights into customer or stakeholder perceptions, experiences and expectations, provide an early warning of issues with service, or focus attention on areas where communication, training or changes in operations might improve delivery of products or services. These collections will allow for ongoing, collaborative and actionable communications between NASS and its customers and stakeholders. It will allow feedback to contribute directly to the improvement of program management.

Feedback collected under this generic clearance will provide useful information, but it will not yield data that can be generalized to the overall population. This type of generic clearance for qualitative information will not be used for quantitative information collections that are designed to yield reliably actionable results, such as monitoring trends over time or documenting program performance. Such data uses require more rigorous designs that address: The target population to which generalizations will be made, the sampling frame, the sample design (including stratification and clustering), the precision requirements or power calculations that justify the proposed sample size, the expected response rate, methods for assessing potential non-response bias, the protocols for data collection, and any testing procedures that were or will be undertaken prior to fielding the study. Depending on the degree of influence the results are likely to have, such collections may still be eligible for submission for other generic mechanisms that are designed to yield quantitative results.

Description of Respondents: Farms; Business or other for-profit; Not-for-profit Institutions and State, Local or Tribal Government.

Number of Respondents: 120,000.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion.

Total Burden Hours: 8,375.

Charlene Parker,
Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

BILLING CODE 3410–20–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Announcement of Loan Refinancing Procedures, and Deadlines for the Refinancing of Federal Financing Bank Loans Pilot Program (Refinancing Program)

AGENCY: Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service (RUS), USDA.

ACTION: Notice of solicitation for letters of intent.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is soliciting Letters of Intent and opening a window for a pilot program to refinance a loan, or any part thereof, consisting of one or more whole but not partial advance(s), made under a loan by the Federal Financing Bank (FFB) and guaranteed by RUS. RUS is announcing the process for the Refinancing of Federal Financing Bank Loans Pilot Program (Refinancing Program) made to RUS Electric Program borrowers operating as an electric utility (Eligible entity). This notice describes the eligibility requirements, the process and deadlines, and the criteria that will be used by RUS to assess refinancing requests from Eligible entities with outstanding FFB debt. The Refinancing Program will refinance a higher interest rate loan or a portion thereof i.e., one or more advance under a FFB loan at the interest rate available as of the date of the advance of the new FFB loan used to refinance the outstanding FFB loan. A new FFB loan will be advanced to prepay the FFB loan. A maximum amount for refinancing per Eligible entity is also being announced. The new FFB loan will be made for the amount identified solely by FFB and RUS to prepay the outstanding FFB loan together with the required prepayment premium, if applicable. In order to maximize the Refinancing Program and the benefits to electric consumers, the Eligible entity will have the option of paying the prepayment premium or rolling the amount into the new FFB loan. The Refinancing Program is made available under Section 749 of the Public Law 115–31, Consolidated Appropriations, Act 2017 (section 749).

DATES: To be considered for this program, borrowers must submit their documentation no later than the dates set forth herein. Failure to comply with the following deadlines will prevent RUS from considering the borrower for the Refinancing Program.

Step 1: To be considered for the Refinancing Program an Eligible entity must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI), as provided herein, in an electronic Portable Document Format (PDF) by electronic mail (email) to REFINANCE-EP@RD.usda.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. (EST) on November 17, 2017. Late or incomplete Letters of Intent will not be considered by RUS for this
Refunding Program. No exceptions will be made.

Step 2: RUS will evaluate all LOI’s received by the deadline identified above. If the dollar amount for all eligible requests is less than the total dollar amount authorized by Congress for this pilot program requests will be processed in the order in which they were received. If the amount requested exceeds the total amount authorized by Congress, RUS will prioritize all requests, in the manner stated below.

Step 3: An Eligible entity will be notified of its acceptance by means of an Invitation to proceed. Only, after a borrower is notified of its acceptance for the Refinancing Program, will an estimate of the amount due, including the prepayment premium, if any, be provided. An Eligible entity will have seven (7) business days to notify RUS of its intent to proceed to refinance and whether the prepayment premium, if any, will be paid, in full, or rolled into the new FFB loan. If RUS has not been notified of such intent to proceed, within the time limit, the request will be denied. See below for the additional steps necessary to document and complete the refinancing.

