

SUPPORTING STATEMENT - PART A

Construction Progress Reporting Surveys

Form C-700, Construction Project Report (Private Construction Projects)

Form C-700 (SL), Construction Project Report (State and Local Governments Projects)

Form C-700 (R), Construction Project Report (Multi-Family Residential Projects)

Justification

1. Necessity of Information Collection

The U.S. Census Bureau is requesting an extension of a currently approved collection for forms C-700, Private Construction Projects; C-700 (R), Multi-Family Residential Projects; and C-700 (SL), State and Local Governments Projects (Attachments A-C). These forms are used to conduct the Construction Progress Reporting Surveys (CPRS) to collect information on the dollar value of construction put in place on building projects under construction by private companies or individuals, private multi-family residential buildings, and on building projects under construction by state and local governments. The CPRS are authorized under Title 13, United States Code, Section 182.

The Census Bureau uses the information collected on these forms to publish estimates of the monthly value of construction put in place: (1) for nonresidential projects owned by private companies or individuals; (2) for projects owned by state and local agencies; and (3) for multi-family residential building projects owned by private companies or individuals. Statistics from CPRS become part of the monthly "Value of Construction Put in Place" series that is used extensively by the Federal Government in making policy decisions and become part of the gross domestic product (GDP). The private sector uses the statistics for market analysis and other research. Construction now accounts for more than eight percent of GDP.

2. Needs and Uses

The C-700 is used to collect data on industrial and manufacturing plants, office buildings, retail buildings, service establishments, religious buildings, schools, universities, hospitals, clinics, and miscellaneous buildings. The C-700 (SL) is used to collect data on public schools, courthouses, prisons, hospitals, civic centers, highways, bridges, sewer systems, and water systems. The C-700 (R) is used to collect data on residential buildings and apartment projects with two or more housing units. Published statistics are used by all levels of government to evaluate economic policy, to measure progress toward national goals, to make policy decisions, and to formulate legislation. For example, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) staff use data to develop the construction components of gross private domestic investment in the gross domestic product. The Federal Reserve Board and the Department of the Treasury use the value in place data to predict the gross domestic product, which is presented to the Board of Governors and has an impact on monetary policy. Private businesses and trade

organizations use the data for estimating the demand for building materials and to schedule production, distribution and sales efforts.

Information quality is an integral part of the pre-dissemination review of information disseminated by the Census Bureau (fully described in the Census Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines). Information quality is also integral to information collections conducted by the Census Bureau and is incorporated into the clearance process required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

3. Use of Information Technology

We use a computer- assisted interview process identified as Call Scheduler to collect data over the telephone for approximately 20 percent of the total responses. This is part of a database system that not only alerts the Census interviewer to call a respondent at a predetermined date and time, but also allows them to enter responses on-line at which time the data are electronically edited for accuracy and consistency.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The C-700, C-700 (R), and C-700 (SL) have existed since 1961, 1975, and 1976, respectively. Countless discussions with people in and out of government who use these statistics and are knowledgeable about the construction statistical sources, indicate that the monthly value put in place series for private nonresidential construction, state and local government construction, and private multi-family residential buildings is unavailable elsewhere.

5. Minimizing Burden

Data for these surveys are collected on a sample basis from state and local agency officials, owners of private nonresidential projects, and owners of private multi-family residential building projects. Total projected cost estimates are requested the first month and monthly progress reports are requested until the project is completed. Respondents are told that if actual values are not readily available from records, estimates are acceptable. Information on projects valued under \$75,000 is not collected for state and local or private nonresidential building projects.

Many respondents are called by a Census interviewer and report the data over the phone. The Call Scheduler schedules each respondent's contact time as requested by the respondent. Having the information available from a database at the time of the scheduled call helps reduce the time respondents spend on the telephone, therefore reducing the respondent burden.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

Many policies, decisions, and analyses are formulated and updated monthly using information collected from CPRS. Month-to-month changes in state and local government construction, private nonresidential construction, and multi-family residential building activities are erratic due to unusual weather conditions, material shortages, labor shortages, changes in the availability of funds and interest rates, and shifts in government grant programs. Less frequent collection of these data would miss these short-term changes.

