

VALUING REDUCED ASTHMA EPISODES FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN - FOCUS GROUPS
EPA ICR No. 2215.01
SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Part A

Section 1. Identification of the Information Collection

1(a) Title of the Information Collection:

Valuing Reduced Asthma Episodes for Adults and Children - Focus Groups

1(b) Short Characterization/Abstract:

Asthma is one of the most common chronic illnesses in the United States, particularly among children. The disease is characterized by recurring episodes of symptoms like cough, shortness of breath, and wheezing. Epidemiological studies suggest that ambient air pollution may contribute to exacerbation of these episodes. Acute asthma episodes are a leading cause of work and school absence and contribute to the economic burden of the disease. The policies and programs of many public and private entities including EPA may affect the frequency and severity of asthma episodes, but economic analysis of these programs is hindered by inadequate information about the economic benefits of reduced asthma episodes. The proposed surveys would gather information to support estimation of willingness to pay (WTP) to avoid acute episodes of asthma exacerbation for adults and children.

The survey research has three main objectives. The first is to estimate WTP to reduce frequency of asthma episodes. The second is to examine how the “attributes” of asthma episodes, such as their frequency, severity and symptoms, affect WTP. The third is to provide some evidence on the WTP to reduce the severity of asthma episodes, while holding frequency constant. WTP would be estimated in the context of the severity of the individual’s asthma and the activities taken to manage the disease. The resulting estimates will help to provide researchers and policy analysts with a systematic and credible basis for valuing policies that influence acute asthma episodes.

Through a cooperative agreement from EPA (R-83062801-0), researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) are designing and proposing to conduct two surveys of adult individuals. One survey would be administered to a sample of adults with physician-diagnosed asthma who have experienced asthma symptoms during the 12 months preceding the survey. The focus is on eliciting adults’ WTP to reduce the asthma episodes that they experience. The other survey would be administered to a national sample of parents of children with physician-diagnosed asthma who have experienced asthma symptoms during the 12 months preceding the survey. In this case, the focus is on eliciting parents’ WTP to reduce the asthma episodes that their children experience.

The purpose of the proposed ICR is to gain approval for the conduct of a series of focus groups and individual interviews as part of the survey development process. Focus groups and cognitive interviews are a crucial component in the survey development process. A total of 50 interviews are anticipated, including focus group responses and individual interviews. Focus group studies are directed group discussions that do not produce quantitative data; hence, EPA will not be collecting quantitative data. Instead, EPA hopes to gain insights that would inform future survey work.

Section 2. Need for and use of the Collection

2(a) Need/Authority for the Collection

Over the next year, the Agency plans on creating a survey that would gather information to support the estimation of willingness to pay (WTP) to alleviate acute exacerbations of asthma in adults and children.

Focus groups are an important part of any survey development process, allowing researchers to identify problematic approaches, terminology, and graphics in the survey and providing a means for explicitly testing draft survey materials.

If this information is not collected, an opportunity to developing methods to better understand the economic benefits associated with reduced asthma episodes would be delayed. This delay would impede developing an improving understanding of the nature of the benefits of related policies and programs of many public and private entities, including the Agency.

This data collection is conducted for research purposes; there are no legal requirements. The materials prepared for these discussions will fully conform to federal regulations – specifically the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a), the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments of 1988 (P.L 100-297), and the Computer Security Act of 1987.

2(b) Practical Utility/Users of the Data

The information collected in the focus groups will be used to develop and improve economics-related surveys, specifically surveys gathering willingness to pay (WTP) information on avoidance of acute episodes of asthma exacerbation for adults and children. To the extent that these surveys are ultimately successfully administered, they will serve further the development of values for avoiding asthma episodes comprised of different symptoms and severity levels, or occurring with different frequency. The results will help to provide researchers and policy analysts with evidence on the potential benefits of actions policies that influence acute asthma episodes. Participation in the focus groups will be voluntary and the identity of the participants will be kept confidential.

