July 24, 2013

Chad Whiteman
Department of Energy Desk Officer
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC 20503

SUBJECT: DOE-887(96), "USE OF GENERIC CLEARANCE FOR THE ENERGY
INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION'S WEB CUSTOMER SURVEY"

Dear Mr. Whiteman:

The Energy Information Administration (EIA) plans to use the Office of Management
and Budget (OMB) approved generic clearance, DOE-887, (DOE Customer Surveys'
OMB No. 1901-0302), to conduct a short survey of EIA's website customers. Your
action is anticipated within two weeks; however, EIA will not conduct this survey
without approval. Results of this data collection will be submitted in the annual report of
surveys conducted under the generic clearance.

The survey EIA is proposing to conduct this year is the same web-based survey we
conducted for the past four years, which provided significant useful feedback. The
results of this and previous surveys were valuable in leading EIA to change and improve
its navigation, web content and presentation, and electronic delivery of energy
information.   This year we are especially interested in getting feedback on the use of our
social media channels, the use of our website on mobile devices, and our readers'
understanding about the changing trends in U.S. oil production, as a proxy for energy
literacy.

In 2012, EIA's site had more than 27 million visitor sessions, for an average of over 2
million customers per month. With the move to virtually 100 percent electronic
dissemination of information, EIA has responded to the growth in electronic customers,
and the increased focus on electronic government, and realizes that the design and
functionality of a government statistical website is critical.   Customers including policy-
makers, business and financial markets, the energy industry and other businesses, the
media, teachers and students, and private citizens all rely on energy information from
EIA that they can easily access and understand.

We are proposing to add a question about use of our website on mobile devices,
specifically tablets and smart phones. A second new question will replace the energy
literacy question we asked last year whether customers believe they can tell where their
gasoline comes from and can avoid buying gas at stations that import oil from non-
friendly countries.   This year we want to know if our users are aware of the amazing

increase in oil production in North Dakota. We feel this is a good measure of energy literacy.

All the other questions will remain unchanged. We collected much valuable information the last four years and want to confirm the responses by asking the questions again. We also want to compare the results this year with those from the last four years to determine if there have been any changes.

The survey has 12 questions, some with follow-up. Depending upon respondents' answers, some respondents could have a maximum of 16 questions.

The questions are organized in three sections: two demographic questions at the beginning, five questions (some with possible follow-ups, described below) about or related to our website, and the remaining questions about EIA's public image, the customer's energy literacy, the use of EIA's social media channels, use of our website on mobile devices, and an open-ended question intended to provide feedback to EIA.

Rationale and Use of Data for Some of the Questions
For Question 5: EIA seeks direct responses from customers about how they use EIA information. EIA has anecdotal information about customer tasks and needs, but nothing measurable collected directly from them except for responses to this survey. We have used the information gathered from this question in budget documents and other reports.

For Question 8: This is a variation of a standard image question often asked in focus groups. "What words would you use to describe EIA?" We have selected adjectives customers have used to describe EIA in narrative sections of previous surveys. Audience research will enable EIA to understand how it is viewed by customers, and to target changes to products and marketing strategies.

For Question 9: We want to know if people are accessing EIA's website via mobile devices, which devices they are using, and whether they are able to accomplish their tasks. Responses to this new question will inform website development decisions.

For Question 10: EIA has branched out in to social media, first to Twitter, next to YouTube, and this year to Facebook. We want to know what users think about accessing EIA information via these new channels. We included an open text box area in case user have comments or want to give us ideas.

For Question 11: One part of EIA's mission is public understanding and education. EIA would like to know the level of understanding its customers have about basic energy issues and trends. Several years ago on our customer surveys, we have asked about the source of our oil imports, as a barometer of our users' energy literacy. Last year we asked if users think they can tell with gasoline stations use imported oil vs. those that use domestic oil? This year we want to ask about changing trends in oil production.   If a large number of respondents select the wrong answer or say they don't know the answer to this question, EIA will use that finding to make improvements in its basic energy

information and will provide new, easy-to-understand products in an appropriate place on our website, such as our energy education products. Regardless of the answer choice here, we plan to include a follow-up screen that gives the correct answer and a brief explanation.

The medium for administration of this survey will be the website itself. EIA has created an electronic survey form (HTML document with the questions is attached) that will be posted on the EIA website, allowing customers to easily and automatically submit their feedback. We will present the invitation to the survey after the customer has been on the site for brief period of time. The invitation will ask if they want to take the survey at that moment or have it presented to them again later (in five minutes).

The code for fielding the survey is similar to that used by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey, the survey tool broadly used across Government and cleared by OMB.   EIA's code ensures that our survey will not be blocked by pop-up blocker software. We want to make sure the broadest possible customer population has the opportunity to respond. We use temporary cookies to ensure that the survey is only presented once per customer. If they respond to the survey or say they don't want to take it, they won't see the invitation again.

The 12-question survey (not including the possible follow-up questions) is expected to fit on three computer screens. This relatively short survey will encourage participation, as has been our experience in the past.

EIA plans to have this survey on the website for up to one month, or until 5,000 responses are received. The number of returns will be monitored each day. The response rate is expected to be similar to that seen last year, when we only had the survey online for one week.

Because EIA does not have a list or frame of its website customers, EIA cannot designate a scientific sample, although direct input from customers is needed. We do expect responses from a diverse group of customers, based on the fact that past surveyed customers represented a diverse group, and due to the sheer volume of input from previous surveys.

While the responses to this survey cannot be claimed as being representative of all users, EIA will get an understanding of users' opinions by obtaining consistent information from a large number of users. During the survey period, EIA can compute a proxy response rate by calculating survey responses/unique web customers per day, although like for most web surveys, the actual response percentage is expected to be very small.

All participation in this survey is voluntary. No self-identification information will be requested. All results will be presented in aggregate form. Subsequent analysis of the data collected will limit any divulgence of individual customer responses.

The attached survey will take about four minutes to complete, based on tests with sample

participants. The burden for the targeted customer group should not exceed 333 hours (5,000 potential respondents multiplied by 4 minutes each).

Colleen Blessing, EIA's User Experience Advisor, is the point of contact for questions and may be reached at 202-586-6482. Other questions should be directed to Alethea Jennings at 202-586-5879.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Brown
Director, Office of Survey Development and
Statistical Integration
U.S. Energy Information Administration