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS IN SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**: For the purpose of the Refinancing Program, the following terms have the following meanings:

- **Administrative Procedure Act Statement**: This Notice of Solicitation for Letters of Intent (NOSA) is being issued without advance rulemaking or public comment. The Administrative Procedure Act of 1946, as amended (5 U.S.C. 553) (APA), has several exemptions to rulemaking requirements. Among them is an exception for a matter relating to “loans, grants, benefits, or contracts.” Furthermore, the 30 day effective date policy is accepted for “good cause.” USDA has determined, consistent with the APA that making these funds available under this NOSA for the Refinancing Program is in the public interest since the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2017, (Pub. L. 115–31) appropriated a budget authority of $600,000,000 on the condition that refinancing involved will benefit the ratepayers of the Eligible entity. As such, the timely submission and processing of all requests and documents is necessary in order to maximize the savings and benefit rural ratepayers. Delays in processing requests would most likely have the effect of decreasing the potential savings resulting from such refinancing of outstanding debt. In order to do this, the Agency decided to move forward with developing procedures for the Refinancing Program within a NOSA instead of rulemaking in order to meet the statutory mandate to implement this new program. The Agency intends to test this new program this year with available funds under this NOSA and will revisit it if permanent authority for the program is granted.

- **A. Program Description**
- **B. Federal Award Information**
- **C. Eligibility Information**
- **D. Submission Information**
- **E. Agency Review of Letter of Intent and Process for Proceeding**
- **F. Federal Awarding Agency Contact**
- **G. Other Information**

**B. Federal Award Information**

This is a pilot program authorized under section 749 of the Public Law 115–31, Consolidated Appropriations Act 2017 (section 749). Pursuant to section 749, RUS announces this pilot program which authorizes no more than $600 million in funds from loans made by the Federal Financing Bank (FFB) that are guaranteed under section 306 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (the Act) to be used for refinancing debt pursuant to section 306C of the Act, including any associated prepayment penalties and prepayment or refinance premium. Eligible entities must demonstrate that the refinancing of the FFB loan will benefit its ratepayers. No waiver of any prepayment premium will be granted;
however, an Eligible entity may include the prepayment premium in the new FFB loan amount used for refinancing (the remaining principal balance outstanding plus interest and any prepayment premium). The amount of the new FFB loan will be the estimated amount necessary for such purpose. Any amount not required to pay in full to refinance the unpaid and outstanding FFB loan will be rescinded by RUS and not available for Advance without any further action required by the Eligible entity. As such, time is of the essence in documenting and advancing the new FFB loan.

Refinancing of a FFB loan under the Refinancing Program is not subject to section (c)(4) of section 306C of the Act (7 U.S.C. 936C(c)(4), which prohibits refinancing a FFB loan with a maturity date that exceeds the years remaining on the FFB loan before refinancing. Under the Refinancing Program, an Eligible entity will be allowed to select a maturity (not to exceed the final maturity date) for the Advance made under the new FFB note and select a new final maturity date not to exceed thirty-five (35) years. This additional flexibility and new final maturity date will further financially benefit the Eligible entity and its ratepayers. RUS will evaluate the requested FFB loan final maturity date to ensure that RUS continues to be adequately secured and that the new FFB loan will be repaid in the time agreed upon. In order to maximize the Refinancing Program, an Eligible entity will have the option of paying the prepayment premium, if any, on the due date or rolling the prepayment premium into the amount of the new FFB loan.

B. Federal Award Information

Type of Award: Loan.
Fiscal Year 2017 Funds: Not more than $600 million.

Authority: The Refinancing Program is a pilot program to be carried out by the Rural Utilities Service pursuant to Section 749 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2017, Public Law 115–51, May 5, 2017.

C. Eligibility Information

Eligible entity, as defined above.

D. Submission Information

1. Letter of Intent

Interested parties must send an email to the contact listed in FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section of this Notice to obtain an electronic sample of the Letter of Intent. The sample Letter of Intent can be found online using the following web address: http://www.rd.usda.gov/Refinancing/.

2. Content of Letter of Intent

An Eligible entity must submit the required information in its Letter of Intent (LOI). FFB loan refinancing will be processed in a multi-step process as described herein. An Eligible entity must submit all the information identified in the Letter of Intent “Request for Refinancing of FFB Loan” available online at the following web address: http://www.rd.usda.gov/Refinancing/.

a. Letter of Intent. The following information (information is available on borrower’s quarterly Statement of Account and Transactions (bill)) must be included in the LOI (as noted above incomplete LOI’s will not be considered) so please review for completeness of information:

i. FFB loan identification of each Future Advance Promissory Note payable to FFB (for example, “R8”) and the Note Designation (ex 000000000000423, 0000000000000425), including the following:
(A) Identify the FFB Advance identifier (account number ex. H0015, H0045) of each Advance that will be refinanced;
(B) Specify whether one or more Advances will be refinanced (partial advances will not be considered);
(C) Identify the date of each Advance that will be refinanced;
(D) Identify the interest rate of each Advance;
(E) Specify the amount outstanding for each Advance that will be refinanced on latest quarterly bill;
(F) List all Advances in order of their refinancing priority (due to cap identified below) (all FFB loans intended to be refinanced should be prioritized and listed in case additional funds are available for this Refinancing Program); and
(G) A contact name, number and email.

