

September 11, 2015

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

SUBJECT: DOE-887(100), "USE OF GENERIC CLEARANCE FOR THE ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION'S WEB PRODUCT 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 six (6) short surveys of EIA customers that browse specific products on its website. Your action is anticipated within two weeks. However, EIA will not conduct these surveys without your approval. Results of these data collections will be submitted in the annual report of surveys conducted under the generic clearance.

The six short surveys that EIA is proposing this year are the first product specific web-based surveys that we have conducted, which should provide a significant amount of useful feedback. We are interested in getting feedback on one of four data browsers (Coal, Electric, Short Term Energy Outlook, and International Energy) and five major reports-- *Electricity Monthly Update*, *Natural Gas Weekly Update*, *Short Term Energy Outlook*, *This Week In Petroleum*, and *U.S. Oil and Gas Proved Reserves*. Only one product survey would be conducted on the EIA website at a time. Surveys will only be conducted once annually. The results of these six surveys will be valuable in leading EIA to make decisions about upgrading, consolidating, and modifying our web products.

In 2014, EIA's website had 20.5 million visitor sessions, with an average of 1.7 million visits 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. We realize 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.

Each of the six surveys has five questions, some with follow-up questions. Depending on respondents' answers, some respondents could have a maximum of seven questions.

The five questions are organized in three sections: one demographic question at the beginning; three questions (some with possible follow-ups, described below) about or related to the specific web product; and the last question an open-ended question intended to provide feedback to EIA.

Each of the six surveys has the same first and last question. For the remaining three questions, three surveys have the same specific web product questions whereas they are different for the other three surveys. The web product questions are described below.

Rationale and Use of Data for the Three Specific Web Product Questions

EIA seeks direct responses from customers for the following questions because EIA has anecdotal information about their tasks and needs. However, EIA has not collected measurable data about EIA's specific web products and the users' knowledge of the energy industry, familiarity with our products, specific data and information needs, and how they use our products. We plan to use the information gathered from these questions in budget documents and other reports.

Electricity Monthly Update, This Week In Petroleum, and U.S. Oil and Gas Proved Reserves

Using the same three questions in these three surveys (*Electricity Monthly Update, This Week In Petroleum, U.S. Oil, and Gas Proved Reserves*), EIA seeks direct responses from customers about how often they follow activities and events in the electric, oil, and/or natural gas industries (Question 2). They can select one of the four options. Question 3 asks users how often they visit the specific web product. They can select one of three options, with each option having a follow-up question. Two of these three follow-up questions ask what other EIA products they visit. They can select all that apply, in addition to providing their own feedback. The third follow-up question asks first-time visitors how likely they are to re-visit.

Question 4 asks the user what information (analysis text, data, charts/graphs) do they view. They can select all that apply from those three options and each option has a follow-up question. If the customer selects analysis text, we ask them a follow-up question about their opinion. If the customer selects data, we ask them a follow-up question about how they use it. If the customer selects charts/graphs, we ask them a follow-up question about how useful they are to them. If the customer selects no, we ask them a follow-up question about the reason they chose that answer.

Data Browser Web Product

EIA seeks direct responses from customers about information on one of four data browsers (Coal, Electric, Short Term Energy Outlook, or International Energy). The direct responses from customers are about the level of complexity of its data browser tool (Question 2). Customers can select one of the four options, in addition to providing their

own feedback. In Question 3, we want to know how often they use the tool. They can select one of the four choices. In Question 4, we want to know about their knowledge of the functionality of the data browser. They can select all that apply from a list of 14 choices.

Natural Gas Weekly Update

For the *Natural Gas Weekly Update*, EIA seeks direct responses from customers about which topics are most important to them. They can select one of the nine choices (Question 2). Question 3 asks for their opinion about changing the current release date. EIA would publish the three text sections of the report on different days of the week instead of the entire report on Thursday. Customers are given the titles of the three sections and the proposed new publishing days and times. We then ask them to select one of three five options based on their opinion—very desirable to desirable, neutral, or undesirable to very undesirable. Each choice has a follow-up question where we ask them the reason they chose that answer.

