

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.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 99-072-1]

User Fees; Agricultural Quarantine and Inspection Services

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice pertains to user fees charged for agricultural quarantine and inspection services we provide in connection with commercial vessels, commercial trucks, commercial railroad cars, commercial aircraft, and international airline passengers arriving at ports in the Customs territory of the United States. The purpose of this notice is to remind the public of the user fees for fiscal year 2000 (October 1, 1999, through September 30, 2000).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information concerning program operations, contact Mr. Jim Smith, Operations Officer, Program Support, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 60, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-8295.

For information concerning rate development, contact Ms. Donna Ford, User Fees Section Head, FSSB, BASEU, MRP-BS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 54, Riverdale, MD 20737-1232; (301) 734-8351.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The regulations in 7 CFR 354.3 (referred to below as the regulations) contain provisions for the collection of user fees for agricultural quarantine and inspection (AQI) services provided by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). These services include, among other things, inspecting commercial vessels, commercial trucks, commercial railroad cars, commercial

aircraft, and international airline passengers arriving at ports in the Customs territory of the United States from points outside the United States. (The Customs territory of the United States is defined in the regulations as the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.)

These user fees are authorized by § 2509(a) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (21 U.S.C. 136a). This statute, known as the Farm Bill, was amended by § 504 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-127) on April 4, 1996.

On July 24, 1997, we published in the **Federal Register** (62 FR 39747-39755, Docket No. 96-038-3) a final rule to amend the regulations by adjusting our user fees for servicing commercial vessels, commercial trucks, commercial railroad cars, commercial aircraft, and international airline passengers arriving at ports in the Customs territory of the United States from points outside the United States and by setting user fees for these services for fiscal years 1997 through 2002. When we established the user fees for fiscal years 1997 through 2002, we stated that, prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, we would publish a notice to remind the public of the user fees for that fiscal year. This document provides notice to the public of the user fees for fiscal year 2000.

We inspect commercial vessels of 100 net tons or more.¹ As specified in § 354.3(b)(1), our user fee for inspecting commercial vessels will be \$461.75 during fiscal year 2000 (October 1, 1999, through September 30, 2000).

We inspect commercial trucks² entering the Customs territory of the United States. Commercial trucks may pay the APHIS user fee each time they enter the Customs territory of the United States from Mexico³ or purchase a prepaid APHIS permit for a calendar year. Since commercial trucks are also

subject to Customs user fees, our regulations provide that commercial trucks must prepay the APHIS user fee if they are prepaying the Customs user fee. In that case, the required APHIS user fee is 20 times the user fee for each arrival and is valid for an unlimited number of entries during the calendar year (see § 354.3(c)(3)(i) of the regulations). The truck owner or operator, upon payment of the APHIS and the Customs user fees, receives a decal to place on the truck windshield. This is a joint decal, indicating that both the Customs and APHIS user fees for the truck have been paid for that calendar year. As specified in § 354.3(c)(1), our user fee for inspecting commercial trucks will be \$4 for individual arrivals and, as specified in § 354.3(c)(3)(i), \$80 for a calendar year 2000 decal.

We inspect commercial railroad cars⁴ entering the Customs territory of the United States. These user fees may be paid per inspection or prepaid. Prepaid user fees cover 1 calendar year's worth of AQI inspections. As specified in § 354.3(d)(1), the user fee for this service will be \$6.75 per loaded commercial railroad car for each arrival or, if user fees are prepaid, \$135 (20 times the individual arrival fee) for each loaded railcar during fiscal year 2000 (October 1, 1999, through September 30, 2000).

We inspect international commercial aircraft⁵ arriving at ports in the Customs territory of the United States. As specified in § 354.3(e)(1), the user fee will be \$60.25 during fiscal year 2000 (October 1, 1999, through September 30, 2000).

We also inspect international airline passengers⁶ arriving at ports in the Customs territory of the United States. As specified in § 354.3(f)(1), the international airline passenger user fee will be \$2.05 during fiscal year 2000

⁴ Those commercial railroad cars subject to inspections are specified in 7 CFR, chapter III, part 330 or in 9 CFR, chapter I, subchapter D of the regulations. Exemptions to these user fees are specified in § 354.3(d)(2).

⁵ Those commercial aircraft subject to inspections are specified in 7 CFR, chapter III, part 330 or in 9 CFR, chapter I, subchapter D of the regulations. Exemptions to these user fees are specified in § 354.3(e)(2).

⁶ Those international airline passengers subject to inspections are specified in 7 CFR, chapter III, part 330 or in 9 CFR, chapter I, subchapter D of the regulations. Exemptions to these user fees are specified in § 354.3(f)(2).

¹ Those commercial vessels subject to inspections are specified in 7 CFR, chapter III, part 330 or in 9 CFR, chapter I, subchapter D of the regulations. Exemptions to these user fees are specified in § 354.3(b)(2).

