

Interagency Working Group

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PARTICIPATING FEDERAL AGENCIES

WHITE HOUSE RURAL COUNCIL
 FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
 U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
 U.S. DEPT. OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
 U.S. DEPT. OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT
 U.S. DEPT. OF LABOR
 U.S. DEPT. OF COMMERCE
 U.S. INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
 U.S. DEPT. OF EDUCATION
 U.S. DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
 U.S. DEPT. OF TREASURY
 U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR
 U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

WORKING GROUP OVERVIEW

NCBA CLUSA, in partnership with USDA, began working on the Interagency Working Group on Cooperative Development in 2014. It was authorized by the Agriculture Act of 2014 P.L. 113-79, 7 USC 1932(e)(12) and states, “the Secretary shall coordinate and chair an interagency working group to foster co-op development and ensure coordination with Federal agencies and national and local co-op organizations that have co-op programs and interests.”

As vice-chair of the Working Group, NCBA CLUSA convene and facilitates. Through its Cooperative Leadership Coalition—comprised of organizations including the National Farmers Union, National Cooperative Bank, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and National Council of Farmer Cooperatives—NCBA CLUSA ensures the cooperative voice is cross-sector and united in its engagement with U.S. federal agencies.

FEB 2016 MEETING RE-CAP

- Hosted by the U.S. Small Business Administration
- Addressed access to capital for cooperatives, specifically inconsistencies in debt financing eligibility.
- The SBA currently recognizes four different types of cooperatives: producer, purchasing, worker and consumer. However, only certain types of these co-ops under certain circumstances are eligible for SBA guaranty loans.
- Adopted in the 1960s, the language of SBA regulations is outdated and does not reflect the evolving nature of cooperatives.
- The regulations have also caused confusion and led many lenders to interpret them broadly, denying access to most—if not all—types of cooperatives.

OCT 2015 MEETING RE-CAP

- Inaugural meeting of the Interagency Working Group on Cooperative Development, hosted by the USDA.
- Attended by representatives of more than 15 federal agencies.
- Marked the realization of a provision NCBA CLUSA worked hard on behalf of its members and co-ops nationwide to secure inclusion of in the Farm Bill.
- Doug O’Brien, Senior Policy Advisory for Rural Affairs with the White House Rural Council, said co-ops are “well positioned” to “navigate and better respond to” some of the country’s greatest challenges.

NCBA CLUSA'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Interagency Working Group on Cooperative Development comes at a time when NCBA CLUSA is making strides to advance the cooperative agenda in the U.S.

CONGRESSIONAL COOPERATIVE BUSINESS CAUCUS

Co-chaired by Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA) and Rep. Mark Pocan (D-WI), this bipartisan caucus provides greater visibility, education and awareness of cooperatives and works to demonstrate their economic impact before Congress and the Administration.

RURAL CO-OP DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Every year, NCBA CLUSA monitors Congressional budget negotiations to ensure consistent funding for the Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) program, a key

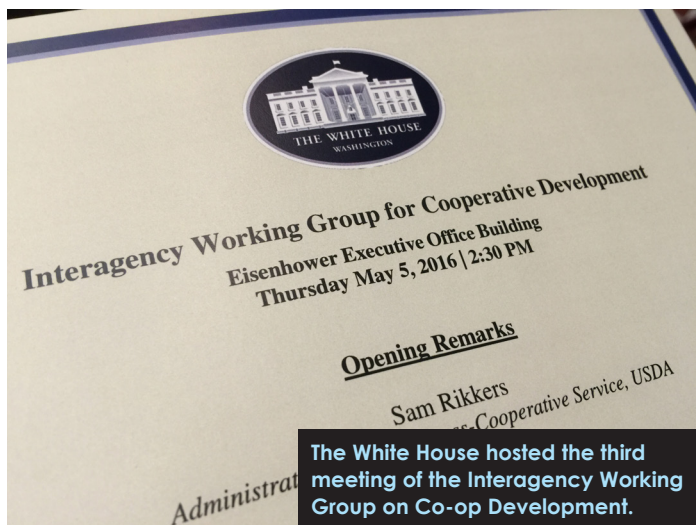
advocacy priority pivotal to the interests of rural cooperative enterprise, job creation and productivity.

ANNUAL ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

In May 2016, NCBA CLUSA will host its second annual advocacy-themed Annual Cooperatives Conference. Last year, NCBA CLUSA members and supporters met with more than one-third of the Senate and heard from Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Senators Al Franken (D-MN) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), who said "cooperative issues are really bipartisan issues."

PROTECTING THE CO-OP BRAND

As the nonprofit insurance companies created under the Affordable Care Act faced media scrutiny in 2015, NCBA CLUSA worked with journalists to clarify the distinction between successful, member-owned co-ops and so-called "CO-OPs," or Consumer Operated and Oriented Plans, the majority of which are not run as cooperative businesses.



FROM OUR CEO

"We are encouraged by this historic meeting that advances the role of cooperatives in the nation's economy at the federal level. We worked hard on behalf of our members and co-ops across the country to get this provision in the Farm Bill and congratulate the U.S. Department of Agriculture and partners for making this working group a reality."

—Judy Ziewacz, CEO and president, NCBA CLUSA

Founded in 1916, NCBA CLUSA is the trade association for cooperative businesses in the U.S. and an international development organization active in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America. For 100 years, NCBA CLUSA has advanced, promoted and defended co-op enterprise, highlighting the impact that cooperatives have in bettering the lives of individuals, families and communities.



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