



Date: August 14, 2020

In Re: Pole Restoration/Pole Trussing & Banding

The Rural Utilities Service Electric Program advised RUS Electric borrowers that it will consider Pole Restoration/Pole Trussing & Banding (useful life extension) as eligible RUS rural electrification loan purposes where all other related approvals or permits are or will be in place. Pole Restoration/Pole Trussing & Banding can significantly increase the useful life of a pole for a fraction of the cost of replacing the pole thus delaying much higher replacement costs. This will provide flexibility to RUS Borrowers who choose to use this process to extend the life of the poles on their electric system. A reduced cost method of strengthening and restoring poles will give borrowers an affordable option to act quickly to reduce the risk of pole failure, system outages, downed lines and energized faults that could result in arcing and initiating fires.

Pole Restoration/Pole Trussing & Banding projects may be included in a Construction Work Plan (CWP) or as a CWP amendment presented through the General Field Representative (GFR). The GFR will review for technical (project) approval using the following project coding and associated 7 CFR 1970 Environmental Policies and Procedures project classifications. As with all RUS funded projects, construction may not commence until the environmental review process has concluded. The environmental review process is concluded when the RUS approves and issues determination in writing as to the applicability of a Categorical Exclusion (CE); issues a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI); or issues a Record of Decision (ROD); which must be completed prior to the start of construction.

Pole restoration, trussing and banding projects will be considered and coded as follows.

Code 618 – Distribution Pole Restoration/Pole Trussing & Banding: Includes all costs where the predominant item is related to the restoration of a pole through a method such as pole trussing and banding. Chemical treatment alone is considered a maintenance expense which is not eligible for RUS financing. However, the cost of chemical treatment completed along with the pole restoration process may be included. Barring extraordinary

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circumstances, as identified at 7CFR1970.52, Pole Restoration/Pole Trussing & Banding, as described, would be classified as a categorical exclusion per 7CFR1970.53(d)(4); Phase or voltage conversions, reconductoring, upgrading, or rebuilding of existing electric distribution lines that would not affect the environment beyond the previously developed, existing rights-of-way.

Code 1105 – Transmission Pole Restoration/Pole Trussing & Banding: Includes all costs where the predominant item is related to the restoration of a pole through a method such as pole trussing and banding. Chemical treatment alone is considered a maintenance expense which is not eligible for RUS financing. However, the cost of chemical treatment completed along with the pole restoration process may be included. Barring extraordinary circumstances, as identified at 7CFR1970.52, Pole Restoration/Pole Trussing & Banding, as described, would be classified as a categorical exclusion per 7CFR1970.53(d)(3); Changes to electric transmission lines that involve pole replacement or structural components only where either the same or substantially equivalent support structures at the approximate existing support structure locations are used;

A ‘useful life’ of twenty (20) years for both distribution and transmission pole restoration/pole trussing & banding will be used in calculations for § 1710.115 and 1710.501.

Technical Standards Committee "A" (Electric) has granted blanket acceptance for Pole Restoration materials including the utilization of trusses and pole banding. This acceptance does not relieve the manufacturer of any responsibility for the satisfactory performance of the item and its conformity to guarantees, specifications, or other provisions of contracts covering its sale. This acceptance is made with the further understanding that no changes in design or workmanship diminishing the quality, strength, and/or electrical characteristics of the item will be made without the knowledge of the Technical Standards Committees.

Unless prior written approval is received from RUS, borrowers are required to comply with RUS policies and procedures provided for in 7CFR Part 1726 - Electric System Construction Policies And Procedures as a condition to RUS providing loans, loan guarantees, or reimbursement of general funds for the construction and improvement of electric facilities.

This action is in addition to all other eligible capital expenses related to powerline construction which are currently eligible for RUS financing.

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