



DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSOCIATE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

TO: Eric D. Still
Associate Chief Financial Officer, FPP

FROM: _____

SUBJECT: Request for Exception to Policy Approval for an Event that has a 20% or more increase expense amount on the Annual Conference Plan

ISSUE

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is requesting an exception approval to attend the 7th Annual Soil & Water Conservation Society (SWCS) International Annual Conference in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The conference will be held from February 21 to February 24, 2021.

DISCUSSION

USDA policy requires agencies and staff offices to obtain an exception approval if the pre-approved event on the Annual Conference Plan had a substantial increase in the estimated expenses equal to or greater than 20%. The agency will submit an approval memorandum and Location Cost Worksheet to the ACFO for an 'exception to policy' approval.

The 7th SWCS International Annual Conference provides a forum for learning about the latest conservation research and practice, enhancing professional relationships, and contributing to solutions to difficult conservation challenges. The conference provides state-of-the-art training information exchange, technology transfer in all disciplines related to NRCS work, and supports USDA's scientific integrity policy. This year's conference theme offers unique opportunities to showcase cutting-edge research and practice developments in soil health, water quality, and resource management through the usual eight general conservation topic areas and three special topic areas of at the intersection of agriculture and conservation, climate-smart agriculture, and on the frontier of conservation in the west.

Justification for increase of 20% or more

The estimated expense for this event is \$xxx,xxx, which include airfare \$xx,xxx; local /TDY transportation expenses \$xx,xxx; miscellaneous travel expenses \$xx,xxx; lodging \$xx,xxx; M&IE \$xx,xxx; audiovisual \$xx,xxx; room rental \$xx,xxx; light refreshments \$xx,xxx; speaker / trainer fees \$xx,xxx; registration fees \$xx,xxx; promotional material \$xx,xxx and other cost \$xx,xxx. The estimated salary and benefits cost are \$xxx,xxx. The projected average cost per attendee without salaries for the event is \$x,xxx or \$xxx per day.

RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation is to approve the 7th Annual Soil & Water Conservation Society (SWCS) International Annual Conference in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina to be held February 21 to February 24, 2021, with approximately 106 agency participants with an estimated cost of \$xxx,xxx. Once signed, return the documents to the OCFO FPD at TPM@usda.gov; FPD will forward the approved document to agency conference POC to upload into the AgCMS for final approval processing.

DECISION BY THE ASSOCIATE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Date: _____

Approved: _____

Disapproved: _____

Discuss with me: _____