SUPPORTING STATEMENT

HIGHWAY BRIDGE AND NATIONAL BRIDGE INSPECTION PROGRAMS

This request is for OMB's approval to renew a currently approved information collection formally titled, "National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) Structure Inventory and Appraisal Sheet," (OMB Control No. 2125-0501). This information collection is scheduled to expire on 08/31/2011.

1. Circumstances that make collection of information necessary:

This collection of the information contained on the Structure Inventory and Appraisal (SI&A) Sheet (Attachment A) as well as the collection of construction costs associated with new and replaced bridges, the requirement that all highway bridges on public roads be inspected at intervals not to exceed 24 months, the establishment of quality control/quality assurance (QC/QA) procedures, follow up on critical findings and scour plans of actions is necessary to satisfy the requirements of 23 United States Code 144 and 151 (Attachment B and C, respectively), the Code of Federal Regulations, 23 Highways Part 650, Subpart C - National Bridge Inspection Standards (Attachment D) and Subpart D Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (Attachment E).

Because of a catastrophic bridge failure in December 1967, the Congress enacted initial legislation which now requires the inspection of all highway bridges on public roads. It requires the State inventory and report a set of inspection data elements (SI&A Sheet). States are required to follow up on critical findings, have quality control/quality assurance procedures in place, and for scour critical bridges prepare a plan of action to monitor deficiencies. States are required to report certain cost data associated with the bridge construction costs in order to carry out the apportionment of the Highway Bridge Program Funds. Routine inspections are to be done at an interval not to exceed 24 months. On the basis of the data reported structurally deficient and functionally obsolete highway bridges can be identified and prioritized according to legal requirements.

The Special Bridge Replacement Program (SBRP) was established in 1970 and was in existence through 1978. It authorized 835 million in funds during its existence.

In 1978 the Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) replaced the SBRP with the Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP) and authorized 4.2 billion in funds for fiscal years 1979 through 1982 and required the reporting of bridge condition information on all highway bridges located on public roads. The 1982 STAA continued the HBRRP authorizing 7.05 billion in funds for fiscal years 1983 through 1986. The Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987 (STURAA) (P.L. 100-17) made bridge inventory and inspection a "stand alone" provision of Title 23 (Section 151). The STURAA extended the HBRRP by authorizing $8.15 billion for FY's 1987 through 1991. This total was reduced to $8.13 billion by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989 (P.L. 101-239).

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) (P.L. 102-240) revised the Federal-aid highway system and created a National Highway System (NHS) of approximately 155,000 miles of principal routes, including the Interstate System. The ISTEA of 1991 extended the HBRRP by authorizing $16.1 billion for FY's 1992 through 1997. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)(P.L. 105-178) authorized $20.4 billion for fiscal years 1998 through 2003. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFE TEA-Lu)(Public Law 109-59) replaced the HBRRP with the Highway Bridge Program (HBP) and authorized $21.6 billion for fiscal years 2005 through 2009.

This information collection supports the DOT Strategic Goals of Safety and Mobility by providing for safe highway bridges through a program to improve the condition of all deficient highway bridges on public roads.

2. <u>How, by whom, and for what purpose is the information used:</u>

The information is collected by the States as part of their bridge inspection programs, and it is used:

- As a basis for setting HBP priorities for the replacement, rehabilitation or preservation of highway bridges;
- As a basis for apportioning HBP funds to the States;
- For identifying strategic national defense needs; and
- To develop the required Report to Congress relative to the progress and status of the nation's bridges.

Users of the information are:

- Federal Highway Administration;
- Department of Transportation, Office of the Secretary;
- State and Local Transportation Departments;
- Congressional committees;
- Department of Defense;
- Highway construction industry;
- General public:
  - news agencies
  - special interest groups
  - private individuals;
- Universities, and
- Other Federal agencies.

The information is needed to:

- Comply with the requirements of Title 23;
- Have a national picture of the status of the condition of highway bridges for preparing the required Report to Congress;
- Have a rational basis for the apportionment of HBP funds;
- Assist the FHWA in its HBP and NBIS oversight responsibilities; and

- Be responsive to various inquiries regarding the status of the Nation's bridges.