ii. Short narrative demonstrating how the refinancing of the FFB loan will benefit its rate payers including, but not limited, to estimated savings to ratepayers, increased investment in energy efficiency or plant modernization, other factors resulting from savings associated with the refinancing, etc.

iii. Requested final maturity date for the new FFB loan. The requested final maturity date must be for a period not to exceed thirty-five years. An Eligible entity must submit a certification stating that the remaining useful life of its electric system is equal to or exceeds the new requested final maturity date and, that the requested final maturity date does not exceed the term of its wholesale power contract with its members or with its generation and transmission supplier. If the remaining useful life of its electric system or the wholesale power contract term is less than the final maturity date requested, the final maturity date will be modified for a shorter period.

b. After evaluating the request and the information specified below, RUS will send an Invitation to proceed identifying the FFB loan that will be refinanced and describing the next steps in the process. Additionally, RUS together with FFB will provide an estimate of the maximum principal amount of the new FFB loan needed to refinance the selected FFB loan and the estimated amount of the prepayment premium, if any. An Eligible entity will make its regularly scheduled quarterly payment on the FFB loan. The initial estimate will be for the first business day after the end of the quarter.

However, an Eligible entity may select another date in the quarter that is not the last day of the quarter to refinance its FFB loan. If a day other than the first day is chosen, all accrued interest, applicable fees and premium are due and payable on or before the refinancing day. RUS and FFB retain the right to move the refinancing date to another business day in the quarter if there are too many to process on any one day.

c. An Eligible entity will have seven business days to confirm, in writing, (including email) its intent to proceed with the refinancing, whether it will pay the prepayment premium, in full, on the refinancing date or roll the amount into the new FFB loan and a final prioritization of only the previously RUS accepted and identified FFB loan, up to the cap amount.

d. Upon receipt of the confirmation of the intent to proceed, an Eligible entity will receive a Conditional commitment letter that must be executed and the terms, conditions, if any, and the amount of the FFB loan accepted by the Eligible entity. The Eligible entity will then receive an FFB note and RUS Reimbursement note to execute. If necessary, authentication by its indenture trustee will be required. A supplemental indenture or other security instrument and related documents may be required to secure the FFB note and RUS Reimbursement note.

e. An Eligible entity must return the executed FFB note and RUS Reimbursement note together with its Advance Request, attached as Annex A to the FFB note, and any other required loan documents in a timely manner, as set forth in Section E. 3. d. The Advance
3. Compliance With Other Federal Statutes

No additional compliance verification is necessary.

4. Funding Restriction

See below.

5. Submission Requirements

The refinancing process consists of several steps.

a. To be considered for the Refinancing Program for this fiscal year, a Borrower must submit its mandatory Letter of intent, that complies with the requirements in section D (2) of this Notice, in a PDF file, not to exceed 10 MB in size, by electronic mail (email) to

   REFINANCE-EP@RD.usda.gov

   no later than 11:59 p.m. (EST) on November 17, 2017.

b. By submitting the Letter of intent, the Eligible entity indicates to RUS that it intends to participate in the Refinancing Program, as described above and as identified in the LOI. RUS will use the LOI to determine the order in which the LOI was received up to $100 million based on the order in which the LOI was received up to an additional $100 million for each advance. RUS will consider requests received in the order in which the LOI was received up to the maximum principal amount of the FFB note.

c. The borrower must execute and return new FFB note and any other required documents.

E. Agency Review of Letter of Intent and Process for Proceeding

1. Letter of Intent

RUS will consider complete Letters of Intent as they are received. Letters of intent will be reviewed by RUS for completeness.

2. Processing of Requests, Prioritization, and Maximum Refinancing Amount

   a. After evaluating the request and the information specified below, RUS will send an Invitation to proceed to an Eligible entity in the queue, in the order in which the LOI was received up to the maximum principal amount of the FFB note. RUS, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to reduce an Eligible entity’s maximum amount to $75 million if the total amount requested by all Eligible entities exceeds the authorized amount by 50 percent or more to maximize the use of the funds and benefit more Eligible entities and electric consumers/ratepayers.

   b. An Eligible entity will be limited to $100 million for each Advance and the estimated amount of the refinancing. RUS, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to reduce an Eligible entity’s maximum amount to $75 million if the total amount requested by all Eligible entities exceeds the authorized amount by 50 percent or more to maximize the use of the funds and benefit more Eligible entities and electric consumers/ratepayers.

   c. The borrower must execute and return new FFB note and any other required documents.

   d. An Eligible entity must return the executed FFB note and RUS Reimbursement note together with its Advance Request and any other required documents in a timely manner.

