

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

JARROD MCKINNEY,

Plaintiff,

v.

THOMAS J. VILSACK, in his official capacity as
Secretary of the United States Department of
Agriculture, et al.,

Defendants.

No. 2:21-cv-00212-RWS

**THE NATIONAL BLACK FARMERS ASSOCIATION AND
THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN INDIAN FARMERS' UNOPPOSED
CONDITIONAL MOTION FOR LEAVE TO INTERVENE AS DEFENDANTS**

The National Black Farmers Association (NBFA) and the Association of American Indian Farmers (AAIF) hereby file this Conditional Motion for Leave to Intervene as Defendants in this action (the “Conditional Motion”). Because, at present, NBFA and AAIF share the same ultimate objective as the Government in defending the law challenged in this action, the organizations expressly request that the Court defer consideration of this Conditional Motion until future developments in this lawsuit indicate that the organizations’ interests diverge from the Government’s. This approach balances NBFA and AAIF’s interests in timely filing their application to intervene, while also accounting for how merits arguments have yet to be developed due to the litigation’s early stage.¹

¹ See *Solid Waste Agency of N. Cook Cty. v. U.S. Army Corps of Engs.*, 101 F.3d 503, 509 (7th Cir. 1996) (“The proper way to handle such an eventuality [where the government’s representation of interest “may turn inadequate” at some future point] [is] to file at the outset of the case a standby or conditional application for leave to intervene and ask the district court to defer consideration of the question of adequacy”).

Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 24, this Conditional Motion is accompanied by (1) a Memorandum of Law in Support; and (2) NBFA and AAIF's Proposed Answer to Plaintiff's Complaint.

Date: July 6, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

PUBLIC JUSTICE, P.C.

/s/ Randolph T. Chen

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*Counsel for the National Black Farmers
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CERTIFICATE OF CONFERENCE

Pursuant to LR CV-7(i), I certify that: (1) the undersigned has complied with the meet and confer requirement in LR CV-7(h); and (2) that this Conditional Motion is unopposed.

Plaintiff's counsel does not oppose the filing of the Conditional Motion as a placeholder motion to secure timeliness, but reserves the right to oppose any later request to intervene.

Defendants' counsel does not oppose the Conditional Motion, and does not believe that the interests of the Government diverge with those of NBFA and AAIF.

/s/ Randolph T. Chen
Randolph T. Chen

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing was filed via the court's CM/ECF system on July 6, 2021, which will serve all counsel of record.

/s/ Randolph T. Chen

Randolph T. Chen

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

JARROD MCKINNEY,

Plaintiff,

v.

THOMAS J. VILSACK, in his official capacity as
Secretary of the United States Department of
Agriculture, et al.,

Defendants.

No. 2:21-cv-00212-RWS

**MEMORANDUM OF LAW IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL BLACK FARMERS
ASSOCIATION AND THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN INDIAN FARMERS'
CONDITIONAL MOTION FOR LEAVE TO INTERVENE AS DEFENDANTS**

The National Black Farmers Association (NBFA) and the Association of American Indian Farmers (AAIF) file this Conditional Motion to Intervene as Defendants in this action (the “Conditional Motion”). It requests that the Court defer consideration until future developments in this lawsuit indicate that the organizations’ interests diverge from the Government’s.

This approach seeks to balance requirements for intervention set out in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 24. NBFA and AAIF have an interest in timely filing this application to intervene and defend the law this action seeks to enjoin—which confers financial benefits on many of their members. At the same time, the conditional nature of this request recognizes the early stage of this litigation, where merits arguments and the adequacy of the Government’s defense have yet to be fully developed.

Accordingly, this Memorandum is structured as follows. First, it provides the authority for NBFA and AAIF’s filing of a Conditional Motion. Second, it provides factual background regarding NBFA and AAIF’s purpose and membership. Third, it argues why NBFA and AAIF meet the factors required for intervention that can be ascertained at this time.

AUTHORITY FOR CONDITIONAL APPLICATION FOR INTERVENTION

NBFA and AAIF file this Conditional Motion pursuant to the approach set out by the Seventh Circuit in *Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*, 101 F.3d 503 (7th Cir. 1996). In *Army Corps*, a plaintiff sued to challenge a federal agency’s denial of a water permit, and a citizens’ group moved to intervene to defend the agency’s decision. *Id.* at 504. The Seventh Circuit denied the request because the putative-intervenor and the agency shared the interest of defending the permitting decision and thus, “adequacy of representation [was] presumed,” as the government is presumed to represent the interests of the public at large. *Id.* at 508. However, the court was also “sympathetic to the aspiring intervenor’s concern that at some future point in this litigation, the government’s representation of their interest may turn inadequate, yet it would be too late to do anything about it.” *Id.* For example, the court provided a hypothetical where the Government declined to appeal an unfavorable decision—at which point its representation of the putative-intervenor’s interests “could well be thought inadequate.” *Id.* at 509. The court thus set out the following solution:

The proper way to handle such an eventuality is for the would-be intervenor, when as here no present inadequacy of representation can be shown, to file at the outset of the case a standby or conditional application for leave to intervene and ask the district court to defer consideration of the question of adequacy of representation until the applicant is prepared to demonstrate inadequacy.

