

program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA 95). This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) is soliciting comments concerning the extension without change of the information collection request (ICR) included in the suspension of pension benefits regulation issued pursuant to the authority of section 203(a)(3)(B) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), which governs the circumstances under which pension plans may suspend pension benefit payments to retirees who return to work, or of participants who continue to work beyond normal retirement age (29 CFR 2530.203-3).

A copy of the proposed information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the office listed below in the addresses section of this notice.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the addresses section below on or before January 31, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Interested parties are invited to submit written comments regarding the collection of information. Send comments to Mr. Gerald B. Lindrew, Office of Policy and Research, U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room N-5647, Washington, DC 20210. Telephone: (202) 693-8410 Fax: (202) 693-4745 (These are not toll-free numbers).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Section 203(a)(3)(B) of ERISA governs the circumstances under which pension plans may suspend pension benefit payments to retirees that return to work or to participants that continue to work beyond normal retirement age. Furthermore, section 203(a)(3)(B) of ERISA authorizes the Secretary to prescribe regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

In this regard, the Department issued a regulation which describes the circumstances and conditions under which plans may suspend the pension benefits of retirees that return to work,

or of participants that continue to work beyond normal retirement age (29 CFR 2530.203-3). In order for a plan to suspend benefits pursuant to the regulation, it must notify affected retirees or participants (by first class mail or personal delivery) during the first calendar month or payroll period in which the plan withholds payment, that benefits are suspended. This notice must include the specific reasons for such suspension, a general description of the plan provisions authorizing the suspension, a copy of the relevant plan provisions, and a statement indicating where the applicable regulations may be found, (*i.e.*, 29 CFR 2530.203-3). In addition, the suspension notification must inform the retiree or participant of the plan's procedure for affording a review of the suspension of benefits.

II. Review Focus

The Department of Labor (Department) is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, *e.g.*, permitting electronic submissions of responses.

III. Current Actions

The Office of Management and Budget's approval of this ICR will expire on February 28, 2005. This notice requests comments on the extension of the ICR. The Department is not proposing or implementing changes to the existing ICR at this time in connection with this extension. Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of the information collection request; they will also become a matter of public record.

AGENCY: Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration.

Title: Suspension of Benefits Regulation pursuant to 29 CFR 2530.203-3.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

OMB Number: 1210-0048.

Affected Public: Individuals or households; business or other for-profit; not-for-profit institutions.

Total Respondents: 74,872.

Total Responses: 74,872.

Frequency of Response: On occasion.

Total Annual Burden: 18,718.

Total Burden Cost (Operating and Maintenance): \$63,000.

Dated: November 24, 2004.

Gerald B. Lindrew,

Deputy Director, Office of Policy and Research, Employee Benefits Security Administration.

[FR Doc. 04-26548 Filed 12-1-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4510-29-P

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employee Benefits Security Administration

Proposed Extension of Information Collection Request Submitted for Public Comment and Recommendations; Prohibited Transaction Class Exemption 77-4

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a preclearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA 95). This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) is soliciting comments concerning the proposed extension of a currently approved collection of information, Class Exemption 77-4 for certain transactions between investment companies and employee benefit plans.

A copy of the proposed information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the office listed below in the addresses section of this notice.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the

addresses section below on or before January 31, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Interested parties are invited to submit written comments regarding the collection of information. Send comments to Mr. Gerald B. Lindrew, Office of Policy and Research, U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room N-5647, Washington, DC 20210. Telephone: (202) 693-8410 Fax: (202) 693-4745 (these are not toll-free numbers).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Without the relief provided by this exemption, an open-end mutual fund would be unable to sell shares to or purchase shares from a plan when the fiduciary with respect to the plan is also the investment advisor for the mutual fund. As a result, plans would be compelled to liquidate their existing investments involving such transactions and to amend their plan documents to establish new investment structures and policies.

In order to insure that the exemption is not abused and that the rights of participants and beneficiaries are protected, the Department has included in the exemption three basic disclosure requirements. The first requires at the time of the purchase or sale of such mutual fund shares that the plan's independent fiduciary receive a copy of the current prospectus issued by the open-end mutual fund and a full and detailed written statement of the investment advisory fees charges to or paid by the plan and the open-end mutual fund to the investment advisor. The second requires that the independent fiduciary approve in writing such purchases and sales. The third requires that the independent fiduciary, once notified of changes in the fees, re-approve in writing the purchase and sale of mutual fund shares.

II. Review Focus

The Department of Labor (Department) is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

III. Current Actions

The Office of Management and Budget's approval of this ICR will expire on February 28, 2005. This notice requests comments on the extension of the ICR. The Department is not proposing or implementing changes to the existing ICR at this time in connection with this extension. Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of the information collection request; they will also become a matter of public record.

Agency: Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration.

Title: Prohibited Transaction Class Exemption 77-4 for Certain Transactions Between Investment Companies and Employee Benefit Plans.

Type of Review: Extension of currently approved collections.

OMB Numbers: 1210-0049.

Affected Public: Individuals or households; business or other for-profit; not-for-profit institutions.

Total Respondents: 431.

Total Responses: 82,000.

Frequency of Response: On occasion.

Average Time per Response: 5 minutes.

Total Annual Burden: 7,000 hour.

Dated: November 24, 2004.

Gerald B. Lindrew,

Deputy Director, Office of Policy and Research, Employee Benefits Security Administration.

[FR Doc. 04-26549 Filed 12-1-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4510-29-P

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a preclearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA 95). This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Employee Benefits Security Administration is soliciting comments on the proposed extension of the information collection provisions of Prohibited Transaction Class Exemption 75-1.

A copy of the information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the individual shown in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office shown in the **ADDRESSES** section on or before January 31, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Gerald B. Lindrew, Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20210, (202) 693-8410, fax (202) 693-4745 (these are not toll-free numbers).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Prohibited Transaction Class Exemption 75-1 provides an exemption from prohibited transaction provisions of the Employment Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). The exemption permits, under certain conditions, an employee benefit plan to purchase securities from broker-dealers' personal inventories of stocks, from underwriting syndicates in which a plan fiduciary is a member, from banks, from reporting dealers, and from a market makers even if a market-maker is a plan fiduciary. The exemption also permits, under certain conditions, a plan to accept an extension of credit from a broker-dealer for the purpose of facilitating settlement of a securities transaction.

By requiring that records pertaining to the exempted transaction be maintained for six years, this ICR insures that the exemption is not abused, the rights of the participants and beneficiaries are

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employee Benefits Security Administration

Proposed Extension of Information Collection Request Submitted for Public Comment; Prohibited Transaction Exemption 75-1 Broker-Dealers, Reporting Dealers, Banks Engaging in Securities Transactions

AGENCY: Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor.