

Supporting Statement A for OMB 0596-0010

Forest Industries and Logging Operations Data Collection Systems

Terms of Clearance (5 CFR 1320)

In accordance with 5 CFR 1320, the information collection is approved for three years.

Abstract (5 CFR 1320)

The USDA Forest Service requests approval from OMB to continue the collection of information related to forest industries and logging operations (OMB 0596-0010) set to expire June 30, 2026. The renewal is requested with no changes to the currently approved information collection. This information collection effort provides unique data from forest and forest products industry which in turn allow for timely assessments of the conditions and trends of the natural resources of the United States and the primary forest sector industries. Respondents include a sample of the population of primary wood processing industrial facilities across the U.S.

A. Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The USDA Forest Service requests renewal of approval for the Forest Industries and Logging Operations information collection, which is required to meet statutory obligations under the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (RPA, P.L. 93 378) and the Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978 (P.L. 95 307). These laws direct the Forest Service to maintain a comprehensive, scientifically supported assessment of current and anticipated uses, demand, and supply of the Nation's renewable forest resources.

To fulfill these mandates, the agency must maintain accurate, up to date information on industrial roundwood consumption, timber drain, mill by-product utilization, logging capacity, and logging residue. This information is not available from any other continuous, nationwide source, and is essential for identifying emerging timber supply issues, supporting policy development, and guiding forest management investment decisions. Without this collection, the Forest Service could not meet statutory requirements or provide policymakers with reliable information on timber resource use.

- 2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**
- a. What information will be collected—reported or recorded? (If there are pieces of information that are especially burdensome in the collection, a specific explanation should be provided.)**

The information collection process consists of two distinct surveys: the Mill Survey and the Loggers' Survey. Each survey is designed to gather specific data from primary wood processing facilities and logging contractors, respectively, providing comprehensive insights into forest industry operations.

Information collected through the **Mill Survey** includes:

- Roundwood consumption by type and volume
- County of origin of delivered timber
- Species processed
- Utilization and disposition of mill by-products

Information collected through the **Loggers' Survey** includes:

- Business location (home county/city)
- Number and size of logging crews
- Certification status
- Travel distance, procurement methods
- Utilized and unutilized portions of felled trees

These data allow the Forest Service to analyze timber drain, assess capacity, and estimate logging residue.

- b. From whom will the information be collected? If there are different respondent categories (such as a loan applicant versus a bank versus an appraiser), each should be described along with the type of collection activity that applies.**

Information is collected from:

Primary Wood Processing Facilities: Respondents include all types of primary wood using mills (with questionnaires sent to a mill's wood procurement agent, production manager, directors or manager, or other personnel previously identified as able to provide the information). Surveys may be completed by mail, email, phone, or in person interview, during which the data collector completes the form on behalf of the respondent.

Logging Contractors (Eastern U.S. only): Collected through face-to-face interviews at active harvesting sites. Responses are entered directly into an electronic data recorder by Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) field staff.

c. What will this information be used for? Provide ALL uses.

The information collected plays a crucial role in supporting a wide range of planning and analytical activities within the forestry sector. It directly contributes to both state and federal forest resource planning, providing the data needed for effective management and conservation strategies. Additionally, the data serves as a foundation for long-term planning efforts within the forest products industry, helping organizations anticipate future needs and challenges.

Economic development strategies at both the state and industry levels benefit from these insights, as stakeholders use the information to identify opportunities and address regional needs. Forestry agencies and consulting firms depend on the data for in-depth analysis, enabling them to provide informed recommendations and guidance. Furthermore, the collected information is essential for evaluating production dynamics across various regions, which informs decisions about resource allocation and operational improvements.

It also aids in estimating logging residue and analyzing operational constraints, helping to minimize waste and optimize efficiency. Ultimately, these uses inform decision-making processes across both public and private sectors and support comprehensive national Resource Planning Act (RPA) assessments, ensuring that forest resources are managed sustainably and effectively.

d. How will the information be collected (for example forms, non-forms, electronically, face-to-face, over the phone, over the internet)? Does the respondent have multiple options for providing the information? If so, what are they?

