

PART 1970 - ENVIRONMENTAL

Subpart L - Land Use and Formally Classified Land

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PART 1970 - ENVIRONMENTAL

Subpart L - Land Use and Formally Classified Land

§ 1970.551 Purpose.

This Staff Instruction provides guidance to the staff of Rural Housing Service, Rural Business and Cooperative Service, and Rural Utilities Service (collectively referred to as the "Agency") regarding the implementation and integration of the protection of formally classified land, important farmland, and land use policy into the Agency's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review process at 7 CFR part 1970 "Environmental Policies and Procedures."

§ 1970.552 Background.

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) was passed in 1981 in order to minimize the extent to which Federal programs contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. The FPPA assures that Federal programs are administered in a manner that, to the extent practicable, is compatible with state and local government and private programs and policies to protect farmland. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service has promulgated implementation procedures for the FPPA at 7 CFR Part 658.

In response to the FPPA, Departmental Regulation 9500-003, "Land Use Policy," was issued in 1983 to establish USDA's policy on land use, which seeks to "promote land use objectives responsive to current and long-term economic, social, and environmental needs." The regulation's ultimate goal was to reduce the rate and amount of the continued conversion of the nation's farmlands, forest lands, and rangelands which may impair the ability to produce sufficient food, fiber, and wood to meet both domestic needs and the demands of export markets.

The Agency is also required, through Executive Order 12372, to use the Intergovernmental Review process to consult with state agencies and local municipalities in order to assure compliance with their planning and land use goals and policies.

§ 1970.553 Policies.

(a) Decisions concerning land use arise from a requirement to balance highly interdependent needs that often compete with each other for the limited supply of available land and water. DR 9500-003 requires that the Agency assure that its programs discourage the unwarranted conversion to other uses of prime and unique farmlands, farmlands of statewide or local importance, and prime rangelands; the unwarranted alteration of wetlands or floodplains; and the unwarranted expansion of the peripheral boundaries of existing settlements; while simultaneously

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 Environmental Policies
and Procedures

providing or improving a community's services and facilities; maintaining and enhancing agricultural and forest production capabilities; maintaining wildlife, fish, and seafood habitat; assuring appropriate environmental quality; and assuring adequate supplies of suitable-quality water.

(b) The Agency should encourage state governments, local governments, and individual landowners to retain important farmlands, rangelands, and forest lands when practicable alternatives exist to meet developmental needs. Additionally, the Agency must assure that its actions, investments, and programs on non-federal lands will conform, to the extent practicable, with the uses permitted under land use regulations adopted by state and local governments. Therefore, the Agency will generally not assist in actions that would either directly or indirectly convert these lands to other uses unless

(1) there is a demonstrated, significant need for the project, program, or facility;

(2) there are no practicable alternative actions or sites that would avoid the conversion of these lands or, if conversion is unavoidable, reduce the number of acres to be converted or encroached upon directly or indirectly; and

(3) the proposal includes all practicable measures for reducing the adverse impacts and the amount of conversion/encroachment.

(c) The Agency also recognizes that unless carefully reviewed, some proposals designed to serve the needs of rural communities can adversely affect the existing economic base and settlement patterns of the community, as well as create development pressures on land and environmental resources essential to farm economies. An example of such a proposal might be the extension of utilities and other types of infrastructure beyond a community's existing settlement pattern and into important farmlands for the purpose of commercial or residential expansion, even though there is available space within the existing settlement pattern for such expansion. Not only may the loss of important farmlands unnecessarily result, but the community may be faced with the economic costs of providing public services to outlying areas, as well as the deterioration of its central business or commercial area; the latter may not be able to compete with the newer, outlying commercial establishments. These results are undesirable, and to avoid their occurrence, projects designed to meet rural community needs (i.e., residential, industrial, commercial, and public facilities) will generally not be approved unless the following conditions are met:

§ 1970.553(c) (Con.)

(1) The project is planned and sited in a manner consistent with the policies of this section, the FPPA, and DR 9500-003.

