

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

In re:)
) Docket No. **16-0168**
Michael Stovall)
)
Petitioner) **Dismissal (With Prejudice)**

Appearances:

Mr. Corey Lea, representative for Petitioner Mr. Michael Stovall, and

Mr. Juan Carlos Alarcon, Esq. with the Office of the General Counsel, Civil Rights
Litigation Division, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C.

1. Petitioner Michael Stovall filed this Petition (**16-0168**) on August 30, 2016. I conclude that Administrative Law Judges have no authority to grant the relief requested, as stated in the Agency Response filed September 28, 2016, a copy of which is attached. [The Agency's Notice of Appearance mistakenly includes the docket number of a different case.]
2. The doctrine of *res judicata* would preclude consideration of this Petition of Michael Stovall, as is shown by the Agency Response (on page 2).
3. The case of Michael Stovall, Petitioner, is **DISMISSED (With Prejudice)**.

Copies of this Dismissal (With Prejudice) order shall be served by the Hearing Clerk upon each of the parties.

Done at Washington, D.C.
this 4th day of October 2016



Jill S. Clifton
Administrative Law Judge

Hearing Clerk's Office
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

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MICHAEL STOVALL
Petitioner

Docket No. 16-0168

Agency Response

On or around September 6, 2016, Petitioner Michael Stovall (“Petitioner”) filed a Request for a Formal Hearing with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Administrative Law Judges (“OALJ”). On September 8, 2016, OALJ issued a notice to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (“Agency”) requesting a response within 20 days. The Agency timely files this response.

Petitioner requests a hearing to be held at a federal courthouse pursuant to 7 C.F.R. part 15f (“Section 741”).¹ See Petitioner’s Request.

Petitioner failed to identify valid legal authority and jurisdiction for this action

Under 7 C.F.R. § 1.131, there are nearly fifty statutes which expressly afford an individual a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge. None of them apply to Petitioner’s request. See 7 C.F.R. § 1.131. As no action may be brought unless authorized, jurisdiction cannot be assumed absent express statutory or regulatory grant. See *Reid v. United States*, 211 U.S. 529, 538 (1909); *Munro v. United States*, 303 U.S. 36, 41 (1938); *United States v. Sherwood*, 312 U.S. 584, 290 (1941); *United States v. Testan*, 424 U.S. 392, 399 (1976); and

¹ Petitioner also refers to the 2007 *Pigford Remedy Act*, *Benoit v. USDA* (No. 08-5434, DC Cir. Ct. of Appeals), *Lea v. USDA* (OALJ No. 11-080), Section 14012 of the Food Energy and Conservation Act, the 2008 Farm Bill, and the Pigford Consent Decree. None of the aforementioned has any relevance whatsoever to OALJ’s jurisdiction to hear these allegations of discrimination.

Hercules, Inc. v. United States, 516 U.S. 417, 422 (1996). Petitioner has not identified a statutory jurisdictional basis which would entitle her to a hearing before the OALJ.

Petitioner's citations of "Section 741" and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act ("ECOA") do not establish a statutory jurisdictional basis for this request. *See* 7 C.F.R. § 15(f) ("Section 741"). 7 C.F.R. Part 15f applies to complaints of discrimination filed with USDA prior to July 1, 1997, alleging discriminatory acts from 1981 to 1997. The period for filing a Section 741 complaint request under the authorized waiver of the ECOA Statute of Limitations expired on October 21, 2000. 7 C.F.R Part 15f ("you have until October 21, 2000 to file your Section 741 complaint"). USDA no longer has authority under the terms of the statutory waiver to accept Section 741 complaint requests, unless such a complaint has already been docketed under part 15f by USDA or a request was filed with USDA prior to October 21, 2000. 7 C.F.R § 15f.5 is clear that Section 741 complaint requests filed under part 15f are no longer accepted by USDA. *See generally* 68 Fed. Reg. 7411 (February 14, 2003).

Furthermore, the actions that the instant request discusses were already the subject of final decisions by federal courts. *See Michael Stovall v. United States of America*, case no. 1:05-cv-00400-FMA (Ct. of Fed. Claims, 2005); *Stovall v. USDA*, 5:11-cv-3706-AKK (Dist. Ct. for the Northern District of Alabama, 2011, affirmed on appeal). Thus, even if there were jurisdiction to hear the petition, the doctrine of *res judicata* would preclude it.

As Petitioner fails to assert cognizable jurisdiction for OALJ to hear this action, the request should be dismissed with prejudice.

Date: September 28, 2016

Respectfully submitted,


J. CARLOS ALARCON, Esq.
Agency Representative

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**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE**

MICHAEL STOVALL
Petitioner

Docket No. 16-0179

AGENCY'S NOTICE OF APPEARANCE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Juan Carlos Alarcon, United States Department of Agriculture, Office of the General Counsel, Civil Rights Employment and Labor Litigation Division, hereby enters his appearance as counsel of record for the Agency in the above-captioned matter. The Clerk and all parties are requested to address all papers served on the Agency as follows:

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Date: September 28, 2016

Respectfully submitted,



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