

The Supporting Statement

Introduction: National Tunnel Inventory (NTI).

Part A. Justification.

1. Circumstances that make collection of information necessary

The NTSB has suggested that the FHWA seek legislative authority to establish a mandatory tunnel inspection program similar to the National Bridge Inspections Standards (NBIS) that would identify critical inspection elements and specify an appropriate inspection frequency. Additionally, the DOT Inspector General (IG), in testimony before Congress in October 2007, highlighted the need for a tunnel inspection and reporting system to ensure the safety of the Nation's tunnels, stating that the FHWA “should develop and implement a system to ensure that States inspect and report on tunnel conditions.” Additionally, the IG stated that “FHWA should move aggressively on this rulemaking and establish rigorous inspection standards as soon as possible.”

In order to be responsive to recommendations from the NTSB and OIG, and to ensure public safety in Federal-aid highway tunnels, the FHWA feels that a regulation establishing uniform national tunnel inventory is necessary. Lack of mandatory standards also introduces the likelihood of non-uniformity in practices across the nation. As evidenced by recent scrutiny of the bridge inspection program by Congress, the public, media, and others, there is a strong desire to have some degree of national uniformity and consistency to ensure public trust and confidence in our highway system.

This collection supports DOT Strategic Plan for Safety.

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose is the information used:

States should collect and report to FHWA the condition of their Federal-aid highway tunnels inventory. This will allow FHWA to be informed on the condition of tunnels in the nation and respond to Congress requests for this type of data.

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The information collected will be used to create a National Inventory of Tunnels (NTI) that will lead to a more accurate assessment of the number and condition of tunnels in the Nation.

3. Extent of automated information collection:

The FHWA intends to collect and store the data electronically.

4. Efforts to identify duplication:

No other similar information is available. This is the first time States will be required to collect and report tunnel inventory data in accordance with the new National Tunnel Inspection Standards.

5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses:

Not applicable. No small businesses will be involved in this information collection

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information:

Less frequent collection of information could lead to dated information. In order to provide accurate information to Congress and all our partners, the frequency should not be more than bi-annually.

7. Special circumstances:

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection.

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8:

The notice to seek public comments was published in the Federal Register on June 14, 2010, (Volume 75, Number 113),[Notices],[Page 33659-33660].

No Comments were received.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents:

There are no payments or special gifts associated with this collection.

10. Assurance of confidentiality:

FHWA is not assuring confidentiality with this collection.

11. Justification for collection of sensitive information:

No questions will be asked that are of a personal or sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of burden hours for information requested:

Currently States are inspecting their tunnels but they are not required to report to FHWA their findings of those inspections. Therefore, FHWA feels that the additional burden on the States to report this data will be very minimal.

Respondents: 50 States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (52 total).

Frequency: Bi-annually.

Estimated Average Annual Burden per Response: Approximately 1400 hours per responder.

Total Burden: 72,800

13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents:

Salary: 1400 hours @ \$20/Hour = \$28,000

Printing : \$0

Overhead: \$2800

14. Estimate of cost to the Federal government:

Printing: \$5000

Overhead: \$0

Payment to contractors: \$0

15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments:

This is a new collection.

16. Publication of results of data collection:

FHWA anticipates that data collected will be included in the annual report to Congress about condition of Tunnels in the US.

17. Approval for not displaying the expiration date of OMB approval:

FHWA is not seeking this approval.

18. Exceptions to certification statement:

No exemptions are required; these activities will comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

