

Insert your comments under the "Comment" title, click "Browse" to attach files (if applicable). Input your email address and select an identity category then click "Submit Comment." Information on using *Regulations.gov*, including instructions for accessing documents, submitting comments, and viewing the docket after the close of the comment period, is available through the site's "FAQ" link.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Crystal Pemberton, Management Analyst, Branch 1, Rural Development Innovation Center—Regulations Management Division, United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, South Building, Washington, DC 20250–1522. Telephone: (202) 260–8621. Email: Crystal.Pemberton@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR part 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104–13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see, 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies the following information collection that RUS is submitting to OMB as extension to an existing collection with Agency adjustment.

Title: Electric System Emergency Restoration Plan.

OMB Control Number: 0572–0140.

Expiration Date of Approval: March 31, 2024.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .5 hour per response.

Respondents: Not-for-profit institutions.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 41.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 20.5 hours.

Abstract: USDA Rural Development administers rural utilities programs through the Rural Utilities Service (Agency). The Agency manages loan programs in accordance with the Rural Electrification Act (RE Act) of 1936, 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*, as amended. One of the Agency's main objectives is to safeguard loan security. An important part of safeguarding loan security is to make sure Agency financed facilities are utilized responsibly, adequately

operated, and maintained. Accordingly, RUS borrowers have a duty to RUS to maintain their respective systems. In performing this duty, borrowers further the purposes of the RE Act while also preserving the value of electric systems to serve as collateral for repayment of RUS assistance.

A substantial portion of the electric infrastructure of the United States resides in rural America and is maintained by rural Americans. RUS is uniquely coupled with the electric infrastructure of rural America and its electric borrowers serving rural America. To ensure that the electric infrastructure in rural America is adequately protected, electric borrowers conduct a Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (VRA) of their respective systems and utilize the results of this assessment to enhance an existing Emergency Restoration Plan (ERP) or to create an ERP. The VRA is utilized to identify specific assets and infrastructure owned or served by the electric utility, to determine the criticality and the risk level associated with the assets and infrastructure including a risk versus cost analysis, to identify threats and vulnerabilities, if present, to review existing mitigation procedures and to assist in the development of new and additional mitigating procedures, if necessary. The ERP provides written procedures detailing response and restoration efforts in the event of a major system outage resulting from a natural or man-made disaster. The annual exercise of the ERP ensures operability and employee competency and serves to identify and correct deficiencies in the existing ERP. The exercise may be implemented individually by a single borrower, or by an individual borrower as a participant in a multi-party (to include utilities, government agencies and other participants or combination thereof) tabletop execution or actual implementation of the ERP.

Electric borrowers maintain ERPs as part of prudent utilities practices. These ERPs are essential to continuous operation of the electric systems. Each electric applicant provides RUS with a written self-certification letter form that an ERP exists for the system and that an initial VRA has been performed as part of the application process.

Comments are invited on:

(a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection

of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Crystal Pemberton, Rural Development Innovation Center—Regulations Management Division, at (202) 260–8621. Email: Crystal.Pemberton@usda.gov.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Andrew Berke,

Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

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BILLING CODE 3410–15–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Census Bureau

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Generic Clearance for Internet Panel Pretesting and Qualitative Survey Methods Testing

AGENCY: Census Bureau, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of information collection, request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment on the proposed extension of the Generic Clearance for Internet Panel Pretesting and Qualitative Survey Methods Testing, prior to the submission of the information collection request (ICR) to OMB for approval.

