



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Office of the Chief Information Officer
Washington, D.C. 20230

January 10, 2011

Mr. Alex Hunt
Chief, Information Policy Branch
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Hunt:

Commerce requests an expedited review of an information collection entitled the 'National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Summer Institute for Middle School Science Teachers (NIST Summer Institute) and the NIST Research Experience for Teachers (NIST RET) Programs Application Requirements.'"

The NIST Summer Institute and the NIST RET are two competitive financial assistance (cooperative agreement) programs that offer middle school science teachers an opportunity to participate in hands-on activities, lectures, tours, visits, or in scientific research with scientists and engineers in NIST laboratories in Gaithersburg, Maryland. The aim is to encourage students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

The NIST Summer Institute has held four competitions since its inception; the NIST RET is a new program. After the fourth NIST Summer Institute session was held in the summer of 2010, it was determined that more teacher background information was needed to evaluate applications and to be in a better position to plan the activities for each Summer Institute as early as possible, based on the teacher selections in each competition. Additionally, with the creation of the NIST RET program, this information is required for teacher selection. The new form, NIST-1103, Teacher Application for the NIST Summer Institute and the NIST RET was developed to meet the purposes of both programs. The decision to proceed with these two programs for FY 2011 was not made until recently by the NIST Director. In order to begin and complete the application and award processes before the end of this school year, NIST is requesting approval by February 4, 2011.

Once OMB approval is received, NIST will announce competitions under these two programs in February, applications will be received in March, and applications can be reviewed and funding decisions made in time to start the programs in July. The regular Paperwork Reduction Act process would delay the collection beyond this timeframe. Your prompt attention to this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Diana H. Hynek
Information Collections Officer