

“(2) the efficient operation of the Rural Telephone Bank and the Rural Electrification Administration telephone loan programs is essential to the continued development of the telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas in the United States.

“(b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the Congress that the Rural Electrification Administration make loans that facilitate the development and enhancement of the rural telecommunications infrastructure in order to make modern telecommunications technology and services available at reasonable rates to the greatest practicable number of people in rural areas in the United States.”

[Title IV of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (former 7 U.S.C. 941-950b), which established the Rural Telephone Bank, was repealed by Pub. L. 115-334, title VI, § 6602(a), Dec. 20, 2018, 132 Stat. 4776.]

§ 902. General authority of Secretary of Agriculture

(a) Loans

The Secretary of Agriculture (referred to in this chapter as the “Secretary”) is authorized and empowered to make loans, or refinance loans made or guaranteed by the Secretary under this chapter, in the several States and Territories of the United States for rural electrification and for the purpose of furnishing and improving electric and telephone service in rural areas, as provided in this chapter, and for the purpose of assisting electric borrowers to implement demand side management, energy efficiency and conservation programs, and on-grid and off-grid renewable energy systems.

(b) Investigations and reports

The Secretary may make, or cause to be made, studies, investigations, and reports regarding matters, including financial, technological, and regulatory matters, affecting the condition and progress of electric, telecommunications, and economic development in rural areas, and publish and disseminate information with respect to the matters.

(c) Technical assistance

Not later than 180 days after December 20, 2018, the Secretary shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Secretary of Energy under which the Secretary of Energy shall provide technical assistance to the Rural Utilities Service on loans to be made under subsection (a) of this section and section 904(a) of this title.

(May 20, 1936, ch. 432, title I, § 2, 49 Stat. 1363; Oct. 28, 1949, ch. 776, §§ 2, 3, 63 Stat. 948; Pub. L. 103-129, § 2(c)(1), Nov. 1, 1993, 107 Stat. 1363; Pub. L. 103-354, title II, § 235(a)(2), (13), Oct. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 3220, 3221; Pub. L. 104-127, title VII, § 771, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1149; Pub. L. 110-234, title VI, § 6101, May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1195; Pub. L. 110-246, § 4(a), title VI, § 6101, June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1956; Pub. L. 115-334, title VI, § 6501, Dec. 20, 2018, 132 Stat. 4771; Pub. L. 116-94, div. B, title VII, § 765, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 2655.)

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

2019—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 116-94 substituted “made or guaranteed by the Secretary” for “made by the Secretary”.

2018—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 115-334, § 6501(a), substituted “loans, or refinance loans made by the Secretary under this chapter, in” for “loans in”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 115-334, § 6501(b), added subsec. (c).

2008—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 110-246, § 6101, inserted “efficiency and” before “conservation”.

1996—Pub. L. 104-127, § 771(1), inserted section catchline.

Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 104-127, § 771(1), (2), inserted heading, substituted “The Secretary of Agriculture (referred to in this chapter as the ‘Secretary’) is” for “The Secretary of Agriculture is”, struck out “and the furnishing of electric energy to persons in rural areas who are not receiving central station service” after “rural electrification”, and substituted “systems.” for “systems; to make, or cause to be made, studies, investigations, and reports concerning the condition and progress of the electrification of and the furnishing of adequate telephone service in rural areas in the several States and Territories; and to publish and disseminate information with respect thereto.”

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 104-127, § 771(3), added subsec. (b) and struck out former subsec. (b) which read as follows: “By January 1, 1994, the Secretary shall issue interim regulations to implement the authority contained in subsection (a) of this section to make loans for the purpose of assisting electric borrowers to implement demand side management, energy conservation programs, and on-grid and off-grid renewable energy systems. If the regulations are not issued by January 1, 1994, the Secretary shall consider any demand side management, energy conservation, or renewable energy program, system, or activity that is approved by a State agency to be eligible for the loans.”

1994—Pub. L. 103-354 substituted “Secretary of Agriculture” for “Administrator” in subsec. (a) and “Secretary” for “Administrator” in two places in subsec. (b).

1993—Pub. L. 103-129 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), substituted “electric and telephone service in rural areas, as provided in this chapter, and for the purpose of assisting electric borrowers to implement demand side management, energy conservation programs, and on-grid and off-grid renewable energy systems;” for “telephone service in rural areas, as hereinafter provided;”, and added subsec. (b).

1949—Act Oct. 28, 1949, authorized loans to furnish and improve rural telephone service; and inserted “title I,” in credit of act May 20, 1936.

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 this title.

§ 903. Authorization of appropriations

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this chapter.

(May 20, 1936, ch. 432, title I, § 3, 49 Stat. 1364; June 21, 1938, ch. 554, title IV, § 401, 52 Stat. 818; Sept. 21, 1944, ch. 412, title V, §§ 501, 503, 504, 58 Stat. 739, 740; July 30, 1947, ch. 356, title I, § 1, 61 Stat. 546; Oct. 28, 1949, ch. 776, §§ 2, 4(a)-(d), 63 Stat. 948; June 15, 1955, ch. 139, § 1, 69 Stat. 131; Pub. L. 92-12, § 3(a), May 7, 1971, 85 Stat. 37; Pub. L. 93-32, § 3, May 11, 1973, 87 Stat. 70; Pub. L. 103-354, title II, § 235(a)(3), (13), Oct. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 3220, 3221; Pub. L. 104-127, title VII, § 772(a), Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1149.)

AMENDMENTS

1996—Pub. L. 104-127 amended section generally, inserting section catchline and substituting current pro-