

chapter, is popularly known as the swampbuster provisions.

### § 3822. Delineation of wetlands; exemptions

#### (a) Delineation by Secretary

##### (1) In general

Subject to subsection (b) of this section and paragraph (6), the Secretary shall delineate, determine, and certify all wetlands located on subject land on a farm.

##### (2) Wetland delineation maps

The Secretary shall delineate wetlands on wetland delineation maps. On the request of a person, the Secretary shall make a reasonable effort to make an on-site wetland determination prior to delineation.

##### (3) Certification

On providing notice to affected persons, the Secretary shall—

(A) certify whether a map is sufficient for the purpose of making a determination of ineligibility for program benefits under section 3821 of this title; and

(B) provide an opportunity to appeal the certification prior to the certification becoming final.

##### (4) Duration of certification

A final certification made under paragraph (3) shall remain valid and in effect as long as the area is devoted to an agricultural use or until such time as the person affected by the certification requests review of the certification by the Secretary.

##### (5) Review of mapping on appeal

In the case of an appeal of the Secretary's certification, the Secretary shall review and certify the accuracy of the mapping of all land subject to the appeal to ensure that the subject land has been accurately delineated. Prior to rendering a decision on the appeal, the Secretary shall conduct an on-site inspection of the subject land on a farm.

##### (6) Reliance on prior certified delineation

No person shall be adversely affected because of having taken an action based on a previous certified wetland delineation by the Secretary. The delineation shall not be subject to a subsequent wetland certification or delineation by the Secretary, unless requested by the person under paragraph (4).

#### (b) Exemptions

No person shall become ineligible under section 3821 of this title for program loans or payments under the following circumstances:

(1) As the result of the production of an agricultural commodity on the following lands:

(A) A converted wetland if the conversion of the wetland was commenced before December 23, 1985.

(B) Land that is a nontidal drainage or irrigation ditch excavated in upland.

(C) A wet area created by a water delivery system, irrigation, irrigation system, or application of water for irrigation.

(D) A wetland on which the owner or operator of a farm or ranch uses normal cropping

or ranching practices to produce an agricultural commodity in a manner that is consistent for the area where the production is possible as a result of a natural condition, such as drought, and is without action by the producer that destroys a natural wetland characteristic.

(E) Land that is an artificial lake or pond created by excavating or diking land (that is not a wetland) to collect and retain water and that is used primarily for livestock watering, fish production, irrigation, wildlife, fire control, flood control, cranberry growing, or rice production, or as a settling pond.

(F) A wetland that is temporarily or incidentally created as a result of adjacent development activity.

(G) A converted wetland if the original conversion of the wetland was commenced before December 23, 1985, and the Secretary determines the wetland characteristics returned after that date as a result of—

(i) the lack of maintenance of drainage, dikes, levees, or similar structures;

(ii) a lack of management of the lands containing the wetland; or

(iii) circumstances beyond the control of the person.

(H) A converted wetland, if—

(i) the converted wetland was determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to have been manipulated for the production of an agricultural commodity or forage prior to December 23, 1985, and was returned to wetland conditions through a voluntary restoration, enhancement, or creation action subsequent to that determination;

(ii) technical determinations regarding the prior site conditions and the restoration, enhancement, or creation action have been adequately documented by the Natural Resources Conservation Service;

(iii) the proposed conversion action is approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service prior to implementation; and

(iv) the extent of the proposed conversion is limited so that the conditions will be at least equivalent to the wetland functions and values that existed prior to implementation of the voluntary wetland restoration, enhancement, or creation action.

(2) For the conversion of the following:

(A) An artificial lake or pond created by excavating or diking land that is not a wetland to collect and retain water and that is used primarily for livestock watering, fish production, irrigation, wildlife, fire control, flood control, cranberry growing, rice production, or as a settling pond.

(B) A wetland that is temporarily or incidentally created as a result of adjacent development activity.

(C) A wetland on which the owner or operator of a farm or ranch uses normal cropping or ranching practices to produce an agricultural commodity in a manner that is consistent for the area where the production is

possible as a result of a natural condition, such as drought, and is without action by the producer that destroys a natural wetland characteristic.

(D) A wetland previously identified as a converted wetland (if the original conversion of the wetland was commenced before December 23, 1985), but that the Secretary determines returned to wetland status after that date as a result of—

- (i) the lack of maintenance of drainage, dikes, levees, or similar structures;
- (ii) a lack of management of the lands containing the wetland; or
- (iii) circumstances beyond the control of the person.