7. Special Circumstances

We ask respondents to report within ten days because of our programming needs and the scheduling of nonresponse follow-up caseloads.

8. Consultations Outside the Agency

Comments are received on a continuing basis from representatives of state and local agencies, private nonresidential projects, and multi-family residential projects who are asked to review the report forms for clarity and ease of reporting. In addition, the following data users inside and outside the Federal Government were consulted in December of 2006.

Mr. Larry Ohman
Weis Builders, Inc
7645 Lyndale Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55423

Ms. Selena Coleman
Gables Construction, Inc
2925 Briarpark #1220
Houston, TX 77042

Mr. Alan Rusch
Louisiana Department of Transportation
Box 44245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Mr. Edward Denner
North Star School District
1200 Morris Avenue
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Ms. Barbara Stoner
GVA LAT Purser & Assoc

4530 Park Road #300
Charlotte, NC 28209

Ms. Nancy Ayers
Hagman Construction, Inc
5353 Gamble Drive #100
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Mr. Paul Lally
Bureau of Economic Analysis
1441 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Mr. Kenneth Simonson
Associated General Contractors of America
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Arlington, VA 22201

Based on comments received, the survey form does not require any changes at this time.

On November 21, 2006, we published a notice in the Federal Register (71FR pages 67328-9) inviting the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on the report forms and/or the program to which it relates. We received one comment stating that taxpayers in the United States should not be paying to see what private construction is doing. The data collected by this survey is for private construction as well as public. All the data is used extensively by the Federal Government in making policy decisions and become part of the gross domestic product (GDP).

9. Paying Respondents

Respondents are not paid or provided gifts for their participation.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The following statement of confidentiality is printed on the report forms C-700 and C-700 (R) (See Attachments A and B): "Notice-Your report to the Census Bureau is confidential by law.

It may be seen only by persons sworn to uphold the confidentiality of Census Bureau information and may be used only for statistical purposes. The law also provides that copies retained in your files are immune from legal process.”

The respondent is informed that these are voluntary surveys in the letter (Attachment D) from the Director of the Census Bureau.

The C-700 (SL) is also voluntary. A letter (See Attachment D-1) from the Director of the Census Bureau informs respondents of this. The data provided are public in nature and are therefore not protected by our confidentiality law.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The survey forms contain no sensitive questions.

12. Estimate of Hour Burden

We estimate responses from approximately 8,500 state and local government projects, 8,500 private nonresidential projects, and 2,500 multi-family residential projects annually. The respondents will each complete 12 monthly reports on average. The total number of annual responses is 234,000. Approximately 20 percent of these, or 46,800 responses, are collected over the phone. We estimate it will take 15 minutes to complete the mailed-back survey form each month that the project is under construction. Telephone calls to collect the data take approximately 5 minutes. These estimates are based upon previous experiences and conversations with respondents. Annual burden for mailed responses is 46,800 hours and burden for telephone responses is 3,900 hours. The total annual burden is 50,700 hours.

13. Estimating Cost Burden

We do not expect respondents to incur any cost other than their time to respond. The information requested is of the type and scope normally carried in company records. No special hardware, accounting software, or system is necessary to provide answers to this information. Respondents are not expected to incur any increase in capital, startup, or systems maintenance cost in responding.

14. Cost to Federal Government

The total cost in FY 2007 for the CPRS program is \$3.8 million, all borne by the Census Bureau.

15. Reason for Change in Burden

There is no change in burden.

16. Project Schedule

The monthly value in place data are collected during the first three weeks of the month following the survey month. Data are edited and keyed on a flow basis during this period. A tabulation follows during the early days of the fourth week. Statistics are published in press release format on the last workday of the month under the monthly press release “United States Department of Commerce News,” U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20230. Data are published showing the dollar amount of construction work done during the month in the United States by type of construction. Detailed data are available online at www.census.gov/constructionspending. Data are shown in actual and seasonally adjusted dollars.

17. Request to Not Display Expiration Date

The expiration date is displayed on the data collection forms.

18. Exceptions to Certification

There are no exceptions.