



Supporting Statement for Generic Clearance for Questionnaire Testing and Research

June 2025

<p>Part A: Justification OMB No. 1905-0186</p>

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), the statistical and analytical agency within the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), prepared this report. By law, our data, analyses, and forecasts are independent of approval by any other officer or employee of the U.S. Government. The views in this report do not represent those of DOE or any other federal agencies.

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EIA-882T, Generic Clearance for Questionnaire Testing and Research

Introduction

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) is the statistical and analytical agency within the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). It collects, analyzes, and disseminates independent and impartial energy information to promote sound policymaking, efficient markets, and public understanding regarding energy and its interaction with the economy and the environment. EIA is required to publish, and otherwise make available independent, high-quality statistical data to federal government agencies, state and local governments, the energy industry, researchers, and the general public.

EIA requests a three-year extension with changes for EIA-882T, “Generic Clearance for Questionnaire Testing and Research.” The EIA-882T allows EIA to conduct field testing of pilot surveys, cognitive interviews, respondent debriefings, usability interviews, field tests, focus groups, pretesting of questionnaires, and the validation of quality data that is collected on EIA survey forms. Through the use of these methodologies, EIA will improve the quality of data being collected, reduce or minimize respondent burden, increase agency efficiency, and improve responsiveness to the public’s need for relevant energy data.

Change made:

1. EIA proposes to collect personally identifiable information (PII) only to the extent necessary to recruit participants for questionnaire testing, evaluation, and research. This PII would not be retained, with the exception of information needed to provide remuneration for participants of questionnaire testing, evaluation, and research and conduct associated data analysis.

A.1. Legal Justification

The authority for this information collection is provided by the following general provisions:

1. Title 15 U.S. Code §772, which established the mandatory requirement of owners and operators of businesses in the U.S. to report energy supply and consumption data to the EIA Administrator.
2. Title 15 U.S. Code §764, which established the EIA Administrator’s powers to plan, direct, and conduct mandatory and voluntary energy programs that are designed and implemented in a fair and efficient manner. These powers include duties to collect, evaluate, assemble, and analyze energy information on U.S. reserves, production, demand, and related economic data, while obtaining the cooperation of business, labor, consumer, and other interests.
3. Title 15 U.S. Code §790a, which established the National Energy Information System (NEIS) that is the enclave containing the energy data collected by EIA, which allows EIA to describe and analyze energy supply and consumption in the U.S. NEIS allows EIA to perform statistical and forecasting activities to meet the needs of the U.S. Department of Energy and Congress, as well

as the needs of the States to the extent required by the Natural Gas Act [Title 15 U.S. Code §717 et seq.] and the Federal Power Act [Title 16 U.S. Code §791a et seq.].

A.2. Needs and Uses of Data

EIA-882T, Generic Clearance for Questionnaire Testing and Research, allows EIA to adopt, and use state-of-the-art and multi-disciplinary research methods and software tools to improve and enhance the quality of EIA and DOE data collections. This clearance will also be used to aid in the development of new surveys. In addition, it will help ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. This authority would also allow EIA to improve data collection in order to meet the needs of EIA's customers while also staying current in the evolving nature of the energy industry.

EIA will use a variety of survey improvement techniques as appropriate to the individual project being researched. These include pilot surveys, pretests/field tests, usability testing, cognitive interviews and focus groups.

The following methods are included in this clearance:

Pilot Surveys Pilot surveys conducted under this clearance will generally be methodological studies and will use statistically representative samples when appropriate. Pilot surveys will normally be utilized when EIA undertakes a complete redesign of a particular data collection methodology or when EIA undertakes data collection in new energy areas, such as Hydrocarbon Gas Liquids production, alternative fueled motor vehicles, battery storage for electric power production, and other emerging areas of the energy sector where data collection would provide utility to EIA. The pilot surveys may replicate all or some components of the methodological design, sampling procedures (where possible), and questionnaires of the full-scale survey. There may be circumstances when the full survey and all components of the methodological design are not needed for the pilot test and an abbreviated form may be substituted for conducting a pilot test. This occurs when EIA is testing the mode of reporting information such as a new online reporting system or utilizing new software. A pilot test may also be conducted before a large-scale collection in order to test and refine the implementation procedures for the full-scale survey. Another example is when EIA is conducting qualitative research and seeks to test a research protocol or the effectiveness of an approach for contacting potential volunteers and inviting them to participate.

