SUPPORTING STATEMENT A
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
Commodity Flow Survey a Component of the 2027 Economic Census
OMB Control No. 0607-0932

Abstract

The U.S. Census Bureau, in partnership with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), requests Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval to conduct the 2027 Commodity Flow Survey (CFS), a component of the 2027 Economic Census, as it is the only comprehensive source of multi-modal, system-wide data on the volume and pattern of goods movement in the United States.

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 CFS provides a crucial set of statistics on the value, weight, mode, and distance of commodities shipped by mining, manufacturing, wholesale, and selected retail and services establishments[1], as well as auxiliary establishments that support these industries. The Census Bureau will publish these shipment characteristics for the nation, census regions and divisions, states, and CFS defined geographic areas. As with the 2022 Commodity Flow Survey, this survey also identifies export, hazardous material, and temperature-controlled shipments.

BTS is mandated by Congress under Title 49 to collect economic data on transportation mode choice and goods movement. This information informs freight flows and is critical to understanding the use, performance, and condition of the nation's transportation system, as well as informing transportation policy and investment decisions. Data on the movement of freight are important for effective analyses of changes in regional and local economic development, safety issues, and environmental concerns. They also provide the private sector with valuable data needed for critical decision-making on a variety of issues including market trends, analysis, and segmentation. Each day, governments, businesses, and consumers make countless decisions about where to go, how to get there, what to ship and which transportation modes to use. Transportation constantly responds to external forces such as shifting markets, changing demographics, safety concerns, weather conditions, energy and environmental constraints, and national defense requirements. Good decisions require having the right information in the right form at the right time.

The CFS provides critical data to federal, state and local government agencies to make a wide range of transportation investment decisions for developing and maintaining an efficient transportation infrastructure that supports economic growth and competitiveness.

Transportation planners require the periodic benchmarks provided by a continuing CFS to evaluate and respond to ongoing geographic shifts in production and distribution centers, as well as policies such as "just in time delivery."

As part of the 2027 Economic Census, the CFS information collection is authorized by law under Title 13, U.S.C., Sections 8(b), 131 and, 193. Title 13, U.S.C., Sections 224 and 225 require response. The BTS also has authority to collect these data based on its enabling legislation 49 U.S.C., Section 6302. Relevant excerpts from Title 13 U.S.C. and Title 49 U.S.C. are provided in Attachment C.

The 2027 CFS will be split into 2 separate, but related surveys: the pre-screener survey and the main survey.

- The pre-screener survey is the first survey and is an electronic reporting sample survey of approximately 45,000 business establishments in selected retail industries, as well as auxiliary establishments. The pre-screener survey is used to determine if the establishment ships goods or not. If the respondent indicates that no shipments are made from the establishment,the business establishment will be removed from the main survey.
- The main survey is an electronic reporting sample survey of approximately 140,000 business establishments in the mining, manufacturing, wholesale, and selected retail and services industries, as well as auxiliary establishments that support these industries. Copies of the survey materials and the summary of changes are presented in Attachments A and B.

The CFS is co-sponsored by BTS and the Census Bureau, with most of the funding (80 percent) provided by BTS. In addition to their funding support, BTS also provides additional technical and planning guidance in the development and implementation of the program.

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.

The CFS is the primary source of national and state-level data on domestic freight shipments by businesses located in the United States. As a shipper-based survey, the CFS collects information on how U.S. establishments transport raw materials and finished goods; the types of commodities shipped by mode of transportation; the value, weight, origin, and destinations of shipments (including exports). The CFS does not directly measure imports or shipments originating in any U.S. territories. Industry coverage includes: Mining, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, select Retail and Services, and some auxiliary establishments (e.g., warehouses) of in-scope, multi-unit, and retail

companies.

For the survey partners, CFS data are the primary input into BTS's Freight Analysis Framework (FAF), which provides the only publicly available, nationally comprehensive, origin-destination data for freight moving to, from and within the United States. Such data enables analysts to trace where goods move and how supply chains change over time. FAF captures modal share information (truck, rail, water, air, pipeline), allowing all sectors of the economy to assess dependencies across different commodities and freight transportation modes to evaluate modal flexibility. The U.S Census Bureau also gains valuable transportation information from the CFS to enhance the Economic Census data.

At the federal level, the data from the CFS are required by a variety of agencies to help accomplish their missions. Results from the CFS help promote economic development and provide for an efficient U.S. transportation system. The CFS allows for better informed infrastructure investment decisions and contributes to the development of policies promoting public safety and protecting the natural environment affected by transportation.

Users and supporters of CFS data at the federal level include:

- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- Maritime Administration
- Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
- Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- Bureau of Economic Analysis
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Federal Emergency Management Administration
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Department of Energy
- Environmental Protection Agency

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) relies heavily on data from the CFS to prepare the industry economic accounts of the United States. The CFS is BEA's primary source of data for distributing the cost of transportation across individual commodities. The regional accounts utilize the CFS for their prototype estimates of merchandise trade by state. BEA uses information from the CFS to produce estimates on the use of transportation services by commodity in the benchmark input-output accounts (I-O). The benchmark I-O accounts are used in-turn in the estimation of BEA's national income and product accounts, annual industry accounts, and travel and tourism satellite accounts. These accounts are widely used by business, government, and researchers to analyze industry performance and the changing structure of the U.S. economy. CFS data are BEA's primary input for estimating each private industry's purchases of transportation services by mode of transport. Without these data, the accuracy of BEA's estimates of value added (i.e., contribution to GDP) for every private industry would be reduced.

