

2024 SUPPORTING STATEMENT
Electric System Emergency Restoration Plan
OMB Control No. 0572-0140

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

This package is submitted under regular clearance as a revision of a currently approved collection.

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is uniquely coupled with the electric infrastructure of rural America and its electric borrowers serving rural America because a substantial portion of the electric infrastructure of the United States resides in, and is maintained by, rural America. To ensure that the electric infrastructure in rural America is adequately protected, RUS requires that all electric borrowers conduct a Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (VRA) of their respective systems and utilize the results of this assessment to enhance an existing Emergency Restoration Plan (ERP) or create an ERP.

The items covered in this information collection package are received from RUS electric program distribution, generation, and transmission borrowers, who are required by 7 CFR 1730.27 and 1730.28 to identify critical assets and develop an Emergency Restoration Plan (ERP). The ERP details how borrowers will restore systems in the event of a system-wide outage resulting from a major natural or man-made disaster or other causes. The ERP also includes preventative measures for emergency recovery from physical and cyber-attacks to the borrower's electric systems and addresses Homeland Security concerns.

Electric power systems have been identified in Presidential Decision Directive 63 (PDD-63) as one of the critical infrastructures of the United States. The United States electric power system consists of three distinct components: (1) generation facilities, (2) transmission facilities (including bulk transmission and subtransmission facilities); and (3) distribution facilities.

The definitions for the electric power system's key components are defined as the following:

- *Generation facilities* means the generation plant and related facilities, including the building containing the plant, all fuel handling facilities, and the step-up substation used to convert the generator voltage to transmission voltage, as well as related energy management (dispatching) systems.
- *Transmission facilities* mean all electrical lines and related facilities, including certain substations, used to connect distribution facilities to generation facilities. They include bulk transmission and subtransmission facilities.
- *Bulk transmission facilities* mean the transmission facilities connecting power supply facilities to the subtransmission facilities, including both the high and low voltage sides of the transformer used to connect to the subtransmission facilities, as well as the supervisory control and data acquisition systems.
- *Subtransmission facilities* means the transmission facilities that connect the high voltage side of the distribution substation to the low voltage side of the bulk

transmission or generating facilities, as well as related supervisory control and data acquisition facilities.

- *Distribution facilities* means all electrical lines and related facilities beginning at the consumers meter base and continuing back to and including the distribution substation.

The term “*critical infrastructure*” is defined in section 1016(e) of the USA Patriot Act of 2001 (42 U.S.C. 5195c(e)) as “systems and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the incapacity or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters.”

Other critical infrastructures identified in PDD-63 are dependent upon the full and continuous functioning of the electric power system. Further, damage to or loss of critical or significant parts of the United States electric power system can cause enormous damage to the environment, loss of life and economic loss and can affect the national security of the United States. Such damage or loss can be caused by an act of nature or an act by man, ranging from an accident to an act of terrorism. Of particular concern are physical and cyber threats from terrorists. Protecting America's critical infrastructure is the shared responsibility of Federal, state, and local government in active partnership with the private sector.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 7 (HSPD-7) established a national policy for Federal departments and agencies to identify and prioritize United States critical infrastructure and key resources and to protect them from terrorist attacks. The Department of Homeland Security's Directorate of Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection (IAIP) is the lead organization in coordinating the national effort to secure the nation's critical infrastructure. This IAIP function will give state, local, and private entities one primary contact within the Federal government for coordinating protection activities, including vulnerability assessments, strategic planning efforts, and exercises. RUS and its electric borrowers are diligently proactive in electric infrastructure security.

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

The VRA is utilized to identify specific assets and infrastructure owned or served by the electric utility, determine the criticality and risk level associated with such assets and infrastructure including a risk versus cost analysis, identify threats and vulnerabilities, if any, review existing mitigation procedures, and assist in the development of new and additional mitigation procedures, if necessary. The ERP provides written procedures detailing response and restoration efforts in the event of a major system outage resulting from a natural or manmade disaster. An annual exercise of the ERP will ensure operability and employee competency and serve to identify and correct deficiencies in the existing ERP. The exercise may be implemented singly by an individual borrower, or by an individual borrower as a participant in a multi-party (to include utilities, government agencies and other participants or combination thereof) tabletop execution or actual implementation of the ERP. Tabletop is a hypothetical emergency response scenario in which participants will identify the policy,

communication, resources, data, coordination, and organizational elements associated with an emergency response).

Electric borrowers maintain an ERP as part of prudent utilities practices. These ERPs are essential to continuous operation of the electric systems. 7 CFR 1730.26(b) requires that each electric applicant develop an ERP that is approved and signed by the applicant's Manager or Chief Executive Officer and approved by the applicant's Board of Directors. Applicants for new RUS electric loans, loan guarantees, or grants must include the written certification of an ERP in the application package submitted to RUS. If the self-certification of an ERP is not received, approval of the loan, loan guarantees, or grants will not be considered until the certification is received by RUS.

INFORMATION COLLECTED UNDER THIS OMB PACKAGE:

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS - NO FORMS:

None.

System for Award Management (SAM) Registration, General Certifications and Representations

Currently, applicants are not required to have an active registration in SAM.

INFORMATION COLLECTION APPROVED UNDER OTHER OMB DOCKETS:

None.

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, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection.

RUS is committed to meeting the requirements of the E-Government Act, which requires Government agencies in general to promote the use of the Internet and other information technologies and to provide increased opportunities for citizen access to Government information and to provide the public the option of submitting information or transacting business electronically to the maximum extent possible. RUS utilizes RD Apply, an application intake system, for applicants to apply electronically for RUS loan and grant programs.

