

# Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

## Volcano Hazards Program (VHP)

OMB Control Number 1028-0090

Terms of Clearance: None

### A. Justification

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

*The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Pub. L. 111-5)* provided funding for the improvement of volcano and other monitoring systems and other monitoring-related activities that contribute to mitigation of volcano hazards. The VHP of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) will continue to accept proposals from State geological surveys and academic institutions to advance the scientific understanding of volcanic processes and to lessen the harmful impacts of volcanic activity in FY10.

The VHP monitors active and potentially active volcanoes, assesses their hazards, responds to volcanic crises, and conducts research on how volcanoes work, in order to fulfill a Congressional mandate (P.L. 93-288) that the USGS issue "timely warnings" of potential volcanic hazards to responsible emergency-management authorities and to the affected populace. According to its mission, the VHP is to provide geoscience data and information, analyses, and research needed to reduce the loss of life, property, and economic and societal impacts of hazards related to volcanoes. The USGS and its academic and State partners accomplish this mission through a system of five observatories that continuously monitor seismic activity, surface deformation, gas emission, and satellite imagery of high-threat volcanoes. Interpretation of this real and near-real time data is based on detailed geologic field investigations and hazard assessments. Eruption warnings and volcano-status notifications are rapidly disseminated to the public and private sectors and impacted communities and businesses through a rigorous system of telephone call-downs and electronic notification. Much of the data are available to the public in near-real time on the program websites.

The USGS VHP administers this program to offer financial support to State geological surveys and academic institutions to assist in volcano monitoring, conduct scientific research on volcanic processes, and produce geologic maps and hazard assessments of high-threat volcanoes.

#### 2. *Indicate how, by whom, 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. [Be specific. If this collection is a form or a questionnaire, every question needs to be justified.]*

The USGS uses this information to evaluate applications for volcano-related research and monitoring. This collection will continue to ensure that sufficient and relevant information is available to evaluate and select proposals for funding. Financial assistance will be awarded on a competitive basis following the evaluation and ranking of both academic and State applications by a review panel composed of representatives from the USGS and the private sector.

We will use Standard Forms 424, 424a, and 424b. Applicants will submit applications for funding assistance in response to Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA) that we will publish on Grants.gov and our program web pages. Applications consist of:

- Information Summary.
- Technical Text (significance of project, project plan, institutional qualifications, project management plan, project personnel and bibliography, current support and pending applications,
- Detailed Budget.

Grant recipients must submit a final report that summarizes the results of the work funded by the grant. The report will contain a comparison of actual accomplishments to the goals established for the period; reasons why established goals were not met, if applicable; and other pertinent information. This information will be used by the USGS VHP Coordinator to evaluate current year success and to determine the need to support additional non-Federal volcano-related activities.

- 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 [and specifically how this collection meets GPEA requirements].***

All applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Hard/paper submissions and electronic copies submitted via e-mail will not be accepted under any circumstances. Reports will be submitted electronically via e-mail.

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

Due to the unique nature of this program and authorizing legislation, no other Federal agency collects this information.

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

We have made efforts to keep the amount of information requested to a minimum for all of our applicants. The information has to be sufficient to fulfill the requirements of the authorizing statute, as well as sufficient to make a competitive funding decision.

- 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.***

Under the Stafford Act (P.L. 93–288; Sec. 202), the Department of the Interior has the responsibility to issue timely warnings of potential geologic disasters to the affected populace and civil authorities. Failure to collect this information would result in a critical reduction in our

ability to predict volcanic eruptions and mitigate the risk associated with volcano-related hazards. Successful applicants must submit reports in compliance with Federal regulations. Not requiring reports would violate the reporting requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements as incorporated in 43 CFR Part 12. Information collection through regular reporting is essential to ensure that Government funds are properly expended.

7. ***Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner: (i) requiring respondents to report more often than quarterly, (ii) requiring respondents prepare written responses in fewer than 30 days after receipt, (iii) requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document, (iv) retain records for more than 3 years; (v) in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study; (vi) the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB; (vii) that includes a pledge of confidentiality not supported by authority established in statute or regulation; requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets or other confidential information.***

There are no circumstances that require us to collect the information in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

8. ***If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice [and in response to the PRA statement associated with the collection over the past three years] and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.***

***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 format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. [Please list the names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers of persons contacted.]***

***Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years — even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.***

On November 16, 2009, we published in the Federal Register (74 FR 58973) a notice of our intent to request that OMB renew this information collection. In that notice we solicited comments for 60 days, ending January 15, 2010. We did not receive any comments in response to that notice.

Before submitting our request for emergency approval of this collection in August 2009, we conducted outreach with potential applicants. We solicited comments about the clarity of instruction, the annual hour burden for the application materials and the final reports from three university professors and a geologist who previously submitted applications for a similar program.

The four individuals listed below provided feedback concerning the clarity of the procedure and approximate length of time it would take to complete the application, based on their previous experience with cooperative agreement applications. The respondents concurred with our estimated burden time for the application to be about 35 hours. We believe that this estimate reflects the time it takes each applicant to prepare the narrative and provide the additional information needed to complete the application. This estimate also includes the time that it takes to receive supporting feedback (i.e. peer-reviews and letters of support). All respondents reported that the 8-hour burden estimate to prepare the final reports seemed sufficient and they did not suggest adjusting the estimated hours for this part of the collection.