(2) The project is consistent with existing plans that guide growth and aim to protect natural resources and, to the extent practicable, compatible with state and local government and private programs and policies to protect farmland.

(3) The project will encourage long-term, economically viable public investment by fostering compact community development, that is, development that is limited to servicing or being located in existing settlement patterns and areas contiguous to them.

§ 1970.554 Definitions. The following definitions and those contained in the Agency's NEPA procedures are applicable to this subpart:

Additional Farmland of Local Importance. In some local areas, there is a concern for certain additional farmlands for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops, even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance. Where appropriate, these lands are to be identified by the local agency or agencies concerned.

Additional Farmland of Statewide Importance. This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the appropriate state agency or agencies. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable. In some States, additional farmlands of statewide importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by state law.

Formally Classified Lands. These are properties that are administered either by Federal, State, or local agencies, or have been given special protection through formal legislative designation.

Important Farmlands. This term includes all land that is defined as prime, unique, and farmland of state and local importance.

Prime Farmland. Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, oilseed, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor, and without intolerable soil erosion, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. Prime farmland includes land that possesses the above characteristics but is being used currently to produce livestock and timber. It does not include land already in or committed to urban development or water storage.

Prime Forest Lands. A category of forest lands including prime timberlands, unique timberland, timberland of statewide importance, and timberland of local importance.

Prime Rangeland. Rangeland which, because of its soil, climate, topography, vegetation, and location, has the highest quality or value for grazing animals. The (potential) natural vegetation is palatable, nutritious, and available to the kinds of herbivores common to the area.

Prime Timberland. Land that has soil capable of growing wood at the rate of 85 cubic feet or more/acre/year (at culmination of mean annual increment) in natural stands and is not in urban or built-up land uses or water. Generally, this is land currently in forest, but does not exclude qualifying lands that could realistically be returned to forest. Delineation of these lands will be in accordance with national criteria.

Private Programs to Protect Farmland. These are programs for the protection of farmland which are pursuant to and consistent with state and local government policies or programs to protect farmland of the affected State and unit of local government, but which are operated by a nonprofit corporation, foundation, association, conservancy, district, or other not-for-profit organization existing under State or federal laws. Private programs to protect farmland may include: (1) Acquiring and holding development rights in farmland and (2) facilitating the transfer of development rights of farmland.

§ 1970.554 (Con.)

State and Local Government Policies or Programs to Protect Farmland.

These include zoning to protect farmland; agricultural land protection provisions of a comprehensive land use plan which has been adopted or reviewed in its entirety by the unit of local government in whose jurisdiction it is operative within 10 years preceding proposed implementation of the particular federal program; completed purchase or acquisition of development rights; completed purchase or acquisition of conservation easements; prescribed procedures for assessing agricultural viability of sites proposed for conversion; completed agricultural districting and capital investments to protect farmland.

Timberland of Local Importance. In some local areas, there is a concern for certain additional forest lands for the growing of wood, even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance. Where appropriate, these lands are to be identified by a local agency or agencies concerned.

Timberland of Statewide Importance. Land, in addition to prime and unique timberlands, that is of statewide importance for the growing of woods. Criteria for defining and delineating these lands are to be determined by state forestry planning committees or appropriate state organizations.

Unique Farmland. Land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high-value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high-quality or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Examples of such crops are citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, fruit, and vegetables.

Unique Timberland. Lands that do not qualify as prime timberland on the basis of producing less than 85 cubic feet/acre/year, but are growing sustained yields of specific high-value species or species capable of producing specialized wood products under a silvicultural system that retains soil productivity and protects water quality. Delineation of these lands will be in accordance with national criteria.