Mill Survey: Collected through

- Mail (paper forms)
- Email (fillable PDF or Excel workbook)
- Phone interview
- In person visit where the data collector conducts an interview and completes the form

Returned via email, mail, fax, or during an in-person interview.

Loggers' Survey (Eastern U.S.): Collected exclusively through face-to-face interviews with responses entered in an electronic data recorder. No follow-up contacts or respondent completed forms are required.

Electronic Capability:

Is this collection available electronically? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, can this collection be submitted electronically? Yes ☐ No ☐

Each avenue of information collected will need to choose one of the descriptions below:

- ☐ Fillable, Fileable
- ☐ Fillable, Printable
- ☐ Fillable, Fileable, Signable
- ☐ Paper only
- ☐ Printable only

Include the Uniform Resource Locator (URL):

e. How frequently will the information be collected?

Mill Survey: Annually from a sample of active mills. In western states, Form W2 census surveys the full mill population once every five years on a rotating schedule.

Loggers' Survey (Eastern U.S. only): Conducted through single contact, in person interviews during FIA field operations. Implementation was paused during the previous OMB approval period due to change in protocol for tree data collection. It was deemed best to focus the field crews' attention on field data collection, thus pausing the questionnaire.

f. Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside USDA or the government?

Information is shared only with established cooperators involved in data collection and analysis:

- State forestry agencies
- University of Montana, Bureau of Business and Economic Research
- University of Massachusetts Amherst, Family Forest Research Center
- University of Tennessee, School of Natural Resources

These partners operate under agreements that include confidentiality protections.

No other internal or external organization receives respondent level information.

g. If this is an ongoing collection, how have the collection requirements changed over time?

There have been no changes to the information collection requirements, forms, or respondent categories since the last approval.

The only operational change was a temporary pause in the Eastern loggers' survey, which did not alter underlying requirements.

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, such as 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 mill survey uses a mix of paper forms and electronic fillable forms, allowing respondents to submit information by email, fax, or mail.

Southern and Northern FIA units email fillable PDFs or Excel files to mills when available; Western states continue to use paper forms exclusively.

The loggers' survey is delivered in-person by field crews gathering felled tree measurements at the active logging sites, eliminating respondent burden associated with accessing or submitting forms.

The chosen methods balance technological efficiency with varying respondent capacity and minimize burden where possible.

Plans to develop an interactive electronic form—which would tailor questions and options as respondents progress and provide brief instructions for further clarification—have not yet been realized due to limited resources. Once implemented, this form will adapt subsequent questions based on prior responses; for example, after a respondent selects a mill type, only questions relevant to that mill type will be displayed. The interactive form will also feature error messages, such as when the sum of county volumes does not match the total log consumption volume. Development will incorporate feedback from collaborators involved in data collection and from a small group of respondents (fewer than 10, in accordance with OMB requirements). Ultimately, this interactive form is expected to reduce respondent burden, minimize invalid responses, and decrease the need for editing.

The Forest Service FIA continuously seeks collaboration with forest industry associations that may conduct similar data collection efforts. This approach ensures respondents are contacted only once—either by this information collection (OMB 0596-0010) or by their industry association—helping to further reduce duplication and burden.

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.

No other data source provides the continuous, nationwide information required for RPA assessments.

The Forest Service coordinates closely with federal agencies, state forestry departments, universities, and private organizations to identify potential overlap.

When alternative data are available, they are used to reduce burden (e.g., state tax records in Maine and Vermont under potential non-disclosure agreements).

Private sector datasets do not include wood source information, species detail, or mill by product data, nor do they provide consistent coverage across states or mill sizes.

