



Sometime in the next week or so someone will be telephoning from the U.S. Census Bureau. The reason for the call is that your household has been selected to participate in a brief voluntary survey that helps estimate changes in the level of consumer prices in the United States. Since this is a survey about where people shop, we felt it was important to assure you that the call is for government purposes.

We would really appreciate your help. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Additional information about the survey is on the back of this letter. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. John Layng". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

W. John Layng
Assistant Commissioner
for Consumer Prices and Price Indexes

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE POINT OF PURCHASE SURVEY?

The purpose of the Point of Purchase Survey is to provide information on the stores and businesses where people shop and the products they buy. This information is used to update the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the "cost of living index." This index directly affects almost everyone at one time or another.

The President, the Congress, and the Federal Reserve use trends in the cost of living to aid in formulating fiscal and monetary policies. Adjustments to wages, Social Security payments, retirement benefits and other compensation such as child support and payments received by millions of Americans are based on changes in the CPI. In addition, businesses, labor organizations and private citizens use the index as a guide in making economic decisions.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE USED?

In order for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to update the CPI, it is necessary to maintain an up-to-date list of the stores and businesses where people shop. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Point of Purchase Survey to provide statistical data needed to update this list.

WHY WAS I SELECTED?

While participation is voluntary and there are no penalties for not answering questions, it is very important that we have your cooperation in the survey to ensure the validity and accuracy of the CPI. Your household was selected randomly from a list of phone numbers. Information that you provide will be used only to identify the stores and businesses where Americans shop and the products they buy.

WHAT CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTION DO I HAVE?

The confidentiality of the information you provide is assured to the full extent permitted by law in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (Title 5 of Public Law 107-347). The information you provide will only be used for statistical purposes.

WHAT LAWS AUTHORIZE YOU TO CONDUCT THIS SURVEY?

This survey is authorized by the Office of Management and Budget under Project 1220-0044. Title 29, Section 2 of the United States Code authorizes the BLS to conduct household studies. Title 15 of the United States Code authorizes the Census Bureau to conduct surveys for other federal agencies.

HOW LONG DOES THIS INTERVIEW TAKE?

The typical interview lasts between 7 and 15 minutes.