Focus groups generally do not yield meaningful quantitative findings and do not yield data about public opinion that can be generalized. As such, they cannot be used directly to estimate benefits and costs associated with environmental action. However, the use of focus groups is an important tool in the survey development process to test and refine the ideas and technical aspects of the survey. The conduct of quantitative research, such as through survey distribution, collection, and analysis, would need to be completed to develop new estimates of economic benefits or costs.

Section 3. Non duplication, Consultations, and Other Collection Criteria

3(a) Non duplication

It is not expected that any of the information to be submitted to the EPA during the focus group study is duplicative or is already in the possession of the Federal Government. The proposed focus groups will address the needs of the Agency and significantly improve our ability to test and redefine ideas that will allow EPA to conduct further quantitative research on willingness to pay estimates for avoidance of acute asthma episodes.

3(b) Public Notice Required Prior to ICR Submission to OMB

In accordance with 5 CFR 1320.8(d) on February 3, 2006, EPA published a 60-day Federal Register notice (E6 FR 1503). See Appendix 1 for a copy of this Federal Register notice.

Also, EPA received only one non-substantial comment from the posting of the 60-day Federal Register notice (E6 FR 1503) published February 3, 2006.

3(c) Consultations

Considerable effort has been taken to consult with persons outside the agency on a regular basis throughout the design of pilot survey questions to serve as the basis for these focus groups and interviews. Two of the main investigators are academic researchers who work for the University of Central Florida; Dr. Mark Dickie and Dr. Shelby Gerking.

Dr. Mark Dickie is a Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics at the University of Central Florida - (407) 823-4730. Dr. Dickie's primary research focus is on environmental valuation through revealed and stated preference methods, including estimating WTP for changes in children's health.

Dr. Shelby Gerking is a Galloway Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics at the University of Central Florida - (407) 823-4729. Dr. Gerking's primary research focus is on environmental policy and valuation.

In addition, in order for the focus groups to yield the most useful information for developing a survey, the principal investigator will consult with experts on the economic analysis of asthma risks. Many of these experts can be found in EPA offices such as the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, the National Center for Environmental Economics, the Office of Research and Development, and the Office of Children's Health Protection. Comments may also be sought from experts in other agencies or governmental organizations. The goal of this input is to ensure that the instrument might have general practical application by, for example, having consistent measurement metrics, definitions and endpoints.

3(d) Effects of Less Frequent Collection

The focus group will be a one-time collection exercise for the enrolled participants.

3(e) General Guidelines

This collection does not violate any of OMB's general guidelines for information collections.

Information will be collected according to the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320. Respondents will be asked to participate in one focus group and their participation will be voluntary. There will be no need for participants to maintain records or submit documents or proprietary trade secrets. There will be complete protection of any demographic information collection from participant—full names, phone numbers and addresses will not be associated with responses.

EPA has developed EPA Information Quality Guidelines (2002) to ensure the utility, objectivity and integrity of information that is disseminated by the Agency. It is EPA's intention that collection of information under this ICR will result in information that will be collected, maintained, and used in ways consistent with both the EPA Information Quality Guidelines (2002) and the OMB Information Quality Guidelines (2002). EPA intends to conduct a pre-dissemination review when the Agency prepares to disseminate any information collected under this ICR.

3(f) Confidentiality

Each focus group will fully conform to federal regulations - specifically the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a), the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments of 1988 (P.L 100-297), and the

Computer Security Act of 1987. Each prospective respondent will be informed that their participation in the survey is voluntary, and that their identities will be kept confidential by the investigators and not associated with their responses. EPA or no other agency will have access to the names of respondents.

3(g) Sensitive Questions

There are no questions on sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private or sensitive in this pilot survey instrument.

Section 4. The Respondents and the Information Requested

4(a) Respondents/SIC Codes

Up to fifty (50) individual focus group / interview participants who have a household experience with asthma.