Id. (emphasis added).

NBFA and AAIF are in a similar posture. They presently share the same objective as the Government in defending the law challenged by this action—but it remains possible that at some future point, the Government’s handling of this litigation may turn inadequate. NBFA and AAIF thus file this Conditional Motion pursuant to the approach set out in *Army Corps* and expressly request the Court defer consideration on the Conditional Motion until future developments in this lawsuit demonstrate that the organizations’ interests diverge from the Government’s.

FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

This case challenges certain provisions in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (the “Act”), a broad piece of legislation aimed at remedying the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing \$1.9 trillion in financial relief to American individuals and industries who have been harmed by the ongoing health crisis. *See* The White House, *Am. Rescue Plan*, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/american-rescue-plan/>. The Act includes approximately \$10.4 billion in funding aimed to strengthen the agricultural and food supply chain, and includes provisions funding the purchase and distribution of agricultural commodities and providing grants to rural communities to fund programs related to healthcare and nutrition. *See What’s in the Am. Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for Ag.?* Am. Farm Bureau Fed. (Mar. 8, 2021), <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/whats-in-the-american-rescue-plan-act-of-2021-for-agriculture>.

This case takes aim at one specific provision of the Act—Section 1005—which provides financial relief to “socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.” Section 1005 provides loan forgiveness, authorizing the U.S. Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) to “provide a payment in an amount up to 120 percent of the outstanding indebtedness of each socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher” on direct farm loans made by USDA and on farm loans guaranteed by USDA. Section 1005(a)(2). Plaintiff alleges that this law “violates the equal protection component of the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.” Compl. ¶ 53.

NBFA and AAIF are non-profit, membership-based organizations dedicated to advancing the interests of Black and Native American farmers. Exh. 1, Decl. of John Boyd, Jr. (“J. Boyd Decl.”) ¶¶ 3-4; Exh. 2, Decl. of Kara Boyd (“K. Boyd Decl.”) ¶¶ 3-4. NBFA has a national membership of over 116,000 members, comprised largely of Black farmers and ranchers and those members direct the organization’s actions by voting on agenda items and resolutions at

annual meetings. J. Boyd Decl. ¶ 3. AAIF has a national membership of over 350 members, comprised largely of Native American farmers and ranchers. K. Boyd Decl. ¶ 3. AAIF's activities are directed by its members through regional representatives, who vote on their constituent members' behalf to determine the organization's agenda. *Id.* ¶ 4.

NBFA's mission is to advocate for the interests of Black farmers and ranchers—which has included improving Black farmers and ranchers' access to public and private loans, as well as education regarding civil rights and land retention. J. Boyd Decl. ¶ 4. NBFA President John Boyd, Jr. has advocated on the specific issue of debt relief for the organization's members for decades and has testified before Congress on the issue. *Id.* ¶ 5. NBFA has members who are eligible for Section 1005's loan forgiveness provisions. Exh. 3, Decl. of Shade Mitchell Lewis ("Lewis Decl.") ¶ 9; Exh. 4, Decl. of Ivan Isidore Williams ("Williams Decl.") ¶ 9.

AAIF's mission is to advocate for the interests of Native American farmers and ranchers. K. Boyd Decl. ¶ 5. AAIF advances its mission by promoting investment in Native American farmers and ranchers, as well as providing them with outreach, advocacy, and technical assistance. *Id.* AAIF President Kara Boyd has specifically advocated on the Act's debt forgiveness provisions, directly engaging with federal legislators to express the organization's support for the legislation and building support for the legislation by networking with other groups that advocate for the interests of Native American farmers. *Id.* ¶ 7. AAIF is aware that it has members who are eligible for Section 1005's loan forgiveness provisions. *See id.* ¶ 8.

Thus, this suit has the potential to undo NBFA and AAIF's dogged advocacy, leave their members in debt from which Congress intended them to be freed, and prevent them from receiving additional financial support that was designed to remedy a long history of discrimination that has already cost NBFA and AAIF's members greatly. To protect those

interests, NBFA and AAIF file this conditional motion to intervene under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 24(a) and (b).

