SUPPORTING STATEMENT
NOAA CUSTOMER SURVEYS
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0342

A.   JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

This is a request for renewal of a generic clearance for voluntary customer surveys to be conducted by NOAA program offices. In accordance with Executive Order 12862, the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, and good management practices, NOAA offices seek to be able to continue to gather customer feedback on services and/or products, which can be used in planning for service/product modification and prioritization.

Under this generic clearance, individual offices would continue use of approved questionnaires and develop new questionnaires, as needed, by selecting subsets of the approved set of collection questions and tailoring those specific questions to be meaningful for their particular programs. These proposed questionnaires would then be submitted through a fast-track request for approval process. A proposed questionnaire would then be submitted to the NOAA Clearance Officer. If the latter finds that the proposal appears to be consistent with the generic clearance, the proposal would be forwarded through the Department of Commerce's Office of the Chief Information Officer to NOAA's OMB Desk Officer for fast-track review. *The generic clearance will not be used to survey any bodies NOAA regulates unless precautions are taken to ensure that the respondents believe that they are not under any risk for not responding or for the contents of their responses; e.g. in no survey to such a population will the names and addresses of respondents be required. Currently there are no such surveys being submitted for approval.*

Two sets of survey questions (included as supplementary documents in this submission) are used for generation of program-level questionnaires:

1) "Quantitative Questions" seeks to obtain numerical ratings from respondents on their satisfaction with various aspects of the product or service they obtained – satisfaction with the quality of the product, the courtesy of the staff, the format of and documentation for data received, and similar standard types of questions. The offices using such questions are able to determine which aspects of their program need improvement, or have improved. The rating system is intended to aid the respondents in identifying their relative level of satisfaction in particular areas, and is not generally intended to be used to establish numerical performance goals or as part of any complex statistical analyses over time. The potential benefits of the latter are outweighed by the difficulties in ensuring that the data is unbiased and fully representational of customers.

2) "Qualitative Questions" are more focused on who is using the product and service, how it is being used, and the medium or format in which the respondent would like to see data provided. The respondent is also given an opportunity to make specific suggestions on what new products or services should be offered or on how existing products or services could be improved.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

The responses to the quantitative questionnaires will be used by the sponsoring program office to determine the customers' satisfaction with the level of service and products delivered, identifying perceived weaknesses in those products or services. Information such as this will be used to help direct program improvement efforts.

The uses of the qualitative questions are somewhat different. Rather than seeking information on the degree of customer satisfaction, the objectives are more complex. Questions 1, 5, 6, and 7 seek information on what product/service was received, suggestions about improving the product or its format, and suggestions for other products or services. This information will assist the program office in better identifying the needs of customers by providing more specific data. For instance, responses concerning formats will be used to help determine which products the users are most interested in seeing through the program Web site. Questions 2, 3, 4, and 9 seek information that will help the program office identify the types of users for specific products and how they use those products.

The NOAA line offices (National Ocean Service (NOS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service (NESDIS), National Weather Service (NWS) and Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) have been expending significant effort to review, report on, and act on the information gathered from their surveys. Many programs have used the NOAA Web site Customer Survey, posted on their individual program area sites, soliciting responses specifically about those sites. Response information is utilized to make a wide variety of modifications to the content, scope and navigation of the program Web sites.

Some surveys solicit comments on how to maintain or improve access to program data. Others provide information about customer usage and their diversity, and allow notification to subsets of user respondents of program or data changes applicable to them, rather than broadcasting emails to the complete user universe. Still others gather feedback on experimental products, to be used in product modification as indicated.

The *currently approved and ongoing* surveys for which NOAA is requesting renewal are listed in the table below and described in following pages. In 2011 (as of November 20) there have been nine new surveys approved by OMB under this generic collection: 5 for NOS) 2 for NESDIS), one for NWS and one for NMFS.

