

Supporting Statement A

Energy Cooperatives to Support the National Coal Resources Data System (NCRDS)

OMB Control Number 1028-0094

Terms of Clearance: None

General Instructions

A completed Supporting Statement A must accompany each request for approval of a collection of information. The Supporting Statement must be prepared in the format described below, and must contain the information specified below. If an item is not applicable, provide a brief explanation. When the question "Does this ICR contain surveys, censuses, or employ statistical methods?" is checked "Yes," then a Supporting Statement B must be completed. OMB reserves the right to require the submission of additional information with respect to any request for approval.

Specific Instructions

Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. The Energy Resources Program (ERP) of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is offering a cooperative agreement and/or grant opportunity to those who have the ability to provide geologic data and conduct research to support the National Coal Resources Data System and other solid-fuel energy assessment projects being conducted by the Energy Resources Program.**

A primary objective of the ERP and National Coal Resources Data System (NCRDS) is to advance the understanding of the energy endowment of the United States (U.S.) through the gathering and organization of digital geologic information related to coal, coalbed gas, and other solid-fuel energy resources. Standardized information on the location, quality, quantity, and availability of U.S. solid-fuel energy resources is necessary for policy makers to: (1) optimize energy development within an economic context; (2) implement wise land use planning on public as well as private lands; and (3) minimize environmental impacts from the utilization of U.S. solid-fuel energy resources. US Stratigraphy (USTRAT), a USGS database with more than 400,000 stratigraphic points on coal occurrence, is a primary product of NCRDS. More than two-thirds of data previously submitted to NCRDS for USTRAT are from States or universities. The primary partners for the past 33 years of the existence of the NCRDS have been the State geological surveys, which function as geologic information agencies with similar goals and

mission to the USGS. Priorities for USTRAT are to collect, interpret, correlate, and evaluate coal stratigraphic, geochemical, and GIS data. The USTRAT database provides the geologic basis for coal resource assessments at both Federal and State levels.

Data, geologic samples and research assistance to other ERP efforts relative to coal and other solid-fuel energy sources are also provided by State survey geologists through the cooperative agreements fostered through NCRDS. Data are disseminated to the public by Federal and State agencies through reports, presentations, and internet access. The continued future use of fossil fuel energy in the U.S. requires the further development of the USTRAT data and integration of other national energy databases.

The authority for the program is in:

Minerals, Lands and Mines, 30 U.S.C. 208-1
Public Lands (USGS Organic Act), 43 U.S.C. 31 et seq
Public Health and Welfare, 42 U.S.C. 15801

- 2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection. Be specific. If this collection is a form or a questionnaire, every question needs to be justified.**

The USGS will use this information to evaluate submitted applications for research that supports the NCRDS and other solid-fuel energy assessment projects being conducted by the Energy Resources Program. This collection will ensure that sufficient and relevant information is available to evaluate and select applications for funding. Financial assistance will be awarded following the evaluation and ranking of applications by an ad-hoc review panel familiar with the objectives of the ERP and NCRDS.

Grant recipients will submit annual progress reports and a final report that will summarize the results of the work funded by the grant. The progress report will describe accomplishments, unanticipated problems encountered, plans for solving unanticipated problems, and any other information pertinent to the progress of the project. The final report will contain a comparison of actual accomplishments to the goals established for the period; reasons established goals were not met, if applicable; and other pertinent information. This information will be used by the USGS ERP Coordinator to evaluate overall success and to determine the need to support future activities.

- 3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden and specifically how this collection meets GPEA requirements.**

All applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). The progress and final reports will be submitted directly to the program office via e-mail.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

Each NCRDS application is unique so no duplication will occur and no similar information is available.

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

The information collection will not significantly impact small businesses or entities. We collect only the minimum information necessary to evaluate applications and ensure that projects are successful and meet the requirements of authorizing statutes and Federal regulations.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The NCRDS is a long-term data collection effort; we anticipate that the frequency of this collection will be every 5 years. If this information is not collected we will not have adequate data to support regional or national assessments concerning coal and coal bed gas occurrences. Requesting external cooperation is the very best way for NCRDS to collect energy data and perform research on the characterization of coals and organic-rich shale, and obtain other information (including geophysical or seismic data, sample collection for generation of thermal maturity data) that can be used in solid-fuel resource assessments.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- * **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- * **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- * **requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- * **requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;**
- * **in connection with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- * **requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- * **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- * **requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information, unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

There are no circumstances that require us to collect the information in a manner inconsistent with OMB

guidelines.

- 8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and in response to the PRA statement associated with the collection over the past three years, and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

Describe 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.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every three years — even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

On Oct 12, 2012, we published a Federal Register notice (77 FR 62253) announcing that we would submit this information request to OMB for approval. In that notice we solicited public comments for 60 days, ending December 11, 2012. We did not receive any comments in response to this notice.

In addition to our Federal Register notice, we solicited comments from the three reviewers listed below to obtain their views on the clarity of the announcement and the annual hour burden for the application materials. The individuals provided feedback concerning the announcement structure and approximate length of time it would take to complete the application process; they also concurred with our estimated burden time for the application to be about 20 hours. We incorporated their suggestions, edits, and comments in the final announcement. The respondents said that the proposal narrative instructions are clear, succinct, and unambiguous. Evaluation criteria are clearly laid out, and the approach is simple to follow.