ARGUMENT

I. Intervention As of Right.

Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 24(a)(2) provides: “On timely motion, the court must permit anyone to intervene who . . . claims an interest relating to the property or transaction that is the subject of the action, and is so situated that disposing of the action may as a practical matter impair or impede the movant’s ability to protect its interest, unless existing parties adequately represent that interest.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 24(a)(2). The Fifth Circuit has explained this Rule “is to be liberally construed” and courts “should allow intervention when no one would be hurt and greater justice could be attained.” *Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v. Texas Alcoholic Bev. Comm’n*, 834 F.3d 562, 565 (5th Cir. 2016).

The Fifth Circuit has elaborated that Rule 24(a)(2) intervention must be allowed where: (1) the application is timely; (2) the applicant has an interest relating to the property or transaction which is the subject of the action; (3) the disposition of that case may impair or impede the applicant’s ability to protect that interest; and (4) the applicant’s interest is inadequately represented by the existing parties to the suit. *Wal-Mart*, 834 F.3d at 565. An intervenor under Rule 24(a)(2) only “must meet the requirements of Article III if the intervenor wishes to pursue relief” distinct from the existing parties. *Town of Chester, N.Y. v. Laroe Ests., Inc.*, 137 S. Ct. 1645, 1648 (2017).

A. NBFA and AAIF have Article III standing.

To the extent it will prove necessary for intervention, NBFA and AAIF have standing. Under the associational standing doctrine, membership organizations like NBFA and AAIF may

sue to redress their members' injuries when: (1) its members have standing to sue in their own right, (2) the interest it seeks to protect is germane to the organization's purpose, and (3) neither the claim asserted nor the relief requested requires the participation of individual members in the lawsuit. *Cooper v. Tex. Alcoholic Bev. Comm'n*, 820 F.3d 730, 737 (5th Cir. 2016).

NBFA and AAIF's members have standing because they stand to receive financial benefits from the law that this action seeks to enjoin. *Cooper*, 820 F.3d at 737 (liquor retailer association's members had standing to defend constitutionality of licensing law that benefited their business). Protecting this interest has been and remains core to NBFA and AAIF's missions. J. Boyd Decl. ¶¶ 4-9; K. Boyd Decl. ¶ 5-6. And defending the constitutionality of this law also does not require the individual participation of any of NBFA and AAIF's members. *Id.*; see also *Ass'n of Am. Physicians & Surgeons, Inc. v. Tex. Med. Bd.*, 627 F.3d 547, 551 (5th Cir. 2010) (while damages claims often require participation of individual members, actions for declaratory and injunctive relief generally do not). Therefore, NBFA and AAIF have Article III standing to participate in this action.

B. The Conditional Motion is timely.

To determine whether NBFA and AAIF's motion is timely, courts consider four factors: (1) the length of time between the proposed intervenor's learning of their interest and the motion to intervene; (2) the extent of prejudice to existing parties from allowing late intervention; (3) the extent of prejudice to the proposed intervenor if their motion is denied; and (4) and unusual circumstances. *Sierra Club v. Espy*, 18 F.3d 1202, 1205 (5th Cir. 1994). Applications to intervene filed before the start of discovery are generally considered to be timely. *E.g.*, *Wal-Mart*, 834 F.3d at 565 (motion to intervene was timely because it was filed "before discovery progressed and because it did not seek to delay or reconsider phases of the litigation that had

already concluded”); *see also Uniloc 2017 LLC v. AT&T Mobility LLC*, 2019 WL 1773117, at *2 (E.D. Tex. April 23, 2019) (motion to intervene was timely because it was filed before the start of discovery).

Here, this Motion is timely under all four factors. As to the first and second factors, NBFA and AAIF promptly filed this Motion a mere four weeks after learning of their interest in this case through reading Plaintiff’s Complaint that was filed on June 10, 2021. Filing at this very early stage of the litigation where Defendant has yet to file a responsive pleading and no discovery has been conducted is also exceedingly unlikely to prejudice any party. As to the third factor, NBFA and AAIF would be severely prejudiced if denied the opportunity to intervene because the litigation seeks to undo their advocacy and remove financial benefits to their members. *See Espy*, 18 F.3d at 1207 (intervenors with “economic interests” affected by litigation would be prejudiced if denied the opportunity to intervene). As to the final factor, NBFA and AAIF are unaware of any “unusual circumstances” that would counsel against intervention.