Question 4 lets customers know that EIA is considering adding new topics or expanding coverage of the three text sections in the report. It then asks them to let us know which information they would most like EIA to expound upon. They can choose all that apply (4), in addition to these two options: do not add new topics or expand coverage, and an open-ended question to provide their own suggestion.

Short Term Energy Outlook

For *Short Term Energy Outlook*, EIA seeks direct responses from customers about which sections are of most interest to them (Question 2). They can select one of the seven choices as well as provide their own feedback. In Question 3, we want to know which feature is the most important to them. They can select one of five choices.

In Question 4, we want to know how they would view EIA changing the publishing of the STEO from every month, to once every other month. Then publish a new report in the alternate month that focuses on recent market trends driving oil and natural gas prices. Their opinion would be measured in a favorability chart-- favorable to somewhat favorable, neither favorable or unfavorable, or somewhat unfavorable to unfavorable. After the customer selects their opinion, we ask them a follow-up question, which allows them to select all that apply from a list of up to four options, as well as provide their own feedback.

Medium for Administration of Surveys

The medium for the administration of this survey will be the website itself. EIA has created one electronic survey form (HTML document with the questions attached) for each of the six surveys that will be posted on the specific web product url that only targets the people who browse those products, allowing customers to easily and automatically submit their feedback. We will present the invitation to the survey after the

customer has been on the specific web product website 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 at a later time (in five minutes).

The code for fielding the survey is similar to that used by the American Customer Satisfaction Index survey, the survey tool broadly used across the 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 that the broadest possible customer population has the opportunity to respond. We also use temporary cookies to ensure that the survey is only presented once per customer. If they respond to the survey or say they do not want to take it, they will not see the invitation again.

The 5-question survey for each of the six web products, not including the possible follow-up questions, is expected to fit on one computer screen. Our past experience with EIA annual customer web surveys shows that the short survey will encourage participation.

EIA plans to have each survey on the website for a specified number of days, or until a certain number of responses are received. The number of returns will be monitored each day. A similar response rate is expected to that of EIA's annual customer web survey, where we only had the survey online for less than the specified time frame.

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. However, we do expect responses from a diverse group of customers based on the sheer volume of input received from previous annual customer surveys and the fact that those customers represented a diverse group.

While the responses to each of the six surveys 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 for each survey, EIA can compute a proxy response rate by calculating survey responses/unique web product customers per day, although the actual response percentage for most web surveys 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 six surveys are attached. Three surveys will take about two minutes to complete while the remaining three will take about three minutes. These estimates are based on in-house usability testing with EIA staff serving as sample participants. The burden for the targeted customer groups should not exceed 112 hours (1,500 potential respondents multiplied by 3 minutes each and 1,100 potential respondents multiplied by 2 minutes each).

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent and Survey	No. of Respondents	Participation Time (minutes)	Burden Hours
1. Data Browsers – Survey will only target customers from one of these four data browsers a. Coal Data Browser b. Electric Data Browser c. Short Term Energy Outlook Data Browser d. International Energy Data Browser	100 (up to 2 months)	2	3
2. <i>Electricity Monthly Update</i>	500 (2 months)	3	25
3. <i>Natural Gas Weekly Update</i>	500 (2 weeks)	2	17
4. <i>Short Term Energy Outlook</i>	500 (1 month)	2	17
5. <i>This Week In Petroleum</i>	500 (2 weeks)	3	25
6. <i>U.S. Oil and Gas Proved Reserves</i>	500 (2 months)	3	25
Total (number of respondents for each survey times minutes, frequency for each survey is once per year)	2,600		112 hours

Susanne Johnson, EIA's Information Management Specialist, is the point of contact for questions and may be reached at 202-586-4795. Other questions should be directed to Lawrence Stroud at 202-586-6242.

Sincerely,

Nanda Srinivasan
Director, Office of Statistical Development and
Statistical Integration
U.S. Energy Information Administration