§ 1970.555 Formally Classified Lands. Formally classified lands include the following:

National Park System Units, which includes National Parks, National Monuments, National Preserves, National Historic Sites, National Historic Parks, National Memorials, National Battlefields, National Cemeteries, National Recreation Areas, National Seashores, National Lakeshores, National Rivers, National Parkways, National Trails, Affiliated Areas, and Other Designations, managed by the National Park Service (NPS); National Heritage Areas, managed by the NPS; National Monuments, managed by the NPS, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Forest Service (USFS), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); National Marine Sanctuaries, managed by NOAA; National Conservation Lands, which include the National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Conservation Lands of the California Desert, managed by the BLM; National Estuarine Research Reserves, managed by NOAA; National Forests, managed by the USFS; National Grasslands, managed by the USFS; Coordination Areas, managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); Coastal Zones, managed by NOAA; Coastal Barrier Resource System, managed by USFWS and state environmental agencies; National Natural Landmarks, managed by NPS; Cooperative Management and Protection Areas, managed by the BLM; Outstanding Natural Areas, managed by the BLM; National Wildlife Refuges, managed by the USFWS; Waterfowl Production Areas, managed by USFWS; Areas of State and Local Interest; and UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.

If the proposal will occur within or adjacent to any of the above categories of formally classified land, that land's managing agency must be contacted as early as possible in the planning process to obtain permission to proceed. Any mitigation measures that the managing agency requires, as well as copies of all correspondence, must be included in the environmental review documentation, with the mitigation measures made conditions of the financial assistance.

1970.556 Land Use Policy Implementation.

(a) Reviewing Compatibility. Applicants should gather information on state and local government land use policies, location and classification of important land resources, and views on possible ways to avoid or reduce potential adverse effects to land resources. It is the Agency's responsibility to weigh and judge the feasibility of alternatives and to determine whether any proposed land use change is in accordance with the implementation requirements of the FPPA and DR 9500-003. After reviewing the project site, applicable land classification data, and consultations with appropriate expert agencies, the Agency must determine whether the applicant's proposal:

§ 1970.556(a) (Con.)

- (1) Is compatible with state and local government land use policies;
- (2) Is compatible with state, local government, and private programs and policies to protect farmland;
- (3) Either will have no effect on important land resources or if there will be a direct or indirect conversion, whether practicable alternatives exist to avoid the conversion; and
- (4) If there are no alternatives, whether there are practicable measures to reduce the amount of the conversion.

(b) Determination of No Effect. If the Agency determines that there is no potential for conversion and that the proposal is compatible with applicable laws and policies, this determination must be documented in the environmental review documentation.

(c) Determination of Effect or Incompatibility. If the Agency determines that an applicant's proposal may result in the direct or indirect conversion of an important land resource, may be incompatible with state or local government, or private programs and policies to protect farmland, or may be incompatible with state or local government land use policies, the following further steps must be taken:

(1) Search for Practicable Alternatives. In consultation with the Agency and the interested public, the applicant will carefully analyze the availability of practicable alternatives that avoid the conversion or incompatibility (see 1970.557 below if the resource in question is important farmland). Possible alternatives include:

- (i) The selection of an alternative site;
- (ii) The selection of an alternative means to meet the applicant's objective; or
- (iii) The denial of the application (i.e., the no-action alternative).

(2) Inform the Public. If a conversion or incompatibility is identified, DR 9500-003 requires the Agency to notify the public of the proposed action and to provide them an opportunity to review and comment on the action's feasibility and alternatives to it. 1970.557(f) below provides instructions on how public noticing is to be conducted for prime and important farmland conversions.

(3) Determine Whether a Practicable Alternative Exists.

(i) Alternative exists - If the applicant concludes that a practicable alternative exists, they will complete step (c)(v)(2) below and transmit the assessment for the Agency's review. If the findings of this review are similar to the applicant's recommendation, the Agency will inform the applicant of such findings and processing of the application will be discontinued. Should the applicant still desire to pursue the proposal, the applicant is free to do so but not with the further assistance of the Agency. Should the applicant be interested in amending the application to reflect the results of the alternative analysis, the applicant will work closely with the Agency to this end.