C. NBFA and AAIF have a sufficient interest in this case.

To determine whether an intervenor has a sufficient interest related to the controversy, the “touchstone of the inquiry is whether the interest alleged is ‘legally protectable.’” *Wal-Mart*, 834 F.3d at 566-67. “[A]n interest is sufficient if it is of the type that the law deems worthy of protection, even if the intervenor does not have an enforceable legal entitlement or would not have standing to pursue her own claim.” *Texas v. United States*, 805 F.3d 653, 659 (5th Cir. 2015) (hereinafter, “*Texas*”). Here, as explained above, NBFA and AAIF have standing and thus plainly have a legally protectable interest. *Wal-Mart*, 834 F.3d at 566 n.3 (“We have previously suggested that a movant who shows standing is deemed to have a sufficiently substantial interest to intervene.”) (internal quotations omitted).

The Fifth Circuit has also held that the intended beneficiaries of a government regulation possess a legally protectable interest sufficient to intervene and defend against a challenge to that regulation. *E.g.*, *Sierra Club v. Glickman*, 82 F.3d 106, 109 (5th Cir. 1996) (association purporting to represent farmers had sufficient interest to intervene in action seeking injunction preventing USDA from “expending any funds” to its members); *Wal-Mart*, 834 F.3d at 566 (trade association had interest justifying intervention where it sought to defend law where its members were the “beneficiar[ies]” of the regulations); *Texas*, 805 F.3d at 659 (“intended beneficiaries of the challenged federal policies” had sufficient interest to intervene). As in *Glickman*, *Wal-Mart*, and *Texas*, NBFA and AAIF’s members are the intended beneficiaries of the law that Plaintiff challenges in this case. *E.g.*, Lewis Decl. ¶ 9; Williams Decl. ¶ 9; K. Boyd Decl. ¶ 7. They thus possess a legally protectable interest sufficient to justify intervention here.

D. This case’s disposition may impair NBFA and AAIF’s interests.

The Fifth Circuit has held that “the *stare decisis* effect of an adverse judgment constitutes a sufficient impairment to compel intervention.” *Glickman*, 82 F.3d at 109-10. This is true here. An adverse resolution of this action would prevent NBFA and AAIF’s members from receiving the financial benefits conferred by the law at issue in this case.

E. The Government’s representation may become inadequate at a future point.

Where a putative-intervenor and the Government share the same objective in defending a law, courts apply a presumption that the Government’s defense is adequate, *see Texas*, 805 F.3d at 661-62; hence NBFA and AAIF have filed this motion to intervene on a conditional basis. However, this litigation is still at an early stage and merits arguments have yet to be fully developed. This presumption thus may well be overcome should the Government later advance arguments that demonstrate its interests diverge from NBFA and AAIF’s. For example, inadequacy of representation may be shown if the Government advances arguments that are

adverse to NBFA and AAIF's interests—such as through compromise positions that limit NBFA and AAIF's members' access to financial benefits conferred by the challenged statutes. *See id.* at 663 (undocumented immigrant intervenors seeking to defend federal deferred-action immigration enforcement policy alongside the Government demonstrated inadequacy because Government took the position that States may refuse to issue driver's licenses to deferred action recipients, which was adverse to intervenors' interests). Courts have also observed inadequacy can be shown when the Government declines to appeal an adverse ruling in the case, *see Army Corps*, 101 F.3d at 508, or changes its position during the pendency of a case, *see Espy*, 18 F.3d at 1206 (finding that when the Government applied a preliminary injunction to all timber sales and not just the nine sales challenged by plaintiffs, the Government was no longer protecting the interests of putative intervenors and so motion to intervene was granted).

Thus, should later developments in this action indicate that NBFA and AAIF's interests diverge from the Government, the organizations will renew this motion and establish this inadequacy of representation factor, having already established the other factors above.

II. Permissive Intervention

NBFA and AAIF also meet the requirements of permissive intervention—but in the interests of judicial economy, they are also requesting the Court defer ruling on this issue so it can be evaluated alongside any renewed motion to intervene as of right.

Rule 24(b)(1)(B) allows a court to grant permissive intervention to a party who makes a timely motion and “has a claim or defense that shares with the main action a common question of law or fact.” District courts have broad discretion on this issue and may permit intervention when: (1) the motion is timely, (2) the intervenor's claim or defense has a question of law or fact in common with the existing action; and (3) intervention will not delay or prejudice the

adjudication of the rights of the original parties. *Reid v. Gen. Motors Corp.*, 240 F.R.D. 257, 259 (E.D. Tex. 2006).

