

June 1, 2009

Department of Energy Desk Officer
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC 20503

SUBJECT: Use of Generic Clearance for Energy Information Administration (EIA-882T(47), 1905-0186) to field test proposed changes to Section K of survey form, EIA-457A, “Residential Energy Consumption Survey Household Questionnaire.”

The form EIA-457A is the primary vehicle used by EIA to collect housing unit and household data for the Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS). These data and those collected from rental agents and household energy suppliers are used to estimate annual energy consumption and expenditures for housing units in the U.S. For the past several survey cycles, the RECS has included a series of questions (identified as “Section K”) funded and used by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for evaluation of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). In preparation for the 2009 RECS, EIA, HHS and its contractor would like to perform limited pre-testing of the LIHEAP questions. EIA also requests approval to allow the LIHEAP contractor to perform additional pre-survey activities to estimate future burden and prepare for post-survey evaluations.

The Section K pre-testing includes a series of field tests of approximately 30 potential respondents. The individuals selected will be representative of the LIHEAP population and chosen from a pool of respondents to a previous survey conducted by the contractor. The questions in Section K are limited to individuals falling below a specified income threshold. There will be three rounds of testing of 10 individuals on approximately 20 items. The first round will use questions from the 2005 RECS. The second and third rounds of testing will use revised 2005 questions and new questions for 2009. Each round will be conducted with 10 different individuals.

The purpose of this pre-test is to:

- Identify how well respondents comprehend and the accuracy of responses to the 2005 questions,
- Identify potentially sensitive questions that should be avoided,
- Test the accuracy of reworded or new 2009 questions and,
- Identify a questionnaire design and order to avoid inconsistent responses.

We estimate each interview to be one hour in length for a total pre-test burden of 30 hours. The initial questions from 2005 to be pre-tested are attached.

The additional request is to allow the LIHEAP contractor to make initial contact with state agencies that administer the LIHEAP programs. For the 2009 RECS, HHS will need to identify which respondents are LIHEAP recipients at the completion of data collection, which will allow them to perform necessary analysis. Lists of LIHEAP recipients are available from the states; however the federal government does not have the direct authority to require states to furnish information on individual LIHEAP recipients. To obtain lists of recipients, as well as other program participation information, each individual State program director needs to be contacted to assess the specific requirements in that State to allow for release of such data.

The purpose of this initial contact is to:

- Obtain an appropriate point of contact in each state for future work,
- Document procedures and,
- Obtain a burden estimate for preparing the LIHEAP list.

We estimate the initial contact burden to be four hours for each state and DC, for a total additional burden of 204 hours.

Total burden for this request, including the 30 hours for Section K pretesting and 204 hours for state agency initial contact is 234 hours.

For questions about this pre-test contact James Berry, EIA Energy Markets and End Use, Energy Consumption Division at 202.586-5543 or james.berry@eia.doe.gov. For questions regarding the information request process, please contact Grace Sutherland at 202.586.6264 or grace.sutherland@eia.doe.gov.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Brown
Director
Statistics and Methods Group
Energy Information Administration

Attachment: 2005 RECS Section K (LIHEAP) Questions

- K-1 INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: PLACE SHOW CARD 29 IN FRONT OF THE RESPONDENT. As a result of energy price increases, some households have faced challenges in paying home energy bills. The questions are about the challenges you may have faced. Please look at Card 29. In the past 12 months, did you *almost every* month, *some* months, *only 1 or 2 months*, or *never* do the following because there wasn't enough money for your home energy bill?
- K-1a SCALEA Did you worry that you wouldn't be able to pay your home energy bill?
- K-1b SCALEB Did you reduce your expenses for what you consider to be basic household necessities?
- K-1c SCALEC Did you need to borrow from a friend or relative to pay your home energy bill?
- K-1d SCALED Did you skip paying your home energy bill or pay less than your whole home energy bill?
- K-1e SCALEE Did you have a supplier of your electric or home heating service threaten to disconnect your electricity or home heating fuel service, or discontinue making fuel deliveries?
- K-1f SCALEF Did you close off part of your home because you could not afford to heat or cool it?
- K-1g SCALEG Did you keep your home at a temperature that you felt was unsafe or unhealthy at any time of the year?
- K-1h SCALEH Did you leave your home for part of the day because it was too hot or too cold?
- K-1i SCALEI Did you use your kitchen stove or oven to provide heat?
- K-2 ENERGYAID There is a home energy assistance program that helps people pay for their heating, cooling and other home energy costs and/or repair or replacement of their heating/cooling equipment. During the past 12 months did anyone in your household receive energy assistance?
- K-2a AIDADDRESS Did you receive energy assistance at this address?
- K-3 Was there ever a time during the past 12 months when you wanted to use your main source of heat, but could not, for one or more of the following reasons:
- K-3a NOPYFIX Your heating system was *broken* and you were *unable* to pay for its repair or replacement?
- K-3a1 NOPYFIXREST Did receiving energy assistance help you to restore heating of your home?
- K-3b NOPYFL You *ran out* of fuel oil, kerosene, propane (bottled gas), coal, or wood because you were *unable* to pay for a delivery?
- K-3b1 NOPYFLREST Did receiving energy assistance help you to restore heating of your home?

- K-3c NOPYEL The utility company *discontinued* your electric service because you were *unable* to pay your bill?
- K-3c1 NOPYELREST Did receiving energy assistance help you to restore heating of your home?
- K-3d NOPYGA The utility company *discontinued* your gas service because you were *unable* to pay your bill?
- K-3d1 NOPYGAREST Did receiving energy assistance help you to restore heating of your home?
- K-4 Was there ever a time during the past 12 months when you wanted to use your air-conditioner, but could not, for one or more of the following reasons:
- K-4a NOPYFIXAC Your air-conditioner was *broken* and you were *unable* to pay for its repair or replacement?
- K-4a1 NOPYFIXACREST Did receiving energy assistance help you to restore cooling of your home?
- K-4b NOPYELAC The utility company *discontinued* your electric service because you were *unable* to pay your bill?
- K-4b1 NOPYELACREST Did receiving energy assistance help you to restore cooling of your home?
- K-5 SOMEPY In the past 12 months, has there been a time when your household did not pay the full amount due for an electric bill?
- K-6 NOPAY In the past 12 months was your electricity ever discontinued because you were unable to pay your electric bill?
- K-6a MTHSNOPY In which months was your electricity discontinued? (Mark all that apply.)
- K-6b NTIMEWOEL How many separate times were you without electricity because your electric service was discontinued?
- K-6c NDAYSWOEL Altogether, how many days were you without electricity in the past 12 months because your electric service was discontinued?

Show Card 29

1. Almost every month
2. Some months
3. Only 1 or 2 months
4. Never