(E) A wetland, if—

(i) the wetland was determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to have been manipulated for the production of an agricultural commodity or forage prior to December 23, 1985, and was returned to wetland conditions through a voluntary restoration, enhancement, or creation action subsequent to that determination;

(ii) technical determinations regarding the prior site conditions and the restoration, enhancement, or creation action have been adequately documented by the Natural Resources Conservation Service;

(iii) the proposed conversion action is approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service prior to implementation; and

(iv) the extent of the proposed conversion is limited so that the conditions will be at least equivalent to the wetland functions and values that existed prior to implementation of the voluntary wetland restoration, enhancement, or creation action.

**(c) On-site inspection requirement**

No program loans, payments, or benefits shall be withheld from a person under this subchapter unless the Secretary has conducted an on-site visit of the subject land.

**(d) Identification of minimal effect exemptions**

For purposes of applying the minimal effect exemption under subsection (f)(1) of this section, the Secretary shall identify by regulation categorical minimal effect exemptions on a regional basis to assist persons in avoiding a violation of the ineligibility provisions of section 3821 of this title. The Secretary shall ensure that employees of the Department of Agriculture who administer this subchapter receive appropriate training to properly apply the minimal effect exemptions determined by the Secretary.

**(e) Nonwetlands**

The Secretary shall exempt from the ineligibility provisions of section 3821 of this title any action by a person upon lands in any case in which the Secretary determines that any one of the following does not apply with respect to such lands:

- (1) Such lands have a predominance of hydric soils.

(2) Such lands are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

(3) Such lands, under normal circumstances, support a prevalence of such vegetation.

**(f) Minimal effect; mitigation**

The Secretary shall exempt a person from the ineligibility provisions of section 3821 of this title for any action associated with the production of an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland, or the conversion of a wetland, if 1 or more of the following conditions apply, as determined by the Secretary:

(1) The action, individually and in connection with all other similar actions authorized by the Secretary in the area, will have a minimal effect on the functional hydrological and biological value of the wetlands in the area, including the value to waterfowl and wildlife.

(2) The wetland and the wetland values, acreage, and functions are mitigated by the person through the restoration of a converted wetland, the enhancement of an existing wetland, or the creation of a new wetland, and the restoration, enhancement, or creation is—

(A) in accordance with a wetland conservation plan;

(B) in advance of, or concurrent with, the action;

(C) not at the expense of the Federal Government;

(D) in the case of enhancement or restoration of wetlands, on not greater than a 1-for-1 acreage basis unless more acreage is needed to provide equivalent functions and values that will be lost as a result of the wetland conversion to be mitigated;

(E) in the case of creation of wetlands, on greater than a 1-for-1 acreage basis if more acreage is needed to provide equivalent functions and values that will be lost as a result of the wetland conversion that is mitigated;

(F) on lands in the same general area of the local watershed as the converted wetland; and

(G) with respect to the restored, enhanced, or created wetland, made subject to an easement that—

(i) is recorded on public land records;

(ii) remains in force for as long as the converted wetland for which the restoration, enhancement, or creation to be mitigated remains in agricultural use or is not returned to its original wetland classification with equivalent functions and values; and

(iii) prohibits making alterations to the restored, enhanced, or created wetland that lower the wetland's functions and values.

(3) The wetland was converted after December 23, 1985, but before November 28, 1990, and the wetland values, acreage, and functions are mitigated by the producer through the requirements of subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), (D), (F), and (G) of paragraph (2).

(4) The action was authorized by a permit issued under section 1344 of title 33 and the wet-

land values, acreage, and functions of the converted wetland were adequately mitigated for the purposes of this subchapter.

**(g) Mitigation appeals**

A person shall be afforded the right to appeal, under section 3843<sup>1</sup> of this title, the imposition of a mitigation agreement requiring greater than one-to-one acreage mitigation to which the person is subject.

**(h) Good faith exemption**

**(1) Exemption described**

The Secretary may waive a person's ineligibility under section 3821 of this title for program loans, payments, and benefits as the result of the conversion of a wetland subsequent to November 28, 1990, or the production of an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland, if the Secretary determines that the person has acted in good faith and without intent to violate this subchapter.

**(2) Eligible reviewers**

A determination of the Secretary, or a designee of the Secretary, under paragraph (1) shall be reviewed by the applicable—

(A) State Executive Director, with the technical concurrence of the State Conservationist; or

(B) district director, with the technical concurrence of the area conservationist.

