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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.

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, Office of Private Voluntary Cooperation/ American Schools and Hospitals Abroad; Announcement of Draft Changes to Criterion #8 American Schools and Hospitals Abroad Program

The U.S. Agency for International Development is announcing draft changes to Criterion #8 in the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program, pursuant to section 214 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. The program criteria serve as administrative guidance for considering the acceptability and relative merits of applicants.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. George Like (703) 712-1766, ASHA Agency for International Development, Washington, DC 20523.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On November 26, 1979, the U.S. Agency for International Development published 11 Program Criteria for the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program. Criterion #8 states "The institution must be open to all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, color or national origin. (The above shall not be construed to require enrollment of students of both sexes at an educational institution enrolling males or females only.) Assistance may not be used to train persons for religious pursuits or to construct buildings or other facilities intended for worship or religious instruction."

On December 12, 2002, Executive Order 13279 "Equal Protection of the Laws for Faith-Based and Community Organizations" was signed. Accordingly, the U.S. Agency for International Development proposes to change Criterion #8 of the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program

to "The institution must be open to all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, color or national origin. (The above shall not be construed to require enrollment of students of both sexes at an educational institution enrolling males or females only.) Assistance may not be used to support any inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction or proselytization."

The sixty-day comment period will begin on the date that this announcement is published in the **Federal Register**.

G. Garrett Grigsby,

Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Rural Utilities Service

Farm Service Agency

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCIES: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, Rural Utilities Service, and Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; comments requested.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service (RHS), the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS), Rural Utilities Service (RUS), and the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of compliance with Civil Rights laws.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by December 20, 2004, to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jacqueline Micheli, Equal Opportunity Specialist, Rural Development, Civil Rights Staff, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 0703, 1400

Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-0703, telephone (202) 692-0099 (voice) or 692-0107 (TDD).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: *Title:* 7 CFR 1901-E, Civil Rights Compliance Requirements.

OMB Number: 0575-0018.

Expiration Date: April 30, 2005.

Type of Request: Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection.

Abstract: The information collection under OMB Number 0575-0018 enables the RHS, RBS, RUS, and FSA to effectively monitor a recipient's compliance with the civil rights laws, and to determine whether or not service and benefits are being provided to beneficiaries on an equal opportunity basis.

The RBS, RHS, RUS, and FSA, formerly the Farmers Home Administration, are required to provide Federal financial assistance through its farmer, housing, and community and business programs on an equal opportunity basis. The laws implemented in 7 CFR part 1901, subpart E ("1901-E"), require the recipients of RBS, RHS, RUS, and FSA's Federal financial assistance to collect various types of information, including information on participants in certain of these agencies' programs, by race, color, and national origin. While these agencies realize that the provisions of 1901-E are outdated as the result of statutory amendment and other processes of law, the information needed to be collected under this implementing regulation is not affected by the obsolete nature of the regulation. The RBS, RHS, RUS, and FSA use the information to monitor a recipient's compliance with the civil rights laws, and to determine whether or not service and benefits are being provided to beneficiaries on an equal opportunity basis. The agencies are in the process of revising 1901-E, and expect to publish for comment a **Federal Register** document proposing these revisions in 2005. The following laws are implemented in 7 CFR 1901-E:

a. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VI"). The implementing regulations for this Act, issued by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), requires recipients of RBS', RHS' RUS' and FSA's program assistance to collect information on the race/national origin