Pretests/Field Tests EIA conducts pretests when developing new questions or new survey questionnaires to see how respondents answer questions, interpret terminology, and identify potential data quality problems. EIA may also conduct pretests to gather data to refine questionnaire items, response categories and scales, and assess reliability or validity of responses. In addition, EIA may use a field test or experiment (a study to compare the effects of two or more procedures or questionnaires) when planning a change in methodology, mode of data collection, or questions in an ongoing survey. This enables comparisons and often provides quantifiable data to decide among the different methods or questions to use. EIA may consider conducting a field test experiment on a representative sample to

measure the effect of changing the sample design, the sampling frame, or any other change in methods or questions that impact the resulting estimates.

Qualitative Studies EIA uses qualitative studies for exploratory investigations in order to decide on the appropriate data collection mode, interview contact approach, or any other issue when little is known about a problem or the best approach to implement a data collection program. A qualitative study uses unstructured interviews, notes, or observations that are typically difficult to quantify. A variety of methods may be used in a qualitative study, including focus groups, unstructured interviews, or semi-structured interviews with “experts,” stakeholders, or other participants. Case studies may also be conducted. Typically, these methods attempt to obtain insights through the intensive study of a relatively small number of people, institutions, or establishments. Respondents are usually purposively chosen because of their knowledge, experience, or status. In a qualitative study different persons or entities may be chosen because they “represent” a particular kind of person, entity, or building establishment, but the sample is usually not representative—in a statistical sense—of any larger population. However, the obtained information may be very useful in generating hypotheses that can be tested more systematically with other methods such as quantitative surveys.

Cognitive Interviews Cognitive interviews are typically one-on-one interviews in which respondents are asked to “think aloud” or asked “retrospective questions” as they answer questions, read survey materials, define terminology, or complete other activities as part of a typical survey process. A number of different techniques may be involved including, asking respondents what specific words or phrases mean or asking respondents probing questions to determine how they estimate, calculate, or determine specific data elements on a survey. The objectives of these cognitive interviews are to identify problems of ambiguity or misunderstanding, explain their process for reporting information, or to identify other difficulties respondents have answering survey questions in order to reduce measurement error from estimates based on a survey.

Respondent Debriefings Respondent debriefings conducted under this clearance will generally be methodological or cognitive research studies. The debriefing form is administered after a respondent completes a questionnaire either in paper format, electronically, or through in-person interviews. The debriefings contain probing questions to determine how respondents interpret the survey questions, how much time and effort was spent completing the questionnaire, and whether they have problems in completing the survey/questionnaire. Respondent debriefings also are useful in determining potential issues with data quality and in estimating respondent burden.

Usability Testing Usability tests are similar to cognitive interviews in which a respondent is typically asked to “think aloud” or asked “retrospective questions” as he or she reviews an electronic questionnaire, website, visual aid, or hard copy survey form. The objective of usability testing is to check that respondents can easily and intuitively navigate electronic survey collection programs, websites, and other survey instruments/materials to submit their data to EIA.

Focus Groups Focus groups, involve group sessions guided by a moderator who follows a topic guide containing questions or subjects focused on a particular issue rather than adhering to a standardized

protocol. Focus groups are useful for exploring issues with from a specific group of respondents, data users, or other stakeholders of EIA data.

Field Techniques Field techniques described in survey research and survey methodology literature will be employed as appropriate. These include follow-up probing, memory cue tasks, paraphrasing, confidence rating, response latency measurements, free and dimensional sort classification tasks, and vignette classifications. The objective of all of these techniques is to aid in the development of surveys that work with respondents' thought processes, thus reducing response error and burden. These techniques have also proven useful for studying and revising pre-existing questionnaires.

Behavior Coding Behavior coding is a quantitative technique in which a standard set of codes is systematically applied to respondent / interviewer interactions in interviewer-administered surveys or respondent / questionnaire interactions in self-administered surveys. The advantage of this technique is that it can identify and quantify problems with the wording or ordering of questions, but the disadvantage is that it does not necessarily illuminate the underlying causes.

