

SUPPORTING STATEMENT - OMB NO. 0579-0311
ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE

April 11, 2009

A. Justification

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

In accordance with 7 U.S.C. 7701 et seq., the Secretary of Agriculture has the ability to prohibit or restrict the importation, exportation and the interstate movement of plants, plant products, certain biological control organisms, noxious weeds, and plant pests.

Plant health regulations promulgated by the United States Department of Agriculture under this authority specifically address control programs for Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB), as well as other pests of concern.

The ALB Cooperative Eradication Program (CEP) has been operating since 1996, working to eradicate this destructive pest from the United States. In 2008, the pest was detected for the first time in Massachusetts. Subsequent work by APHIS employees found that the infestation may have been present for twelve to fifteen years, which could mean it has spread outside of Massachusetts and into other areas of New England.

The CEP, in concert with state departments of agriculture or, in the case of Massachusetts, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, is embarking on a large survey effort throughout New England in the coming months to determine if ALB has spread outside of the Worcester, MA area. Outreach and education to the public on the beetle, what it looks like, and the damage it can cause are a large and very important part of this survey process. Reporting the results of the survey will be key for determining where ALB may exist in New England and upstate New York. Additionally, the ALB outreach program will help determine where ALB may exist, if it exists anywhere in the United States through the same effort, called Beetlebusters. Beetlebusters enlists the assistance of residents in communities asking them to search their trees and report any suspected ALB. Follow-up conversations with residents that suspect they have found ALB results as APHIS works to uncover any undetected infestations that may exist.

APHIS relies on the public to report sightings of the beetle or beetle damage they may see in their local area. This reporting, which is done through a simple online form, covers suspected sightings of ALB. The areas where reports come from are those under regulatory oversight and those areas where no regulatory oversight currently exists. Surveys performed by members of the general public, nature organizations, school groups, garden clubs, and others will help APHIS uncover unknown infestations. The surveys by the public supplements the work done by the program's surveyors.

If any member of the public reports seeing signs of the beetle, APHIS takes the appropriate steps to determine if the beetle is indeed present in an area, and if so, to what extent. If there are no signs of ALB found through a large area, as determined by hundreds of volunteer surveyors or searchers, APHIS can make some decisions about the need to focus program resources into that area.

Any information collected as part of this program would be used by APHIS to pinpoint the beetle. If any respondents provide information that indicates signs of an ALB infestation, and that information holds through phone conversations with respondents, then surveyors from the ALB cooperative eradication program will conduct an inspection of the area in question to determine if the pest is indeed present and will ultimately implement measures to stop the beetle's spread upon positive identification. Surveyors may need to contact that respondent for more information or more details on the location of the suspected infestation as the infestation continues.

Implementing this program will entail the voluntary completion of an online survey form to determine if there is any presence of the beetle in a particular location. APHIS is asking OMB to approve, for 3 years, its use of these information collection activities in connection with APHIS' efforts to ensure the eradication of the ALB in regulated or non-regulated areas.

2. Indicate how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The voluntary, online survey collected the following information from each respondent: For positive sightings, the name of the person reporting the finding, a way to contact them, the exact address/location of the sighting and details on where the tree is located are needed. The information will be compiled by APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) ALB program.

Information collected as part of this program in the past has been used by APHIS to pinpoint regulated or nonregulated areas that have been searched for signs of the beetle. When respondents provided information that indicated signs of an ALB infestation, surveyors from the ALB cooperative eradication program conducted an inspection of the area to determine if the pest was indeed present in the area. The information provided to the database in 2007 was used to declare the Chicago regulated area free of ALB in 2008. Moving forward, information received by the database will be used to determine if reported signs of infestation throughout New England, upstate New York or other parts of the United States are actually ALB. Using the same steps as in the past, the information in the database will be transmitted to the ALB program in the proper state and arrangements made for onsite inspections by CEP officials or state department of agriculture plant pest experts. Any follow-up questions or details on location will be obtained by contacting the respondent to the database for more information and direction.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The survey will be located on the APHIS Webb site at <http://beetlebusters.aphis.usda.gov>. The survey, which is completely voluntary, asks for only basic information and can be filled out online.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purpose described in item 2 above.

