

**Generic Information Collection Request:
Debriefing interviews for the Commodity Flow Survey**

Request: The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725) for the Commodity Flow Survey (CFS). These activities will include debriefings with respondents to the 2017 CFS (Waves 1/2 and Waves 3/4).

The CFS is administered every 5 years through a partnership between the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS). It provides data on the movement of goods in the United States including commodities shipped, their value, weight, and mode of transportation, as well as the origin and destination of shipments of commodities from manufacturing, mining, wholesale, and selected retail and services establishments. These data are used by policy makers and transportation planners to evaluate the demand for transportation facilities and services, energy use, and safety risk and environmental concerns. Additionally, the data collected from CFS is also used to analyze trends in the movement of goods, mapping spatial patterns of commodity and vehicle flows, forecasting demands for the movement of goods, and determining needs for associated infrastructure and equipment.

Further information regarding the Commodity Flow Survey can be found at this website: <https://www.census.gov/econ/cfs/>.

Purpose: The purpose of this evaluation is to understand the burden associated with survey completion and to help inform ways to reduce it (e.g., use of records).

The results from debriefing interviews will be recorded and a report produced that outlines the findings of the debriefings and recommendations for improvement.

Population of Interest: U.S. companies that ship goods, across a variety of sizes, industries, and locations.

Timeline: The first round of testing will be conducted in August/September 2017. A second round of testing will take place in February/March 2018.

Language: Testing will be conducted in English only.

Method: We plan to conduct in-person debriefing interviews with 35-40 respondents. Travel is required for the debriefing interviews (two trips per round of testing)¹. The interviews may be recorded (with consent), to facilitate summarization.

Sample: We plan to conduct a total of 35-40 interviews across both rounds of testing. The sample size necessary for this test was determined by qualitative research experience. We plan to conduct interviews with a variety of sizes and types (i.e., industries) of business establishments. The sampling frame for these interviews comes from a list of companies that

¹ Testing locations to be determined.

were sampled to participate in the 2017 CFS. Participating companies will most likely have submitted responses to the CFS survey, but not necessarily.

Recruitment: Respondents will be recruited via phone. Respondents will be informed that their participation is voluntary.

Protocol: The protocol for the debriefing study is enclosed (see Attachment A). We anticipate that each debriefing interview will take 60 minutes to complete.

Use of Incentive: Monetary incentives for participation will not be offered.

Below is a list of materials to be used in the current study:

1. **Attachment A:** Protocol used to outline how the research study will be conducted
2. **Attachment B:** Consent form to obtain participant consent for participation and recording of the session
3. **Attachment C:** CFS survey to illustrate the survey being evaluated

Length of interview: For the debriefing interviews, we expect that each interview will last no more than 60 minutes (40 cases x 60 minutes per case = 40 hours). Additionally, to recruit respondents we expect to make up to 5 phone contacts per completed case. The recruiting calls are expected to last on average 3 minutes per call (5 attempted phone calls per completed case x 40 cases x 3 minute per case = 10 hours). Thus, the estimated burden for this project is 50 hours (40 hours for interviews + 10 hours for recruiting).

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and statistical aspects of the design of this research is listed below:

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