   e. An Eligible entity will have seven business days to confirm, in writing, (including email) its intent to proceed with the refinancing, whether it will pay the prepayment premium, in full, on the refinancing date or roll the amount into the new FFB loan, and a final prioritization of an Advance after reviewing the prepayment premium, if any, up to the cap amount. An Eligible entity will not be allowed to add or substitute an Advance based on the estimate. However, an Advance can be deleted from the final refinancing prior to receipt by the Eligible entity of the new FFB note. The final total amount necessary to refinance the FFB loan will be provided by RUS two business days before the scheduled refinancing date.

   f. Upon receipt of the confirmation of the intent to proceed, an Eligible entity will receive a Conditional commitment letter that must be executed and accepted. After that, a new FFB note and RUS Reimbursement note will be sent for execution. If necessary, both notes will need to be authenticated by the Eligible entity’s indenture trustee. A supplemental indenture or other security instrument any related documents may be required to secure the FFB note and RUS Reimbursement note.

   g. If the prepayment premiums will be financed, the maximum principal amount of the FFB note will be rounded up two percent to be sufficient to prepay the amount due. RUS reserves the right to change the rounding amount from two percent, if it determines that two percent is insufficient to accomplish the refinancing due to interest rate volatility. If the maximum principal amount of the executed FFB note is insufficient to cover all amounts due, according to the final amount provided two days in advance of the refinancing date, the Eligible entity is required to pay the deficient amount in full on or before the refinancing date.

h. An Eligible entity must return the executed FFB note and RUS Reimbursement note together with its Advance Request and any other required documents in a timely manner. FFB will require five days to purchase the FFB note after RUS has reviewed and processed the FFB note. The Advance Request, specifying the options chosen, by the Eligible entity, should be marked “REFINANCING.” An Eligible entity will have the option of submitting no more than two Advance Requests (for ex. one for a short term maturity and one long term maturity or one for a long term maturity date and another for the final maturity date). If two are submitted they must be submitted simultaneously,
dated the same date, same Advance request date, and together the amount cannot exceed the maximum principal amount of the FFB note. No funds will be advanced directly to the Eligible entity but will be advanced to prepay the FFB loan, as agreed upon. As such, if all documents have not been returned to RUS by the 15th day of the third month of the quarter, the refinancing date will be moved to the first day of the next quarter.

F. Federal Awarding Agency Contact
Jonathan Claffey, Office of the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Rural Development, United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., STOP 1510, Room 5136–S, Washington, DC 20250–1510; Telephone: (202) 720–0736; Email: jon.claffey@wdc.usda.gov.

G. Other Information
USDA Non-Discrimination Statement
In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720–2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877–8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD–3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form.

To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632–9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: a. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250–9410; b. Facsimile: (202) 690–7442; or c. Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

LIST OF PETITIONS RECEIVED BY EDA FOR CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY FOR TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Firm name</th>
<th>Firm address</th>
<th>Date accepted for investigation</th>
<th>Product(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copper John Corporation ..........</td>
<td>173 State Street, Auburn, NY 13021.</td>
<td>10/3/2017</td>
<td>The firm manufactures bow sights and release aids for the archery market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior Fabrication Company, LLC</td>
<td>17499 South Dolan Street, Kinchelow, MI 49788</td>
<td>10/4/2017</td>
<td>The firm manufactures heavy duty steel components and assemblies, such as masts for forklift trucks and components for medical imaging equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Brand Gear Company ....</td>
<td>145 Cane Creek Industrial Park Road, Suite 100, Fletcher, NC 28732</td>
<td>10/5/2017</td>
<td>The firm manufactures cut and sewn camping and military gear.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any party having a substantial interest in these proceedings may request a public hearing on the matter. A written request for a hearing must be submitted to the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms Division, Room 71030, Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20230, no later than ten (10) calendar days following publication of this notice.

These petitions are received pursuant to section 253 of the Trade Act 1974, as amended.

Please follow the requirements set forth in EDA’s regulations at 13 CFR 315.9 for procedures to request a public hearing. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance official number and title for the program under which these petitions are submitted is 11.313, Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms.

Irette Patterson,
Program Analyst.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economic Development Administration
Notice of Petitions by Firms for Determination of Eligibility To Apply for Trade Adjustment Assistance

AGENCY: Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice and opportunity for public comment.

SUMMARY: The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has received petitions for certification of eligibility to apply for Trade Adjustment Assistance from the firms listed below. Accordingly, EDA has initiated investigations to determine whether increased imports into the United States of articles like or directly competitive with those produced by each of these firms contributed importantly to the total or partial separation of the firm’s workers, or threat thereof, and to a decrease in sales or production of each petitioning firm.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

48480   Federal Register / Vol. 82, No. 200 / Wednesday, October 18, 2017 / Notices