

**Generic Information Collection Request:
Exploratory Research 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).

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 the CFS are 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/programs-surveys/cfs.html>

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics is interested in learning if a significant amount of retail companies not currently in the CFS sample have been shipping their own products. Staff from the Data Collection Methodology & Research Branch (DCMRB) within the Economic Statistical Methods Division (ESMD) of the Census Bureau will be conducting unmoderated testing.

Purpose: The results of this study will be used to determine if the Bureau of Transportation Statistics needs to conduct further research on retail companies that are not currently part of the CFS sample.

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

Timeline: Testing will run from May through July 2025.

Language: Testing will be conducted in English only.

Method: The method of research will be unmoderated testing. Respondents will be sent a short-form questionnaire asking if their establishment ships from any retail location, and if they would be willing to participate in additional research in the future.

Sample: We plan to collect a maximum of 500 unmoderated responses from establishments in the retail sector. This sample will yield a suitable, broad representation of U.S. businesses for the exploratory research. This number of responses was selected because it is a manageable number for the time period allotted, it should adequately cover target companies, and should be large enough to identify meaningful findings.

The sampling frame for these interviews comes from a list of companies on the Business Register. Participants will be informed that participation in this exploratory research is voluntary.

Recruitment: Participants will be recruited from the Business Register. Before answering the questionnaire, participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential under Title 13. Respondents will be recruited via email.

Questionnaire: See Attachment D: Retail Shipping Questionnaire

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:** Consent Form to obtain participant consent for participation in the exploratory research session
2. **Attachment B:** 2022 CFS Survey Screenshots to illustrate the affiliated survey
3. **Attachment C:** Recruitment Email used to invite participants to the study
4. **Attachment D:** Retail Shipping Questionnaire

Length of questionnaire: We expect that each questionnaire response will last no more than two minutes (500 cases x two minutes per case = 16 hours and 40 minutes). To recruit participants, we expect to reach out via email up to two times per completed case. The emails are expected to take on average one minute to read and act upon (Two email contacts per completed case x 500 cases x one minute per case = 16 hours and 40 minutes). The total burden estimate is 33 hours and 20 minutes.

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

Rachel Sloan

Data Collection Methodology & Research Branch
Economic Statistics and Methodology Division
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20233
(301) 763-4911
Rachel.e.sloan@census.gov

Cc:

Nick Orsini	(ADEP) with enclosure
William Davie Jr	(ESMD) with enclosure
Temika Holland	(ESMD) with enclosure
Kevin Deardorff	(ERD) with enclosure
Jennifer Whitaker	(ERD) with enclosure
Berin Linfors	(ERD) with enclosure
Cha-Chi Fan	(BTS) with enclosure
Ryan Grube	(BTS) with enclosure
Jessica Holzberg	(ADRM) with enclosure
Jasmine Luck	(ADRM) with enclosure