

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
CORAL REEF CONSERVATION PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0448

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The [Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000](#) (Act) (P.L. 106-562; 16 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.) was passed to provide a framework for conserving coral reefs. Program implementation guidelines were published in the [Federal Register](#) on April 19, 2002 ([67 FR 19396](#)). The Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program, under the Act, provides funds to a broad-based group of applicants with experience in coral reef conservation to conduct activities to protect and conserve coral reef ecosystems.

The OMB Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) clearance is for: 1) requests for a waiver of matching funds and 2) comments from authorities with jurisdiction over the area of proposed projects.

Requests for a Waiver of Matching Funds

This provision requires applicants that are requesting a waiver of matching funds to provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver, including attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing a match, and any other extenuating circumstances preventing the availability of a match.

Comments from Authorities with Jurisdiction Over the Area of Proposed Projects

This provision requests comments on proposed projects from authorities with jurisdiction over the area where the project will be carried out. Specifically, agencies will be requested to comment on: the extent to which the project is consistent with locally-established coral reef conservation priorities and projects; whether the project has been coordinated with existing or planned projects; suggestions for improving project coordination and/or technical approach; whether the applicant will need to obtain a permit or other authorization from the agency for the project; and appropriate staff points of contact.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

Requests for a Waiver of Matching Funds

The Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program publishes requests for proposals once each fiscal year in the Federal Register. Information describing the eligibility requirements for a waiver of matching funds is described in the Announcement for Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) for the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program. The FFO can be obtained at

<http://www.grants.gov> or <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov/grants.html> . Only those applicants requesting a waiver of matching funds are required to submit the waiver request information as part of the grant application. Respondents are either required to submit grant proposals electronically through www.grants.gov (for awards administered by NOAA) or encouraged to email their letters justifying the need for a waiver (for awards administered by DOI, i.e. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and American Samoa). The information is reviewed by staff to determine if a waiver of matching funds is justified.

Comments from Authorities with Jurisdiction Over the Area of Proposed Projects

Proposals received in response to the annual solicitation will be faxed or mailed to the agencies or authorities with jurisdiction over the area where the project will be carried out. These entities will have the opportunity to comment on each proposal. Comments from the appropriate authorities indicate whether the proposed project(s) are aligned, conflicting, or duplicative of local priorities, initiatives, and strategies. The reviews will be used to determine if projects are consistent with local priorities and will be factored into the proposal evaluation process.

As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the information gathered has utility. NOAA National Ocean Service will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to Section 515 of Public Law 106-554.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

Applicants and reviewers will be encouraged to submit their information electronically. Match waiver requests either will be submitted as part of an application package electronically through www.grants.gov or emailed to coral.grants@noaa.gov. Additionally, a database is currently being developed that will track projects funded through the Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program and will ease the burden on grantees to prepare and submit required bi-annual progress reports.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The information is collected on a specific proposal-by-proposal basis and is not otherwise available. We have not identified any duplication.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

Small businesses and entities are not expected to be involved.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

If the information collection was not conducted or conducted less frequently, the reviewing agency personnel would: 1) have a difficult time assessing whether the applicants' projects outweigh the public interest in requiring a match, and 2) be unable to determine a project's consistency with local conservation priorities.

The Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 mandates both of these requirements, and if not able to collect this information NOAA would be unable to appropriately carry out its mandate.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

There are no special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice, published on April 4, 2008 (73 FR 18779), solicited public comment. No comments were received.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payments or gifts to respondents are provided.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No assurance of confidentiality is provided to respondents.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

No sensitive questions are asked.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

The annual burden for the respondents is **112 hours**.

Match Waiver Request:

14 respondents x ½ hour per request x 1 responses = 7 hours.
(14 average match waiver requests received per year)

Proposal Comment:

14 respondents x 1 ½ hour per request x 5 responses = 105 hours
(Two reviewers per jurisdiction with authority to comment x 7 jurisdictions = 14 respondents providing comments on an average of 5 project proposals per year).

Annual Responses: 84.

Annual Burden Hours: 112.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in #12 above).

The annual recipient cost burden from this collection is estimated to be \$50.00 per year for the estimated five respondents not using electronic submission. Specifically, this includes costs to mail or fax comments. All other comments are submitted electronically. The total is \$250.00.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

The annualized cost burden to the Federal government to respond by mail or fax to those submissions not sent electronically for this collection is estimated to be \$250.00 per year. All government responses to review submissions submitted electronically are likewise sent electronically.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB 83-I.

The responses and hours required for the collection of information are adjusted, based on responses during the past 3 years, to provide a more accurate estimate of the number of respondents and a more realistic estimation of the time required per response. There are fewer applicants, but also, each commenting respondent is now estimated to submit 5 comments per year, rather than 3. The net increase in hours is 34. Reduced costs (from \$1,900 to \$250) are due to increasing use of electronic submission for waiver requests and proposal comments: previously, each respondent's costs were estimated at \$50, but now only five respondents per year are expected to mail or fax responses.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

This collection will not be published.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

This collection does not seek approval to not display the expiration date.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 of the OMB 83-I.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.