4(b) Information Requested

- (i) Data items, including record keeping requirements
- (ii) Respondent Activities

Respondents will be selected from greater Orlando area, near the University of Central Florida. They will be elicited based on their household experience with asthma. These respondents are asked to come to a local interview facility or the University of Central Florida and participate in a 2 hour discussion on different aspects of asthma episodes. There will be 5 focus group interviews (of up to 6 participants for each focus group) and 20 cognitive (one-on-one) interviews with the main investigators. The focus groups will be providing their thoughts, perceptions and beliefs regarding the issue of managing their own or their child's asthma. The 20 individuals participating in the cognitive interviews will be walked through one of the survey instruments (or a portion of it) individually and will be asked to "think aloud" about what the questions mean to them. The survey instrument questions may be displayed on a computer. They may answer the questions to move on to another question, but these responses will not be recorded or used. They are ultimately providing feedback on whether the questions are clearly stated, meaningful to them, whether the possible answers make sense or if there is some response they would like to offer that is missing. These cognitive interviews and the focus group participants will be helping to assess the clarity and relevance of these asthma-related questions, and their relative merit for use in a survey instrument. All responses are voluntary. The collection will be a one time event and there will be no need for participants to maintain records or submit documents or proprietary trade secrets. There will be complete protection of any demographic information collection from participants -- names, phone numbers and addresses will not be associated with responses.

Section 5. The Information Collected - Agency Activities, Collection Methodology, and Information Management

5(a) Agency Activities

Agency activities associated with this information collection include the following, mostly performed by the principle investigators under the cooperative agreement:

- Drafting focus groups scripts and accompanying materials
- Observing and moderating the focus group discussions
- Summarizing focus group results and making changes to draft survey materials as appropriate

5(b) Collection Methodology and Management

Focus group studies are directed group discussions that do not produce quantitative data, but which enable skilled observers to infer the underlying views and assumptions of the group that are expressed in the discussion. To facilitate interpretation, discussions will be recorded and/or videotaped so that both a visual record and written transcript of the discussion are available for review. Participants are informed in advance that the sessions will be recorded. Transcripts and video tapes will be maintained in the individual project files over the appropriate time frame under records management procedures.

5(c) Small Entity Flexibility

No information will be collected from small businesses or small organizations or small governmental jurisdictions as a result of this information collection.

5(d) Collection Schedule

Focus groups will be scheduled very shortly after approval of this ICR. No fixed schedule for this collection has been established otherwise.

Section 6. Estimating the Burden and Cost of Collection

6(a) Estimating Respondent Burden

6(b) Estimating Respondent Costs

The only burden imposed by the interviews on respondents will be the time required to participate in focus group discussions and answer interview questions. The survey developers estimate that this will require an average of 2 hours per respondent. With a total of 50 respondents this requires a total of 100 hours. Based on an average hourly rate of \$27.31 (including employer costs of all employee benefits), the survey developers expect that the average per-respondent cost for the pilot survey will be \$54.62 and the corresponding one-time total cost to all respondents will be \$2731.00. Since this information collection is voluntary and does not involve any special equipment, respondents will not incur any capital or operation and maintenance (O&M) costs.

TABLE 1. – Average Annual Respondent Burden and Costs¹

Center	Subject	Number of Focus Groups for Study	Average Number of Participants per Group	Number of Individual Cognitive Interviews for Study	Total Number of Individuals Participating in the Study	Avg Hours of Duration for Each Group/Cognitive Interview (includes screening)	Total Estimated "Respondent" Hours	Average per-respondent cost (\$) ²	Total Estimated Burden per Year (\$)
Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation	Valuation of reduced asthma episodes for adults and children	5	6	20	50	2.0	100	\$54.62	\$2,731.00
TOTAL									\$2,731.00

¹ There are no capital costs or operating and maintenance costs associated with this collection of information.

² Hourly rate (\$27.31) Employer costs per hour worked for employee compensation and costs as a percent of total compensation: Civilian worker, total compensation, December 2006 (<http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/ecec.t02.htm>)

6(c) Estimating Agency Burden and Costs

The Agency incurs costs directly through assisting the principle investigators to develop focus group materials, and through the cooperative agreement as principle investigators develop focus group materials, conduct focus group discussions, and observe focus group discussions.

