

Notices

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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.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

Processing Public Comments in Agency Rulemaking; Request for Comments

AGENCY: Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS).

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Office of the Chairman of ACUS is requesting public input on federal agency approaches and processes for receiving, publicizing, and responding to comments related to rulemaking proceedings. ACUS is accepting written comments. Responses to this request may inform an ongoing ACUS project, *Processing Public Comments in Agency Rulemaking*, which, if warranted, may recommend best practices for agencies to use.

DATES: Written comments must be received no later than 10:00 a.m. (ET) December 28, 2026.

ADDRESSES: You may submit written comments by email to info@acus.gov (with "Processing Public Comments in Agency Rulemaking" in the subject line of the message), or by U.S. Mail addressed to Processing Public Comments in Agency Rulemaking, Administrative Conference of the United States, Suite 706 South, 1120 20th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036. ACUS will ordinarily post comments on the project web page (<https://www.acus.gov/projects/processing-public-comments-agency-rulemaking>) as they are received. Commenters should not include information, such as personal information or confidential business information, that they do not wish to appear on the ACUS website. For the full ACUS public comment policy, please visit <https://www.acus.gov/policy/public-comment-policy>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Becaja Caldwell, Attorney Advisor,

Administrative Conference of the United States, 1120 20th Street NW, Suite 706 South, Washington, DC 20036; Telephone (202) 480-2080; email bcaldwell@acus.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Administrative Conference Act, 5 U.S.C. 591-596, established the Administrative Conference of the United States. The Conference studies the efficiency, adequacy, and fairness of the administrative procedures used by federal agencies and makes recommendations to agencies, the President, Congress, and the Judicial Conference of the United States for procedural improvements (5 U.S.C. 594(1)). For further information about the Conference and its activities, see www.acus.gov.

Processing Public Comments in Agency Rulemaking

The public notice-and-comment process is an integral part of federal agency rulemaking. It provides an important opportunity for interested persons to share their perspectives, expertise, and experiences relevant to an agency's proposed action. Public comments can help inform an agency's decision making, for example by identifying potential local impacts, implementation challenges, and alternative approaches to regulatory action. Addressing public comments adequately is essential to ensure that final agency actions are based on the best available information, are perceived as legitimate by the public, and are not subsequently set aside on judicial review.¹

While most proposed rules receive few or no public comments, many receive hundreds or thousands of them. Processing voluminous comments requires significant agency resources, but even small numbers of comments may raise complex questions of law and policy that require substantial time and effort to address. Accordingly, agencies must ensure they employ robust procedures for processing comments from intake and analysis to response and resolution of comments.

ACUS is undertaking a project to examine how agencies receive public comments related to rulemaking proceedings; make those comments

available to agency staff, contractors, and the public; analyze the content of the comments; and develop responses to them. The project includes consideration of the organizational practices agencies use to process comments; how agencies use contractors in comment processing; and how agencies procure and use various technological tools (including algorithmic tools) in receiving, analyzing, and responding to comments.

General Topics for Public Comment

ACUS welcomes views, information, and data on all aspects of federal agencies' process for receiving, reviewing, analyzing, and responding to comments in connection with rulemaking proceedings. ACUS invites interested persons to share their experiences with submitting comments on proposed rules or other rulemaking-related requests for information. For example:

A. What has been your experience submitting comments to federal agencies on proposed rules or in response to advance notices of proposed rulemaking or other rulemaking-related requests for information?

B. If you have submitted comments via both *Regulations.gov* and another agency platform, such as the Federal Communications Commission Electronic Comment Filing System, in what ways were the experiences similar? In what ways were they different?

Specific questions that ACUS is examining as part of this study include:

1. Which agencies conduct rulemakings that commonly receive public comments? What are the notable variations in the kinds of rules that receive comments and the quantity and quality of those comments?

2. How do agencies use *Regulations.gov* and the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) to solicit, organize, store, and publish public comments? What agency officials (or contractors) are involved in these processes?

3. Which agencies have developed their own electronic systems to solicit, organize, and store public comments? How do these systems compare to *Regulations.gov* and FDMS?