The first and third factors, as discussed above in Section I, are plainly met because the Conditional Motion is timely and thus will not impose delay or prejudice on any of the existing parties given the early stage of the litigation. As to the second factor, a common question of law exists where, as here, a proposed intervenor seeks to intervene in a lawsuit to defend a law challenged by the plaintiff. *See Texas v. United States*, 2018 WL 10562846, at *3 (N.D. Tex. May 16, 2018) (granting permissive intervention to state coalition seeking to defend federal healthcare law because coalition’s defense “share[d] a question of law” with plaintiffs’ constitutional challenge).

For these reasons, NBFA and AAIF could ask the Court to exercise its discretion to allow for permissive intervention. However, because NBFA and AAIF may later seek to intervene as of right, they believe it is most appropriate for the Court to also defer ruling on permissive intervention until the organizations determine whether their Rule 24(a) motion will become ripe.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the NBFA and AAIF respectfully request the Court docket their Conditional Motion for Leave to Intervene as Defendants and defer consideration on the motion pending future developments in this lawsuit.

Date: July 6, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

PUBLIC JUSTICE, P.C.

/s/ Randolph T. Chen

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Association and the Association of American
Indian Farmers*

EXHIBIT 1

DECLARATION OF JOHN BOYD, JR.

My name is John Boyd, Jr. I am over the age of 18 and fully competent to make this declaration.

1. I am the Founder and President of the National Black Farmers Association (NBFA). I am authorized to speak about NBFA's activities as they relate to this matter.

2. I am a fourth-generation Black farmer who has been farming for over 38 years. I currently farm soybeans, corn, wheat, and hay; I also raise approximately 100 head of beef cattle on farms covering over 1,500 acres in Mecklenburg County, Virginia. I have been farming in Mecklenburg County since 1983.

3. NBFA is a non-profit, membership-based organization that represents the interests of Black farmers and ranchers. NBFA has over 116,000 members nationwide in 46 states, consisting largely of Black farmers and ranchers. NBFA members vote on the organization's agenda items and resolutions in annual meetings.

4. A core part of NBFA's mission is promoting education and advocacy regarding civil rights, land retention, access to public and private loans, education and agricultural training, and rural economic development for Black and other small farmers and ranchers.

5. As part of NBFA's mission and in my capacity as NBFA President, I have for decades advocated for legislation that provides loan forgiveness to Black farmers and ranchers. For example, on July 19, 2019, I testified before Congress on behalf of NBFA, where I described the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) history of racial discrimination and called on Congress to "set aside \$5 Billion to help address the needs of black and other small scale farmers."¹

¹ Testimony of J. Boyd (Appendix at 77, 79), U.S. House Hr'g re: *Promoting Econ. Growth: Exploring the Impact of Recent Trade Policies on the U.S. Econ.* (June 19, 2019), <https://www.congress.gov/116/chr/CHRG-116hhrg39451/CHRG-116hhrg39451.pdf>

6. NBFA has focused on the issue of loan forgiveness because it remedies how USDA has long discriminated against Black farmers and ranchers in the agency's lending practices. To provide just one example, USDA frequently imposed on Black farmers and ranchers various forms of supervised loan provisions that were rarely imposed on their white counterparts. These provisions restrict how the loan can be spent—for instance, by requiring certain purchases to be approved by a loan officer or limiting the suppliers from whom farm equipment and supplies could be purchased.

7. These provisions cause significant harm because they lead to frequent delays in the farmers' access to equipment and supplies. Agriculture is a time-sensitive industry—the planting season is narrow, and even minor delays can negatively impact a farmer's crop yields.

8. USDA's history of discrimination has disproportionately affected Black farmers and ranchers. Due in major part to discriminatory practices such as these, Black farmers and ranchers have faced distinct obstacles to paying off debts held by USDA. Accordingly, NBFA has made loan forgiveness a priority issue in its advocacy efforts.

9. I have personal experience with USDA's history of discrimination. When I first sought USDA loans to start my own farming business in the 1980s, I was myself subjected to a supervisory loan provision that required me to buy certain supplies from a specific supplier. I also experienced direct racial discrimination, where USDA representatives referred to me using racial slurs. In addition, at the time, Black farmers in my area seeking to apply for USDA loans could only obtain appointments with USDA representatives on a single day of the week, whereas white farmers were not subject to such restrictions.

10. NBFA's participation in this lawsuit is a key part of its mission to advocate for and defend programs that provide financial assistance and support to Black farmers and ranchers.

EXHIBIT 2

DECLARATION OF KARA BOYD

My name is Kara Boyd. I am over the age of 18 and fully competent to make this declaration.

1. I am the Founder and President of AAIF. I am authorized to speak about AAIF's activities relating to this matter.

2. I am a farmer and an enrolled member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. I co-manage 1,500 acres of a family farm that includes farmland in the towns of Boydton, Baskerville, and Bracey in southern Virginia. On these farms, I grow crops such as hemp and vegetables; I also raise swine, poultry, and goats.

