

**U.S Department of Energy**  
**Supporting Statement**  
**“Consumers and Fuel Economy”**  
**OMB Control Number: 1910-New**

This supporting statement provides additional information regarding the Department of Energy (DOE) request for processing of the proposed information collection, “Consumers and Fuel Economy.” The numbered questions correspond to the order shown on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Form 83-I, “Instructions for Completing OMB Form 83-I.”

**A. Justification**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the information collection.**

DOE is required under U.S. Code, Title 49, Section 32908(c)(3) and (g)(2)(A) to publish and distribute the annual *Fuel Economy Guide* and to provide “consumer education” about vehicle fuel economy. To further promote consumer education, DOE also developed and maintains the associated website [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov). The purpose of the *Guide* and the website is to provide consumers with reliable fuel economy information for light-duty vehicles. The information obtained in this collection will be made available to consumers at no cost through the *Fuel Economy Guide* and [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov).

The specific purpose of this information collection is to support a study on how consumers value vehicle fuel economy, to compare the current results with those from a similar study conducted in 2003 (published in 2007), and to estimate distributions of these valuation processes across the national population of car-owning and car-leasing households. The current study is inspired by the 2003 study, but not duplicative. Nearly 12 years have passed since the first study was conducted, and in that interval the United States has adopted aggressive fuel economy standards, been through the greatest economic recession since the Great Depression, and seen a boon of domestic oil and gas production from shale deposits—among other changes. Based solely upon these events, it is valid to ask whether the results of prior research are sufficient for present day policy-making.

In addition to the changed economic, resource, and policy setting, the new research addresses one of the primary critiques of the previous study: some reviewers complained that the sample was drawn only from households in California. A specific basis for this complaint was rarely provided, amounting to little more than, “Oh, it’s Californians. They must be different.” The new study addresses this critique by sampling in California (to establish a base of comparison to the earlier study), and three other states. For planning purposes, the selected cities are Houston, Texas, Detroit, Michigan, and Atlanta, Georgia.

The data derived from this study will be used to provide consumers with information that will help them value increased fuel economy as a means of reducing petroleum consumption, saving money on fuel, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection**

The study will be funded by the DOE Clean Cities Program and designed and conducted by the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California, Davis (UCD). UCD researchers will develop an interview protocol and conduct 54 in-home interviews. The 54 in-home interviews will be conducted in Sacramento, California (18 interviews); Atlanta, Georgia (12 interviews); Detroit, Michigan (12 interviews); and, Houston, Texas (12 interviews). A team of four UCD researchers (two researchers per interview) will conduct the in-home interviews. Interviews will be conducted at the participants' homes and include at least the primary driver of the recently purchased vehicle that qualifies the household for participation. Interviews are expected to last between one and two hours. The discussion will be guided by a list of specific topic areas: history of car purchases, stories of specific car purchases, design of a next new car, and questions specifically about whether and how fuel economy is valued by the household. The majority of questions will be open-ended. Interviews will be audio recorded and the interviewers will make written notes during the interview.

Each UCD researcher will review the audio recordings and compile a review of the households in which they have been an interviewer. These reviews will include themes that arise during the interviews regarding whether and how consumers value fuel economy. These reviews will be compared across households to locate themes representing common experiences, ideas, and valuations.

The data derived from this study will be used by DOE to provide consumers with information that will help them value increased vehicle fuel economy as a means of reducing petroleum consumption, saving money on fuel, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This information will also help inform policy making and program implementation within the DOE Clean Cities Program.

The results of this study will be provided to consumers through the *Fuel Economy Guide* and [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov) and through information provided to the media. Consumers are expected to use the information in deciding whether to purchase vehicles with increased fuel economy or to increase the fuel economy of the vehicles they already own through driving and maintenance tips. Because [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov) hosts tens of millions of user sessions each year (58 million user sessions in 2013), we expect that millions of consumers will find this information directly on the website. We will also make the findings known to the national news media, especially those covering automotive issues.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.**

Please see response to item 2 above. UCD researchers will conduct personal interviews at the participants' homes; the only electronic device used for these interviews will be an audio recorder.

#### **4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

The current study will compare the results of the data collection with those of a similar study conducted by the same UCD researchers in 2003 (published in 2007). The current study is needed to assess the effects of economic changes that have occurred since the 2003 study was conducted (especially the 2008 economic recession) on how consumers value fuel economy. The current study avoids duplication by conducting in-home interviews with participants in four different states, whereas the 2003 study included in-home interviews with California households only.

#### **5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

This information collection will not impact small businesses or other small entities.

#### **6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

The purpose of this data collection and study is to provide consumers with information that will help them value increased vehicle fuel economy as a means of reducing petroleum consumption, saving money on fuel, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. If these data are not collected, it will affect DOE's ability to provide consumers with the information they need to reduce petroleum consumption, save money on fuel, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Thus, this data collection is required to help DOE meet its statutory requirement to provide the public with reliable fuel economy information.

#### **7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines. (a) requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly; (b) requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it; (c) requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document; (d) requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years; (e) in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to product valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study; (f) requiring the use of statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB; (g) that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in stature of regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; (h) requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

There are none. The package is consistent with OMB guidelines

**8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5CFR 320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken in response to the comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside DOE to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or report.**

DOE published a 60-day Federal Register Notice and Request for Comments concerning this collection in the Federal Register on May 5, 2014, Vol. 79, No. 86, page 25592. The notice described the collection and invited interested parties to submit comments or recommendations regarding the collection. No comments were received.

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

Studies have shown that even a token monetary incentive leads to higher response rates and better cooperation from the public in participating in these types of research. UCD researchers plan to pay each in-home interviewee \$100 (maximum \$200 per household).

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

In accordance with Federal policy on the Protection of Human Subjects (DHHS Regulations 45 CFR Part 46, FDA Regulations 21 CFR Parts 50 and 56), UCD is responsible for the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects in research conducted by, or under the supervision of, UCD faculty, staff, students, or agents. Therefore, the UCD Institutional Review Board (IRB) must approve all research that relies on human subjects—regardless of whether those subjects are completing simple questionnaires or undergoing experiments with medical technologies. One criterion for exemption from a full review by the IRB (which exemption has been granted by UCD's IRB for this research proposal) is the protection of the identity of participants and the confidentiality of information collected from them. These requirements are met through the use of identifiers other than respondents' names for all records and files, the control of access to all records and files in any manner in which they may be stored, and the storage of electronic records on a password protected server behind the UCD firewall. IRB protocols require that respondents be informed of these conditions and protections prior to their agreement to participate in the research. IRB protocols also allow respondents to retire from the research at any time, without cause.

In addition, no report or data released from this research will contain individually identifying information.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered**

**private. This justification should include the reasons why DOE considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.**

Not applicable. No questions of a personally sensitive nature are included in this information collection.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, DOE should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample fewer than 10 potential respondents is desirable.**

The estimate of burden of the information collection is as follows:

Total number of unduplicated respondents: 54 households

Number of in-home interviews per respondent: 1

Number of minutes per respondent:

In-home interview	120 minutes
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Total = 120 minutes or 2 hours per respondent

Total time: 2 hours x 54 respondents = 108 hours

**13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information.**

There are no annual costs to respondents resulting from the collection of information.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.**

The estimated total (not annual) cost for this one-time data collection would be approximately \$263K:

Salaries/Benefits	\$ 121K
Travel, Supplies, Expenses	\$ 59K
Overhead	\$ 83K
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Total	\$ 263K

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 (or 14) of OMB Form 83-I.**

Not applicable. This information collection is a new collection of information.

**16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.**

Results will be published in at least one research paper and standard statistical techniques will be used to evaluate the data. We will not publish the raw data. The results of any statistical analysis and summary statistics will be published in both a scholarly peer-reviewed journal and as a technical report. The summary results will be made available to consumers through the *Fuel Economy Guide* and [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov).

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.**

Not applicable. DOE is not seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of this information collection.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 of OMB Form 83-I.**

Not applicable. There are no exceptions to the certification statement.