DATES: To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed

information collection must be received on or before December 18, 2023.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments by email to adrm.pra@census.gov. Please reference OMB Control Number 0607–0978 in the subject line of your comments. You may also submit comments, identified by Docket Number USBC–2023–0002, to the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. All comments received are part of the public record. No comments will be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> for public viewing until after the comment period has closed. Comments will generally be posted without change. All Personally Identifiable Information (for example, name and address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to Aleia Clark Fobia, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, Center for Behavioral Science Methods, Washington, DC 20233 or by calling 202–893–4091.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The Census Bureau is committed to conducting research in a cost-efficient manner. The U.S. Census Bureau plans to request an extension of the current OMB approval to conduct a series of medium-scale internet-based tests, as a cost-efficient method of testing questions and contact strategies over the internet through different types of samples. Using internet panel pretesting, we can answer some research questions more thoroughly than in the small-scale testing, but less expensively than in the large-scale field test.

This research program will be used by the Census Bureau and survey sponsors to test alternative contact methods, including emails and text messages, improve online questionnaires and procedures, reduce respondent burden, and ultimately increase the quality of data collected in the censuses and surveys. We will use the clearance to conduct experimental pretesting of decennial and demographic census and survey questionnaires prior to fielding them as well as communications and/or marketing strategies and data dissemination tools for the Census

Bureau. The primary method of identifying measurement problems with the questionnaire or survey procedure is split panel tests. This will encompass both methodological and subject matter research questions that can be tested on a medium-scale internet panel.

This research program will also be used by the Census Bureau for remote usability testing of electronic interfaces and to perform other qualitative analyses such as respondent debriefings. An advantage of using remote, medium-scale testing is that participants can test products at their convenience using their own equipment, as opposed to using Census Bureau-supplied computers. A diverse participant pool (geographically, demographically, or economically) is another advantage. Remote usability testing would use click through rates and other paradata, accuracy and satisfaction scores, and written qualitative comments to determine optimal interface designs and to obtain feedback from respondents.

The public is currently offered an opportunity to participate in this research remotely, by signing up for an online research panel. If a person opts in, the Census Bureau will occasionally email (or text, if applicable) the person an invitation to complete a survey for one of our research projects. Invited respondents will be told the topic of the survey, and how long it will take to complete it. Under this clearance, we will also conduct similar-scale and similarly designed research using other email lists to validate preliminary findings and expand the research.

II. Method of Collection

Split sample experiments. This involves testing alternative versions of questionnaires, invitations to questionnaires (e.g., emails or text messages), or websites, at least some of which have been designed to address problems identified in draft versions or versions from previous waves. The use of multiple questionnaires, invitations, or websites, randomly assigned to permit statistical comparisons, is the critical component here; data collection will be via the internet. Comparison of revised questionnaires (or invitations) against a control version, preferably, or against each other facilitates statistical evaluation of the performance of alternative versions of the questionnaire (or invitation or website).

The number of versions tested and the number of cases per version will depend on the objectives of the test. We cannot specify with certainty a minimum panel size, although we would expect that no questionnaire versions would be

administered to less than fifty respondents.

Split sample tests that incorporate methodological questionnaire design experiments will have a larger maximum sample size (up to several hundred cases per panel) than other pretest methods. This will enable the detection of statistically significant differences and facilitate methodological experiments that can extend questionnaire design knowledge more generally for use in a variety of Census Bureau data collection instruments.

Usability Interviews: This method involves getting respondent input to aid in the development of automated questionnaires and websites and associated materials. The objective is to identify problems that keep respondents from completing automated questionnaires accurately and efficiently with minimal burden, or that prevent respondents from successfully navigating websites and finding the information they seek. Remote usability testing may be conducted under this clearance, whereby a user would receive an invitation to use a website or survey, then answer targeted questions about that experience.

Qualitative Interviews: This method involves one-on-one (or sometimes group) interviews in which the respondent is typically asked questions about survey content areas, survey questions or the survey process. A number of different techniques may be involved, including cognitive interviews and focus groups. The objective is to identify problems of ambiguity or misunderstanding, or other difficulties respondents may have answering survey questions in order to improve the information ultimately collected in large scale surveys and censuses.