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

Following the Small Business Administration definition, all entities targeted by this information collection (approximately 5,658) classify as small businesses or entities, given number of employees (<500 for wood products and <2000 for pulp and paper mills). However, within these facilities, the mill survey by design targets larger mills (based on production size). Mills are selected into the sample using a stratified sample design, with mill size as one stratum. In this manner larger production size mills have a higher probability of selection into the sample, minimizing the impact to smaller production mills. The collection effort aims to minimize impact to all respondents by

- 1) Requesting information useful to the states when generating state mill directories (such as mill contact information, products produced, and equipment lists) which helps reduce the number of surveys a mill could receive
- 2) Many state cooperators collecting the information for this survey attach address labels to the questionnaire. These address labels include the mill name, contact person/owner, address, and county. Including these labels reduces the burden on respondents by requiring only review for accuracy and edits as necessary.
- 3) Mills can provide other forms, spreadsheets, documentation, or other available internal or external reports that contain the same information requested in the questionnaires. Some mills maintain internal databases of the tree species processed, and from where trees are harvested. Instead of filling out this section in the respective questionnaire, the mill may submit a computer printout or an electronic file of this information from their database.
- 4) Some States rely on personal mill visits to collect the information. These data collectors often assist respondents in completing the questionnaires.
- 5) For mailed questionnaires, self-addressed and stamped return envelopes are provided.
- 6) To aid respondents in selecting their applicable wood procurement areas, states may add an appendix page to the mill survey showing a map of the state with counties name and number, and/or provide a list of state county names.

Loggers Survey: The Loggers' survey is designed to minimize the burden to businesses and entities of all sizes by presenting the questions in person and requiring no respondent's effort to access, complete, or mail forms. All answers are recorded by the

interviewer directly into data recorders, reducing the time and cost burden to respondents.

6. Describe the consequence 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 data collection is not conducted, the Forest Service would be unable to comply with the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, which requires periodic national assessments based on comprehensive and current data. The absence of this collection would: impair the agency's ability to update inventories and analyses of timber resource use; prevent the application of scientific knowledge to resource assessments; limit the development of periodic assessments required to guide resource management and policy decisions.

If the collection is conducted less frequently, federal and state agencies, legislators, industry stakeholders, and researchers would lack timely insight into national and regional trends in timber resource use and industry development. This would result in resource decisions being based on outdated information, diminishing the effectiveness of management strategies and potentially leading to unsustainable practices. Technical and legal obstacles to reducing burden include the statutory requirement for comprehensive, current data, which cannot be met without regular information collection.

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

a. Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly.

This collection of information does not have a requirement for the information to be collected quarterly or more often.

b. Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt.

This collection of information does not have a requirement for the respondent to prepare a written response to the collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt.

c. Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document.

This collection of information does not have a requirement for the respondents to submit more than an original document.

- d. Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years.**

The collection does not have a mandatory requirement for retaining records or record keeping.

- e. 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.**

The data collection is designed to represent the population of active mills by roundwood type and state (level of stratification). The loggers' survey is based on stratified geographical location and represents a valid estimate to generalize to the population, given type of wood products harvested.

- f. Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB.**

The collection process has been approved by OMB in a recurring basis for decades.

- g. 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.**

The pledge included in the questionnaire indicates protection of confidential information through aggregation of mill level data. Instructions on the mill survey's front page indicate that "All Volumes Reported will be held confidential and will only be used to aggregate to the county and state level"

Furthermore, where applicable, the survey form provides the option for respondents to opt out of state directories, further protecting mill's privacy.

Additionally, these data collections fall under the Forest Inventory and Analysis data protection authority where confidential information is protected under: 7 U.S.C. § 2276: US Code - Section 2276: Confidentiality of information.

- h. 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.**

Confidential information is protected under: 7 U.S.C. § 2276 : US Code - Section 2276: Confidentiality of information.

There are no other special circumstances. The collection of information is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

- 8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

The Federal Register 60-day Notice for the renewal of this information collection was published on March 25, 2026, in Volume 91, No. 57, pages 14520-14521.

No information of a sensitive nature is included with this information collection. No public comments received to date (May 20th, 2026).