**(3) Period for compliance**

The Secretary shall provide a person who the Secretary determines has acted in good faith and without intent to violate this subchapter with a reasonable period, but not to exceed 1 year, during which to implement the measures and practices necessary to be considered to be actively restoring the subject wetland.

**(i) Restoration**

Any person who is determined to be ineligible for program benefits under section 3821 of this title for any crop year shall not be ineligible for such program benefits under such section for any subsequent crop year if, prior to the beginning of such subsequent crop year, the person has fully restored the characteristics of the converted wetland to its prior wetland state or has otherwise mitigated for the loss of wetland values, as determined by the Secretary, through the restoration, enhancement, or creation of wetland values in the same general area of the local watershed as the converted wetland.

**(j) Determinations; restoration and mitigation plans; monitoring activities**

Technical determinations, the development of restoration and mitigation plans, and monitoring activities under this section shall be made by the National<sup>2</sup> Resources Conservation Service.

**(k) Mitigation banking**

**(1) Mitigation banking program**

**(A) In general**

Using authorities available to the Secretary, the Secretary shall operate a pro-

gram or work with third parties to establish mitigation banks to assist persons in complying with the provisions of this section while mitigating any loss of wetland values and functions.

**(B) Funding**

Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall use \$10,000,000, to remain available until expended, to carry out this paragraph.

**(2) Applicability**

Subsection (f)(2)(C) shall not apply to this subsection.

**(3) Policy and criteria**

The Secretary shall develop the appropriate policy and criteria that will allow willing persons to access existing mitigation banks, under this section or any other authority, that will serve the purposes of this section without requiring the Secretary to hold an easement, in whole or in part, in a mitigation bank.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, § 1222, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1508; Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, § 1422, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3573; Pub. L. 104-127, title III, § 322, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 987; Pub. L. 110-234, title II, § 2003, May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1028; Pub. L. 110-246, § 4(a), title II, § 2003, June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1756; Pub. L. 113-79, title II, § 2609, Feb. 7, 2014, 128 Stat. 761.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 3843 of this title, referred to in subsec. (g), was omitted and a new section 3843 was added in the general amendment of subchapter V of this chapter by Pub. L. 104-127, title III, § 341, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1008. The new section 3843, which did not relate to appeal procedures, was subsequently repealed by Pub. L. 113-79, title II, § 2710(a), Feb. 7, 2014, 128 Stat. 770.

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

AMENDMENTS

2014—Subsec. (k). Pub. L. 113-79 amended subsec. (k) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: "Using authorities available to the Secretary, the Secretary may operate a pilot program for mitigation banking of wetlands to assist persons to increase the efficiency of agricultural operations while protecting wetland functions and values. Subsection (f)(2)(C) of this section shall not apply to this subsection."

2008—Subsec. (h)(2), (3). Pub. L. 110-246, § 2003, added par. (2), redesignated former par. (2) as (3), and inserted "be" before "actively".

1996—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 104-127, § 322(a), added subsec. (a) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (a). Text consisted of pars. (1) to (4) relating to delineation of wetlands.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 104-127, § 322(b), added subsec. (b) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (b). Text consisted of pars. (1)(A) to (D) and (2)(A) and (B) relating to exemptions.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 104-127, § 322(c), added subsec. (d) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (d). Text read as follows: "Section 3821 of this title shall not apply to a loan described in section 3821 of this title made before December 23, 1985."

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 104-127, § 322(d), added subsec. (f) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (f). Text consisted of pars. (1) to (3) relating to minimal effect and mitigation exemptions.

<sup>1</sup> See References in Text note below.

<sup>2</sup> So in original. Probably should be "Natural".

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 104-127, §322(e), which directed substitution of “person” for “producer”, was executed by making the substitution in two places.

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 104-127, §322(f), added subsec. (h) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (h). Text consisted of pars. (1) to (3) relating to good faith exemptions to ineligibility under section 3821 of this title and graduated sanctions.

Subsec. (i). Pub. L. 104-127, §322(g), inserted before period at end “or has otherwise mitigated for the loss of wetland values, as determined by the Secretary, through the restoration, enhancement, or creation of wetland values in the same general area of the local watershed as the converted wetland”.