Gretchen Hoffman, Senior Coal Geologist and Database Coordinator New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources New Mexico Tech 801 Leroy Place Socorro, NM 87801-4796 Phone: 575- 835-5640	Maria Mastalerz, Ph.D. Research Scientist Indiana Geological Survey 611 N. Walnut Grove Bloomington, IN 47405-2208 Phone: 812-855-9416	Steve Greb, Geologist, Energy and Minerals Section Kentucky Geological Survey 228 Mining and Mineral Resources Bldg. University of Kentucky Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0107 Phone: 859-257-5500 x136
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- 9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

Except for the remuneration of grantees, no payments or gifts are provided to the respondents.

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

No assurance of confidentiality is given to respondents.

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. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

NCRDS applications do not require or need information of a sensitive or private nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

- * **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.**
- * **If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens.**
- * **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here.**

Our burden estimates are based on our own knowledge plus the outreach described in item 8.

For the 5-year period of each grant award, we estimate a total of 156 responses (26 applications, 104 annual reports, and 26 final reports) for this information collection. This is a total burden of 1,118 hours. We estimate the total dollar value of the burden hours to be \$69, 150 (rounded).

- **Applications: 520 hours.** We estimate that it will take each applicant 20 hours to complete an application.
- **Reports: 598 hours.** Each of the 26 grant recipients will complete an annual report for the first 4 years of the grant award (104 reports). The completion time for each annual report is approximately 2 hours (104 X 2 = 208 hours). Grant recipients will complete a final report at the end of the grant award period. We estimate it will take approximately 15 hours to complete each final report (26 X 15 = 390 hours). This is an average of 4.6 hours per report (598 hours divided by 130 reports).

This is an annualized burden of 35 responses (9 applications and 26 reports) totaling 300 hours over the

3-year approval for this information collection (see table 1). The annual dollar value of the burden hours is approximately \$13, 830.

To obtain the rate for State/local/tribal government, we used data from http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/naics4_999200.htm#00-0000 , Table 19-2042 -- Geoscientist mean income (\$30.73). To account for benefits, we multiplied the mean hourly rate by 1.5, for a total of \$46.10. For purposes of this information collection, we have used the same rate for individuals and the private sector.

Table 1. Estimated annualized burden for this collection of information

ACTIVITY	ANNUALIZED NUMBER OF RESPONSES	COMPLETION TIME PER RESPONSE	TOTAL ANNUALIZED BURDEN HOURS	DOLLAR VALUE OF BURDEN HOUR (incl benefits)	TOTAL DOLLAR VALUE OF BURDEN HOURS
Applications	9*	20 hours	180	\$46.10	\$8,298
Annual and Final Reports	26	4.6 hours	120	\$46.10	\$5,532
Total	35		300		\$13,830

*rounded

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual non-hour cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected in item 12.)

- * The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life) and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information (including filing fees paid for form processing). Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and record storage facilities.
- * If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents (fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.
- * Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government, or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices.

Not applicable.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The estimated annual cost to the Federal Government is \$21,346. These costs are for processing and reviewing information received as a result of this collection (Table 2). The table below accounts for Federal Staff and performing various tasks associated with this collection of information. This includes the time for a Technical Officer (Geologist) and three Geologists. Time spent by the Technical Officer and one part-time geologist/Technical Officer is used for: preparing requisitions, developing the program announcement, organizing the proposals, notifying recipients of awards, developing funding, and providing technical support to the awarded projects. The two other geologists (GS14 and GS9) serve on the proposal review committee once every 5 years.

We used the Office of Personnel Management Salary Table 2012-DCB (https://www.opm.gov/oca/12tables/html/dcb_h.asp) to determine the hourly rate. We multiplied the hourly rate by 1.5 to account for benefits.

Table 2. Federal Employee Salaries and Benefits (on average per year)

Position/Title	Grade	Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate incl. benefits (1.5 x hourly pay rate)	Annual Hours	Annual Cost
Geologist -Technical Officer	GS 14/5	\$57.13	\$85.70	180 hours	\$15,426
Geologist -Technical Officer	GS 9/5	\$28.04	\$42.06	80	\$3,365
Geologist (Technical Reviewer #1)	GS 14/5	\$57.13	\$85.70	20	\$1,714
Geologist (Technical Reviewer #2)	GS 9/5	\$28.04	\$42.06	20	\$841
Total					\$21,346

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments in hour or cost burden.

We are not reporting any program changes or adjustments. The program has not changed since the previous OMB submission.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

We will not publish any tabulated or statistical data related to this information collection. However, the Principal Investigator will be encouraged to disseminate significant research results promptly to the scientific community and appropriate professional organizations; local, state, regional and federal

agencies; and the general public. Research findings should be published in scientific or technical journals, in a peer-reviewed form.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

We will display the OMB control number and expiration date on the information collection instrument.

18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.