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 record keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

Based on consultations with several sawmills and small operators (9 in total), respondents expressed a range of perspectives on data availability, clarity of instructions, frequency of collection, and comfort with data sharing. Some participants noted that the requested data were only rough estimates, emphasizing that availability can vary greatly and, at times, feels like “a wild guess,” whereas others found most information readily accessible, even if not supported by formal documentation. Several mills indicated that while basic production figures were familiar and easy to provide, more detailed breakdowns—such as by species or county—were difficult or time-consuming to generate without formal record-keeping systems. Views on the frequency of data collection varied, though most respondents found an annual cycle acceptable, with one operator noting that annual reporting remains reasonable and beneficial for maintaining up-to-date information for the forestry sector. Feedback on the clarity of instructions was largely positive, with respondents reporting that the survey was easy to navigate when completed verbally and that the instructions were sufficiently clear. Across all consultations, respondents generally reported no concerns with sharing their information, provided submissions would remain confidential or anonymized as needed and that individual mill-level production data would not be publicly disclosed.

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

This collection of information does not provide any 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.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552) governs the confidentiality to be provided for information received by the Forest Service. As such, information provided is covered under FOIA's exception 4, which protects "trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person that is privileged or confidential". A statement of confidentiality for mill level information is provided in each questionnaire's cover page. It indicates mill information will be held confidential and data only available summarized at county and state level.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly 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.

No information of a sensitive nature is included with this information collection.

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. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form.

Table 1. Burden hours by applicable survey form and corresponding number of respondents.

IDENTIFICATION OF REPORTING OR RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENT			ANNUAL BURDEN									
SECTION OF REGULATION	DESCRIPTION (For each entry, identify either Private Sector, Farm, or Not-For-Profit Institution)	FORM NO.	REPORTING					RECORD KEEPING			RESPONDENT COST	
			NO. OF RESPONDENTS	NO OF RESPONSES PER RESPONDENT	TOTAL ANNUAL RESPONSES (Col. D x E)	HOURS PER RESPONSE	TOTAL HOURS (Col. F x G)	NO. OF RECORD-KEEPERS	ANNUAL HOURS PER RECORD-KEEPER	TOTAL HOURS (Col. I x J)	COST PER HOUR	TOTAL COST (Col. H x L)
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)	(K)	(L)	(M)
	Private sector	L1	150	1	150	0.18	27	0	0	0	25.49	\$688.23
	Private sector	S1	803	1	803	0.5	401.5	0	0	0	22.15	\$8,893.23
	Private sector	N1A	1265	1	1265	0.83	1049.95	0	0	0	22.15	\$23,256.39
	Private sector	N1B	40	1	40	0.83	33.2	0	0	0	22.15	\$735.38
	Private sector	NT1	2400	1	2400	0.08	192	0	0	0	22.15	\$4,252.80
	Private sector	NT2	98	1	98	0.42	41.16	0	0	0	22.15	\$911.69
	Private sector	NT3	20	1	20	1	20	0	0	0	22.15	\$443.00
	Private sector		500	1	500	0.08	40	0	0	0	22.15	\$886.00
	Private sector	W1 annual	251	1	251	0.75	188.25	0	0	0	22.15	\$4,169.74
	Private sector	W2 census	82	1	82	0.85	69.7	0	0	0	22.15	\$1,543.86
	Private sector	W3 census card	49	1	49	0.25	12.25	0	0	0	22.15	\$271.34
	SUBTOTAL PRIVATE SECTOR		5658	11	5658	5.77	2075.01	0	0	0	246.99	\$46,051.65

Cost per hour is estimated at \$25.49 for loggers and \$22.15 for all other woodworking manufacturing. These estimates are as reported by the Bureau of Labor on the News Release of May 15th, 2026 (<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ocwage.pdf>)

Record keeping burden should be addressed separately and should include columns for:

- a) Description of record keeping activity: None
- b) Number of record keepers: None
- c) Annual hours per record keeper: None
- d) Total annual record keeping hours (columns b x c): Zero

13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers 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.