Estimated Average Annual Agency Burden and Costs

Task	Costs (and Person-hours) Per Focus Group Hour			Total Hours and Cost	
	EPA (\$43.80/ Hour)	Estimated Contractor and Investigator Costs ¹	O&M Cost	Number of focus group activities (50 responses)	Total Cost/Year
Prepare Materials for Focus Group Discussion	\$219 (5 hrs)	\$1,000	--	1	\$1,219
Organize and conduct focus group discussion (contractor)	--	\$4,000	--	1	\$4,000
Observe focus group discussion	--	\$1,000	--	1	\$1,000
Total	\$219.00	\$5,000	--	1	\$6,219

Notes: ¹includes recruiting respondents, meeting space, respondent reimbursement for participants, and recording of discussion.

6(d) Estimating the Respondent Universe and Total Burden and Costs

6(e) Bottom Line Burden Hours and Cost Tables

We expect the focus group hours to total 100 and Agency costs as estimated in section 6(c).

(i) Respondent Tally

Action	Approximate Number of Focus Groups	Approximate Number of Individual Cognitive Interviews	Estimated Respondent Hours	Total labor Cost per Year	Total Annual Capital Costs	Total Annual O&M costs
Focus Group Discussion	5	20	100	\$2,731.00	\$0	\$0

(ii) Agency Costs

Task	Costs (and Person-hours) Per Focus Group Hour			Total Hours and Cost	
	EPA (\$43.80/ Hour)	Estimated Contractor and Investigator Costs ¹	O&M Cost	Number of focus group activities (50 responses)	Total Cost/Year

Total	\$219.00	\$5,000	--	1	\$6,219
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6(f) Reasons for Change in Burden

This is a new request.

6(g) Burden Statement

The annual public reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to 2 hours per response. Burden means the total time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, or disclose or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions; develop, acquire, install, and utilize technology and systems for the purposes of collecting, validating, and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; adjust the existing ways to comply with any previously applicable instructions and requirements; train personnel to be able to respond to a collection of information; search data sources; complete and review the collection of information; and transmit or otherwise disclose the information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control numbers for EPA's regulations are listed in 40 CFR part 9 and 48 CFR chapter 15.

To comment on the Agency's need for this information, the accuracy of the provided burden estimates, and any suggested methods for minimizing respondent burden, including the use of automated collection techniques, EPA has established a public docket for this ICR under Docket ID Number [EPA-HQ-OA-2006-0080], which is available for online viewing at www.regulations.gov, or in person viewing at the Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Docket in the EPA Docket Center (EPA/DC), EPA West, Room 3334, 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. The EPA Docket Center Public Reading Room is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The telephone number for the Reading Room is (202) 566-1744, and the telephone number for the Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Docket is (202) 566-1752. An electronic version of the public docket is available at www.regulations.gov. This site can be used to submit or view public comments, access the index listing of the contents of the public docket, and to access those documents in the public docket that are available electronically. When in the system, select "search," then key in the Docket ID Number identified above. Also, you can send comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, 725 17th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20503, Attention: Desk Officer for EPA. Please include the EPA Docket ID Number EPA-HQ-OA-2006-0080 in any correspondence.

Part B.

There are no tabulated results for this information collection.

Information gathered from focus groups is qualitative in nature. They allow for a more in-depth understanding of respondents' attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and feelings than do quantitative studies. It serves the narrowly defined need for direct and informal opinion on a specific topic.

Appendix 1

[Federal Register: February 3, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 23)]
[Notices]
[Page 5834-5836]
From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov]
[DOCID:fr03fe06-53]

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[EPA-HQ-OA-2006-0080; FRL-8026-8]

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection;
Comment Request; Valuing Reduced Asthma Episodes for Adults and
Children-Focus Groups; EPA ICR Number 2215.01

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), this document announces that EPA is planning to submit a request for a new Information Collection Request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Before submitting the ICR to OMB for review and approval, EPA is soliciting comments on specific aspects of the proposed information collection as described below.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before April 4, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Submit your comments, referencing docket ID number EPA-HQ-OA-2006-0080, by one of the following methods:
<http://www.regulations.gov>: Follow the on-line

instructions for submitting comments.