Split Panel Tests (A/B Testing) Split panel tests, or A/B testing, refer to controlled experimental testing of alternative hypotheses. Thus, they allow one to choose from among competing questions, questionnaires, definitions, error messages or survey improvement methodologies with greater confidence than any of the other methods. Split panel tests conducted during the fielding of the survey are superior in that they can support both internal validity (controlled comparisons of the variable(s) under investigation) and external validity (represent the population under study). Most of the previously mentioned survey improvement methods can be strengthened when teamed with this method.

The information gathered will be used to modify and develop better questionnaires and data collection procedures. The end result will be improvements in the quality of data being collected by EIA, reduction or minimization of respondent burden, increased agency efficiency, and improved responsiveness to the public. Additionally, the information collected may be used to develop research reports, research publications, peer-reviewed journal articles, peer-reviewed book chapters, and informational white papers. The results of this research may also be prepared for presentation at professional conferences, internally at DOE and to other federal agencies.

During the past three years, EIA has used this clearance for a variety of studies including:

**Cognitive Testing Activities for the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)
September 2022**

EIA was tasked in the IIJA to explore the feasibility of collecting self-reported electric vehicle (EV) information from EV owners. Eighty-eight EV owners were recruited for a computer assisted self-interview about their electric vehicles. Both battery EV and plug-in hybrid EV owners were recruited. The survey was administered online and asked respondents about their type of EV, driving habits and charging habits. In light of the IIJA, this qualitative study used unmoderated online probing to gauge the quality of respondent's answers as well as follow up survey questions asking respondents about their perceived difficulty with reporting information and their confidence in the responses they provided. Finally, EIA also examined item non-response rates to gauge respondents' ability to report information.

Second, EIA explored the feasibility of collecting the delivered generation resource mix from Load Serving Entities (LSEs) and the marginal generation units and associated CO₂ emissions within each Balancing Authority's (BA) boundaries. This research was conducted concurrently. First, EIA conducted 29 early-stage scoping interviews with LSEs to determine if LSEs track the resource mix of generated and purchased electricity that is distributed to their load, how this information is stored in records, and the feasibility of reporting these data annually, monthly, or hourly to determine the practicality of providing this information on a near real-time basis. Early-stage scoping interviews were conducted with four BAs to determine if they track ownership of generators that make up the resource mix used to generate electricity and if they track generation resources dispatched to meet incremental load, how these data are stored in records, and if not already collecting, the burden associated with beginning to collect this information. Following the early-stage scoping interviews, EIA developed a survey questionnaire to measure the delivered generation resource mix for each LSE. Thirteen cognitive interviews were conducted with LSEs to evaluate these new questions. Additionally, new survey questions were developed and proposed to be added to the Hourly and Daily Balancing Authority Operations Report (EIA-930) and Annual Balancing Authority Generator Inventory Report (EIA-930A) to measure marginal emissions within the metered boundaries of BAs.

Pretesting Activities for the Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS)

October 2022

EIA explored energy-related changes to 68 office buildings following the COVID-19 pandemic. The data came from an exploratory, unmoderated web-only survey conducted in 2023 with a convenience sample. EIA conducted the survey to learn about changes to commercial buildings brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The results inform questionnaire development for the next CBECS. EIA found that respondents for office buildings described changes to their building's vacancy, heating, ventilation, air conditioning systems, and to air filtration.

Heating Shutoff Cognitive Testing and Pilot Survey

April 2023

Two rounds of cognitive interviews were conducted with a sample of electric-only, natural gas-only, and dual-service utilities that are on the EIA-861M and/or EIA-857 sample frames. EIA conducted a total of 67 full or partial interviews with electric and natural gas utilities. In addition, EIA conducted a review of utility reports to state commissions about customer disconnections and related metrics for all 50 states and District of Columbia. The review included documenting which states require utility reporting to state commissions, the frequency and level of the reporting, and the specific information included in those reports. Following the cognitive interviews and the review, EIA conducted a pilot survey. In total, there were 201 completes and 16 partial completes. Thirty entities refused and 415 entities did not respond. Overall, respondents needed about 2.5 hours, on average, to complete the survey the first time and estimated needing about one hour less, or about 1.5 hours on average, the next time they complete it.

