

Section 1613 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2000 amends Section 278(d) of the National Appeals Division's enabling statute.

<< 7 USCA § 7996 >>

SEC. 1613. EQUITABLE RELIEF FROM INELIGIBILITY FOR LOANS, PAYMENTS, OR OTHER BENEFITS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY.—The term “agricultural commodity” means any agricultural commodity, food, feed, fiber, or livestock that is subject to a covered program.

(2) COVERED PROGRAM.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “covered program” means—

(i) a program administered by the Secretary under which price or income support, or production or market loss assistance, is provided to producers of agricultural commodities; and

(ii) a conservation program administered by the Secretary.

(B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term “covered program” does not include—

(i) an agricultural credit program carried out under the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq.); or

(ii) the crop insurance program carried out under the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.).

(3) PARTICIPANT.—The term “participant” means a participant in a covered program.

(4) STATE CONSERVATIONIST.—The term “State Conservationist” means the State Conservationist with respect to a program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

(5) STATE DIRECTOR.—The term “State Director” means the State Executive Director of the Farm Service Agency with respect to a program administered by the Farm Service Agency.

(b) EQUITABLE RELIEF.—The Secretary may provide relief to any participant that is determined to be not in compliance with the requirements of a covered program, and therefore ineligible for a loan, payment, or other benefit under the covered program, if the participant—

(1) acting in good faith, relied on the action or advice of the Secretary (including any authorized representative of the Secretary) to the detriment of the participant; or

(2) failed to comply fully with the requirements of the covered program, but made a good faith effort to comply with the requirements.

(c) FORMS OF RELIEF.—The Secretary may authorize a participant in a covered program to—

(1) retain loans, payments, or other benefits received under the covered program;

(2) continue to receive loans, payments, and other benefits under the covered program;

(3) continue to participate, in whole or in part, under any contract executed under the covered program;

(4) in the case of a conservation program, reenroll all or part of the land covered by the program; and

(5) receive such other equitable relief as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(d) REMEDIAL ACTION.—As a condition of receiving relief under this section, the Secretary may require the participant to take actions designed to remedy any failure to comply with the covered program.

(e) EQUITABLE RELIEF BY STATE DIRECTORS AND STATE CONSERVATIONISTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A State Director, in the case of programs administered by the State Director, and the State Conservationist, in the case of programs administered by the State Conservationist, may grant relief to a participant in accordance with subsections (b) through (d) if—

(A) the amount of loans, payments, and benefits for which relief will be provided to the participant under this subsection is less than \$20,000;

(B) the total amount of loans, payments, and benefits for which relief has been previously provided to the participant under this subsection is not more than \$5,000; and

(C) the total amount of loans, payments, and benefits for which relief is provided to similarly situated participants under this subsection is not more than \$1,000,000, as determined by the Secretary.

(2) CONSULTATION, APPROVAL, AND REVERSAL.—The decision by a State Director or State Conservationist to grant relief under this subsection—

(3) **NONAPPLICABILITY.**—The authority of a State Director or State Conservationist under this subsection does not apply to the administration of—

(A) payment limitations under—

(i) sections 1001 through 1001F of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308 et seq.); or

(ii) a conservation program administered by the Secretary.

(B) highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements under subtitle B or C of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3811 et seq.).

(4) **OTHER AUTHORITY.**—The authority provided to a State Director and State Conservationist under this subsection is in addition to any other applicable authority and does not limit other authority provided by law or the Secretary.

(f) **JUDICIAL REVIEW.**—A discretionary decision by the Secretary, the State Director, or the State Conservationist under this section shall be final, and shall not be subject to review under chapter 7 of title 5, United States Code.

(g) **REPORTS.**—Not later than February 1 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report that describes for the previous calendar year—

(1) the number of requests for equitable relief under subsections (b) and (e) and the disposition of the requests; and

(2) the number of requests for equitable relief under section 278(d) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6998(d)) and the disposition of the requests.

(h) **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAW.**—The authority provided in this section is in addition to any other authority provided in this or any other Act.

(i) **FINALITY RULE.**—Section 281(a) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 7001(a)) is amended—

<< 7 USCA § 7001 >>

(1) by striking “Consolidated Farm Service Agency” each place it appears and inserting “Farm Service Agency”;

<< 7 USCA § 7001 >>

(2) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “This subsection” and inserting the following:

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), this subsection’; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(B) **NONAPPLICABILITY.**—This subsection does not apply to—

“(i) a function performed under section 376 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act; or

“(ii) a function performed under a conservation program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.”; and

<< 7 USCA § 7001 >>

(3) in paragraph (2), by inserting “, before the end of the 90–day period,” after “unless the decision”.

(j) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—

<< 7 USCA § 1339a >>

(1) Section 326 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 (7 U.S.C. 1339a) is repealed.

<< 7 USCA § 6998 >>

(2) Section 278(d) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6998(d)) is amended in the first sentence by striking “section 326 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 (7 U.S.C. 1339a)” and inserting “section 1613 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002”.

<< 16 USCA § 3830a >>

(3) Section 1230A of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3830a) is repealed.