

May 7, 2015

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

SUBJECT: EIA-882T, "USE OF GENERIC CLEARANCE FOR QUESTIONNAIRE TESTING AND RESEARCH"

Dear Mr. Whiteman:

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) plans to use the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved generic clearance, EIA-882T, (DOE Customer Surveys' OMB No. 1901-0186, to conduct research on the knowledge and perceptions of EIA survey respondents regarding EIA's efforts to protect the confidentiality of the reported data. 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.

This the first study EIA is conducting to learn what respondents think about the agency's ability to protect the information that we collect, and what they believe regarding how EIA uses the information and how the information may be shared. The knowledge gained from this research will help EIA set appropriate data confidentiality policies for collecting survey information. Previous research from outside of EIA indicates that public trust remains low or divided regarding the government's collection of information and their ability to protect what they collect.

EIA proposes to interview, by telephone or in-person, up to 50 current EIA survey respondents. The respondents will be selected from the different fuel groups:

Petroleum: 18

Natural Gas: 10

Electric Power: 8

Coal: 8

Renewable Fuels: 6

The protocol used in the cognitive interviews has 14 questions, some with follow-up. The protocol will test the respondent's perceptions of using Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) exemptions and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA) to protect reported information and the meaning of terms such as

“statistical use”

EIA also plans to hold a one-hour focus group session at its annual energy conference on June 15-16, 2015 in Washington, D.C. The list of the registrants for the conference will be used to select up to 20 persons to participate. Persons from companies that report on EIA surveys will be invited to participate in the focus group session.

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 company responses.

The attached protocol takes about 30 minutes, based on tests with sample participants from four trade associations. The burden for the targeted customer group should not exceed 45 hours (50 potential respondents multiplied by 30 minutes each plus 20 potential participants in a one hour focus group session).

Jacob Bournazian, EIA's Data Confidentiality Officer, is the point of contact for questions and may be reached at 202-586-5562 or by email: jacob.bournazian@eia.gov. Other questions should be directed to Lawrence Stroud at 202-586-6242 or by email: lawrence.stroud@eia.gov.

Sincerely,

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