

“(a) STUDY OF AIRCRAFT INSPECTIONS.—

“(1) INTENT OF STUDY.—The intent of the study required by this subsection is to examine the cost efficiencies of conducting inspections of aircraft and pilots by one Federal agency without reducing aircraft, passenger, or pilot safety standards or lowering mission preparedness.

“(2) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Transportation shall jointly conduct a study of the inspection specifications and procedures by which aircraft and pilots contracted by the Department are certified to determine the cost efficiencies of eliminating duplicative Department inspection requirements and transferring some or all inspection requirements to the Federal Aviation Administration, while ensuring that neither aircraft, passenger, nor pilot safety is reduced and that mission preparedness is maintained.

“(3) SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS.—In conducting the study, the Secretaries shall evaluate current inspection specifications and procedures mandated by the Department and the Forest Service, taking into consideration the unique requirements and risks of particular Department and Forest Service missions that may require special inspection specifications and procedures to ensure the safety of Department and Forest Service personnel and their contractees.

“(4) MAINTENANCE OF STANDARDS AND PREPAREDNESS.—In making recommendations to transfer inspection authority or otherwise change Department inspection specifications and procedures, the Secretaries shall ensure that the implementation of any such recommendations does not lower aircraft or pilot standards or preparedness for Department or Forest Service missions.

“(5) SUBMISSION OF RESULTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 13, 1994], the Secretaries shall submit to Congress the results of the study, including any recommendations to transfer inspection authority or otherwise change Department inspection specifications and procedures and a cost-benefit analysis of such recommendations.

“(b) REVIEW OF RECENTLY ADOPTED AIRCRAFT POLICY.—

“(1) REVIEW REQUIRED.—The Secretaries shall review the policy initiated by the Secretary of Agriculture on July 1, 1994, to accept Federal Aviation Administration inspections on aircraft and pilots that provide ‘airport to airport’ service for the Forest Service. The policy is currently being cooperatively developed by the Department and the Federal Aviation Administration and is intended to reduce duplicative inspections and to reduce Government costs, while maintaining aircraft, passenger, and pilot safety standards, specifications and procedures currently required by the Department and the Forest Service.

“(2) EXPANSION OF POLICY.—As part of the review, the Secretaries shall examine the feasibility and desirability of applying this policy on a Government-wide basis.

“(3) SUBMISSION OF RESULTS.—Not later than one year after the date of the implementation of the policy, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to Congress the results of the review, including any recommendations that the Secretary considers appropriate.”

ORDER OF SUCCESSION

Order of succession upon death, absence, sickness, or resignation of Secretary of Agriculture, see Ex. Ord. No. 11793, July 10, 1974, 39 F.R. 25631, set out as a note under section 3345 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

CROSS REFERENCES

Purchase of seeds and plants for distribution, see section 415 of this title.

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 2276 of this title; title 13 section 9.

§ 2204a. Rural development; utilization of non-Federal offices; location of field units; interchange of personnel and facilities

The Secretary of Agriculture shall utilize to the maximum extent practicable State, regional, district, county, local, or other Department of Agriculture offices to enhance rural development, and shall to the maximum extent practicable provide directly, or, in the case of agencies outside of the Department of Agriculture, through arrangements with the heads of such agencies, for—

(1) the location of all field units of the Federal Government concerned with rural development in the appropriate Department of Agriculture offices covering the geographical areas most similar to those covered by such field units, and

(2) the interchange of personnel and facilities in each such office to the extent necessary or desirable to achieve the most efficient utilization of such personnel and facilities and provide the most effective assistance in the development of rural areas in accordance with State rural development plans.

(Pub. L. 92-419, title VI, §603(c), Aug. 30, 1972, 86 Stat. 675; Pub. L. 96-355, §4(5), Sept. 24, 1980, 94 Stat. 1174.)

AMENDMENTS

1980—Pub. L. 96-355 struck out designation for former par. (1) and, in such par., redesignated former subpars. (A) and (B) as pars. (1) and (2), respectively, and struck out former par. (2) which related to contents of report submitted under section 2204(b) of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1980 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 96-355 effective Oct. 1, 1980, see section 10 of Pub. L. 96-355, set out as an Effective Date note under section 2204b of this title.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Powers, duties, and assets of agencies, offices, and other entities within Department of Agriculture relating to rural development functions transferred to Rural Development Administration by section 2302(b) of Pub. L. 101-624.

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 917 of this title.

§ 2204b. Rural development policy**(a) Coordination of nationwide rural development program using services of executive branch departments and agencies and State and local governments**

The Secretary of Agriculture shall provide leadership within the executive branch for, and shall assume responsibility for coordinating, a nationwide rural development program using the services of executive branch departments and agencies, including, but not limited to, the agencies, bureaus, offices, and services of the Department of Agriculture, in coordination with rural development programs of State and local governments.