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

This certification of an Emergency Restoration Plan is an annual submission and is required for each borrower. No similar information already exists; therefore, there is no duplication of information.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

All but 10% of the electric borrowers meet the Small Business Administration criteria for a small business. RUS has made every effort to ensure that the burden on these entities is the minimum necessary to effectively administer the agency programs. The certification, of which a sample is available electronically in fillable pdf form, is unique to each electric borrower and is the minimum necessary to ensure that electric borrowers conduct the Vulnerability and Risk Assessment of their systems and establish and maintain an Emergency Restoration Plan.

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

This self-certification is required from each RUS electric applicant during the application process and should be submitted in letter form along with the application through RUS' electronic application intake system, RD Apply. This certification will be kept on file at the Washington, DC headquarters. If this information were not collected in the timeframe specified in the rule, vulnerabilities that may exist in the electric system infrastructure would not be detected. The result would be increased risk to public safety and may affect the Government loan security interest.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

a. Requiring respondents to report information more than quarterly.

There is no request to collection this information more than quarterly.

b. Requiring written responses in less than 30 days.

There is no requirement to respond in less than 30 days.

c. Requiring more than an original and two copies.

There is no requirement for more than an original and two copies to be submitted.

d. Requiring respondents to retain records for more than 3 years.

Record retention requirements shall be in accordance with 7 CFR 1767.

- a. **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.**

This collection does not involve statistical information.

- b. **Requiring the use of a statistical data sampling that has not be reviewed and approved by OMB.**

This collection does not employ statistical sampling.

- a. **Requiring 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.**

This is no requirement of a pledge of confidentiality.

- b. **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.**

There is no requirement to submit propriety trade secrets.

8. If applicable, identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the Agency's notice soliciting comments on the information collection. Summarize public comments received and describe actions taken by the Agency in response to these comments. 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, reporting format (if any), and on data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

As required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), a notice requesting public comments was published on October 17, 2023, in the **Federal Register**, at 88 FR 71528. The comment period ended December 18, 2023, and no comments were received on this information collection.

The following individuals have been consulted to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, etc.:

General Manager
Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation
Clarksville, TN

Chief Financial Officer

Gibson Electric Membership Corporation
Trenton, TN

Engineering System Engineer
Southwest Louisiana Electric Membership Corporation
Lafayette, Louisiana

Overall, the borrowers believe that the collection of information requested is necessary, resources such as the CFR and Agency website are readily available, and the collection of information was not too burdensome or time-consuming. -

In addition to the individuals listed above, the Agency periodically reviews its procedures to determine if any paperwork requirements can be eliminated without lessening the Government's security of the Agency's loans portfolio. Agency staff, including General Field Representatives, often discusses paperwork requirements.

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

There is no payment or gift to respondents.

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

Rural Development (RD) supports the maintenance of confidentiality when appropriate. The Agency published a Privacy Act of 1974, System of Records (SORN) in the **Federal Register** on May 14, 2019 (84 FR 21315). A copy of that document can be found at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-05-14/pdf/2019-09874.pdf>.

11. Provide additional justification for any question of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitude, religious belief, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

The information collected does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature such as sexual behavior, religious beliefs, or other matters commonly considered private.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

Based upon the current number of approved electric program borrowers for FY 23, the Agency estimates that there will be 41 respondents and 41 annual responses and 20.5 burden hours. The total cost to respondents is estimated to be \$897.70. Each response is estimated to require 30 minutes. 50 percent of the time, or 15 minutes, requires managerial attention and the other 50 percent requires the time of an

Administrative Assistant. Wage rates are based on information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, median hourly wage for General and Operations Managers, \$47.16, (Occupation Code 11-1021) and Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, \$19.71, (Occupation Code 43-6014) which can be found at https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm. With the addition of cost of benefits, the hourly wages are \$61.87 and \$25.70 respectively, so the cost averaging the two out as they both spend 15 minutes is \$43.79. The calculation of estimated cost of labor for the hours required to comply with this information collection is illustrated in accompanying spreadsheet:

Data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employer Cost for Employee Compensation – March 2022 is utilized to calculate the total cost of benefits. Benefits as a percentage of total compensation for Private Industry Workers, Management, Business, and other Financial Occupations and Private Industry Workers, Office and Administrative Support Occupations 31.2% and 30.4% of total hourly compensation, respectively. See https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/ecec_06162022.pdf.

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

a. Total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life); and

There are no capital or start-up costs associated with this collection.

b. Total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.

There are no operation and maintenance, or purchase of services components associated with this collection.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government.

The annualized cost to the Federal Government to administer the activities reported in this package is estimated to be \$849.52. RUS will receive approximately 41 responses and each response requires 15 minutes of professional time (GS 13 Step 5) for review and processing. Costs are shown below at a wage rate of \$60.83 for professional time (GS 13 Step 5) with \$22.05 benefits for total hourly wage rate of \$82.88.¹

COST TO THE GOVERNMENT

Responses	Hour burden	Hourly Wage/Benefit	Annualized cost to the
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¹ Cost of total benefits as a percentage of total compensation for Federal Government employees has been calculated by multiplying 36.25% by the hourly OPM wage and adding that amount in accordance with OMB Memorandum M-08 13.

		cost	Federal Government
41	.25	\$82.88	\$849.52

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-1.

There is a decrease in the number of burden hours and a decrease in the number of borrowers as the ERP self-certification is required only during the application process as well as changes via increased salary rates.

16. For collection of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

The results of this collection of information are not intended for publication.

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.

No such approval is requested.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in item 19 on OMB 83-1.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This information collection does not employ statistical methods.