E-mail: dockins.chris@epa.gov.

Fax: 202-566-2338.

Mail: Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Docket, Environmental Protection Agency, Mailcode 28221T, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460.

Hand Deliver: Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Docket in the EPA Docket Center (EPA/DC), EPA West, Room B102, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC. Such deliveries are only accepted during the Docket's normal hours of operation, and special arrangements should be made for deliveries of boxed information.

Instructions: Direct your comments to Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OA-2006-0080. EPA's policy is that all comments received will be included in the public docket without change and may be made available online at <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information

provided, unless the comment includes information claimed to be Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Do not submit information that you

consider to be CBI or otherwise protected through <http://www.regulations.gov> or e-mail. The <http://www.regulations.gov> Web site

is an ``anonymous access'' system, which means EPA will not know your identity or contact information unless you provide it in the body of your comment. If you send an e-mail comment directly to EPA without going through <http://www.regulations.gov> your e-mail address will be

automatically captured and included as part of the comment that is placed in the public docket and made available on the Internet. If you submit an electronic comment, EPA recommends that you include your name and other contact information in the body of your comment and with any disk or CD-ROM you submit. If EPA cannot read your comment due to technical difficulties and cannot contact you for clarification, EPA may not be able to consider your comment. Electronic files should avoid the use of special characters, any form of encryption, and be free of any defects or viruses. For additional information about EPA's public docket visit the EPA Docket Center homepage at <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/dockets.htm>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Chris **Dockins**, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, U.S. EPA, Mail Code 1809T, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460; telephone number 202-566-2286; fax number 202-566-2338; e-mail address: dockins.chris@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

How Can I Access the Docket and/or Submit Comments?

EPA has established a public docket for this ICR under Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OA-2006-0080, which is available for online viewing at <http://www.regulations.gov>, or in person viewing at the Office of

Environmental Information (OEI) Docket in the EPA Docket Center (EPA/DC), EPA West, Room B102, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC. The EPA/DC Public Reading Room is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The telephone number for the Reading Room is 202-566-1744, and the telephone number for the Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Docket is 202-566-1752.

Use <http://www.regulations.gov> to obtain a copy of the draft

collection of information, submit or view public comments, access the index listing of the contents of the docket, and to access those documents in the public docket that are available electronically. Once in the system, select ``search,'' then key in the docket ID number identified in this document.

What Information Is EPA Particularly Interested In?

Pursuant to section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA, EPA specifically solicits comments and information to enable it to:

- (i) 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;
- (ii) 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;

(iii) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(iv) 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 submission of responses. In particular, EPA is requesting comments from very small businesses (those that employ less than 25) on examples of specific additional efforts that EPA could make to reduce the paperwork burden for very small businesses affected by this collection.

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What Should I Consider When I Prepare My Comments for EPA?

You may find the following suggestions helpful for preparing your comments:

1. Explain your views as clearly as possible and provide specific examples.
2. Describe any assumptions that you used.
3. Provide copies of any technical information and/or data you used that support your views.
4. If you estimate potential burden or costs, explain how you arrived at the estimate that you provide.
5. Offer alternative ways to improve the collection activity.
6. Make sure to submit your comments by the deadline identified under DATES.
7. To ensure proper receipt by EPA, be sure to identify the docket ID number assigned to this action in the subject line on the first page of your response. You may also provide the name, date, and Federal Register citation.

What Information Collection Activity or ICR Does This Apply To?

Affected Entities: Entities potentially affected by this action are individuals volunteering to participate in focus group discussions.

Title: Valuing Reduced Asthma Episodes for Adults and Children-- Focus Groups.

ICR Numbers: EPA ICR No. 2215.01.

ICR Status: This ICR is for a new information collection activity. An Agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control numbers for EPA's regulations in title 40 of the CFR, after appearing in the Federal Register when approved, are listed in 40 CFR part 9, are displayed either by publication in the Federal Register or by other appropriate means, such as on the related collection instrument or form, if applicable. The display of OMB control numbers in certain EPA regulations is consolidated in 40 CFR part 9.