(ii) No Practicable Alternative Exists -If the applicant concludes that there is no practicable alternative to the conversion, the applicant must then continue with step (c)(4) immediately below.

(4) Search for Mitigation Measures. - Once the applicant determines that there is no practicable alternative to avoiding the conversion or incompatibility, including the no-action alternative, all practicable measures for reducing the direct and indirect amount of the conversion must be included in the application. Some examples of mitigation measures would include reducing the size of the project which thereby reduces the amount of the important land resource to be converted. The NRCS Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system can also be used to identify mitigation measures when the conversion of important farmland cannot be avoided (see 1970.557 below).

§ 1970.556(c) (Con.)

(5) Document Findings. - Upon completion of the above steps, the processing official will assure that a written summary of the steps taken and the reasons for the recommendations reached shall be included in the environmental documentation along with either one of the following recommendations as applicable (the following example assumes that important farmland is the affected resource and that the inappropriate phrase within the brackets would be deleted).

(i) The application would result in the direct or indirect conversion of important farmland and [is or is not] compatible with state, local government, or private programs and policies to protect farmland. It is recommended that the Agency determine, based upon the attached analysis, that there is no practicable alternative and that the application contains all practicable measures for reducing the amount of conversion (or limiting the extent of any identified incompatibility).

(ii) The application would result in direct or indirect conversion of important farmland and [is or is not] incompatible with state, local government, or private programs and policies to protect farmland. It is recommended that the Agency determine, based upon the attached analysis, that there is a practicable alternative to this action, and that processing of this application be discontinued.

(6) Implement findings. The completed environmental report or environmental assessment and the Agency's determination of compliance with the Act and the DR will be processed according to this instruction. Whenever this determination is as stated in step (c)(5)(ii) above, the applicant shall be so informed and the processing of the application discontinued. Any further Agency involvement will be as specified in (c)(3)(i) above.

1970.557 Farmland Protection Policy Act (FFPA) Implementation.

Proposals that will construct on or otherwise convert land to a use that will prohibit that land from potentially being farmed in the future may convert important farmland. If such a land conversion will occur, the following process should be followed:

(a) Determination of the Presence of Important Farmland. The applicant should be instructed to utilize the NRCS's Web Soil Survey to determine if the land is designated as important farmland.

§ 1970.557 (Con.)

(b) Exemptions from the FPPA. If the land is determined to be important farmland, the applicant should then determine whether the conversion may qualify as an exception under the FPPA. Areas not subject to the FPPA and not considered to be important farmland include land located within "incorporated city limits" (which does not include annexed land), farmland already in urban development (includes lands identified as an "urbanized area" on Census Bureau maps, urban areas mapped with a "tint overprint" on USGS topographical maps, or areas marked as "urban-built-up" on USDA Important Farmland maps), land used for water storage, areas with a structural density of 30 or more structures per 40 acres, and areas for which the LESA score is less than 160 points. Additionally, the following projects are not subject to the FPPA: construction of on-farm structures needed for farm operations or new minor secondary structures such as garages and storage sheds, digesters, small-scale solar arrays (that cover an area of an acre or less), and small scale-wind turbines.

(c) Land Evaluation and Site Assessments. If the project is not exempted from the FPPA, the Agency must contact NRCS to coordinate the completion of a LESA using Form AD-1006 "Farmland Conversion Impact Rating" (or NRCS-CPA-106 for corridor projects). The Agency will complete Part I and III of Form AD-1006 and send the form to NRCS along with a letter requesting NRCS's opinion regarding prime farmland. After NRCS has completed Parts II, IV, and V, they will return the form to the Agency who then must complete Part VI and VII, which will produce a "total points" value. A copy of the completed form should then be sent back to NRCS. If the site is determined by NRCS to be subject to the Act they will respond to these requests within 10 working days of their receipt, except if a site visit or land evaluation system design is needed, in which case NRCS will respond within 30 working days (time frames estimated). In the event that NRCS fails to complete its response within the required period, follow-up contact should be made. If further delay would interfere with construction activities, the agency should proceed as though the site were not farmland.