The information that APHIS collects is not available from any other source. APHIS is the only Federal agency responsible for detecting and controlling the outbreak of plant pests and diseases. There are no other programs that train community members in how to site ALB, and then provide them the resource to report the results of their searches to APHIS.

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

The information APHIS is collecting in connection with this program is the minimum needed to determine if the ALB is in areas outside of the regulated area in Worcester, MA or outside of other known areas of infestation in New York, New Jersey and Illinois. Burden is minimized by the fact that this is a completely volunteer program, and the public doesn't have to fill the form out if they do not wish to do so. Burden is further reduced by the fact that the form is an online form and asks for only the most basic information, including name, phone number, email address, date, street address, ZIP Code, location of the surveyed tree on the property, and whether or not the respondent saw any ALBs.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as Well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Collecting this information less frequently or failing to collect it could lead to the deregulation of areas where the beetle is still present, thus leading to a large-scale outbreak. It could also result in APHIS not receiving information about where infestations may exist, causing them to linger, unreported and grow. ALB kills trees, particularly maple trees. Infestation could lead to the demise of thousands of trees in key forested areas in New England and upstate New York. The ALB infestation in Worcester MA has been there for twelve to fifteen years without being reported, so wood has moved from this area over the years, and that wood could be infested with ALB larva and pupa. This information collection can help find ALB in other communities before a similar timeframe has elapsed.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information collection guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

This information collection is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines established in 5 CFR 1320.5.

8. Describe 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 form, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB.

In 2009, APHIS consulted with individuals concerning the ALB program, outreach activities, and information collections including:

Jeff Daley
Senior Policy Advisor
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street Ste 600
Boston MA 02114
617-626-4991

Michael Bohne
Forest Health Group Leader
USDA Forest Service
271 Mast Road
Durham, NH 03824
603-868-7708

Joan Mahoney
Horticulture Inspector
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
24 Ventura Dr.
N. Babylon, NY 11703
631-598-5943

APHIS also consulted with those in other USDA agencies, such as the US Forest Service.

On Tuesday, June 23, 2009, pages 29657- 29858, APHIS published in the Federal Register, a 60-day notice seeking public comments on its plan to request a **3-year renewal** of this collection of information. During that time, APHIS received one comment from an interested member of the public.

The comment was received from a concerned citizen in NJ about her perception of the general disregard of the environment by USDA-APHIS. It had no relevance to the purpose of the collection.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

Respondents may receive certificates of appreciation or small giveaway items, such as pens, pencils, and stickers, with the Beetle Busters logo for their participation.

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

No additional assurance of confidentiality is provided with this information collection. However, the confidentiality of information is protected under 5 U.S.C. 552a.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

This information collection activity will ask no questions of a personal or sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

•Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.

The hour burden depends on the number of respondents and that is unpredictable. Typically, when a positive report comes in, the time involves reviewing the details on the insect reported to determine if it is potentially ALB. A reasonable determination of whether an insect reported to the database is possibly ALB, can be made by an APHIS ALB program employee with a five-minute phone conversation with the respondent. A picture sent by the respondent can also help tell if an insect is ALB.

Time spent by the respondents is also in the five minute period. They are asked to fill out a brief online information sheet, an activity which will take five minutes or less.

•Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.

The estimate of the total annual cost of burden to the respondents (415 hours x \$10) is \$4,150.

See APHIS Form 71. Burden estimates were developed from discussions with program personnel, USDA's Office of Communications Creative Services Division, along with outside firms that have conducted similar work.

13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.

There is zero annual cost burden associated with capital and start-up costs, operation and maintenance expenditures, and purchase of services.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The annualized cost to the Federal government is estimated at \$18,212.55 (see APHIS Form 79).

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

There is no change in burden for this information collection.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

APHIS has no plans to publish information it collects in connection with this program.

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

There are no forms associated with this information collection.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act."

APHIS can certify compliance with all provisions of the Act.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

There are no statistical methods associated with the information collection activities used in this program.