Dependent Interviewing Respondent Debriefing and Usability Interviews (Forms EIA-3 and EIA-63C)

April 2023

Dependent interviewing is a method in which respondents are presented with their previously reported data, administrative data or data from other sources during data collection to reduce response burden and improve data quality. To assess respondents' attitudes toward dependent interviewing, including their views towards how dependent interviewing influenced their burden, EIA conducted unmoderated online respondent debriefings and received a total of 62 usable responses from EIA-3 and EIA-63C, respondents. To further assess respondents' perceptions toward prefilled answers and the usability of the questionnaire when answers were prefilled, 8 usability interviews were conducted with EIA-3 respondents and 3 usability interviews were conducted with EIA-63C respondents. In general, most respondents viewed prefilled answers in the two surveys favorably. Respondents indicated that prefilled answers made completing the survey form easier, faster, and less burdensome than the alternative (having no prefill data). The results showed that the majority of respondents identified that the survey form had prefilled answers and that the prefilled answers came from the organization's previous data collection cycle. Respondents to the EIA-63C were less inclined to spend time verifying the accuracy of the prefilled answers. However, prefilled answers are only used in the EIA-63C for questions about the characteristics of the facility, which are not likely to change. Additionally, some usability issues were found with regards to updating prefilled answers in both surveys.

EIA-861A Schedule 4C Proposed Changes

November 2024

The EIA-861A form collects energy data from both regulated and deregulated states. The sales, revenue and customer count data on both EIA-861 schedule 4B and 4C should theoretically be equal. However, in some states, the data on Schedule 4B and the data on Schedule 4C do not match. To pinpoint the discrepancies and improve the data quality, EIA is proposing to collect the names of the power marketer (company), state, balancing authority, and the total megawatt hours from distribution companies. EIA does not plan to publish these data. However, if new power marketers are identified in this proposed data collection, EIA will be able to include these power marketers in future EIA-861 data collections. These proposed new questions would be used for future frame development. EIA would like to first assess and understand the feasibility of collecting these data from distribution companies. EIA is conducting virtual interviews and unmoderated web interviews to understand whether or not distribution companies can provide this information, gain a better understanding of the terminology used across the industry, understand respondents' concerns about providing this information, and their preferred mode for submitting this information. Currently, EIA has completed nine interviews, and the unmoderated web survey was sent to those that did not participate in the interview. This research is ongoing.

EIA-923 and EPA CEMS Cognitive Testing Activities

March 2024

The 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act called for harmonization of emission estimates produced by EIA and EPA. To estimate carbon dioxide emissions for the electric power sector, EIA applies a fuel-specific emissions factor to the quantity of fuel consumed, using data collected on the Power Plant Operations Report (EIA-923). Alternatively, EPA's Continuous Emission Monitoring System (CEMS), uses instrumentation installed on the stacks of large power plants to measure carbon emissions. Earlier research on emissions, which focused primarily on the electric power sector,

examined discrepancies in EIA-923's and CEMS' measure of emissions and concluded that both instruments are subject to measurement error and differences in scope, emission sources considered, and other complicating factors. Additionally, different individuals representing electric power plants are responsible for responding to the EIA-923 and the CEMS. It was recommended that EIA develop a new data publication that presents comparable (adjusted for differences in scope) EIA-923 and CEMS electric power sector emissions estimates and discusses reasons for any differences. Before that is done, EIA determined it was necessary to evaluate the EIA-923 to determine if any changes to the survey form are needed. To that end, EIA conducted 22 cognitive interviews with respondents to the EIA-923. Following the EIA-923 cognitive interviews, EIA conducted 6 qualitative interviews with CEMS data providers at the same power plants.

Residential Energy Consumption 2024 Pretesting (Forms EIA-457A, EIA-457D, EIA-457E, EIA-457F, EIA-457G)

November 2023

EIA conducted 39 unmoderated cognitive interviews on the Residential Energy Consumption Survey. This testing was intended to gauge the respondents' understanding of key terms, the clarity of questionnaire wording, and the difficulty experienced while answering proposed questions. The unmoderated cognitive interviews asked respondents open-ended probes about questions of interest, which attempted to gauge respondents' comprehension of key survey concepts, and any difficulty respondents experienced while completing the questions. In addition, respondents were asked to rate the difficulty of completing various survey questions on a close-ended Likert scale.

