

December 7, 2011

## **Re: Department of Energy Request for Emergency Approval of Information Collection Request**

The Department of Energy (DOE) is applying for an Emergency approval of an Information Collection Request for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE). The goals of the ICR are to:

- Provide information to support major energy efficiency initiatives already underway, such as the “Home Energy Score” pilot program<sup>1</sup>, “Green Button” enterprise<sup>2</sup> and the “Recovery Through Retrofit” program,<sup>3</sup> the success of which is dependent upon knowing the information proposed to be collected by this ICR;
- Meet the policy requirements on modernization of the electricity grid put forth by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to provide to consumers timely [energy use] information and control options;<sup>4</sup>
- Fulfill DOE’s commitment to the President to provide in a judicious manner, a “crowd-sourced” map to track progress on efforts to improve consumer access to and control of their energy usage data; and
- Assist the implementation of energy savings projects as described in the President’s recent memo to the heads of executive departments and agencies.<sup>5</sup>

DOE requests the emergency approval of this ICR due to the timely nature of the President’s recent request to “increase the pace of the implementation of energy conservation measures, and improve the results from its energy efficiency investments.”<sup>5</sup> Earlier this year, a joint memo from the White House, DOE, USDA, DOI and NIST announced that DOE would undertake as part of the grid modernization initiatives the production of a “crowd-sourced” map to track progress on efforts to improve consumer access to and control of their energy usage data. The “crowd-sourced” map would enable Americans to take advantage of new tools and services to manage their energy use and save on their utility bills.

There is a tremendous need for the information in this map to be made available to the public. A 2009 Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) report entitled “Recovery through Retrofit” recommended Federal actions that would grow green job opportunities and boost energy savings by retrofitting homes for energy. The report found that homeowners’ lack of access to information is a barrier to a strong nationwide market for home energy upgrades. There is currently no effective way to track how many consumers across the country have access to their electricity usage information. In October, White House Chief Technology Officer Aneesh Chopra successfully petitioned California’s three largest utilities to create a “green button” that would allow customers to go online to access their usage with a single click. However, the trend has yet to catch on in other parts of the country. In November, U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced that up to \$8 million in funding will be made available to encourage utilities, local governments, and communities to create programs that empower consumers to better manage their electricity use through improved access to their own electricity consumption data. In recent days, the President has initiated a \$2 billion program to reduce Federal energy use, and operate Federal buildings efficiently. The memo that outlined this latest program explicitly states that “agencies shall, where technically feasible, continue efforts to connect meters and advanced metering devices to enterprise

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<sup>1</sup> [http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/news/progress\\_alerts.cfm/pa\\_id=433](http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/news/progress_alerts.cfm/pa_id=433)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/11/21/empowering-customers-green-button>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Recovery\\_Through\\_Retrofit\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Recovery_Through_Retrofit_Final_Report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2010-title42/html/USCODE-2010-title42-chap152.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/02/presidential-memorandum-implementation-energy-savings-projects-and-perfo>

energy management systems to streamline and optimize measurement, management, and reporting of facility energy use.” The key to success of all these programs is the need for electricity consumers, residential and commercial, to have extensive knowledge about their electricity consumption information. This ICR is specifically designed to make that information available to them.

These weighty goals elevate the importance of this ICR and demand action in a timely manner. The data that would be collected through this ICR would provide a framework upon which the aforementioned programs could accelerate the process of improving the nation’s energy efficiency.

This view is not taken without regard for the burden it places on the electric power industry. However, the information requested from respondents for this ICR will not involve burdensome research. Further, DOE has designed the information collection device to entail a minimal time burden, estimated in preliminary tests to be four minutes per respondent.

DOE requests an Emergency approval for this ICR for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy to execute the “Electricity Consumption Data Consumer Access and Control Questionnaire.”

Sincerely,  
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U.S. Department of Energy

On behalf of

Carla Frisch  
Acting Director of Analysis  
Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy  
U.S. Department of Energy