Subsec. (j). Pub. L. 104-127, §322(h), added subsec. (j) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (j). Text provided that technical determinations and the development of restoration and mitigation plans be made through agreement of local representative of Soil Conservation Service and representative of the Fish and Wildlife Service and required reporting of determinations and monitoring.

Subsec. (k). Pub. L. 104-127, §322(i), added subsec. (k). 1990—Pub. L. 101-624 amended section generally, substituting present provisions for provisions relating to eligibility for program benefits in connection with production of crops on certain wetlands, making program ineligibility inapplicable to pre-Dec. 23, 1985, section 3821 loans, and providing for personal exemptions from program ineligibility for actions associated with production of commodities having minimal wetland effect.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1996 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 104-127 effective 90 days after Apr. 4, 1996, see section 326 of Pub. L. 104-127, set out as a note under section 3821 of this title.

### § 3823. Affiliated persons

If a person is affected by a reduction in benefits under section 3821 of this title and the affected person is affiliated with other persons for the purpose of receiving the benefits, the benefits of each affiliated person shall be reduced under section 3821 of this title in proportion to the interest held by the affiliated person.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1223, as added Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §324, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 992.)

#### PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 3823, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1223, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1508; Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1423, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3576; Pub. L. 102-237, title II, §204(4), Dec. 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 1855, related to consultation with Secretary of the Interior, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §§323, 326, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 992, effective 90 days after Apr. 4, 1996.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective 90 days after Apr. 4, 1996, see section 326 of Pub. L. 104-127, set out as an Effective Date of 1996 Amendment note under section 3821 of this title.

### § 3824. Fairness of compliance

If the actions of an unrelated person or public entity, outside the control of, and without the prior approval of, the landowner or tenant result in a change in the characteristics of cropland that would cause the land to be determined to

be a wetland, the affected land shall not be considered to be wetland for purposes of this subchapter.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1224, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1424, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3576.)

## SUBCHAPTER IV—AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

### PART I—COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

#### SUBPART A—GENERAL PROVISIONS

### § 3830. Repealed. Pub. L. 113-79, title II, §2701, Feb. 7, 2014, 128 Stat. 766

Section, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1230, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1431(2), Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3576; amended Pub. L. 103-66, title I, §1402(a), Aug. 10, 1993, 107 Stat. 332; Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §331, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 992; Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2006(b), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 237, related to comprehensive conservation enhancement program.

#### CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE

Pub. L. 106-224, title II, §211, June 20, 2000, 114 Stat. 406, as amended by Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2503(b)(1)(B), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 269, authorized Secretary to use \$40,000,000 of funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation to provide financial assistance to farmers and ranchers to address threats to soil, water, and related natural resources, including grazing land, wetland, and wildlife habitat; comply with Federal and State environmental laws; and make beneficial, cost-effective changes to cropping systems, grazing management, manure, nutrient, pest, or irrigation management, land uses, or other measures needed to conserve and improve soil, water, and related natural resources.

#### FARMLAND PROTECTION PROGRAM

Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §388, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1020, directed Secretary of Agriculture to establish and carry out a farmland protection program, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2503(b)(1)(A), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 269.

[Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2503(b)(2), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 269, provided that: “The amendment made by paragraph (1)(A) [repealing section 388 of Pub. L. 104-127, formerly set out above] shall have no effect on any contract entered into under section 388 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 [Pub. L. 104-127] (16 U.S.C. 3830 note) that is in effect as of the date of enactment of this Act [May 13, 2002].”]

### § 3830a. Repealed. Pub. L. 107-171, title I, § 1613(j)(3), title II, § 2006(c), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 221, 237

Section, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1230A, as added Pub. L. 106-387, §1(a) [title VII, §755], Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1549, 1549A-42, related to good faith reliance.

#### SUBPART B—CONSERVATION RESERVE

#### CODIFICATION

Subchapter B of chapter 1 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985, comprising this subpart, was originally designated in Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1509, by Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §§1431(1), 1432(1), Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3576, 3577, and amended by Pub. L. 99-500, Oct. 18, 1986, 100 Stat. 1783, and Pub. L. 99-591, Oct. 30, 1986, 100 Stat. 3341; Pub. L. 99-641, Nov. 10, 1986, 100 Stat. 3556; Pub. L. 100-233, Jan. 6, 1988, 101 Stat. 1568; Pub. L. 100-387, Aug. 11, 1988, 102 Stat. 924; Pub. L. 101-512, Nov. 5, 1990, 104 Stat. 1915; Pub. L. 101-624, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3359; Pub. L.