Residential Energy Consumption 2024 Usability Testing (Forms EIA-457A, EIA-457D, EIA-457E, EIA-457F, EIA-457G)

April 2024

EIA undertook usability testing to learn how respondents interpret the Residential Energy Consumption Survey's web design and functionality, identify difficulties respondents have completing actions and navigating the survey, and determine how respondents understand and address feedback provided by the survey. Usability testing took place over two rounds and was conducted by an EIA contractor. Round one included 15 respondents and round two included 12 respondents. No major usability issues were detected with the survey. Respondents generally understood the web edits and navigated them with ease.

EIA-923 Sensitivity Study Cognitive Testing Activities (Form EIA-923)

May 2024

In 2017, EIA received approval from OMB to publish the unsuppressed tables for aggregated monthly and annual price data by state. However, despite EIA having the authority to publish this unsuppressed data, this change was never implemented, and the tables with suppression are currently being published. Before moving forward with any changes in the suppression strategy, EIA determined that a sensitivity study should be conducted to determine respondents' perceptions about the proposed changes to the published price data. EIA conducted an online survey of independent power producers located in the most often suppressed states. EIA received a total of 19 responses to the online survey, all of which indicated that this change in suppression would have no impact on these companies. In

addition, EIA conduct 5 virtual qualitative interviews with EIA-923 respondents to better understand the impact changes to the data tables may have on their companies. These respondents indicated that changing the suppression rules would likely not impact their companies, and most respondents stated that having more data could be beneficial.

Residential Utility Disconnection Survey Exploratory Interviews (Form EIA-112)

June 2024

EIA was directed to conduct a monthly survey of electric and natural gas utilities to collect the number of residential customer final notifications, disconnections, and reconnections. During 2023, EIA consulted with stakeholders, conducted exploratory interviews with a sample of utilities, and fielded a pilot survey with the population of utilities. These pretesting activities resulted in the creation of the EIA-112 form, or the Residential Utility Disconnections Survey. After launching the survey, EIA received several additional research questions from stakeholders. In 2024, EIA conducted exploratory unmoderated online interviews with a sample of utilities to answer the research questions received from 2023 pretesting results and from stakeholders. A total of 42 electric, natural gas, and dual-service utilities responded to the web survey. Results from these pretesting studies led to the development of the EIA-112 Residential Utility Disconnection Survey, which was approved by OMB. EIA plans to launch the EIA-112 in the first quarter of 2025 as an annual survey that collects monthly data from qualified utilities that provide electricity, natural gas, or both services to residential customers.

EIA-64A Cognitive Testing Activities

December 2024

EIA is consolidating two items from form EIA-757A, the Natural Gas Processing Plant Survey, into form EIA-64A, the Annual Report of the Origin of Natural Gas Liquids Production, and suspending form EIA-757A. The EIA-757A shared the same sample with EIA-64A, so this consolidation reduces redundancy and respondent burden. The two items from EIA-757A have historically been published at the plant-level. The original items on EIA-64A, however, have historically been published at the state- or region-level. EIA would like to continue publishing the items from the EIA-757A at the plant-level, as well as explore the possibility of publishing other items in section 2 of the EIA-64A at the plant-level. To that end, EIA conducted 9 cognitive interviews regarding respondents' ability to report on the EIA-757A items and to determine respondents' perceptions about the proposed changes to the published data. Findings from this research will be incorporated into future Supporting Statement As to address any potential concerns articulated by respondents and/or data users.

A.3. Use of Technology

EIA utilizes different forms of technology when conducting its pretesting.

Internet data collection will continue to be a primary collection mode for EIA when conducting its research proposals approved under EIA-882T. EIA utilizes online surveys to answer research questions ranging from respondents' cognitive understanding of terminology used on our surveys to EIA data users' preferences on our data. In addition to online based surveys, EIA also uses internet-based video interviews with respondents and data users. This provides EIA with a cost-efficient system to collect information from respondents to improve EIA's surveys.