**Individuals Contacted Outside the Agency**

1. Steven McNutt, Coordinating Scientist Alaska Volcano Observatory University of Alaska – Fairbanks 3295 College Road, 109ASC Fairbanks, AK 99775 Phone: 907-474-7131	3. Christopher Nye State of Alaska/Dept. of Natural Resources Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys 3354 College Road Fairbanks, AK 99709 Phone: 907-474-7430
2. Robert Smith University of Utah 1471 E Federal Way Salt Lake City, Utah 84102	4. Donald Thomas University of Hawaii at Hilo 200 W Kawili Street Honolulu, HI 96720 Phone: 808-974-7398

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

No payments or gifts are provided other than the remuneration of grantees.

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

No assurance of confidentiality is given 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. 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.**

No questions of a sensitive nature are asked

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.**

Our estimates are based on our own knowledge plus the outreach described in item 8. We expect to receive approximately 20 responses, taking each applicant approximately 35 hours to complete the narrative and to present supporting documents to complete the application process, totaling

700 burden hours. We anticipate awarding 12 grants per year. The award recipient will be required to submit a final report on or before 90 working days after the expiration of the agreement. We estimate that it will take approximately 8 hours per grant recipient to complete and submit the final report (totaling 96 hours). We estimate that the total hour burden for this collection will be 796 hours.

We estimate the dollar value of the annual burden hours to be \$26,306 (see Table 1). The hour cost is based on BLS news release USDL 08-1802 of December 10, 2008, for average full compensation per hour including benefits for private industry. The particular values utilized are:

- States/tribal/local governments. Average hourly wage is \$23.99 multiplied by 1.5 to account for benefits (\$35.99).
- Private sector. Average hourly wage is \$18.56 multiplied by 1.4 to account for benefits (\$25.98).

**Table 1. Estimated Dollar Value of Annual Burden Hours**

Activity	Annual Number of Responses	Estimated Completion Time per Respondent	Total Annual Burden Hours	Dollar Value of Burden Hour [Including Benefits]	Total Dollar Value of Annual Burden Hours
<b>Applications</b>					
State/Local/Tribal	14	35 hours	490	\$35.99	\$17,635
Private	6	35 hours	210	\$25.98	\$5,456
<b>Final Report</b>					
State/Local/Tribal	9	8 hours	72	\$35.99	\$2,591
Private	3	8 hours	24	\$25.98	\$624
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>		<b>796</b>		<b>\$26,306</b>

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual [non-hour] 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).**

There is no non-hour cost burden to applicants under this collection. There is no fee for application nor any fees associated with application requirements.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies also may aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.**

The total estimated cost to the Federal Government for processing and reviewing proposals and reviewing reports as a result of this collection of information is \$54,228 (rounded). This includes Federal employee's hourly wages and benefits. Table 2 below shows Federal staff and grade levels performing various tasks associated with this information collection. VHP proposals will be reviewed by a peer panel of six members. Five members will be Department of the Interior representatives and one member will be an external representative. We used the Office of Personnel Management Salary Table 2009-DCB (<http://www.opm.gov/flsa/oca/09tables/html/>

[dcb.h.asp](#)) to determine the hourly wages for the Federal employees associated with this collection. We multiplied the hourly wage by 1.5 to account for benefits (as implied by the previously referenced BLS news release).

**Table 2. Annual Cost to the Federal Government**

Position	Grade/ Step	Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate incl. benefits (1.5 x hourly pay rate)	Estimated time spent by Federal Employees (hours)	Cost per federal staff (Hourly Pay Rate incl. Benefits x Number of Hours)
VHP Program Coordinator	GS-15/5	\$65.62	\$98.43	40	\$ 3,937
VHP Grants Coordinator (and Peer Review Panelist #5)	GS-14/5	55.78	83.67	140	11,714
Management Officer	GS-14/5	55.78	83.67	40	3,347
VHP Secretary	GS-8/5	24.78	37.17	120	4,460
Grants and Acquisitions Specialist	GS-12/5	39.70	59.55	120	7,146
Peer Review Panelist #1	GS-15/5	65.62	98.43	60	5,906
Peer Review Panelist #2	GS-15/5	65.62	98.43	60	5,906
Peer Review Panelist #3	GS-15/5	65.62	98.43	60	5,906
Peer Review Panelist #4	GS-15/5	65.62	98.43	60	5,906
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$54,228</b>

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.**

There are no changes or adjustments.

**16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.**

The information collected will not be tabulated or published for statistical use. The information collected will be evaluated by a panel of program managers and scientists. The panelists will read the proposals prior to their meeting. The panel will discuss each proposal and evaluate the technical merit. The peer review panel will vote on each proposal based on the criteria established. The panel rankings are the principal determination of proposal success pending available funds.

**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.**

Not applicable. We will display the expiration date.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions".**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.