Survey Name	Annual/ Annualized Responses	Burden Hours
1. NOAA Web site Customer Satisfaction (ongoing - *administered through NOS, all line offices other than NWS, results sorted by and available to each participating program*)	1,839 (5 min.)	153
2. NOAA Web site Customer Satisfaction (NWS) (ongoing)	57,000 (5 min.)	4,750
3. NWS - Experimental Products/Services (ongoing)	93,000 (5 min.)	7,750
4. Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) - Tropical Atmosphere Ocean Array Web Data Distribution (ongoing)	6,259 (1 min)	104
5. OAR - Ocean Surface Current Analyses – Real Time Data Feedback Request Form (ongoing)	515 (1 min.)	9
6. NOS – Chart Users Survey (new survey every two years)	2,600 (10 min.)	433
7. NOS Coastal Services Center (averages 3 short-term surveys annually): Currently underway are Training Feedback and Digital Coast surveys. See total estimated annual burden estimate to the right.	500 (average 10 min.)	85
8. NWS Hazards Terminology Survey (short-term)	4,650 (20 min.)	1,550
9. NESDIS NOAA Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites – R Series (GOES-R) Program Product and Service Survey (short-term)	200 (15 min.)	50
	166,563	14,884
Additional burden estimated for new surveys in 2012	35,280	4,116
TOTALS	201,843	19,000
TOTALS for 3 years	605,529	57,000

The **NOAA Web site Customer Satisfaction survey** is administered by the NOS and implemented on 18 separate Web sites, for programs under NOS, NMFS, NESDIS and OAR. Data is collected into a single database, separated by the individual Web site on which it is implemented. An administrator is able to view survey results for each Web site and act upon these results as appropriate.

National Weather Service

Web site Customer Satisfaction and Experimental Products/Services Surveys

The generic Web site surveys are used by local web content providers, and Regional and National web managers, to improve usability of National Weather Service (NWS) Web pages to better meet user needs and expectations. The surveys have been used to support greater standardization of navigation across multiple office sites, to improve user interfaces to forecast and warning information, and to collect comments from users on accessibility of data and information. Many times, the survey comments have been useful in improving Web applications and page coding to improve performance and reduce server demands. . Since July 31, 2008 there have been 122,610 generic Web site satisfaction survey responses submitted.

NWS also makes extensive use of the survey to collect user feedback on proposed changes, additions, or terminations of Official and Experimental Products/Services. Under NOAA's Partnership Policy, we are required to collect user feedback on changes to environmental information and services. For proposed new products and services, the survey responses have provided invaluable feedback from private and commercial users, as well as government partners, to local, Regional, and National decision makers. Survey allows for fairness and openness in proposed changes, and assists the decision makers in determining what actions and services are appropriate for NWS to provide. All survey responses are carefully evaluated and considered in determining the appropriate action. For proposed termination of services/products, the surveys have provided user input, allowing NWS to ensure data requirements were met while still being able to consolidate Web services. Since July 31, 2008 there have been 237,558 Customer Survey responses for Official and Experimental Products/Services.

Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR)

The Tropical Atmosphere Ocean (TAO) Project survey is at
http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/tao/data_deliv/reg.html.

The TAO Array Web Data Distribution feedback request form is used as a metric of customer usage and diversity of users of TAO/TRITON/PIRATA/RAMA data.   Feedback helps us improve the product and the Web site delivery mechanisms to better meet users specific research needs.

The Ocean Surface Current Analyses – Real Time (OSCAR) survey is at
http://www.oscar.noaa.gov/datadisplay/datadownload.htm.

The OSCAR Data feedback request form is used as a metric of customer usage and of users diversity.   The information has allowed the OSCAR project to assess the uses to which the data is being put in order to evaluate the current usefulness of the data and the ways in which the Web site can be improved to provide better customer service and satisfaction. User suggestions have resulted in our expanding the geographic coverage of the dataset, the resolution of the data provided, and improved the Web site functionality.

National Ocean Service (NOS)

Chart Users Survey: NOAA is responsible for producing and distributing the nautical charting products covering the coastal waterways of the United States and its territories. The users of these navigational products can be broadly described as commercial mariners and recreational boaters.

This survey is conducted every two years, with an average of 2,500 respondents each time. Updated surveys are submitted for OMB approval before dissemination. Answers to survey questions by users of NOAA's nautical products have been used to revise/modify these products and services to better meet user needs.

Coastal Services Center (Center) surveys:

Training Feedback Survey

This survey will assess whether past participants of Center trainings have been applying the knowledge and skills gained through these trainings. Professional development training is offered in three distinct areas: geospatial technology, coastal issues, and process skills. Delivery methods include face-to-face instructor-led training held at the Center and local host sites, self-guided web-based training, and instructor-led web-based training. Technical assistance is conducted via telephone, electronically, or remotely (on-site) depending on the needs of the specific customer and the specific technical assistance topic.

