

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
Department of Energy Customer Satisfaction Surveys
DOE-887
OMB No. 1901-0302

A. Justification

1. Collection of Information

The Department of Energy (DOE) requests approval for a three-year extension from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for a generic clearance to conduct customer satisfaction surveys. This authority would allow the DOE to survey users of their products or services or the products or services of individuals or businesses in partnership agreements with the DOE in order to determine their needs. It would also allow DOE to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and overall cost of its products and services. The customer satisfaction surveys conducted under this clearance will be conducted by various components of the DOE with review and support from the U.S. Energy Information Administration. EIA will conduct an internal review of all proposed DOE customer satisfaction surveys prior to submitting them to OMB. EIA will verify that the material submitted to OMB is accurate, timely, and complete. Copies will be provided to appropriate contacts in DOE for their review and comment.

The specific methods proposed for the coverage by this clearance are as follows:

Feedback Questionnaires. Feedback questionnaires conducted under this clearance will generally be available to users of products produced by the U.S. Department of Energy. Products include publications, websites, conferences, data, and other communications that contain energy information. Collection may be on the basis of convenience and limited to a specific product, e.g., website, publication, dataset, or conference. The sample designs will be determined at the time of development and will vary based on the content of the product being evaluated. In general, questionnaires will be delivered electronically or by paper form.

Focus Groups. Focus groups involve group sessions guided by a moderator who follows a topic guide containing questions or topics focused on a particular product rather than adhering to a standardized questionnaire. Focus groups are useful for surfacing and exploring issues with populations of interest, e.g., from a specific group of stakeholders.

Procedures for Clearance

Before testing activity is undertaken, EIA will provide OMB with a memo describing the study to be conducted and a copy of questionnaires and debriefing materials that will be used. Depending on the stage of questionnaire development, this may be a printed questionnaire, a set of prototype items showing each item type to be used and the range of topics to be covered by the questionnaire, or an interview script. When split sample experiments are conducted, either in small group sessions or as part of a field test, the different versions questionnaires to be used will be provided. For a test of alternative

procedures, the description and rationale for the procedures will be submitted. A brief description of the planned field activity will also be provided. EIA requests that OMB raise comments on substantive issues within 10 working days of receipt.

2. Legal Authority:

The authority for the voluntary customer satisfaction surveys is provided by Section 2 of P.L. No. 103-62, Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, codified at 31 USC 1101 et. seq. which states: "The purposes of this Act are to :... (3) Improve Federal program effectiveness and public accountability by promoting a new focus on results, service quality, and customer satisfaction; and (4) Help Federal managers improve service delivery, by requiring that they plan for meeting program objectives and by providing them with information about program results and service quality."

In addition, Executive Order 12862, which was signed September 11, 1993, was aimed at: "Ensuring that the Federal Government provides the highest quality service possible to the American people." The Executive Order establishes an explicit goal for the quality of service--"Customer service equal to the best in business." That is--"The highest quality of service delivered to customers by private organizations providing a comparable or analogous service."

The activities conducted under this clearance are designed to gather and measure customer satisfaction of DOE and other partner's products or services and satisfy the requirements and the spirit of the Executive Order.

3. The Purpose of Data Collection

The information gathered from the customer satisfaction surveys will be used to provide additional details on the types users for DOE/EIA products, what kind of services they desire, and their level of satisfaction with our current products and services. The information collected will be analyzed to determine areas important to our customers, assess our performance in these areas, and to develop strategies to better meet customer expectations.

As a customer and performance-driven organization, the data DOE derives from the customer surveys are used in the strategic planning process, in the budget preparation process, in developing the agency's communication strategy, and by the DOE Performance Measures Coordinator. The data from this ICR will also be used in conjunction with data from other sources to provide a more complete and accurate assessment. Results are shared with DOE, with other agencies in seminars, and through presentations at meetings, such as with the American Statistical Association's Committee on Energy Statistics.

During the past three years, DOE has used this clearance for a variety of studies including:

U. S. Energy Information Administration (EIA)

- Website Customer Survey (EIA): EIA conducted three annual surveys under this clearance to solicit the opinions of its website customers regarding customer service, EIA's public image and customer's energy literacy. Survey results assist in developing improvements to web content and presentation, navigation and electronic delivery of energy information.
- This Week in Petroleum (EIA): The survey of "This Week in Petroleum" was EIA's first effort to solicit customer feedback and suggestions on a specific EIA product. Similar efforts are being planned for other web products. Results help to determine the need for upgrading, consolidating and modifying web products.

DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE)

- EERE Website Customer Surveys (DOE, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE)): EERE conducted this survey to obtain qualitative information to help determine needed improvements in the navigation, content, and other aspects of the EERE Web site.
- EERE Web Usability Surveys:
 - Biomass Program
 - Building Energy Codes Program
 - Industrial Technology Program (ITP):
 - To improve website usability by making it easier for the audience to accomplish its main task, EERE conducted three web usability surveys to gather the following information: 1) to identify visitors to the website (their role, characteristics and distribution), 2) the purpose for their visit, 3) their opinion of how the website meets their needs.
- Save Energy Now LEADER Program (ITP): EERE evaluated the opinions of program customers to identify 1) overall satisfaction with the program, 2) potential areas of improvement and 3) other potential services that could be provided by the program.
- Energy Savers Survey: To improve the usability of the website, EERE gathered information from website users to help identify 1) main audience groups 2) top tasks 3) positive and negative aspects of user experience and 4) potential areas for improvement in redesign.
- Hydrothermal Development Institutional Barriers Survey (Geothermal Technologies Program): EERE gathered information from geothermal professionals to provide a baseline of data for targeting solutions to industry-identified barriers to geothermal development. Survey results assisted in 1) quantifying industry perception of hurdles

to geothermal development by industry category (developers, financiers, government, policymakers, utilities, researchers, etc.) and 2) suggesting potential analysis and RD&D to help to overcome industry barriers.

DOE, National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)

- Building Technologies Program Website Survey: NREL conducted the study to determine audience information needs and to improve content and delivery of the website.
- India Solar Resource Data Survey: The Strategic Energy Analysis Center at NREL conducted a survey to learn about the usefulness of 1) the India solar resource products 2) planned products and activities and 3) additional activities aimed at making business decisions in the Indian solar energy sector.

4. Use of Improved Technology

Customer satisfaction surveys will employ electronic data collection methods as appropriate.

5. Efforts to Identify Duplication

These tasks will not duplicate any other survey/questionnaire design or pretest work being done by EIA or other Federal agencies. One of the purposes of this request is to stimulate additional research that would not otherwise be performed due to time and cost constraints. This research may involve collaboration with other agencies, especially the Office of Management and Budget, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census, and the National Science Foundation.

EIA will use existing information to the maximum extent possible by reviewing results of earlier evaluations of survey data before attempting to revise existing questionnaires or design new ones. EIA survey staff also will keep up-to-date on private and public survey research and results.

6. Collection of Information Involving Small Establishments

In most cases the information collected will be voluntary and based on the use of a DOE/EIA product. As such, for most collections small establishments will not be targeted or obligated. In cases where samples are needed to gain a representative statistic, small samples will be used to select respondents, and the number of questions on the surveys and the number of responses needed will be kept to a minimum.

7. Consequences of Less Frequent Reporting

Without this information collection, DOE would not be able to measure the kind and quality of service needed. In addition, DOE would not be able to meet the requirements of Executive Order 12862: SETTING CUSTOMOER SERVICE STANDARDS.

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.5

The Department will adhere to all the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5. Efforts will be taken to make sure surveys conducted under this generic clearance are the least burdensome, are not duplicative, and have practical utility.

9. Consultations Outside the Agency

DOE/EIA heeds and follows best practices from other government agencies, including the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Management and Budget, Commerce (Census Bureau), and the Government Services Administration. A *Federal Register* Notice (77 FR 58364, dated September 20, 2012) was published soliciting comments. No comments were received.

DOE/EIA staff will continue to review pertinent literature and seek advice from academia, industry, and others on conducting customer surveys.