(d) LESA Scores Below 160. If the LESA score is below 160, then the project is not considered to be a conversion of prime farmland, and the environmental review process may proceed. This determination should be documented in the environmental file.

(e) LESA Scores Equal to or Above 160. If the LESA score is equal to or above 160, the FPPA requires the consideration of alternatives that would reduce or avoid the conversion. This process will follow the steps outlined in 1970.556(c) above.

§ 1970.557 (Con.)

(f) Public Notification. For (e) immediately above, a public notice announcing the proposed conversion will be required. For proposals classified as categorical exclusions with an environmental report, public noticing should be completed by having the applicant post a public notice of the proposed action at the closest post office on their community bulletin board for 7 days, including postmarks on the notice to document the date it was posted and the date it was removed. A template for the post office final public notice is included as Attachment A. If the proposal requires an Environmental Assessment to be prepared, the public notice language is to be added to the Notice of Availability (see Exhibit C-6). No final notice of the conversion is required.

(g) Further consideration of the application or proposal must be delayed until the expiration of the public comment period. Consequently, publication of the notice as early as possible in the review process is both in the public's and the applicant's interest. Any comments received must be considered and addressed in the subsequent Agency analysis of alternatives and mitigation measures following the guidance in 1970.556(c) above.

(h) If the LESA score is above 160, the interest rate for direct Community Facility and B&I Direct loans must be increased by 2% per annum, in accordance with RD Instruction 440.1. However, for public bodies, this increase only applies if there is a practicable alternative.

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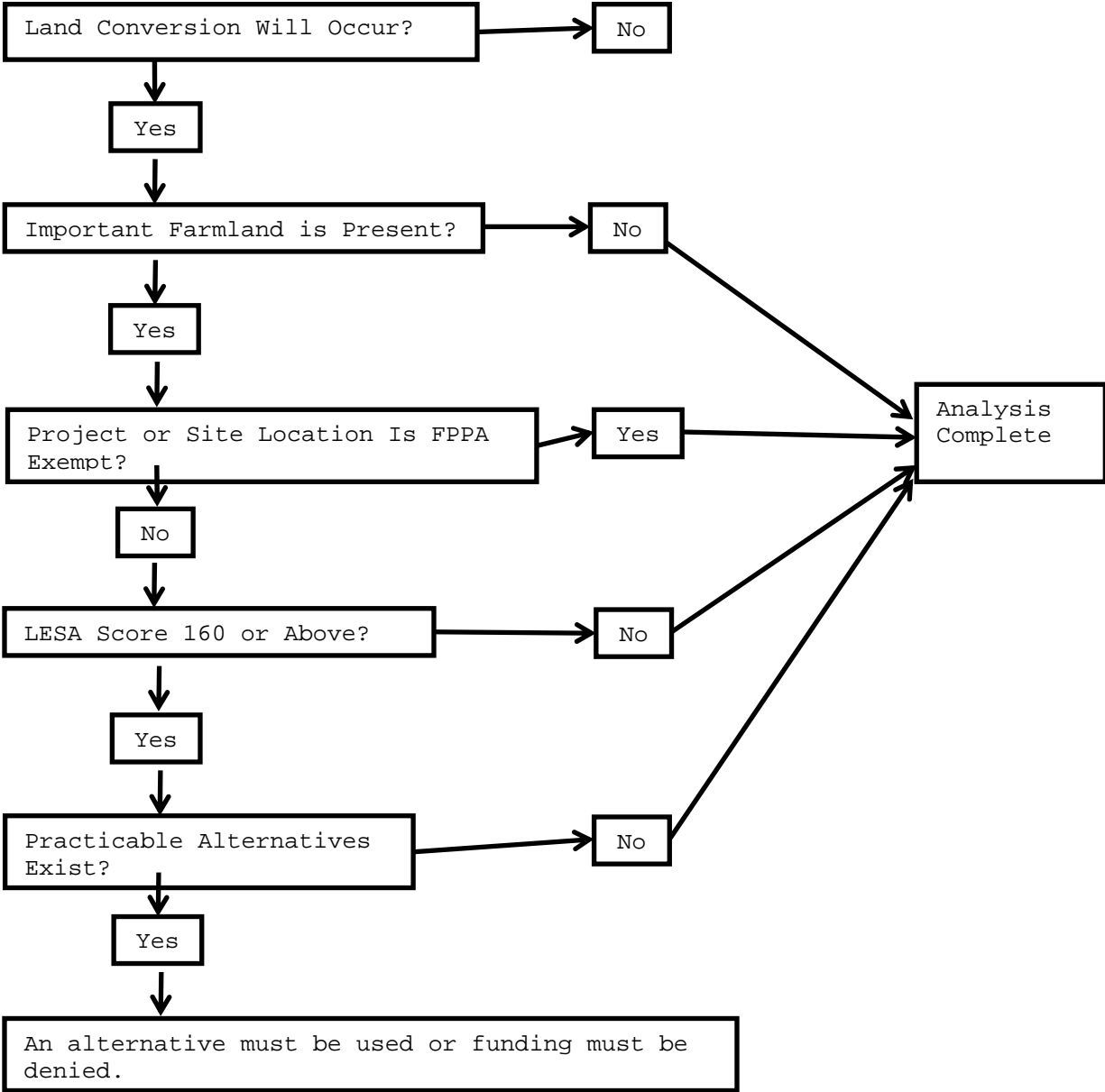
Public Notice Template for Farmland Conversion