(b) Policy development; systematic review of Federal programs; access to information; development of process to receive and assess needs, goals, etc.; cooperative agreements to improve Federal programs affecting rural areas; public hearings and comments

(1) The Secretary shall conduct a systematic review of Federal programs affecting rural areas to (A) determine whether such areas are benefiting from such programs in an equitable proportion to the benefits received by urban areas and (B) identify any factors that may restrict accessibility to such programs in rural areas or limit participation in such programs.

(2) Subject to the Privacy Act of 1974 [5 U.S.C. 552a], the Secretary may secure directly from any Federal department or agency information necessary to carry out the Secretary's duties under this section. Upon request of the Secretary under this paragraph, the head of any such Federal department or agency shall furnish such information to the Secretary.

(3) The Secretary shall develop a process through which multistate, State, substate, and local rural development needs, goals, objectives, plans, and recommendations can be received and assessed on a continuing basis. Such process may include the use of those rural development experts, advisors, and consultants that the Secretary deems appropriate, as well as the establishment of temporary advisory committees under the terms of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

(4) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding chapter 63 of title 31, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and any other organization or individual to improve the coordination and effectiveness of Federal programs, services, and actions affecting rural areas, including the establishment and financing of interagency groups, if the Secretary determines that the objectives of the agreement will serve the mutual interest of the parties in rural development activities.

(B) COOPERATORS.—Each cooperator, including each Federal agency, to the extent that funds are otherwise available, may participate in any cooperative agreement or working group established pursuant to this paragraph by contributing funds or other resources to the Secretary to carry out the agreement or functions of the group.

(5) The Secretary may hold public hearings and receive comments on any matter that the Secretary determines may have a significant impact on rural development or the economic development of rural communities.

(c) Rural development strategy and annual updates; preparation and scope; purposes; time for updates; public hearings and suggestions and recommendations; transmittal to Congressional committees; analysis of budgetary considerations and factors; evaluation and recommendations regarding implementation and revisions

(1) The Secretary shall prepare a comprehensive rural development strategy based on the needs, goals, objectives, plans, and recommenda-

tions of local communities, substate areas, States, and multistate regions, which is designed to—

(A) maximize the effectiveness, increase the responsiveness, and improve the delivery of Federal programs to rural areas;

(B) increase the coordination of Federal programs with the development needs, objectives, and resources of local communities, substate areas, States, and multistate regions; and

(C) achieve the most effective combinations of Federal, State, and local resources to meet the needs of rural areas for orderly growth and development.

(2) The rural development strategy shall take into account the need to—

(A) improve the economic well-being of all rural residents and alleviate the problems of low income, elderly, minority, and otherwise disadvantaged rural residents;

(B) improve the business and employment opportunities, occupational training and employment services, health care services, educational opportunities, energy utilization and availability, housing, transportation, community services, community facilities, water supplies, sewage and solid waste management systems, credit availability, and accessibility to and delivery of private and public financial resources in the maintenance and creation of jobs in rural areas;

(C) improve State and local government management capabilities, institutions, and programs related to rural development and expand educational and training opportunities for State and local officials, particularly in small rural communities;

(D) strengthen the family farm system; and

(E) maintain and protect the environment and natural resources of rural areas.

(3) The rural development strategy developed under this subsection shall be for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1982, and updated for each fiscal year thereafter.

(4) The Secretary shall hold public hearings and receive such suggestions and recommendations as the Secretary deems appropriate during the preparation of the rural development strategy and the annual updates to the strategy.

(5) The rural development strategy and the annual updates to the strategy shall be transmitted to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry by January 31 of the calendar year immediately preceding the beginning of the appropriate fiscal year.

(6) The rural development strategy and each annual update of the strategy shall contain an analysis of the budget recommendations of the President for the fiscal year following the transmittal of the strategy or update of the strategy and of all the available budget projections of the President for subsequent fiscal years, and projections regarding the budget that are relevant or essential to the rural development policy and the rural development strategy developed under this subsection. Each annual update shall also contain a detailed statement of the findings and conclusions of the Secretary regarding the implementation during the preceding fiscal year of

the rural development strategy, including any revisions of the strategy, any recommended legislation to improve the rural development effort of the Federal Government, and an evaluation of and recommendations regarding the rural development information system required under section 1926(a)(12) of this title.