10. Payment of Gift to Respondent

Respondents for activities conducted in the laboratory (e.g. focus groups) under this clearance may receive compensation for travel and participation. This practice has proven necessary and effective in recruiting subjects to participate in such research, and is also employed by the other Federal cognitive laboratories. Research on incentives that may be conducted under this clearance may also involve nonmonetary incentives. The Office of Management and Budget has noted that effectiveness of such incentives is a worthwhile research topic. If incentives need to be proposed for any research activity under this clearance, justification will be provided and we will work closely with OMB on the incentive strategy to be employed. EIA will typically propose incentives at the level approved by the Office of Management and Budget for cognitive laboratories and focus groups (currently up to \$40 for cognitive interviews and up to \$75 for focus groups). If a higher level incentive is proposed for approval, a meaningful justification will be provided

11. Confidentiality and Privacy Concerns

Data collected from respondents will be tabulated and analyzed only for the purpose of understanding and evaluating customer satisfaction with DOE products or services. Information about specific respondents may be used internally within the agency for analysis, for example responses by important stakeholders may be flagged for special consideration. All respondents who participate in research under this clearance will be informed that their participation is voluntary. If respondents participate in this research on-line, it will be obvious to them that their participation is voluntary because they will have to do X in order to access the survey.

The information reported on the customer surveys Form DOE-887 will be protected and not disclosed to the public to the extent that it satisfies the criteria for exemption under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. §552, the Department of

Energy (DOE) regulations, 10 C.F.R. §1004.11, implementing the FOIA, and the Trade Secrets Act, 18 U.S.C. §1905.

12. Questions of a Sensitive Nature

Most of the questions being asked will not be of a sensitive nature and should not pose a problem to respondents. However, it is possible that in developing surveys potentially sensitive questions may be included. One of the purposes of these efforts is to identify such questions, determine sources of sensitivity, and alleviate them insofar as possible before an actual survey is conducted.

13. Burden of the Collection of Information

The annual respondent burden is estimated to be 12,500 hours. [50,000 respondents x 1 report x .25 hours (15 min.) = 12,500 burden hours]. This estimate of burden covers all surveys conducted by the DOE and represents a compilation of the different types of surveys and questionnaires that could be completed. In many instances the questionnaire is a short feedback questionnaire on the website experience that will take less than 15 minutes to complete. Since some questionnaires are available to online visitors, it is possible that a large number of responses could occur during a time when the systems are not being monitored (e.g. a federal holiday or a weekend). Many of these online questionnaires are voluntary and available to the public and DOE estimates a maximum respondent count in the event there is a high response to the questionnaire. In other instances a focus group or more in depth questionnaire could be administered that would take longer than 15 minutes to complete. This estimate represents an average of all of the different kinds of surveys conducted by DOE and considers the possibility of continued increases in data users of DOE/EIA data products.

<u>Respondent Burden</u>	<u>Hours</u>
June 2013 – May 2014	12,500 hours
June 2014 – May 2015	12,500 hours
<u>June 2015 – May 2016</u>	<u>12,500 hours</u>
Total	49,500 hours

14. Estimate of Total Annual Cost

Additional cost to the Federal Government is not anticipated. Expenses (equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff) will be incurred by EIA components as part of their normal operating budgets. Executing the collection of customer satisfaction information is consistent with Executive Orders 12862 (Setting Customer Service Standards) & 13571 (Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving customer Service) and is integral to existing system's functionality. We will include information about additional costs in the individual submissions to OMB.

15. Annualized Cost

No additional cost to the Federal Government is anticipated. Expenses (equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff) will be incurred by DOE components as part of their normal operating budgets. Any deviation from the above will be covered when we notify OMB as to actual studies conducted under this clearance.

16. Program Changes or Adjustments

There are currently no changes or adjustments.

17. Schedule of Data Collection and Publication

The information will be used by DOE to analyze customer satisfaction and to make improvements. Individually identifiable results will not be published in any DOE or EIA publications. A summary of the results of customer satisfaction surveys may be published on the 'About Us' section of DOE's web site, but these results will not contain any personally identifiable information. Some papers may also be written and presented at public meetings or published in DOE/EIA reports. Due to the nature of this clearance, there is no time schedule. Information collection will not begin until OMB has been notified of a proposed activity and given two weeks to provide comments to DOE/EIA on the activity. Work will continue throughout the duration of the three-year clearance.

18. OMB Approved Expiration Date

EIA will display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection. No exemption is requested.

19. Exception to the Certification Statement

There are no exceptions to the certification.