



United States Department of Agriculture

JUN 4 2008

SUBJECT: NRCS Office Space Optimization

TO: Division Directors and Above
Center Directors
Regional Conservationists
State Conservationists
Directors, Caribbean and Pacific Islands Areas

FILE CODE: 120-20

As public servants, it's our responsibility to ensure we're using the funding we're appropriated and apportioned in the most efficient and effective ways possible. Over the past few years you've been involved with and/or briefed about efforts to streamline and strengthen business operations at NRCS and throughout USDA under the Secretary's Blueprint for Stronger Service and NRCS' supportive Administrative Transformation project. As part of these efforts, we're taking a look at our office space use at headquarters, in centers, and across the country to determine where we can save on space, while still maintaining or improving the level of service we provide to our customers.

Right now we have space that's not being used as efficiently as it could be in some offices, and in other offices we have more space than we need for our employees and partner staff. Over time, and with proper planning, we can optimize the use of our office space, improve its functionality, and help control the associated costs.

USDA has set a goal to reduce its office and warehouse space in the coming years. For NRCS, this goal is not focused on closing offices. Instead, what we are doing is taking stock of the space we have and identifying places where we can use new technologies, office configurations, and innovative ways of doing business to streamline our physical workspace and reduce our footprint. We anticipate optimization of our office space will equate to program dollar savings that can be put toward our conservation mission to better assist customers and achieve more conservation on the ground.

You'll be hearing more about this effort in the coming months. I'm asking you to be open and flexible to these new solutions and offer input and feedback on ways we can optimize the space in your offices. As lease renewal opportunities arise, we are asking agency leaders and lease managers to explore ways to use space more efficiently and potentially reduce the square footage we occupy. Lease managers will work closely with you, our USDA sister agencies, and our conservation district partners (who often share the same office space) to come up with workable solutions. At the end of the day, it will benefit our mission and our partners if we only occupy the office space we need and convert those savings achieved into direct conservation assistance. To aide our efforts to optimize office space use and reduce our footprint, we have established two teams with very capable leaders to work on this critical effort. Deputy Chief for Management Gayle Norman Barry and her team are focused on opportunities with National

Headquarters and Centers, and State Conservationist Karen Woodrich is focused on state, area, field and other local offices. Additionally, beginning in FY2015, we expect to build a leased square footage reduction incentive into the state allocation process to give states credit for reductions achieved during FY2014. FY2016 allocations will account for FY2015 reductions and so forth.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued dedication to natural resources conservation. If you have questions, please contact me at 202-720-5811 or via email.



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Associate Chief for Operations

cc:

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