EIA uses a scheduling software to schedule interviews with participants. Participants are able to follow the link sent in their invitation letter and choose which time works best with their schedule, it then adds the interview to their calendar, so they are less likely to forget the interview. This has saved EIA staff time by eliminating scheduling phone calls and numerous emails back and forth.

EIA uses a qualitative software program when compiling research notes and analyzing data. This tool helps categorize and classify data. Automatically sort sentiment, themes, and attributes, and can quickly exchange data with SAS for further statistical analysis. This tool allows staff to easily cross-tabulate mixed methods data and visualize the results to brainstorm and map ideas, explore connections between project items and discover new paths of investigation.

A.4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

These tasks will not duplicate any other survey/questionnaire design or pretest work being done by EIA or other Federal agencies. One of the purposes of this request is to stimulate additional research that would not otherwise be performed due to time and cost constraints. This research may involve collaboration with other agencies, especially the Office of Management and Budget, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census Bureau, and the National Science Foundation.

EIA will use existing information to the maximum extent possible by reviewing results of earlier evaluations of survey data before attempting to revise existing questionnaires or design new ones.

A.5. Provisions for Reducing Burden on Small Businesses

One purpose of these research efforts is to accurately measure the reporting burden, develop survey methodologies and questionnaires that are consistent with the information that respondents maintain in their data systems during the ordinary course of business in order to minimize burden. These methods also provide small establishments a vehicle to inform EIA of the impacts that changes to data collection activities have on these establishments.

A.6. Consequences of Less-Frequent Reporting

Because this clearance is an on-going effort, it has the potential to have an immediate impact on all of EIA's data collections. If pretesting projects was not carried out, the quality of the data collected in the surveys would decline, EIA would be hindered in its ability to modify survey forms to collect information relevant to the energy market and it would limit EIA from meeting its mission of providing and disseminates independent and impartial energy information to promote sound policymaking, efficient markets, and public understanding regarding energy and its interaction with the economy and the environment.

A.7. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.5

All the guidelines listed in the OMB guidelines are met. There are no special circumstances.

A.8. Summary of Consultations Outside of the Agency

On December 6th, 2024, EIA published a 60-day Federal Register Notice, outlining proposed changes to the Generic Clearance for Questionnaire Testing and Research and inviting interested parties to comment. EIA received no comments.

Consultations with staff from other Federal agencies that sponsor surveys conducted by EIA will occur in conjunction with the testing program for each survey. These consultations include discussions concerning potential response problems, clarity of questions and instructions, and other aspects of respondent burden. EIA staff are active members of both government organizations and private organizations focused on the survey data collection and survey operations. As part of their memberships, EIA staff frequently attend annual conferences and regularly present research and chair panels at these events.

All EIA staff who perform cognitive research are members of the Interagency Response Error Group (IREG). This group is composed of employees across principal federal statistical agencies and meets quarterly to discuss current cognitive research projects and confer about common issues affecting cognitive research.

A.9. Payments or Gifts to Respondents

Respondents for activities conducted in the laboratory (e.g. cognitive interviews and focus groups) under this clearance may receive compensation for travel and participation. This practice has proven necessary and effective in recruiting subjects to participate in such research and is also employed by the other Federal cognitive laboratories. Research on incentives that may be conducted under this clearance may also involve nonmonetary incentives. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has noted that effectiveness of such incentives is a worthwhile research topic. If incentives need to be proposed for any research activity under this clearance, justification will be provided, and we will work closely with OMB on the incentive strategy to be employed.

A.10. Provisions for Protection of Information

For qualitative interviews, EIA will ask potential respondents if they would be willing to be audio or video recorded. If potential respondents agree, EIA will provide them with an informed consent form, which respondents will sign to signify compliance. A copy of the signed consent will be given to the potential respondents, with the original signed consent form kept on file at EIA. Audio or video recording will only be used for data analysis, and only those researchers at EIA that are involved in the research will have access to these recordings. If potential respondents are not willing to be audio/video recorded, interviewer will bypass recording and take notes. The following language will be included in the informed consent:

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) routinely tests forms used for collecting data or disseminating data in order to produce the best forms possible.