Abstract: Asthma is one of the most common chronic illnesses in the United States, particularly among children. The disease is characterized by recurring episodes of symptoms like cough, shortness of breath, and wheezing. Epidemiological studies suggest that ambient air pollution may contribute to exacerbation of these episodes. Acute asthma episodes are a leading cause of work and school absence and contribute to the economic burden of the disease. The policies and programs of many public and private entities including EPA may affect

the frequency and severity of asthma episodes, but economic analysis of these programs is hindered by inadequate information about the economic benefits of reduced asthma episodes. The proposed surveys would gather information to support estimation of willingness to pay (WTP) to avoid acute episodes of asthma exacerbation for adults and children.

The survey research has three main objectives. The first is to estimate WTP to reduce frequency of asthma episodes. The second is to examine how the "attributes" of asthma episodes, such as their frequency, severity and symptoms, affect WTP. The third is to provide some evidence on the WTP to reduce the severity of asthma episodes, while holding frequency constant. WTP would be estimated in the context of the severity of the individual's asthma and the activities taken to manage the disease. The resulting estimates will help to provide researchers and policy analysts with a systematic and credible basis for valuing policies that influence acute asthma episodes.

Through a cooperative agreement from EPA (R-83062801-0), researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) have designed and are proposing to conduct two nationwide surveys of adult individuals. One survey would be administered to a sample of adults with physician-diagnosed asthma who have experienced asthma symptoms during the 12 months preceding the survey. This survey focuses on eliciting adults' WTP to reduce the asthma episodes that they experience. The other survey would be administered to a national sample of parents of children with physician-diagnosed asthma who have experienced asthma symptoms during the 12 months preceding the survey. In this case, the focus is on eliciting parents' WTP to reduce the asthma episodes that their children experience.

The purpose of the proposed ICR is to gain approval for the conduct of a series of focus groups and individual interviews as part of the survey development process. Focus groups and cognitive interviews are a crucial component in the survey development process as they allow survey developers to identify problematic approaches, terminology, and graphics in the survey instrument. A total of 50 interviews are anticipated, including focus group responses and individual interviews.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control numbers for EPA's regulations are listed in 40 CFR part 9 and 48 CFR Chapter 15.

The EPA would like to solicit comments in order to:

- (i) 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;
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- (iv) 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 submission of responses.

Burden Statement: The annual public reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per response. Burden means the total time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, or disclose or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions; develop, acquire, install, and utilize technology and systems for the purposes of

collecting, validating, and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; adjust the existing ways to comply with any previously applicable instructions and requirements; train personnel to be able to respond to a collection of information; search data sources; complete and review the collection of information; and transmit or otherwise disclose the information.

The only burden imposed by the interviews on respondents will be the time required to participate in focus group discussions and answer interview questions. The survey developers estimate that this will require an average of 2 hours per respondent. With a total of 50 respondents this requires a total of 100 hours. Based on an average hourly rate of \$26.05 \1\ (including employer costs of all employee benefits), the survey developers expect that the average per-respondent cost for the pilot survey will be \$52.10 and the

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corresponding one-time total cost to all respondents will be \$5210.00. Since this information collection is voluntary and does not involve any special equipment, respondents will not incur any capital or operation and maintenance (O&M) costs.

\1\ Employer costs per hour worked for employee compensation and costs as a percent of total compensation: Civilian workers, total compensation, December 2005 (<http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/ecec.t02.htm>).

What Is the Next Step in the Process for This ICR?

EPA will consider the comments received and amend the ICR as appropriate. The final ICR package will then be submitted to OMB for review and approval pursuant to 5 CFR 1320.12. At that time, EPA will issue another Federal Register notice pursuant to 5 CFR 1320.5(a)(1)(iv) to announce the submission of the ICR to OMB and the opportunity to submit additional comments to OMB. If you have any questions about this ICR or the approval process, please contact the technical person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.

Dated: January 5, 2006.
Al McGartland,
Director, National Center for Environmental Economics, Office of Policy Economics and Innovation.
[FR Doc. E6-1503 Filed 2-2-06; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 6560-50-P