Data collection for this project is authorized under the authorizing legislation for the questionnaire being tested. This may be Title 13, Sections 131, 141, 161, 181, 182, 193, and 301 for Census Bureau-sponsored surveys, and Title 13, Section 8(b), and Title 15 for surveys sponsored by other Federal agencies. We do not now know what other titles will be referenced, since we do not know what survey questionnaires will be pretested during the course of the clearance.

Literature on and considerations about the use of internet samples for this type of work have been thoroughly covered by a Task Force commissioned by the American Association for Public Opinion Research and are well documented there (Baker, et al., 2013).

The information collected in this program of developing and testing

questionnaires will be used by staff from the Census Bureau and sponsoring agencies to evaluate and improve the quality of the data in the surveys and censuses that are ultimately conducted. Because the questionnaires being tested under this clearance are still in the process of development, the data that result from these collections are not considered official statistics of the Census Bureau or other Federal agencies. Data will be included in research reports prepared for sponsors inside and outside of the Census Bureau. The results may also be prepared for presentations related to survey methodology at professional meetings or publications in professional journals.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0607–0978.
Form Number(s): TBD.

Type of Review: Regular submission, Request for an Extension, without Change, of a Currently Approved Collection.

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 67,600.

Estimated Time per Response: 15 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 16,900.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$0. (This is not the cost of respondents' time, but the indirect costs respondents may incur for such things as purchases of specialized software or hardware needed to report, or expenditures for accounting or records maintenance services required specifically by the collection.)

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

Legal Authority: Data collection for this project is authorized under the authorizing legislation for the questionnaire being tested. This may be Title 13, Sections 131, 141, 161, 181, 182, 193, and 301 for Census Bureau-sponsored surveys, and Title 13 and 15 for surveys sponsored by other Federal agencies. We do not now know what other titles will be referenced, since we do not know what survey questionnaires will be pretested during the course of the clearance.

IV. Request for Comments

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection,

including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include, or summarize, each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Sheleen Dumas,

Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, Commerce Department.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of Economic Analysis

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Direct Investment Surveys: BE–15, Annual Survey of Foreign Direct Investment in the United States

The Department of Commerce will submit the following information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, on or after the date of publication of this notice. We invite the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. Public comments were previously requested via the **Federal Register** on 08/09/2023 during a 60-day comment period. This notice allows for an additional 30 days for public comments.

Agency: Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), Department of Commerce.

Title: Annual Survey of Foreign Direct Investment in the United States.

OMB Control Number: 0608–0034.

Form Number: BE–15.

Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Number of Respondents: 6,550 annually, of which approximately 3,350 file A forms, 1,700 file B forms, 1,000 file C forms, and 500 file Claim for Exemption forms.

Average Hours per Response: 24.3 hours per respondent (159,038 hours/6,550 respondents) is the average but may vary considerably among respondents because of differences in company size and complexity.

Burden Hours: 159,038 hours. Total annual burden is calculated by multiplying the estimated number of submissions of each form by the average hourly burden per form, which is 44.75 hours for the A form, 3.75 hours for the B form, 2.25 hours for the C form, and 1 hour for the Claim for Exemption form.

Needs and Uses: The Annual Survey of Foreign Direct Investment in the United States (BE–15) obtains sample data on the financial structure and operations of foreign-owned U.S. business enterprises. The data are needed to provide reliable, useful, and timely measures of foreign direct investment in the United States to assess its impact on the U.S. economy. The sample data are used to derive universe estimates in non-benchmark years from similar data reported in the BE–12 benchmark survey, which is conducted every five years. The data collected include balance sheets; income statements; property, plant, and equipment; employment and employee compensation; merchandise trade; sales of goods and services; taxes; and research and development activity for the U.S. operations. In addition to these national data, several data items are collected by the state, including employment and property, plant, and equipment.

Affected Public: Businesses or other for-profit organizations.

Frequency: Annual.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

Legal Authority: International Investment and Trade in Services Survey Act (Pub. L. 94–472, 22 U.S.C. 3101–3108, as amended).

This information collection request may be viewed at www.reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view the Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website www.reginfo.gov/