(d) Strategy implementation; goals

The Secretary shall ensure the effective implementation of the rural development strategy and maximize coordination of Federal programs affecting rural areas through a systematic effort to—

(1) improve communication and encourage cooperation among Federal departments and agencies in the administration of rural development programs;

(2) eliminate conflicts, duplication, and gaps in program coverage, and resolve contradictions and inconsistencies in the objectives, administration, and effects of rural development programs;

(3) facilitate the sharing or common location of field offices of Federal agencies administering similar or complementary programs and unification of delivery systems, where feasible, to maximize convenience and accessibility of such agencies and programs to rural residents;

(4) facilitate and expedite joint funding of rural projects through Federal programs;

(5) correct administrative problems in Federal programs that delay or hinder the effective delivery of services, assistance, or benefits to rural areas; and

(6) simplify, standardize, and reduce the complexity of applications, reports, and other forms required under Federal rural development programs.

(Pub. L. 92-419, title VI, § 607, as added Pub. L. 96-355, § 2, Sept. 24, 1980, 94 Stat. 1171; amended Pub. L. 104-127, title VII, § 759A, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1138.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Privacy Act of 1974, referred to in subsec. (b)(2), is Pub. L. 93-579, Dec. 31, 1974, 88 Stat. 1896, as amended, which enacted section 552a of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees, and provisions set out as notes under section 552a of Title 5. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 552a of Title 5 and Tables.

The Federal Advisory Committee Act, referred to in subsec. (b)(3), is Pub. L. 92-463, Oct. 6, 1972, 86 Stat. 770, as amended, which is set out in the Appendix to Title 5.

AMENDMENTS

1996—Subsec. (b)(4). Pub. L. 104-127 added par. (4) and struck out former par. (4) which read as follows: “The Secretary may undertake cooperative efforts with other Federal departments and agencies to improve the coordination and effectiveness of Federal programs, services, and actions affecting rural areas. The Secretary may request the heads of other Federal departments and agencies to participate in any working groups that the Secretary deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.”

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section 10 of Pub. L. 96-355 provided that: “The provisions of this Act [enacting this section and section

2211b of this title, amending sections 1926, 2204, 2204a, 2204b-1, 2663, and 2667 of this title and section 5314 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees, and enacting provisions set out as a note under section 2201 of this title] shall become effective October 1, 1980.”

TERMINATION OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

For termination, effective May 15, 2000, of provisions in subsec. (c)(5) of this section relating to transmittal of rural development strategy annual updates to certain committees of Congress, see section 3003 of Pub. L. 104-66, as amended, set out as a note under section 1113 of Title 31, Money and Finance, and page 44 of House Document No. 103-7.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Powers, duties, and assets of agencies, offices, and other entities within Department of Agriculture relating to rural development functions transferred to Rural Development Administration by section 2302(b) of Pub. L. 101-624.

SIMPLIFIED, UNIFORM APPLICATION FOR ASSISTANCE FROM ALL FEDERAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Section 762 of Pub. L. 104-127 provided that: “Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act [Apr. 4, 1996], the Secretary of Agriculture shall develop a streamlined, simplified, and uniform application which shall be used in applying for assistance under all of the following:

“(1) Sections 304(b), 306, 306A, 306C, 306D, 310B, and 375 [7 U.S.C. 2008j] and subtitle E [7 U.S.C. 2009 et seq.] of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1924(b), 1926, 1926a, 1926c, 1926d, and 1932).

“(2) Subtitle G of title XVI and sections 2281 [42 U.S.C. 5177a], 2333, and 2381 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5901-5908, 5177a, 950aaa-2, and 3125b).

“(3) Subtitle C of title IX of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act Amendments of 1991 (Public Law 102-237[:]; 7 U.S.C. [former] 5930 note).

“(4) Section 1323(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-198; 7 U.S.C. 1932 note).

“(5) Title V and section 603(c) of the Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 2661-2669 and 2204a(c)).

“(6) Sections 5 and 311 and title IV of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. [former] 905, [former] 940a, and 941-950b).”

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 12720

Ex. Ord. No. 12720, July 16, 1990, 55 F.R. 29337, as amended by Ex. Ord. No. 12783, Dec. 17, 1991, 56 F.R. 65977, which established the President's Council on Rural America, was revoked by Ex. Ord. No. 12869, § 4(c), Sept. 30, 1993, 58 F.R. 51751, formerly set out as a note under section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 926 of this title.

§ 2204b-1. Rural development

(a) Congressional commitment

The Congress commits itself to a sound balance between rural and urban America. The Congress considers this balance so essential to the peace, prosperity, and welfare of all our citizens that the highest priority must be given to the revitalization and development of rural areas.

(b) Location of Federal facilities

Congress hereby directs the heads of all executive departments and agencies of the Government to establish and maintain departmental