



U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20416

June 4, 2009

Wendy Liberante
OMB Desk Officer
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Ms. Liberante:

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is requesting approval on an emergency basis for the attached revised information collection. This information collection will be used in the implementation of changes to the Surety Bond Guarantee (SBG) Program that were authorized by Title V, Section 508 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act).

Through the SBG Program, SBA guarantees bid, payment, and performance bonds that are issued by sureties on behalf of small businesses. SBA's guarantee gives sureties the incentive to bond these small businesses, which cannot obtain bonds through regular commercial channels, and provides the small businesses with greater access to contracting opportunities. One of the significant changes to the SBG program as a result of the Recovery Act is an increase in the maximum eligible contract amount. This change means that more small businesses would be able to bid on and perform contracts. SBA believes that implementing these changes as expeditiously as possible is critical to avoid adverse impact on small businesses seeking bond guarantees for contracts at the higher amounts. Compliance with the normal review procedures under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) would severely impact SBA's ability to make the necessary changes expeditiously.

SBA also asks that OMB exercise its authority to waive the 60-day comment period for forms under 5 C.F.R. §1320.8(2)(d)(1). Although SBA recognizes the need for this notice requirement, compliance would cause a substantial delay in implementing the SBG Recovery Act initiatives. Therefore, SBA requests that OMB waive the requirement at this time, and approve this collection for the full period allowed under statute and regulations.

SBA is also issuing the interim final rule that governs the SBG Program Recovery Act changes. These regulations contain a description of this information collection, provide estimated burden information, and request comments on the information collection. SBA will address any comments received when the information is re-submitted after the emergency period, for review under normal processing procedures.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request for your emergency approval of this information collection by June , 2009.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Lalumiere
Director
Office of Surety Guarantees