

## The Supporting Statement

### Introduction:

Evaluate the Effects of the National Scenic Byways Program Grants, this is a new request that we are seeking OMB clearance on.

### Part A. Justification.

#### 1. Circumstances that make collection of information necessary:

*Background:* Title 23, Section 162 of the United States Code describes the creation of the National Scenic Byways Program. This legislation was most recently amended in 2005 upon passage of the P.L. 109-59 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The legislation also includes provisions for review and dissemination of grant monies by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. Grant applications are solicited on an annual basis. Eligible projects are on State designated byways, National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads, or Indian tribe scenic byways. Applications are completed by Federal, State, or local governmental agencies; Tribal governments; and non-profit organizations.

The application information is collected electronically via the online Grant system and used to determine project eligibility. We are seeking approval from OMB for the forms used to collect the application information and used on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The implementation of [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) is a result of P.L. 106-107 Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999.

Additional information on the National Scenic Byways Program and its grant program is available at [www.bywaysonline.org](http://www.bywaysonline.org).

This information collection supports the DOT Environment Strategic Goal by providing funding to protect and enhance the natural environment and communities affected by highway transportation. The National Scenic Byways Program takes this strategic goal a step further by also providing funding to market and interpret the resources located along scenic byways in effort to preserve these special places while also providing some economic benefit to the communities located along the scenic byways.

#### 2. How, by whom, and for what purpose is the information used:

The information collected is by FHWA and DOT to determine if the proposed project is eligible for National Scenic Byways Program grant funds. The Secretary of Transportation makes the final decision as to which projects to fund – this popular program traditionally receives requests for two to three times the amount of funding available.

Information collected indicates the project location including Congressional district, describes the scope of work, provides a detailed project budget including the source of matching funds, indicates who is responsible for ensuring the work is completed, and describes project benefits.

The information collected is also used to notify Congress as to the selected projects. Upon award of the project, the information is used by the State, or other Federal land management agency administering the project, to develop the project agreement and ensure that the project is delivered as agreed upon. Finally, FHWA maintains a publicly available database of all funded projects on [www.bywaysonline.org](http://www.bywaysonline.org).

### 3. Extent of automated information collection:

The grant application package is almost entirely electronic. Currently, electronic signatures are not recognized. The program office is exploring the use of electronic signatures. Applicants are currently given the option of submitting some attachments in hard copy if an electronic copy is not readily available.

The form package available on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) gives applicants the opportunity to download the grant application package and fill it out offline. However, in order to download the grant application package, the applicant must first download a free, yet non-standard software package, PureEdge. PureEdge operates much like AdobeAcrobat, but is less widely known or used than AdobeAcrobat. AdobeAcrobat is also a free software package.

FHWA staff reviews Grant applications electronically. As part of the review, FHWA staff prepares feedback on every application. This feedback is also shared electronically. Notifications to Congress are also made electronically.

FHWA has attempted to reduce burden by providing the application electronically. In the last several years, 100 percent of the applications submitted have been at least partially electronic. In the past FHWA has required both an electronic and hardcopy submissions of each application. FHWA is exploring the option of allowing electronic submission only, that hard copies would be limited to attachments or if the applicant did not have access to an Internet connection. FHWA believes that this meets the requirements of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA).

### 4. Efforts to identify duplication:

There is no duplication or existing source for the information to be collected.

### 5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses:

N/A

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information:

The National Scenic Byways Program receives an annual appropriation of funds, thus the FHWA makes an annual call for projects.

7. Special circumstances:

N/A

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8:

Notice in the Federal Register was published on June 2, 2006, (Volume #71, no.106 on pg. 32176-7). One comment was received. See below:

Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
Agency Information Collection Activities: Request for Comments for a New Information Collection Docket No. FHWA-2006-24901

Response to Request for Comments

The National Scenic Byways Program is an important program for identifying, preserving, enhancing and promoting our critical scenic, historic, cultural, natural, recreational and archeological resources and the roadways that lead to them. It has provided the vision and leadership that has enabled many state and local entities to develop and tell their stories. As former Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater stated: "Transportation is about more than asphalt, concrete and steel. It's about people and connections." The National Scenic Byways Grants Program has been of vital importance to the state and local byway constituents. Since its inception under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, the program has evolved an electronic grant application process that enables the applicants to complete the process expeditiously. It works well. We are familiar with it. It directly relates to byway types of activities and the goals of the national program. It is my understanding that the byway grant process is to migrate into the grants.gov domain. We would very much appreciate it if the existing byway grants electronic application were used within the grants.gov domain so that we do not need to spend our limited time learning another new program process. The burden of time and effort for learning and navigating a new system limits the time we can spend on providing assistance to the byway communities. Thank you for allowing this opportunity to comment on this matter. If you need clarification or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents:

N/A funding is provided only to projects selected by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

10. Assurance of confidentiality:

Confidential information is not collected.

11. Justification for collection of sensitive information:

N/A

12. Estimate of burden hours for information requested:

*Respondents:* 50 State Departments of Transportation, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, Federal Land Management Agencies, State and local governments, non-profit agencies and Tribal Governments. It is estimated that 400 applications will be received and the respondent number is approximately 60.

*Frequency:* Annual

*Estimated burden hours per application:* 40 hours

*Estimated total burden hours:* 400 application x 40 hours = 16,000 hours

\$20/hr (with overhead cost) x 40 hours = \$800 for each application

\$800 x 400 applications = \$320,000 in total.

13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents:

There is no cost beyond the labor cost outlined in question # 12 for the respondents.

14. Estimate of cost to the Federal government:

\$41.95/hr (~Grade 13 Step 1, with 1/3 overhead costs) x 4 hours of review = \$167.80 for each application review at FHWA Division level

\$41.95/hr (~Grade 13 Step 1, with 1/3 overhead costs) x 8 hours of review = \$335.60 for each application at the FHWA HQ level

\$503.40 x 400 = \$201,360 in total labor.

15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments:

N/A

16. Publication of results of data collection:

There will be a press release published.

17. Approval for not displaying the expiration date of OMB approval:

N/A

18. Exceptions to certification statement:

N/A