

**EIA-877: Winter Heating Fuels Telephone Survey (OMB Control Number: 1905-0186)**

**Cognitive Interviews Protocol (July 2018)**

*(This protocol is a guide)*

**Research Goals:**

- To better understand the terminology used within the Winter Fuels industry;
- To determine how respondents are reporting the retail price for No. 2 heating oil and propane;
- To better understand the price tiers offered by publicly traded companies that make retail sales of No. 2 fuel oil and/or propane;
- To determine if respondents are reporting the retail price for residential customers only;
- To assess whether respondents are able to separate residential customers from their commercial and/or industrial customers;
- To assess whether respondents are including any type of discount in the price they report every Monday; and
- To check the burden per response on the form including how much time it takes to report annual volumes.

**Purpose of Interview**

Let me start by telling you a little about what we will be doing today:

- Introduce self and observers
- We are asking you some questions about how you report the retail price for No. 2 fuel oil and/or propane
- We are attempting to clear up some data issues that affect the average retail price in your state and want to better understand the terminology and pricing methods used in the heating oil industry.
- You were selected because you currently report weekly retail prices every Monday.
- There are no right or wrong answers, and if something doesn't make sense to you or you have any questions, please ask
- Before we start, do you have any questions about EIA or this weekly survey?

**Part A - Introduction**

- Are you the person that reports the weekly retail price every Monday?
- How long have you been providing this information to EIA?

**Part B Burden**

Now let's talk about the time and effort it takes you to currently complete this form.

- Thinking back to last year's heating season, how much time did it take you to report your weekly retail price on Monday? (The current burden is 6 mins)
- Do you report the price by sending a fax or email or over the telephone?
- Is your company's retail price advertised or published anywhere?

- Thinking back to last year's heating oil season, how much time did it take you to gather and report your annual sales volumes of No. 2 heating oil and propane sold to residential customers? (This information is only collected once on the first week of the heating oil season or when the company is first contacted to report their data to EIA)
- Is the same amount of time that it took you for the past 2 years?
  - If no, did last year take more time or less time than the year before?

### **Part C- Terminology**

EIA is interested in ensuring that the language and terminology on the form is understood and reflective of the heating oil industry

- Form EIA-877 currently requests information on the retail price per gallons (excluding taxes) for residential customers of No. 2 heating oil and propane.
- Is the retail price that you report for your retail outlet only?
  - If no, what other outlet prices are included?
- Is the retail price the price as of Monday or do you create an average?
- Does the retail price you report to EIA include any price discounts?
- Is the retail price the price that a new consumer would receive if they contacted your company today?
- Is the retail price that you report to EIA the retail price for residential customers only?
  - If no, is the retail price for all customers?
- Are you able to separate your residential customers from your non-residential customers in your customer database?

### **Part D- Wrapping Up**

**Do you ever receive call backs from EIA to check the reported price from your outlet?**

**If yes, approximately how many calls did you receive on a monthly basis during last year's heating oil season last year**

- Do you have any problems reporting prices on Monday morning?
- Do you have any suggestions to improve this survey?

**Thank you for your time today**