This collection does not have capital operation and maintenance costs

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

Annual cost to the agency for implementing the information collection are estimated based on current agreements with state agencies (Table 2), that cover all costs of survey delivery including printing, mailing, return postage, and follow-up activities (i.e., phone calls and visits to mills); agreements with university partners, to cover survey delivery as well as some data management and reporting; and effort by Forest Service staff who provide program direction, agreement management, training to partners, survey planning (design and sample selection), data management (editing and processing) and data delivery (analysis, tools, and reporting), plus data collection for a few states (Table 2).

Table 2. State survey coverage

State Agreements	UOM	UMASS	FS Staff
Alabama	Alaska	Connecticut	Arkansas
Florida	Arizona	Delaware	Louisiana
Georgia	California	Illinois	Oklahoma
Kentucky	Colorado	Iowa	
Mississippi	Idaho	Kansas	
North Carolina	Montana	Massachusetts	
South Carolina	Nevada	Nebraska	
Tennessee	New Mexico	New Hampshire	
Texas	Oregon	New Jersey	
Virginia	Utah	New York	
Minnesota	Washington	North Dakota	
Michigan	Wyoming	Ohio	
Pennsylvania		Rhode Island	
Maryland		South Dakota	
Wisconsin		West Virginia	
Maine			
Vermont			
Indiana			
Missouri			

Average annual costs include:

State agreements: \$771,750

University of Montana (UOM): \$593,000

University of Massachusetts (UMASS): \$410,000

Forest Service Staff: \$609,999 (Table 3)

Table 3. Estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government

Action Item	Personnel	GS Level	Hourly Rate*	Hours	Salary
Administration, data acquisition Nation-wide	1	13	75.14	624	46,887
Admin, UOM Pacific Northwest states	1	12	68.77	104	7,152
Admin, UOM Rocky Mountain states	1	14	86.18	104	8,962
Supervision, UMASS and Northern states	1	15	98.31	416	40,895
Data management (sample drawing, data editing, processing, reporting, etc.)	3	12	57.62	1,664	287,619
Data collection coordination	1	12	57.62	2,080	119,841
Data edit and survey follow-up	1	11	47.42	2,080	98,642
Total Annual Cost to Federal Government	XXXXXXX XXX	XXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	609,999

*Taken from: http://www.opm.gov/oqa/08tables/pdf/gs_h.pdf, Cost to Government calculated at hourly wage multiplied by 1.3.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported on the burden worksheet (IC staff paste answer into ROCIS Burden Short Statement Block).

The estimated burden decreased by approximately 8.5% (from 2,269 hours in the previous approval to 2,075 in current calculations) primarily because the number of active primary wood processing facilities has declined. This reduction reflects business closures within the industry, which has decreased our target population. Specifically, 5,658 respondents are estimated for this new survey period compared to 6,448 responses estimated for the previous approval period.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates and other actions.

In a normal year, the sample selection and data collection (of mills' previous year activity) starts at the beginning of the calendar year, data editing and processing occurs around the year's third quarter, and data posting to public, reporting, and sample frame updates take place during the year's last quarter. During data processing, collected data are aggregated by various categories providing information by county and state by tree species, primary wood product, and mill residues. This

information is compared, contrasted, and evaluated with earlier collections, timber resource supply statistics, and industrial output information.

Results of this information collection will be published as Forest Service Research Notes, General Technical Reports, and Resource Bulletins. The reports will contain tabular summaries of the information collected along with appropriate analysis and evaluation of impacts on the timber resource supply and demand conditions.

Compiled and summarized results will also be available over the agency's website and by contacting FIA.

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.

This collection of information is not seeking approval to not display the expiration date.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement, "Certification Requirement for Paperwork Reduction Act."

- ☒ On behalf of this USDA Forest Service, I certify that the collection of information encompassed by this request complies with 5 CFR 1320.9 and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3).