² Those commercial trucks subject to inspections are specified in 7 CFR, chapter III, part 330 or in 9 CFR, chapter I, subchapter D of the regulations. Exemptions to these user fees are specified in § 354.3(c)(2).

³ Section 354.3(c)(2)(i) of the regulations states that commercial trucks entering the Customs territory of the United States from Canada are exempt from paying an APHIS user fee.

(October 1, 1999, through September 30, 2000).

Done in Washington, DC, this 30th day of August, 1999.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 99-23188 Filed 9-3-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

National Drought Policy Commission

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Commission meeting and public hearing and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The National Drought Policy Act of 1998 established the National Drought Policy Commission (Commission). The Farm Service Agency (FSA) was identified to provide support to the Commission. The Commission shall conduct a thorough study and submit a report to the President and Congress on national drought policy. The first meeting of the Commission was held on July 22, 1999, and the first public hearing on July 23, 1999. Minutes of the first meeting and a list of Commission members can be found on the Commission's web site at www.fsa.usda.gov/drought. This notice announces the second meeting and public hearing and seeks comments on issues that the Commission should address and recommendations that the Commission should consider as part of its report. The second public hearing and meeting of the Commission will be held September 22. All meetings are open to the public; however, seating is limited and available on a first-come basis.

DATES: The Commission will conduct a public hearing on September 22, 1999, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the Williamsburg Room, Jamie L. Whitten Building, 12th and Jefferson Drive, SW, Washington, DC.

The Commission will meet on September 22, 1999, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the same location. All times noted are Eastern Daylight Time. The Commission will discuss the current drought in the Northeast as it applies to national policy. They will also discuss the status of Commission activities, the operational definition of drought for the Commission, and other committee business.

Anyone wishing to make an oral presentation to the Commission at the public hearing, must contact the

Executive Director, Leona Dittus, in writing (by letter, fax or internet) no later than 12 noon, September 21, 1999, in order to be included on the agenda. Presenters will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis. The request should identify the name and affiliation of the individual who will make the presentation and an outline of the issues to be addressed. Thirty-five copies of any written presentation material shall be given to the Executive Director by all presenters no later than the time of the presentation for distribution to the Commission and the interested public. Those wishing to testify, but who are unable to notify the Commission office by September 21, 1999, will be able to sign up as a presenter the day of the hearing (September 22) between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. These presenters will testify on a first-come, first-served basis and comments will be limited based on the time available and the number of presenters. Written statements will be accepted at the meeting, or may be mailed or faxed to the Commission office.

ADDRESSES: Comments and statements should be sent to Leona Dittus, Executive Director, National Drought Policy Commission, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 6701-S, STOP 0501, Washington, DC 20250-0501.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Leona Dittus (202) 720-3168; FAX (202) 720-4293; internet

Leona_Dittus@WDC.FSA.USDA.GOV.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the Commission is to provide advice and recommendations to the President and Congress on the creation of an integrated, coordinated Federal policy, designed to prepare for and respond to serious drought emergencies. Tasks for the Commission include developing recommendations that will (a) better integrate Federal laws and programs with ongoing State, local, and tribal programs (b) improve public awareness of the need for drought mitigation, prevention, and response and (c) determine whether all Federal drought preparation and response programs should be consolidated under one existing Federal agency, and, if so, identify the agency. The Commission will be chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture or his designee, and a Vice Chair shall be selected from among the members who are not Federal officers or employees. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair will act in his stead. Administrative staff support essential to the execution of the Commission's responsibilities shall be provided by USDA, FSA.

Commission members specifically cited in Public Law 105-199, include the Secretaries of Agriculture, Interior, Army, and Commerce, the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration; two persons nominated by the National Governors' Association, a person nominated by the National Association of Counties, and a person nominated by the Conference of Mayors. Those four members are to be appointed by the President. Six additional Commission members have been appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Army. The six at-large members represent groups acutely affected by drought emergencies, such as the agricultural production community, the credit community, rural and urban water associations, Native Americans, and fishing and environmental interests.

If special accommodations are required, please contact Leona Dittus, at the address specified above, by COB September 15, 1999.

Signed at Washington, DC, on September 1, 1999.

Parks Shackelford,

Acting Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

[FR Doc. 99-23184 Filed 9-1-99; 2:01 pm]

BILLING CODE 3410-05-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Western Washington Cascades Provincial Interagency Executive Committee (PIEC) Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Western Washington Cascades Provincial Interagency Executive Committee Advisory Committee (Provincial Advisory Committee) will meet on Friday, September 24, 1999, at the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Headquarters, 21905 64th Avenue West, in Mountlake Terrace, WA. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and continue until about 3 p.m. Agenda items to be covered include: (1) formal introduction of members and a review and discussion of Advisory-Committee operating procedures and groundrules; (2) brief orientation including Advisory Committee purpose and history and the role of Committee members; and (3) a futuring session including a briefing on the current status and complexity of forest programs and resources and a