

The Supporting Statement

Introduction: Possible Inclusion of Specific Pavement Types in the FHWA Traffic Noise Model: Regulatory and Procedural Changes (New Request).

Part A. Justification

1. Circumstances that make collection of information necessary:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has been actively involved in what today the highway noise industry refers to as “quieter pavements.” In 2003, the FHWA entered into the Quiet Pavement Pilot Program with the Arizona Department of Transportation, co-sponsored the 2004 International Scan on “Quieter Pavement Systems in Europe,” and funded several national workshops, trainings and informational outreach pieces on this topic. In 2005, the FHWA began funding the “Pavement Effects Implementation Study” (PEI) to see how more specific pavement types could be incorporated into the FHWA Traffic Noise Model (FHWA TNM). The incorporation of specific pavement types into TNM would require State Departments of Transportation to use these more specific pavement types in TNM and would result in additional regulatory and procedural changes.

The PEI currently is out of funding but an interim report will soon be released. Before additional time, effort and funding are put into completing the PEI, it is important to conduct a user-need analysis to determine whether our stakeholders, primarily State Departments of Transportation, still want us to complete this research, knowing that it would result in regulatory and procedural changes. The information would cover the topics of being required to use a more specific pavement type(s), being required to maintain the specific pavement type selected, and being required to call a project, a Type I project, if the original pavement is replaced or overlaid with a louder pavement

This IC supports the DOT Human and Natural Environment Strategic Goal. An outcome of continuing with the PEI could result in regulatory and/or procedural changes to how Federal-aid highway projects assess highway traffic noise. While adding specific pavement types would increase the accuracy of the FHWA TNM, it could also result in certain projects that now are not required to have a noise analysis completed; have a noise analysis completed. Therefore, not including specific pavement types in TNM may result in environmental streamlining based on less overall noise analysis being required.

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

The FHWA will collect this information via common electronic means (i.e. email) and will use the responses to collectively determine whether or not to continue with the inclusion of specific pavement types in the FHWA TNM.

3. Extent of automated information collection:

The information will be provided electronically (via email) to our stakeholder. The stakeholder will electronically return their responses.

4. Efforts to identify duplication:

No other similar information is available since the information being collected is specific to the FHWA TNM and the FHWA’s development of the PEI.

5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses:

Small businesses are not affected by this information collection effort.

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information:

The consequence of not collecting this information would result in the FHWA not knowing or understanding how our primary stakeholders, primarily State DOTs, feel about this topic and its possible implications to 23 CFR 772 and FHWA noise guidance

7. Special circumstances:

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection.

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8:

The proposed information collection 60-day notices is published in the Federal Register as follows: Federal Register / Vol. 77, No. 121, Page 37735 / June 22, 2012 [Docket No. FHWA-2012-0054].

The FHWA received comments from five stakeholders: California Department of Transportation, Colorado Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Transportation, Washington State Department of Transportation and the American Concrete Pavement Association/International Grooving & Grinding Association. The FHWA contacted each of these stakeholders to discuss their comments and concerns. The FHWA's desire to proceed with this IC has not changed. The FHWA is still seeking approval for this IC.

The California Department of Transportation supports "improving the accuracy of the FHWA Traffic Noise Model. The FHWA should collect and maintain a comprehensive national database of pavement acoustics which could be used for both modeling and planning purposes. Accurately quantifying and assessing the noise impacts of all components of highway transportation infrastructure would be valuable metrics to capture." The FHWA agrees with the California Department of Transportation's support to collect this information.

The Colorado Department of Transportation stated that they do not desire a new information collection. Since this IC deals with the FHWA Traffic Noise Model and possible changes to 23 CFR 772, which the FHWA oversees, and FHWA guidance, it is imperative that the FHWA be able to collect this information in order to determine the most appropriate and accepted path to proceed down regarding the inclusion of specific pavement types within the FHWA TNM. The Colorado Department of Transportation also provided several technical and specific comments on why they do not approve of specific pavement types within the FHWA TNM. The FHWA discussed these comments with the Colorado Department of Transportation and requested that they provide these comments and possibly others, if the FHWA was approved to carry out this IC request.

The Oregon Department of Transportation "does not oppose the collection of the information nor does it oppose the completion of the PEI for informational purposes but not if it will be used as a tool to implement additional unfunded regulations." The FHWA agrees with the Oregon Department of Transportation's support to collect this information and asked the Oregon Department of Transportation to further comment, if the FHWA was approved to carry out this IC request.

The Washington State Department of Transportation does not feel that this IC is necessary for the FHWA performance. Since this IC deals with the FHWA Traffic Noise Model and possible changes to 23 CFR 772, which the FHWA oversees, and FHWA guidance, it is imperative that the FHWA be able to collect this information in order to determine the most appropriate and accepted path to proceed down regarding the inclusion of specific pavement types within the FHWA TNM. The Washington State Department of Transportation feels that the estimated burden is acceptable and suggested putting the IC questions in the 60-day notice.

The American Concrete Pavement Association and the International Grooving & Grinding Association did not comment on whether or not they supported the IC, but rather provided several technical and specific comments on why they do not approve of the inclusion of specific pavement types within the FHWA TNM. The FHWA discussed these comments with a point of contact for the American Concrete Pavement Association and the International Grooving & Grinding Association and requested that they provide these comments and possibly others, if the FHWA was approved to carry out this IC request.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents:

There are no payments of gifts being offered to respondents as part of this information collection effort.

10. Assurance of confidentiality:

There is no assurance of confidentiality in statute, regulation or agency policy. While the FHWA will need to make a public statement on whether to include specific pavement types in the FHWA TNM or not, the FHWA will maximize, to the extent possible, the confidentiality of those submitting comments.

11. Justification for collection of sensitive information:

The information being collected is not sensitive.

12. Estimate of burden hours for information requested:

There will be approximately 60 respondents. This information will only be collected once. It will take each respondent approximately 30 minutes to respond to these questions, for a total burden hours of 30 hours. No annualized cost to the respondents is estimated.

13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents:

There are no total capital/start-up costs or operation/maintenance cost associated with this IC.

14. Estimate of cost to the Federal government:

There is no salary costs based on hours, overhead, printing, payment to contractors.

15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments:

This is a new collection request.

16. Publication of results of data collection:

This information will not be published.

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

Approval for not displaying the expiration date is not being requested.

18. Exceptions to certification statement:

No exceptions to the certification statement are being requested.