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Interagency Working Group on Cooperative Development

Draft Questions for the Record

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Confirmation Hearing of Sonny Perdue, Nominee for USDA Secretary

The current Farm Bill authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to “coordinate and chair an interagency working group to foster cooperative development and ensure coordination with Federal agencies and national and local cooperative organizations that have cooperative programs and interests.”

-7 USC 1932(e)(12)

The goal of this working group formally called the Interagency Working Group on Cooperative Development, is to leverage the cooperative expertise and energies inside the USDA and work with stakeholders inside and outside of government to improve the coordination and effectiveness of programs serving cooperative business across federal agencies.

The USDA has convened four of these meetings since October 2015. The meetings have been well attended with over a dozen federal departments and agencies represented. This has proven to be a helpful venue to address barriers to cooperative development and opportunity, including meetings at the Small Business Administration where access to capital was discussed and at the U.S. Department of Commerce where adding cooperatives back into the economic census was discussed.

As Secretary, how familiar are you with the role cooperatives play in economic development and jobs in local communities? Will you commit to the continued work of this Interagency Working Group on Cooperative Development and position it prominently in your department and this Administration?

For any further questions, contact Alan Knapp, Vice President of Advocacy at, 202-383-5480, or aknapp@ncba.coop.