3. AAIF is non-profit, membership-based organization that represents the interests of Native American farmers. AAIF has over 350 members nationwide, comprised mostly of Native American farmers and ranchers.

4. AAIF invites its members to vote on the organization's agenda items and resolutions in annual meetings. AAIF members are represented by regional representatives at these meetings, who vote on their constituent members' behalf.

5. AAIF's mission is focused on providing outreach, advocacy, and technical assistance to Native American farmers and ranchers. AAIF also seeks to promote investment in support of Native American farmers and ranchers.

6. AAIF's participation in this lawsuit is an integral part of its mission to advocate for and defend programs that provide financial assistance and support to Native American farmers and ranchers.

7. In my capacity as President of AAIF, I advocated to federal legislators in early 2021 in support of legislation that would provide loan forgiveness to Native American farmers

and ranchers. I also built support for this legislation by networking with other groups that advocate for the interests of Native American farmers.

8. I am aware that AAIF has members that are eligible for financial benefits under Sections 1005 and 1006 of the American Rescue Plan Act and that they would be injured should this lawsuit enjoin those laws.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on: June 8, 2021



KARA BOYD
Founder & President
Association of American Indian Farmers

EXHIBIT 3

DECLARATION OF IVAN ISIDORE WILLIAMS

My name is Ivan Isidore Williams. I am over the age of 18 and fully competent to make this declaration.

1. I am an African-American farmer who is a member of the National Black Farmers Association (NBFA). I want the NBFA to represent my interests in this lawsuit.

2. I live in Beulaville, NC, where I was also born and raised. Beulaville is rural town of approximately 1,296 people in the southeastern part of North Carolina.

3. I operate a farm of over 65 acres in Beulaville, where I grow soybeans and corn. I own some of my land, and also lease a portion of my land. I am a third-generation farmer who has operated this farm for over 40 years. I am 60 years old.

4. In addition to farming, I typically work a second job to supplement my income. For example, I have worked at a textile plant performing manufacturing work and I have also worked as a meter reader at a utility company. I presently work a manufacturing job at a fiber optic plant.

5. Around the year 2000, I took out USDA loans in the amount of approximately \$40,000. I used the loans for operating expenses and purchasing farm equipment.

6. As of January 1, 2021, the outstanding balance on my loan was approximately \$12,000.

7. Generally, I have timely made my payments on my loan. However, I have also missed payments or been late on payments due to a variety of factors that affected my farming business, including drought, floods, or other difficulties harvesting my crop. When I have been late on my payments, I have received letters from USDA warning about potential foreclosure on my property.

8. I believe I have experienced racial discrimination from USDA representatives. For example, in the past, I have attempted to take out additional USDA loans to operate my farm and upgrade my equipment. However, USDA representatives discouraged me from applying for additional loans by telling me I would be ineligible because I already had existing USDA loans. To my knowledge, white farmers in my area have routinely been able to take out additional USDA loans even though they similarly have existing USDA loan balances.

9. I believe I am eligible for loan forgiveness under Section 1005 of the American Rescue Plan Act because I am a socially disadvantaged farmer who has an outstanding balance on a loan with USDA.

10. In fact, last month, I received a letter from USDA regarding the issue of loan forgiveness. I then followed up regarding the issue with my local USDA representative, and he informed me that my outstanding balance would be forgiven. When I found out that my loan was going to be forgiven, I looked forward to repurposing money that I would have used to make my annual loan payment toward other important life expenses, such as the mortgage payment on my residential home.

11. If Section 1005 is enjoined, I would therefore suffer injury.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date: 06-08-2021

By: Ivan Isidore Williams
IVAN ISIDORE WILLIAMS

EXHIBIT 4

DECLARATION OF SHADE MARSHALL LEWIS

My name is Shade Marshall Lewis. I am over the age of 18 and fully competent to make this declaration.

1. I am an African-American rancher who is a member of the National Black Farmers Association (NBFA). I want the NBFA to represent my interests in this lawsuit.

2. I live in La Grange, MO, a rural town of 958 people in northeast Missouri. I was born and raised in La Grange.

3. I own and operate a cattle farm in La Grange, where I raise between 100-200 heads of cattle on over 100 acres of land. I have operated my cattle farm since 2014.

4. In addition to my job as a rancher, I also work a second job conducting maintenance on power transmission lines. I work a second job for financial stability, as the cattle farming business can be unpredictable and vary significantly from year-to-year.