3. Extent of automated information collection:

100% of the data is transmitted electronically. In the past, the States transmitted the information contained on the SI&A Sheet to the FHWA via magnetic tapes, cartridges, and diskettes. With the development and implementation of the NBI web-based system, the data has been submitted electronically, or through e-mail. Utilization of computerized information technology, such as laptop and handheld computers for field use during inspections for recording data and direct transmittal into a State's inventory system along with the mechanism of electronic submittal effectively reduces the reporting burden when compared to the manual reporting system.

4. Efforts to identify duplication:

The FHWA is not aware of any other record keeping or bridge reporting requirements imposed by the FHWA or any other Federal agencies, which duplicates this process. The information collected is not available anywhere except under this program.

5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses:

State and local transportation departments and Federal Agencies collect this information. There are no small businesses or other small entities involved.

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information:

The current regulations require a 24 month bridge inspection frequency as a standard. Regulation calls for annual reporting of the data. If the data were to be reported less frequently the formula that is used to apportion the bridge funds annually would distribute funds based on outdated data. If the inspection time interval was to be lengthened to more than 24 months, the collected data will be again be much older, also resulting in funds distribution based on outdated data. Increased inspection intervals may also have safety implications. Per 23 CFR 650.311(c), the maximum frequency between routine inspections may be increased to 48 months with FHWA approval.

7. Special circumstances:

There are no special circumstances related to this information collection.

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8:

The collection of the SI&A information is in compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8.

The FHWA published a Federal Register notice on April 6, 2011(Volume 76, Number 66) for renewal of this collection which solicited public comments on our intent to seek OMB renewed approval. No comments were received.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents:

The respondents do not receive any gifts or payments for the information they provide.

10. Assurance of confidentiality:

The information to be provided on the Structure Inventory and Appraisal (SI&A) sheet is not considered confidential in nature.

11. Justification for collection of sensitive information:

There is no sensitive information on the SI&A Sheet.

12. Estimate of burden hours for information requested:

The respondents are the 50 State transportation departments, Federal Agencies and the transportation departments of the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The number of responses per year is based on the total bridge inventory rounded to 600,000, with approximately one half being inspected each year based on the standard 24 month inspection frequency. Some States have voluntarily chosen to inspect their most deficient bridges more frequently than every 24 months; however, our estimate does not include this information. The annual responses are estimated at 300,000 for routine inspections. The number of responses per year for fracture critical and underwater inspection is also based on information in the bridge inventory. These are separate and special inspections that may coincide with the routine inspection. The annual responses are estimated at 16,200 for these special inspections.

Some States have requested approval that some bridges be inspected at a greater interval than once every 24 months. We estimate that 10 percent or 30,000 bridges annually will receive an extended inspection interval over the next few years. With the average time of 6 hours to complete a routine bridge inspection, 1 hour to complete the SI&A Sheet, 1 hour to complete a bridge inspection report, 90 hours to collect bridge construction unit costs, and an additional 2,080 hours to follow up on critical findings, is estimated that the burden hours will total 2,296,360 hours per year (300,000 responses – 30,000 responses removed due to 4-year cycle plus 9,000 bridges requiring fracture critical inspections plus 7,200 bridges requiring underwater inspections x 8.00 hours per response), plus 90 hours x 52 for unit cost data collection, plus 2,080 (52 responses x 40hrs for follow up on critical findings) equals 2,296,360 burden hours.

Responses =		**286,200**	300,000 (responses) - 30,000 (responses removed due to 4 year cycle) + 9,000 (critical inspections) + 7,200 (underwater inspections)
	x	8 hrs	
		2,289,600	
	+	4680	90 hours x 52 for unit cost data collection
	+	2080	52 responses x 40hrs for follow up on critical findings
Burden Hours =		**2,296,360**	

13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents:

There are no annual costs to respondents, other than the salaries described under Item 12 above.

14. Estimate of cost to the Federal government:

There are no costs to FHWA.

15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments:

There are no changes to this collection.

16. Publication of results of data collection:

The information collected is used to:

* Monitor the progress made toward the reduction of deficient bridges through the HBP and other Federal-aid highway programs.

* Basic information on bridge conditions is extracted from the NBI and published in the required Report to Congress on the condition of the nation's bridges.

* Bridge data in conjunction with information extracted from FHWA's financial system is used to prepare the Annual Materials Report on New Bridge Construction and Rehabilitation.

* Basic statistical information as well as the data itself is made available through the FHWA's website.

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

The FHWA is not requesting OMB's approval for not displaying the expiration date.

18. Exceptions to certification statement:

The FHWA is not requesting exceptions to the certification statement.