

(b) Components of plan

The natural resource conservation management plan referred to in subsection (a)(1) of this section (hereafter referred to as the “plan”)—

(1) shall set forth—

(A) the conservation measures and practices to be carried out by the owner of the land subject to the easement; and

(B) the commercial use, if any, to be permitted on such land during the term of the easement; and

(2) shall provide for the permanent retirement of any existing cropland base and allotment history for such land under any program administered by the Secretary.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1239A, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1440, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3597.)

§ 3839b. Duties of Secretary

In return for the granting of an easement by an owner under this part, the Secretary shall—

(1) share the cost of carrying out the establishment of conservation measures and practices set forth in the plan for which the Secretary determines that cost sharing is appropriate and in the public interest;

(2) pay for a period not to exceed 10 years annual easement payments in the aggregate not to exceed the lesser of—

(A) \$250,000; or

(B) the difference in the value of the land with and without an easement;

(3) provide necessary technical assistance to assist owners in complying with the terms and conditions of the easement and the plan; and

(4) permit the land to be used for wildlife activities, including hunting and fishing, if such use is permitted by the owner.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1239B, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1440, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3598.)

§ 3839c. Payments**(a) Time of payment**

The Secretary shall provide payment for obligations incurred by the Secretary under this part—

(1) with respect to any cost sharing obligation as soon as possible after the obligation is incurred; and

(2) with respect to any annual easement payment obligation incurred by the Secretary as soon as possible after October 1 of each calendar year.

(b) Cost sharing payments

In making cost sharing payments to owners under this part, the Secretary may pay up to 100 percent of the cost of establishing conservation measures and practices pursuant to this part.

(c) Easement payments; acceptability of offers**(1) Determination of amount**

The Secretary shall determine the amount payable to owners in the form of easement payments under this part, and in making such determination may consider, among other

things, the amount necessary to encourage owners to participate in the easement program.

(2) Acceptability of offers

In determining the acceptability of easement offers, the Secretary may take into consideration—

(A) the extent to which the purposes of the easement program would be achieved on the land;

(B) the productivity of the land; and

(C) the on-farm and off-farm environmental threats if the land is used for the production of agricultural commodities.

(d) Form of payment

Except as otherwise provided in this section, payments under this part—

(1) shall be made in cash in such amount and at such time as is agreed on and specified in the easement or related agreement; and

(2) may be made in advance of a determination of performance.

(e) Payments to others

If an owner who is entitled to a payment under this part dies, becomes incompetent, is otherwise unable to receive such payment, or is succeeded by another person who renders or completes the required performance, the Secretary shall make such payment, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary and without regard to any other provision of law, in such manner as the Secretary determines is fair and reasonable in light of all of the circumstances.

(f) Payment limitation**(1) In general**

The total amount of easement payments made to a person under this part for any year may not exceed \$50,000.

(2) Regulations

The Secretary shall issue regulations prescribing such rules as the Secretary determines necessary to ensure a fair and reasonable application of the limitation contained in this subsection.

(3) Other payments

Easement payments received by an owner shall be in addition to, and not affect, the total amount of payments that such owner is otherwise eligible to receive under this Act, the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, or the Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.).

(4) State environmental enhancement

The provisions of this subsection that limit payments to any person, and section 1305(d) of the Agricultural Reconciliation Act of 1987 (7 U.S.C. 1308 note), shall not be applicable to payments received by a State, political subdivision, or agency thereof in connection with agreements entered into under an environmental easement enhancement program carried out by that entity that has been approved by the Secretary. The Secretary may enter into such agreements for payments to States, political subdivisions, or agencies thereof that

the Secretary determines will advance the purposes of this part.

(g) Exemption from automatic sequester

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no order issued under section 902 of title 2 shall affect any payment under this part.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1239C, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1440, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3599.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This Act, referred to in subsec. (f)(3), is Pub. L. 99-198, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1354, as amended, known as the Food Security Act of 1985. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title of 1985 Amendment note set out under section 1281 of Title 7, Agriculture, and Tables.

The Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, referred to in subsec. (f)(3), is Pub. L. 101-624, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3359, as amended. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title of 1990 Amendment note set out under section 1421 of Title 7 and Tables.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, referred to in subsec. (f)(3), is act Oct. 31, 1949, ch. 792, 63 Stat. 1051, as amended, which is classified principally to chapter 35A (§1421 et seq.) of Title 7. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1421 of Title 7 and Tables.

Section 1305(d) of the Agricultural Reconciliation Act of 1987, referred to in subsec. (f)(4), is section 1305(d) of Pub. L. 100-203, which is set out as a note under section 1308 of Title 7.

§ 3839d. Changes in ownership; modification of easement

(a) Limitations

No easement shall be created under this part on land that has changed ownership in the preceding 12 months unless—

- (1) the new ownership was acquired by will or succession as a result of the death of the previous owner;
- (2) the new ownership was acquired before January 1, 1990; or
- (3) the Secretary determines that the land was acquired under circumstances that give adequate assurances that such land was not acquired for the purposes of placing it in the program established by this part.

(b) Modification; termination

(1) Modification

The Secretary may modify an easement acquired from, or a related agreement with, an owner under this part if—

- (A) the current owner of the land agrees to such modification; and
- (B) the Secretary determines that such modification is desirable—
 - (i) to carry out this part;
 - (ii) to facilitate the practical administration of this part; or
 - (iii) to achieve such other goals as the Secretary determines are appropriate and consistent with this part.

(2) Termination

(A) In general

The Secretary may terminate an easement created with an owner under this part if—

- (i) the current owner of the land agrees to such termination; and

- (ii) the Secretary determines that such termination would be in the public interest.

(B) Notice

At least 90 days before taking any action to terminate under subparagraph (A) all easements entered into under this part, the Secretary shall provide written notice of such action to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1239D, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1440, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3600.)

PART IV—ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

CODIFICATION

Chapter 4 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985, comprising this part, was originally added to Pub. L. 99-198 by Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §334, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 996. Chapter 4 is shown herein, however, as having been added by Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2301, May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 253, because of the extensive revision of the chapter's provisions by Pub. L. 107-171. Such revision did not contain a chapter heading, which was subsequently added by Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §2501(b), May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1058, and Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §2501(b), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1786. Pub. L. 110-234 was repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234.

§ 3839aa. Purposes

The purposes of the environmental quality incentives program established by this part are to promote agricultural production, forest management, and environmental quality as compatible goals, and to optimize environmental benefits, by—

- (1) assisting producers in complying with local, State, and national regulatory requirements concerning—
 - (A) soil, water, and air quality;
 - (B) wildlife habitat; and
 - (C) surface and ground water conservation;
- (2) avoiding, to the maximum extent practicable, the need for resource and regulatory programs by assisting producers in protecting soil, water, air, and related natural resources and meeting environmental quality criteria established by Federal, State, tribal, and local agencies;
- (3) providing flexible assistance to producers to install and maintain conservation practices that sustain food and fiber production while—
 - (A) enhancing soil, water, and related natural resources, including grazing land, forestland, wetland, and wildlife; and
 - (B) conserving energy;
- (4) assisting producers to make beneficial, cost effective changes to production systems (including conservation practices related to organic production), grazing management, fuels management, forest management, nutrient management associated with livestock, pest or irrigation management, or other practices on agricultural and forested land; and