

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT**  
**Special Need Request Under the Plant Protection Act**  
**OMB NO. 0579-0291**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for preventing plant diseases or insect pests from entering the United States, preventing the spread of pests and noxious weeds not widely distributed in the United States, and eradicating those imported pests when eradication is feasible.

The Plant Protection Act (PPA, 7 U.S.C 7701 et seq.) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to restrict the importation, entry, or interstate movement of plants, plant products, and other articles to prevent the introduction of plant pests into the United States or their dissemination within the United States. This authority has been delegated to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which administers regulations to implement the PPA. Regulations governing the interstate movement of plants, plant products, and other articles are contained in 7 CFR part 301, “Domestic Quarantine Notices.”

The regulations in “Subpart-Preemption and Special Need Requests” allow States or political subdivisions of States to request approval from APHIS to impose prohibitions or restrictions on the movement in interstate commerce of specific articles that pose a plant health risk that are in addition to the prohibitions and restrictions imposed by APHIS. This process requires information collection activities, including a pest data detection survey with a pest risk analysis showing that a pest is not present in a State, or, if already present, the current distribution in the State, and that the pest would harm or injure the environment and/or agricultural resources of the State or political subdivision.

APHIS is asking the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve, for an additional 3 years, its use of this information collection activity, associated with its efforts to prevent the spread of plant pests and plant diseases from entering into the United States.

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

APHIS uses the following information collection activity to establish a process for a State or political subdivision of a State to request approval to impose prohibitions for the dissemination of plant pest and noxious weeds within their State.

**Special Need Exception Request which include data detection survey to include pest risk analysis that shows the pest would harm or inquire the environment and specific information regarding characteristics vulnerable to the pest; 7 CFR 301.1; (State)**

APHIS believes that specific information such as a pest data detection survey with a pest risk analysis that shows that a pest is not present in a State, or if already present, the current distribution in the State, and information that demonstrates the state has a unique production or environmental interest that needs greater protection than the Federal regulation provides. This includes information—generally open source—about the harm the pest could cause to the environment and/or agricultural resources of the State or political subdivision. This information is needed and would be considered, along with more general information available to APHIS for the Deputy Administrator to be able to determine whether to grant or deny a request for a special need exemption. The Deputy Administrator’s determination would be based upon his or her review of the information submitted by the State or political subdivision in support of its request and would consider any comments received. These requests, along with all the required data, can be submitted to APHIS by States as needed. If a request is granted by APHIS, it will be valid for 2 years at which time the requester (State) must request a renewal.

The special needs request are submitted with the required information and cover letter from a requesting State to the Deputy Administrator of Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ). The required information includes:

- Survey. The results of a scientifically sound survey that shows that the pest of concern is not in the State or subdivision of the State, or that shows the distribution of the pest.
- Risk of entry. A pest risk assessment or scientific data that shows that the pest could enter the area.
- Harm or injury. Information that shows that if the pest entered or spread in the State, it would harm agricultural or environmental resources. Quantitative estimates of the potential injury are preferred.
- Special basis. Evidence that the area has special or unique characteristics that make it more vulnerable to harm or injury, such as unique fauna or flora, special historical or cultural interest, etc.
- Requested restrictions. Details about what specifically is requested, why it is necessary, why it will work and how it will help.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

The data gathered/compiled as part of these special need exception requests can be done at the respondent’s/State’s preference. APHIS only requires that the information be formally sent to APHIS. These requests are very infrequent.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purpose described in item 2 above.**

The information APHIS collects is exclusive to its mission to prevent the introduction of plant pests and plant diseases into the United States, and to prevent the spread of diseases within the United States. The information is not available from any other source. In addition, the information requested is specific to each plant pest, host, and geographic location.

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

APHIS estimates zero percent of the respondents will be considered small entities.

**6. Describe the consequences 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.**

If this information was not collected or collected less frequently, it would create vulnerabilities which would cripple APHIS' ability to prevent the introduction or spread of plant pests and diseases in the United States. In addition, it would leave a State, or a political subdivision of a State, with unique or special need, with less than adequate protection from the dissemination of destructive biological control organisms, plant pests, and noxious weeds within the United States.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information collection guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.**

- **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- **requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or 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; or requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, 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.**

No special circumstances exist that would require this collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information collection guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

**8. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting form, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB.**

APHIS engaged in productive consultations with the following individuals concerning the information collection activities associated with this program. It contacted these respondents by email and phone to discuss the information APHIS collects to administer the Special Need Request Under the Plant Protection Act. Discussed were how the Agency and the respondents obtain the necessary data and how frequently; how much data is available; the convenience and clarity of reporting formats and other collection instruments; and the clarity of, and necessity for, any recordkeeping requirements. The consulted individuals had no concerns with any of these items and had no further recommendations. In the last 10+ years, APHIS has only received one of these requests and there have been no other inquiries concerning this information collection.

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On Monday, August 30, 2021, APHIS published in the Federal Register (86 FR 48386) a 60-day notice seeking public comments on its plans to request a 3-year renewal of this collection of information. APHIS received no comments from the public.

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

This information collection activity involves no payments or gifts to respondents.

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

No additional assurance of confidentiality is provided with this information collection. Any and all information obtained in this collection shall not be disclosed except in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and others that are considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency 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.**

This information collection activity asks no questions of a personal or sensitive nature.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.**

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.**

See APHIS Form 71 for hour burden estimates.

- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.**

APHIS estimates the total annualized cost to the above respondents to be \$8,793. APHIS arrived at this figure by multiplying the total burden hours (160) by a State respondent’s \$54.96 average wage with benefits. This was obtained from the U.S Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics Employer Costs for Employee Compensation News Release USDL-22-0469 ([https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/ecec\\_03182022.htm](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/ecec_03182022.htm)), which was released on March 18, 2022.

**13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.**

There is zero annual cost burden associated with capital and start-up, operation and maintenance, and purchase of services in connection with this program.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

See APHIS Form 79. The estimated cost for the Federal Government is \$2,331.

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

	Requested	Program Change Due to New Statute	Program Change Due to Agency Discretion	Change Due to Adjustment in Agency Estimate	Change Due to Potential Violation of the PRA	Previously Approved
Annual Number of Responses	1	0	0	0	0	1
Annual Time Burden (Hr)	160	0	0	0	0	160

There is no change in burden for this request for renewal. Although APHIS has received only one exception request since 2012, the information collection remains active as there is an increase in pest detections and sudden outbreaks could potentially affect 10 or more states.

**16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.**

APHIS has no plans to publish information collected in connection with this program.

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

There are no USDA forms associated with this information collection request.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in the “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act.”**

APHIS is able to certify compliance with all the provisions under the Act.

**B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

Statistical methods are not used in this information collection.