5. I am 30 years old and a first-generation rancher. Prior to starting my own cattle farm, I spent years building up my ranching experience, as well as the credit necessary to purchase property for a cattle farm. I believe everyone deserves a fair chance at farming, especially beginning farmers.

6. In 2014, I was able to take out a USDA loan for \$300,000. I used this loan to buy the property for my cattle farm.

7. As of January 1, 2021, the outstanding balance on my loan was approximately \$197,000.

8. My loan has an annual payment term and I have made many payments. However, due to fluctuations in the cattle farming business from year-to-year, I have also missed annual

payments on my loan. As a result of being late on my loan payments, I have received warnings from USDA threatening foreclosure on my property.

9. I believe I am eligible for loan forgiveness under Section 1005 of the American Rescue Plan Act because I am a socially disadvantaged rancher who has an outstanding balance on a direct farm loan with USDA.

10. After learning about the passage of Section 1005, I factored the law's debt forgiveness provision into my business plans. For example, I explored how receiving this loan forgiveness would enable me to pay down other loans I have taken out to purchase livestock.

11. Thus, if Section 1005 is enjoined, I would suffer injury.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed in La Grange, MO.

6/8/2021

Date: _____

DocuSigned by:



6E7CD79EC5F3463...

By: _____

SHADE MARSHALL LEWIS

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS**

JARROD MCKINNEY,

Plaintiff,

v.

THOMAS J. VILSACK, in his official capacity as
Secretary of the United States Department of
Agriculture, et al.,

Defendants.

No. 2:21-cv-00212-RWS

**PROPOSED ANSWER TO PLAINTIFF'S COMPLAINT BY
PROPOSED DEFENDANT-INTERVENORS THE NATIONAL BLACK FARMERS
ASSOCIATION AND THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN INDIAN FARMERS**

Proposed Defendant-Intervenors the National Black Farmers Association (NBFA) and the Association of American Indian Farmers (AAIF) answer the Plaintiff's Complaint as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. Paragraph 1 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced authorities are applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

2. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 2.

3. Paragraph 3 states legal conclusions and opinions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny the allegations.

4. NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained in Paragraph 4.

5. Paragraph 5 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

6. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 6 that 28 U.S.C. § 1331 provides federal question jurisdiction, but deny any suggestion that the Court has jurisdiction over this case.

7. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 7.

8. NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief about the allegations in Paragraph 8.

PARTIES

9. NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained in Paragraph 9.

10. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 10.

11. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 11.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

12. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 12.

13. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 13.

14. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 14.

15. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 15.

16. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 16.

17. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 17.

18. NBFA and AAIF admit that Paragraph 18 accurately quotes Section 1005's definition of "socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher" and accurately quotes the definition of "socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher" in 7 U.S.C. § 2279(a). However, the remainder of Paragraph 18 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced citations are applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

19. NBFA and AAIF deny the allegations in Paragraph 19.

20. Paragraph 20 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced citation is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

21. NBFA and AAIF admit that Paragraph 21 accurately quotes Senate Bill 278, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced quotation is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

22. Paragraph 22 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced citation is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

23. Paragraph 23 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced citation is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

24. Paragraph 24 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced citation is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

25. NBFA and AAIF admit that Paragraph 25 accurately quotes from Section 2 of Sente Bill 278, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced quotation is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

26. NBFA and AAIF admit the quotation of Defendant Vilsack in Paragraph 26 is accurate, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the quotation is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

27. NBFA and AAIF admit the quotation of Defendant Vilsack in Paragraph 27 is accurate, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the quotation is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

28. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 28.

29. NBFA and AAIF admit the quotation of Defendant Ducheneaux in Paragraph 29 is accurate, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the quotation is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

30. NBFA and AAIF admit that the quotations of Defendant Ducheneaux and Dewayne Goldmon in Paragraph 30 are accurate, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced quotations are applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action. In addition, with respect to Paragraph 30's allegations regarding letters sent by USDA to farmers and ranchers who have not designated details about their demographic information, NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge and information to form a belief about those allegations.

31. NBFA and AAIF deny the allegations in Paragraph 31.

32. NBFA and AAIF admit that Paragraph 32 accurately cites and quotes from a USDA website describing the agency's Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged

Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced program is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

33. NBFA and AAIF admit that Paragraph 33 accurately cites and quotes from a USDA website describing the agency's Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced program is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

34. NBFA and AAIF admit the existence of the class action lawsuits referenced in Paragraph 34, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced lawsuits are applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action. In addition, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's allegations regarding the number of class members who received payments as a result of the *Pigford* litigation.