[Insert applicant's name] intends to seek financial assistance from USDA, **[Rural Housing Service (RHS), Rural Business Service (RBS), Rural Utilities Service (RUS)]** for [insert type of project here: construction, infrastructure improvements, etc]. The proposed project consists of **[itemize the project's construction activities and locations]**. **[Insert a detailed written description of location]**. If implemented, the proposed project will convert Important Farmland **[include acreage and locations]**. In accordance with USDA Departmental Regulation 9500-3, Land Use Policy, the purpose of this notice is to inform the public of this proposed conversion or effect and request comments concerning the proposal, alternative sites or actions that would avoid these impacts, and methods that could be used to minimize these impacts.

The environmental documentation regarding this proposal is available for review at **[insert Rural Development office location or applicant locations]**. For questions regarding this proposal, contact **[insert name and telephone number of Rural Development official]**. (If applicable) Other federal agencies involved in this proposal are: **[insert other federal agency names]**

Any person interested in commenting on this proposal should submit comments to the address above by **[insert a date that is 7 days from the date the notice is first posted]**.

Important Farmland Conversion Analysis



U.S. Department of Agriculture FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

See attached form.

Exhibit C in PDF format only.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)		Date Of Land Evaluation Request			
Name of Project		Federal Agency Involved			
Proposed Land Use		County and State			
PART II (To be completed by NRCS)		Date Request Received By NRCS		Person Completing Form:	
Does the site contain Prime, Unique, Statewide or Local Important Farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form)		YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Average Farm Size	
Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: %		Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: %			
		Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS			
PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)		Alternative Site Rating			
		Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly					
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly					
C. Total Acres In Site					
PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information					
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland					
B. Total Acres Statewide Important or Local Important Farmland					
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted					
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value					
PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)					
PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Site Assessment Criteria (Criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5 b. For Corridor project use form NRCS-CPA-106)		Maximum Points	Site A	Site B	Site C
1. Area In Non-urban Use		(15)			
2. Perimeter In Non-urban Use		(10)			
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed		(20)			
4. Protection Provided By State and Local Government		(20)			
5. Distance From Urban Built-up Area		(15)			
6. Distance To Urban Support Services		(15)			
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average		(10)			
8. Creation Of Non-farmable Farmland		(10)			
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services		(5)			
10. On-Farm Investments		(20)			
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services		(10)			
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use		(10)			
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS		160			
PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)					
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)		100			
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or local site assessment)		160			
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)		260			
Site Selected:		Date Of Selection		Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Reason For Selection:					
Name of Federal agency representative completing this form:					Date:

(See Instructions on reverse side)

STEPS IN THE PROCESSING THE FARMLAND AND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING FORM

- Step 1 - Federal agencies (or Federally funded projects) involved in proposed projects that may convert farmland, as defined in the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) to nonagricultural uses, will initially complete Parts I and III of the form. For Corridor type projects, the Federal agency shall use form NRCS-CPA-106 in place of form AD-1006. The Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) process may also be accessed by visiting the FPPA website, <http://fppa.nrcs.usda.gov/lesa/>.
- Step 2 - Originator (Federal Agency) will send one original copy of the form together with appropriate scaled maps indicating location(s) of project site(s), to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) local Field Office or USDA Service Center and retain a copy for their files. (NRCS has offices in most counties in the U.S. The USDA Office Information Locator may be found at http://offices.usda.gov/scripts/ndISAPI.dll/oip_public/USA_map, or the offices can usually be found in the Phone Book under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture. A list of field offices is available from the NRCS State Conservationist and State Office in each State.)
- Step 3 - NRCS will, within 10 working days after receipt of the completed form, make a determination as to whether the site(s) of the proposed project contains prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland. (When a site visit or land evaluation system design is needed, NRCS will respond within 30 working days.
- Step 4 - For sites where farmland covered by the FPPA will be converted by the proposed project, NRCS will complete Parts II, IV and V of the form.
- Step 5 - NRCS will return the original copy of the form to the Federal agency involved in the project, and retain a file copy for NRCS records.
- Step 6 - The Federal agency involved in the proposed project will complete Parts VI and VII of the form and return the form with the final selected site to the servicing NRCS office.
- Step 7 - The Federal agency providing financial or technical assistance to the proposed project will make a determination as to whether the proposed conversion is consistent with the FPPA.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING FORM
(For Federal Agency)

Part I: When completing the "County and State" questions, list all the local governments that are responsible for local land use controls where site(s) are to be evaluated.

Part III: When completing item B (Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly), include the following:

- 1. Acres not being directly converted but that would no longer be capable of being farmed after the conversion, because the conversion would restrict access to them or other major change in the ability to use the land for agriculture.
- 2. Acres planned to receive services from an infrastructure project as indicated in the project justification (e.g. highways, utilities planned build out capacity) that will cause a direct conversion.

Part VI: Do not complete Part VI using the standard format if a State or Local site assessment is used. With local and NRCS assistance, use the local Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA).

- 1. Assign the maximum points for each site assessment criterion as shown in § 658.5(b) of CFR. In cases of corridor-type project such as transportation, power line and flood control, criteria #5 and #6 will not apply and will, be weighted zero, however, criterion #8 will be weighed a maximum of 25 points and criterion #11 a maximum of 25 points.
- 2. Federal agencies may assign relative weights among the 12 site assessment criteria other than those shown on the FPPA rule after submitting individual agency FPPA policy for review and comment to NRCS. In all cases where other weights are assigned, relative adjustments must be made to maintain the maximum total points at 160. For project sites where the total points equal or exceed 160, consider alternative actions, as appropriate, that could reduce adverse impacts (e.g. Alternative Sites, Modifications or Mitigation).

Part VII: In computing the "Total Site Assessment Points" where a State or local site assessment is used and the total maximum number of points is other than 160, convert the site assessment points to a base of 160.
Example: if the Site Assessment maximum is 200 points, and the alternative Site "A" is rated 180 points:

$\frac{\text{Total points assigned Site A}}{\text{Maximum points possible}} = \frac{180}{200} \times 160 = 144 \text{ points for Site A}$

For assistance in completing this form or FPPA process, contact the local NRCS Field Office or USDA Service Center.
NRCS employees, consult the FPPA Manual and/or policy for additional instructions to complete the AD-1006 form.