

BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS
OMB CLEARANCE PACKAGE

For
CLEARANCE TO CONDUCT THE NATIONAL FERRY
DATABASE SURVEY

Prepared by
Office of Survey Programs
Bureau of Transportation Statistics
Research and Innovative Technology Administration

March 10, 2010

Table of Contents

A. JUSTIFICATION

- 1. Need for the Information Collection**
- 2. Use of Information**
- 3. Use of Improved Information Technology**
- 4. Efforts to Avoid Duplication**
- 5. Methods Used to Minimize Burden on Small Entities**
- 6. Consequences of Not Collecting the Information**
- 7. Special Circumstances**
- 8. Agency 60-Day Federal Register Notice and Consultations Outside the Agency**
- 9. Payment to Respondents**
- 10. Assurance of Confidentiality**
- 11. Sensitive Questions**
- 12. Estimates of Response Burden and Annual Cost to Respondents**
- 13. Estimates of Cost Burden for Collection of Information.**
- 14. Estimates of Annual Cost to the Federal Government.**
- 15. Changes in Burden**
- 16. Publication Plans/Time Schedule**
- 17. Approval Not to Display Expiration Date**
- 18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement**

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

- 1. Description of Activity**
- 2. Procedures for the Collection of Information**
- 3. Non-response, Maximization of Response Rates, Accuracy and Reliability**
- 4. Test of Procedures**
- 5. Personnel/Organizations Responsible for Design, Collection, or Analysis of the Information**

- Attachment I: The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) (P.L. 105-178), section 1207(c)
- Attachment II: The Safe, Accountable, Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) Public Law 109-59, Section 1801(e)
- Attachment III: TITLE 5 United States Code 552(b)(4)
- Attachment IV: TITLE 18 United States Code 1905
- Attachment V: 60- Day Federal Register Notice
- Attachment VI: 30- Day Federal Register Notice
- Attachment VII: Title 49 C.F.R. 7.17
- Attachment VIII: NCFO Cover Letter
- Attachment IX: NCFO Questionnaire (draft) including the ICR statement
- Attachment X: Cognitive Interview Consent Form
- Attachment XI: Cognitive Interview Protocol

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection methods to be used. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

This survey will be a census of all known ferry boat operators within the US. Current enumerations have provided an estimate of approximately 260 operators. All known ferry operators will be encouraged to participate. Since this is a census of establishments, each ferry operator will be asked to select the person or persons within the operation who is most knowledgeable about the operation to complete the questionnaire. Thus, it will be up to the operator to decide who the individual respondent will be. The 2006 and 2008 NCFOs achieved response rates of 89% and 88% respectively. While it is hoped that future data collections will have a higher response rate, we should expect to receive approximately 234 completed questionnaires based on previous efforts.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including: statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection, estimation procedure, degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification, unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

As the National Census of Ferry Operators is a census of all known ferry operations in the U.S., no sampling or stratification procedures will be employed. All operations will be asked to participate. Given the difference in operating cycles between operations (some only operate seasonally), it is estimated that the data collection period for this survey will last up to 6 months. This will allow responses to be received from ferry companies that do not operate year round. As previously noted, statute requires that the census data be updated every two years.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

The 2006 NCFO achieved a response rate of 89% through the efforts of a number of organizations and people. BTS follow the same strategies for the 2008 census and achieved an 88% response rate. These techniques include the use of an advance letter to inform operators about the census as well as articles in industry related publications and announcements at conferences; and availability of a toll-free number for respondents to call in the event they have questions about the survey.

Beginning in 2010 and beyond, BTS will utilize email advance notices as well as the advance letter. The questionnaire will also be made available online to decrease respondent burden and

simplify the data collection process. It is hoped that these efforts, in addition to the outreach efforts and reminder calls described above, that the response rate for future studies will improve.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility.

The content of the survey is established by the legislation requiring the data collection. The survey will be modified and reviewed by the Office of Survey Programs using feedback from a number of DOT staff affiliated with the previous study. The National Ferry Database Survey final draft will be reviewed by staff within MARAD, FHWA, FTA, AASHTO, and PVA. There will be no experimental conditions built into the NCFO data collection itself. In addition to these efforts, BTS will be conducting on site interviews with three or four ferry operations to get feedback on the current form. The consent letter and protocol to be followed in these interviews can be seen in attachments X and XI respectively. The goal of these interviews will be to make sure that the wording and layout of the questionnaires is easy to understand and complete.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

The web design, data entry and follow up phoning will be conducted by MacroSys, a BTS contractor. The questionnaire design specifications, specifications for data collection, questionnaire content, and data production are under the supervision of BTS. BTS is solely responsible for the review of the final survey questionnaire, data, and technical documentation. The points-of-contact at BTS are:

Kenneth Steve
kenneth.steve@dot.gov
202 366-4108

Joy Sharp
joy.sharp@dot.gov
202-366-0881

Both are located at:
Department of Transportation
Research and Innovative Technology Administration
Bureau of Transportation Statistics
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590