Digital Coast Survey

This survey will assess customer views and related needs regarding www.csc.noaa.gov/**digitalcoast**/. The Digital Coast Web site provides access to coastal data (e.g. hydrography, marine boundaries, socioeconomic data) as well as providing the tools, training, and information needed to turn these data into the information most needed by coastal resource management professionals.

National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service (NESDIS)

NOAA Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites – R Series (GOES-R) Program Product and Service Survey

The survey will be conducted by the NESDIS Office of Satellite Products and Operations (OSPO) and NOAA's Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites – R Series (GOES-R) Program. The NOAA Satellite Service provides environmental satellite data to environmental offices around the world. The customers are domestic and international environmental agencies, the commercial environmental sector and the general public. Most services are provided in the form of direct readouts, through free and open access, to anyone who wants to use them. Direct readout services are those in which the satellite broadcasts information, and anyone with an appropriate receiving station can collect the data. Information is also available on the Web. The survey includes various questions submitted by program managers and development leaders who are seeking requirements for development of new systems and procedures.

As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the information gathered has utility. NOAA Fisheries will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

Currently, most surveys are conducted via email. Some surveys are mailed to their customer lists. Web site customer satisfaction and some product satisfaction surveys are posted on the applicable Web sites, with monitoring to eliminate most, if not all, frivolous responses.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

A team with representatives from all of NOAA's major organizations helped to develop the questions and identify any current efforts. While there may be other customer surveys planned that will be the subject of separate clearance requests, NOAA is confident that the procedures in place ensure that no current or future survey will duplicate any other similar survey within the program area involved. The NOAA PRA Clearance Officer alerts those planning a survey, through this OMB Control No. or others, about similar/overlapping surveys being planned or conducted.

Last year DOC implemented an overlapping generic information collection which includes customer surveys (OMB Control No. 0690-0030). NOAA uses this vehicle for surveys for which less robust results are needed, as very little description/documentation is needed.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

While small businesses will be respondents to some of the surveys, the burden on any respondent is expected to be minimal. Response to all surveys will continue to be voluntary.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

If these surveys were not conducted, the program offices have significantly less information for determining which areas of their programs should be modified, and how they might be modified, to provide better service to the public. The frequency of surveys will vary. Some will be conducted once a year, while others will be ongoing. The ongoing approach is deemed especially useful when asking questions about specific products and formats, rather than about general satisfaction with a program. This more frequent feedback may allow the program office to get helpful information from respondents at the time a product is received or a Home Page is used, rather than later as part of an annual survey.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

Respondents who choose to complete surveys on the Web will obviously be responding in less than thirty calendar days from when they receive the request. In those surveys where a questionnaire is attached to each product delivery, a person who frequently orders products will receive more than one request quarterly, but all responses are voluntary.

8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice soliciting public comments was published on September 7, 2011 (76 FR 55362). No comments were received.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payment or gift will be given to any respondent.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

There will be no assurance of confidentiality; however, provision of contact information is optional.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

No sensitive questions will be asked.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

A total of 201,843 individual responses is expected annually, with an average response time of five to six minutes, resulting in 19,000 burden hours. The three-year total, as entered in ROCIS per instructions, will be 605,529 responses and 57,000 hours.

It is possible that there may be more than one response per respondent per year; this information is not tracked, but each entry on web-based surveys has a time stamp. More than one entry per respondent can be reasonably expected as new information and products appear. However, entries in close succession, which generally could be construed as frivolous, are eliminated.

13. <u>Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).</u>

There will be no cost to respondents. For mailed surveys, envelopes with pre-paid postage will be supplied.

14. <u>Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government</u>.

All surveys will be conducted and analyzed in-house as part of program planning and thus there is no additional cost beyond regular staff time.

15. <u>Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments</u>.

Adjustments:

Several of the surveys included in the previous collection are not to be renewed and others have been approved since the last renewal.

This generic clearance continues to be used for a wider variety of surveys, especially for NWS Web sites; thus the annual response and burden estimate have been adjusted upward from 80,000 responses and 9,000 hours to 201,843 responses and 19,000 hours.

16. <u>For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication</u>.

Aggregated results will be posted on the applicable Web sites as needed, to share with users as part of information to be imparted about planned program or product changes.

17. <u>If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate</u>.

All surveys will display the OMB expiration date.

18. <u>Explain each exception to the certification statement</u>.

No exceptions are requested.