

§ 6209. Initial referendum**(a) Requirement**

Not later than 30 months after the date on which the collection of assessments begins under the order pursuant to section 6204(d) of this title, the Secretary shall conduct a referendum among producers, producer-handlers, and importers who—

- (1) are not exempt from assessment under section 6204(d)(5) of this title; and
- (2) produced or imported limes during a representative period as determined by the Secretary.

(b) Purpose of referendum

The referendum referred to in subsection (a) is for the purpose of determining whether the issuance of the order is approved or favored by not less than a majority of the producers, producer-handlers, and importers voting in the referendum. The order shall continue in effect only with such a majority.

(c) Confidentiality

The ballots and other information or reports that reveal, or tend to reveal, the vote of any person under this section, or section 6210 of this title, shall be held strictly confidential and shall not be disclosed.

(d) Refund of assessments from escrow account**(1) In general**

A portion of the assessments collected from producers, producer-handlers, and importers prior to announcement of the results of the referendum provided for in this section shall be held in an escrow account until the results of the referendum are published by the Secretary. The amount in the escrow account shall be equal to the product obtained by multiplying the total amount of assessments collected during such period by 10 percent.

(2) Approval of order

If the order is approved by a majority of the producers, producer-handlers, and importers voting in the initial referendum under subsection (a), the funds in the escrow account shall be released to be used for the purposes of this chapter.

(3) Disapproval of order**(A) Proration**

If—

- (i) the amount in the escrow account required by paragraph (1) is not sufficient to refund the total amount of assessments demanded by producers, producer-handlers, or importers; and
- (ii) the plan is not approved pursuant to the referendum conducted under subsection (a);

the Board shall prorate the amount of such refunds among all eligible producers, producer-handlers, or importers who demand such refund.

(B) Right to refund

A producer, producer-handler, or importer shall be eligible to receive a refund—

- (i) if demand is made personally, in accordance with regulations and on a form

and within a time period prescribed by the Board, but in no event less than 90 days after the date of publication of the results of the referendum; and

- (ii) on submission of proof satisfactory to the Board that the person paid the assessment for which refund is sought and did not collect the assessment from another person.

(C) Surplus funds

Any funds not refunded under this paragraph shall be released to be used to carry out this chapter.

(Pub. L. 101-624, title XIX, §1960, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3879; Pub. L. 103-194, §5, Dec. 14, 1993, 107 Stat. 2295.)

Editorial Notes**AMENDMENTS**

1993—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 103-194 substituted “Not later than 30 months after the date on which the collection of assessments begins under the order pursuant to section 6204(d) of this title,” for “Not later than 2 years after the date on which the Secretary first issues an order under section 6203(a).”.

§ 6210. Suspension and termination**(a) Finding of Secretary**

If the Secretary finds that an order issued under section 6203(a) of this title, or a provision of such order, obstructs or does not tend to effectuate the purposes of this chapter, the Secretary shall terminate or suspend the operation of such order or provision.

(b) Periodic referenda

The Secretary may periodically conduct a referendum to determine if lime producers, producer-handlers, and importers favor the continuation, termination, or suspension of any order issued under section 6203(a) of this title and in effect at the time of such referendum.

(c) Required referenda

The Secretary shall hold a referendum under subsection (b)—

- (1) at the request of the Board; or
- (2) if not less than 10 percent of the lime producers, producer-handlers, and importers subject to assessment under this chapter submit a petition requesting such a referendum.

(d) Limitation

The termination or suspension of any order, or any provision thereof, shall not be considered an order within the meaning of this chapter.

(e) Vote

The Secretary shall suspend or terminate the order at the end of the marketing year if the Secretary determines that—

- (1) the suspension or termination of the order is favored by not less than a majority of those persons voting in a referendum under subsection (b); and
- (2) the producers, producer-handlers, and importers comprising this majority produce and import more than 50 percent of the volume of limes produced and imported by those voting in the referendum.