35. NBFA and AAIF admit the existence of the class action settlement referenced in Paragraph 35, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced settlement is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

36. NBFA and AAIF admit the existence of the class action settlement referenced in Paragraph 36, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced settlement is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

37. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 37, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced claims process is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

38. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 38, but deny the allegation that Congress's suspension of the two-year statute of limitations for Equal Credit Opportunity Claims was absolute, as the limitations period was only suspended for complaints made against USDA between 1981 and 1996. In addition, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced Congressional action is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

39. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 39, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced legislation is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this case.

40. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 40, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced legislation is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this case.

41. NBFA and AAIF admit that Paragraph 41 accurately cites a USDA website, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced website is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this case.

42. NBFA and AAIF admit that Paragraph 42 accurately cites a USDA website, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced website is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this case.

43. NBFA and AAIF admit that Paragraph 43 accurately cites a USDA website, but deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced website is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this case.

44. NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief about the truth of the allegations in Paragraph 44.

45. NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief about the truth of the allegations in Paragraph 45.

46. NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief about the truth of the allegations in Paragraph 46.

47. NBFA and AAIF admit the allegations in Paragraph 47 that holders of loans guaranteed by FSA are also eligible for repayment, but lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief about the truth of the remaining allegations.

48. Paragraph 48 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief about the allegations in Paragraph 48.

49. Paragraph 49 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny the allegations.

50. Paragraph 50 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced statute is applicable to the legal questions at issue in this case.

Count I: Violation of the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution

51. Paragraph 51 "incorporates the prior allegations of this complaint." NBFA and AAIF thus likewise respond to this allegation by incorporating by reference the responses set forth above as if fully set forth herein.

52. Paragraph 52 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced authorities are applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

53. Paragraph 53 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny the allegation.

54. Paragraph 54 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny the allegations.

55. Paragraph 55 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced authorities are applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

56. Paragraph 56 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding how the referenced authorities are applicable to the legal questions at issue in this action.

57. Paragraph 57 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny the allegations.

58. Paragraph 58 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny the allegations.

59. Paragraph 59 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF admit that Section 1005 directs the Secretary to provide farm loan assistance to all socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers with qualifying farm loans, but deny the remaining allegations.

60. Paragraph 60 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny the Plaintiff's argument and/or characterization regarding Section 1005.

61. Paragraph 61 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny the allegations.

62. Paragraph 62 states legal conclusion to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief about the truth of the allegations.

Count II: Violation of the Administrative Procedure Act

63. Paragraph 63 “incorporates paragraphs 1-50, and 52-62.” NBFA and AAIF thus likewise respond to this allegation by incorporating by reference the responses above with respect to the incorporated paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

64. Paragraph 64 states a legal conclusion to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny the allegations.

65. Paragraph 65 states a legal conclusion to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief about the truth of the allegations.

66. NBFA and AAIF lack sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief about the truth of the allegations in Paragraph 66.

67. Paragraph 67 states a legal conclusion to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny the allegations.

68. Paragraph 68 states legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF admit that the quotation of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) is accurate, but deny the allegations that assert Section 1005 and USDA’s implementation of Section 1005 violate the APA.

Prayer for Relief

69. The portion of the Complaint captioned “Prayer for Relief” consists of Plaintiff’s requested relief, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, NBFA and AAIF deny that Plaintiff is entitled to his requested relief, or any relief whatsoever.

AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES

NBFA and AAIF hereby assert the following affirmative defenses to the causes of action made by Plaintiff in the Complaint, subject to their right to amend and assert other affirmative defenses as may become available during discovery in this action.

FIRST AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: LACK OF STANDING

This Court lacks subject matter jurisdiction over Plaintiff’s claims because Plaintiff cannot show the injury necessary to establish standing in federal court.

SECOND AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: LACK OF RIPENESS

This Court lacks subject matter jurisdiction over Plaintiff’s claims because they are not ripe for review.

THIRD AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: FAILURE TO EXHAUST

Plaintiff’s claims are barred because Plaintiff has failed to exhaust administrative remedies.

FOURTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE: FAILURE TO STATE A CAUSE OF ACTION

Plaintiff’s claims, as set forth in the Complaint, fail to state facts sufficient to constitute a cause of action against Defendants.

WHEREFORE, NBFA and AAIF respectfully request that the Court: (1) dismiss the Complaint with prejudice; (2) enter judgment in favor of NBFA and AAIF; and (3) grant such further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: July 6, 2021

PUBLIC JUSTICE, P.C.

/s/ Randolph T. Chen

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