

Noise Barrier Inventory

Supporting Statement

Introduction: This is to request OMB three-year approved clearance for the new information collection entitled "Noise Barriers Inventory Request".

Part A. Justification.

1. Circumstances that make collection of information necessary:

The basis of the Federal-aid highway program is a strong federal-state partnership. At the core of that partnership is a philosophy of trust and flexibility, and a belief that the states are in the best position to make investment decisions and that states base these decisions on the needs and priorities of their citizens. The FHWA noise regulation (23 CFR 772) gives each state department of transportation (SDOT) flexibility to determine the feasibility and reasonableness of noise abatement by balancing of the benefits of noise abatement against the overall adverse social, economic, and environmental effects and costs of the noise abatement measures. The SDOT must base its determination on the interest of the overall public good, keeping in mind all the elements of the highway program (need, funding, environmental impacts, public involvement, etc.). This request for information collection is supported by the FHWA Environmental Stewardship Strategic Goal.

Reduction of highway traffic noise should occur through a program of shared responsibility with the most effective strategy being implementation of noise compatible planning and land use control strategies by state and local governments. Local governments can use their power to regulate land development to prohibit noise-sensitive land use development adjacent to a highway, or to require that developers plan, design, and construct development in ways that minimize noise impacts. The FHWA noise regulations limit Federal participation in the construction of noise barriers along existing highways to those projects proposed along lands where land development or substantial construction predated the existence of any highway. The data reflects the flexibility in noise abatement decision-making. Some states have built many noise barriers while a few have built none. Through the end of 2010, 47 SDOTs and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have constructed over 2,748 linear miles of barriers at a cost of over \$4.05 billion (\$5.44 billion in 2010 dollars). Three states and the District of Columbia have not constructed noise barriers. Ten SDOTs account for approximately sixty-two percent (62%) of total barrier length and sixty-nine percent (69%) of total barrier cost. The type of information requested can be found in 23CFR772.13(f).

The previously distributed listing can be found at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/noise_barriers/inventory/summary/sintro7.cfm, (this information was collected from 2008-2010, OMB# 2125-0622). This listing continues to be extremely useful in the management of the highway traffic noise program, in our technical assistance efforts for State highway agencies, and in responding to inquiries from congressional sources, Federal, State, and local agencies, and the general public. An updated listing of noise barriers will be distributed nationally for use in the highway traffic noise program. It is anticipated that this information will be requested in 2014 (for noise barriers constructed in 2011, 2012 and 2013) and then again in 2017 (for noise barriers constructed in 2014, 2015 and 2016). After review of the "Summary of Noise Barriers Constructed by December 31, 2004" document, a SDOT may request to delete, modify or add information to any calendar year.

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

This listing continues to be extremely useful in the management of the highway traffic noise program, in our technical assistance efforts for State highway agencies, and in responding to inquiries from congressional sources, Federal, State, and local agencies, and the general public. An updated listing of noise barriers will be distributed nationally for use in the State highway agencies' traffic noise program. This collection request is for all noise barriers constructed by December 31, 2013 and then for all noise barriers constructed by December 31, 2016. This would include all funding sources and material types. Although the collection concentrates on the 2011, 2012, and 2013 and then 2014, 2015 and 2016 calendar years, a State highway agency may, after review of the "Summary of Noise Barriers Constructed by December 31, 2004" document, delete, modify or add information to any calendar year.

3. Extent of automated information collection:

Participants will provide the information by Excel Workbook, with 100% of the responses being electronic.

4. Efforts to identify duplication:

There are no known efforts to collect similar information.

5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses:

Small businesses are not being recruited to participate in this study. No information will be collected from small businesses.

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information:

The request for collection once every 3 years is intentional for the purposes of reducing the frequency of collection. It is felt that collection less than 3 years is not necessary and that greater than 3 years reduces the relevance of the information.

7. Special circumstances:

There are no special circumstances with this request.

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8:

The FHWA published a Notice of Request for Comments on June 21, 2013 at 78 FR 120 pages: 37649-37650 which solicited public comments regarding this new information collection requirement. No comments regarding this information collection were received.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents:

There are no payments or gifts to the respondents from this request of data collection.

10. Assurance of confidentiality:

The construction of noise barriers are funded with Federal-aid highway funds, and therefore are public information. When this information was collected in the past, the final reporting document was posted on the FHWA website. It is intended that the information from this request will also be posted on the FHWA website.

11. Justification for collection of sensitive information:

The information collected is not of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of burden hours for information requested:

It is estimated that on average it would take each respondent 8 hours to respond to this request. The actual response time will be dependent on the number of noise barriers constructed, the availability of this information, and the collection method. For the Highway agencies that did not construct noise barriers within the time period, there is no burden. It is estimated that the total burden of this request would be 416 hours every 3 years.

52 Respondents X 8 hours per response = 416 hours (139 hours annually)

13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents:

There are no costs to the participants beyond the hour burden.

14. Estimate of cost to the Federal government:

There will be a GS-13, Step 4 compiling all the data received and developing a final report for posting on the FHWA website. In 2008 a GS-13, Step 1 makes \$97,936 annually (\$46.93 hourly). It is estimated that it will take 60 hours to compile the data and develop a final report for a total cost to the Federal government of \$2,816.

15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments:

This is a new information collection request.

16. Publication of results of data collection:

The results of the data collection will be posted on the FHWA website.

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

Not applicable. We are not seeking approval to not display the expiration date.

18. Exceptions to certification statement:

There are no exceptions to the certification statement for this information collection request.