4. How do agencies conduct comment analysis? What are the primary elements of the agency's comment analysis process? Who is involved in it? What

¹ Admin. Conf. of the U.S., Recommendation 2018-7, *Public Engagement in Rulemaking*, 84 FR 2146 (Feb. 6, 2019).

technologies, if any, do agencies use to analyze comments? How formal or informal is the process?

5. How do agencies develop responses to public comments? How does this stage of the process relate to prior stages? How does the development of comment responses relate to other aspects of developing the final rule? How do public comments affect the substance of final rules?

6. What aspects of agency comment processing procedures seem to be working well and why? For areas where things are not working well, what seem to be the sources of the problems and what are the potential solutions?

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 595.)

Dated: October 21, 2026.

Shawne C. McGibbon,
General Counsel.

[FR Doc. 2026-21742 Filed 10-23-26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6110-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. No. AMS-NOP-26-0199]

National Organic Standards Board Call for Applications and Nominations

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; call for applications or nominations to the Board.

SUMMARY: Through this notice, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is announcing its call for applications and nominations to fill three vacancies on the National Organic Standards Board (Board): one individual who owns or operates an organic farming operation or employee of such individual; one individual who represents a public interest or consumer interest group; and one individual with expertise in the fields of toxicology, ecology, or biochemistry. Appointees will serve a 5-year term beginning in January 2027 and ending in January 2032. Additionally, USDA seeks applications or nominations for a pool of candidates that the Secretary of Agriculture can draw upon as replacement appointees if unexpected vacancies occur.

DATES: Application packages must be received by mail or postmarked on or before December 28, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Applications can be sent via email to Andrew Malone at Andrew.Malone@usda.gov, or mailed to: USDA-AMS-NOP, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 2642-S., Ag Stop 0268, Washington, DC 20250-0268. Electronic submittals are preferred.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michelle Arsenault, (202) 997-0115; email: nosb@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: For information on how to apply, please see the applications process page: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic/nosb/nomination-process>.

The Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA), as amended (7 U.S.C. 6501–6524), required the Secretary to establish the National Organic Standards Board (Board) in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Board was established to assist in the development of standards for substances to be used in organic production and to advise the Secretary on the implementation of the OFPA.

The Board is composed of 15 members:

- Four individuals who own or operate an organic farming operation, or employees of such individuals;
- Two individuals who own or operate an organic handling operation, or employees of such individuals;
- One individual who owns or operates a retail establishment with significant trade in organic products, or employees of such individuals;
- Three individuals with expertise in areas of environmental protection and resource conservation;
- Three individuals who represent public interest or consumer interest groups;
- One individual with expertise in the fields of toxicology, ecology, or biochemistry; and
- One individual who is a certifying agent.

Per OFPA, under 7 U.S.C. 6518, individuals seeking appointment to the Board must meet the qualifications for the relevant vacancy (e.g., demonstrated experience and interest in organic production and organic certification, demonstrated experience with respect to agricultural products produced and handled on certified organic farms, or experience with consumer and public interest organizations). Applicants may also consider the additional selection criteria the Board recommended on June 10, 1999, included below and on the following web page: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic/nosb/nomination-process>.

- A general understanding of organic principles and practical experience in the organic community;
- Demonstrated experience in the development of public policy such as participation on public or private advisory boards, boards of directors, or other comparable organizations;

• Participation in standards development or involvement in educational outreach activities;

• A commitment to the integrity and growth of the organic food and fiber industry;

• The ability to evaluate technical information and to fully participate in Board deliberation and recommendations;

• The willingness to commit the time and energy necessary to assume Board duties; and

• Other factors that may be appropriate for specific positions.

To apply, submit the following: a resume (required); Form AD-755 (required), which can be accessed at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-755-advisory-committee-commodity-board-background-information.pdf>; a cover letter (optional); and letters of recommendation (optional). Resumes should be no longer than five (5) pages and should include the following information: the position for which the candidate is applying; current and past organization affiliations; areas of expertise; education; career positions held; and any other notable, relevant positions held. Previous applicants who wish to be considered must reapply.

If USDA receives a request under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) for records relating to Board nominations, application materials may be released to the requester. Prior to the release of the information, personally identifiable information protected by the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) will be redacted.

Equal opportunity practices, in accordance with USDA policies, will be followed in all membership appointments to the Committee.

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, 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 State