You have volunteered to take part in a study to *[enter a brief description and purpose of the study]*. In order to have a complete record of your comments, your interview will be *[audio recorded or video recorded]* using a digital device. We plan to use the recording to supplement our notes. Only staff involved in this research will have access to the recording.

[Use the following for CIPSEA protected survey] This study is being conducted under the authority of Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (CIPSEA), Title V of the E-Government Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-347).]

[Use the following if it is protected by exemptions FOIA] This study will be protected and not disclosed to the public to the extent that it satisfies the criteria for exemption under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. §552, the DOE regulations, 10 C.F.R. §1004.11, implementing the FOIA, and the Trade Secrets Act, 18 U.S.C. §1905.

- ☐ Check here if: I consent to participate
- ☐ Check here if: I consent to audio recording
- ☐ Check here if: I consent to video recording
- ☐ Check here if: I consent to screen recording
- ☐ Check here if: I do NOT consent to audio/video recording

If information is protected by exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), then information provided by participants in cognitive research activities will be protected and not disclosed to the public to the extent that it satisfies the criteria for exemption under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. §552, the DOE regulations, 10 C.F.R. §1004.11, implementing the FOIA, and the Trade Secrets Act, 18 U.S.C. §1905. If the survey is protected under the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002, then participants are informed that their responses are confidential and will only be used for statistical purposes. This is useful when the cognitive research involves a survey that already is protected under CIPSEA.

The data collected from respondents are tabulated and analyzed only for the purpose of evaluating the research in question. Information from the study will be de-identified with all direct identifying information removed and reference to the respondent is written in the third person singular and plural tenses. All respondents who participate in research under this clearance will be informed that their participation is voluntary. Results (in aggregate form) may be used to develop research reports, research publications, peer-reviewed journal articles, peer-reviewed book chapters, and informational white papers. The results of this research may also be prepared for presentation at professional conferences, internally at DOE, and to other federal agencies.

A.11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

Most of the questions being asked will not be of a sensitive nature and should not pose a problem to respondents. However, it is possible that in developing studies potentially sensitive questions may be included. One of the purposes of these efforts is to identify such questions, determine sources of sensitivity, and alleviate them insofar as possible before an actual survey is conducted.

A.12. Estimate of Respondent Burden Hours and Cost

The total requested burden is 22,500 hours and 22,500 responses. These hours and responses will be distributed as follows:

Annual:	7,500 hours/7,500 responses
Total:	22,500 hours/22,500 responses

As EIA works to better meet its organizational goals, we anticipate more collaboration with respect to enhanced survey/product development planning. EIA plans to expand research activity for evaluating proposals to modify surveys and to more accurately estimate reporting burden. This estimate is based on recent trends to increase the electronic data collection and processing of survey data, our experience with past clearances, and our anticipation that the research will require approximately one hour per respondent.

A variety of forms will be used in conducting the research under this clearance, and the exact number of different forms, length of each form, and number of subject/ respondents per form are unknown at this time. Additional capital, start-up, or operation and maintenance costs for respondents should not be necessary for any data collections under this clearance. There is typically no cost to respondents for participating in the research being conducted under this clearance, except for their time to complete the questionnaire.

A.13. Annual Cost to the Federal Government

Additional cost to the Federal Government is not anticipated. Expenses (equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff) will be incurred by EIA components as part of their normal operating budgets. We will include information about costs in the individual submissions to OMB.

A.14. Changes in Burden

There is no change in the requested burden hours or responses from the previous clearance.

A.16. Collection, Tabulation, and Publication Plans

Feedback collected under this generic clearance provides useful information and will be used for general service improvement and to explore new data products. Research findings can be used to develop conference papers/presentations, internal stakeholder presentations, present to DOE and other agencies in seminars, and develop white papers. Furthermore, EIA will have the ability to write research reports, research publications, peer-reviewed journal articles, peer-reviewed book chapters, and informational white papers.

A.17. OMB Number and Expiration Date

The OMB Number (1905-0186) and expiration date will be displayed on all the data collection forms and instructions.

A.18. Certification Statement

There are no exceptions to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB Form 83-I. This information collection request complies with 5 CFR 1320.9.