BEA's prototype merchandise trade estimates by state rely on various years of the CFS public-use files. These prototype estimates would suffer without the CFS public-use files, leading to loss in

quality and accuracy. Currently, BEA makes use of the origin, destination, export flag, commodity, industry of shipper, weight factor, and shipment value from the CFS public -use files, and there are plans to use the mode information within the CFS public-use files in future estimates of service trade by state. It would also be extremely useful to BEA to have additional commodity detail in future CFS public-use file releases, as this greatly improves the accuracy of the estimated merchandise trade by state estimates. The CFS is currently investigating options to publish additional commodity detail either in the standard release or as a special tabulation.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) utilizes CFS data to analyze agricultural product shipment patterns by truck across the U.S., identify bottlenecks, and support research on supply chain resilience.

Transportation planners and policy makers in special interest areas have also identified CFS data as critical to their decision making. For example, CFS data on the types and magnitude of hazardous materials shipped in various geographic regions are critical in evaluating and setting policies on the movement of hazardous materials.

CFS data are also crucial to transportation managers, analysts, and researchers in the private sector. These data are used to identify trends in shipping activities, strength of market segments, costs associated with shipping and existing and potential transportation related issues requiring additional resources. Over the past cycle, the following data uses were identified from email inquiries:

- Assessing transportation data in and out of Lee County, FL for Hurricane Ian disaster recovery efforts
- Creating a bibliography for data from government sources relevant to the Baltimore bridge collapse
- Researching carbon stocks and annual material flowing in and out of California as part of climate change mitigation efforts
- Generating interindustry interregional trade relationships for a multiregional input-output model of the U.S. by estimating states' abilities to fulfill their own demands for goods produced by manufacturing and mining industries and examining state-to-state trade among wholesalers and other identified service firms (financial) more generally
- Formalizing a supply chain disruption model for the US
- Modeling freight flows for making better state-level GDP estimates
- Examining commodities and regions to see where modal competition does and does not appear strong
- Investigating a proposed merger among egg producers by analyzing how far eggs are transported in the market
- Researching trade frictions using 5-digit SCTG data prior to 2012

- Researching the air cargo business within the state of Hawaii using volume of air shipments by commodity and shipment value/weight for inter-island transportation

The CFS has received support from a wide range of users expressing the need for the unique data produced by the survey.

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. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

For the 2027 Commodity Flow Survey (CFS), both the pre-screener and main surveys will be conducted online using Centurion, the Census Bureau's secure online survey collection tool.

- Pre-screener Survey:
    - Respondents will access Centurion via login credentials provided in the survey invitation. They will report for one fixed time period (Quarter zero (i.e., Q0)) before the main survey begins.
- Main Survey:
    - Respondents will use the Census Bureau's Respondent Portal to access Centurion for this survey. Centurion is designed to make the reporting process more flexible, secure, and convenient for respondents. The response-driven nature of the instrument also reduces respondent burden. Respondents can complete the entire survey in one session or work on the survey over several sessions. Centurion automatically saves the entered data when the user proceeds to the next screen, so the users can return later and pick up exactly where they previously left off. The data provided electronically by respondents are immediately available to the Census Bureau. The use of this system also reduces paper usage, as it eliminates paper forms in the initial and follow-up mailings. In rare situations where a respondent does not have access to the Internet, the data may be collected by telephone.
    - The Respondent Portal is an online portal that allows respondents to report for the Census Bureau surveys in which they've been selected. Respondents will be asked to set up an account on the Respondent Portal if they do not already have one from reporting on other surveys. If respondents already have an account, they can simply log in, enter the authentication code that will be provided in the survey invitation, and then access Centurion to begin reporting electronically. Through the Respondent Portal, users will also be able to learn more about the survey, check their filing status or communicate with a Census Bureau representative through

secure email. The Respondent portal ensures respondent correspondence is handled with complete security, safety, and confidentiality.

- Respondents for the main survey will report online for all four quarters (Q1-Q4) of 2027. Centurion will provide the ability to access any/all of the questionnaires for the four reporting periods; and determine if completed questionnaires were received. This online user interface will also assist respondents in accurately completing the CFS questionnaire by utilizing built-in consistency edits.

The CFS program will have a webpage dedicated to respondents that provides answers to frequently asked questions and additional information on the CFS.

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 Question 2.

Through meetings and a series of data user conferences with the DOT, professional organizations, as well as transportation planners and data users, the Census Bureau determined that no information collections by Federal agencies, trade groups, or businesses duplicate the content, comprehensive coverage, detail level of transportation characteristics, geographic detail, and statistical reliability provided by the CFS. These features distinguish the ability of the CFS data to meet the requirements of its principal data users and make the survey uniquely suited to provide these valuable transportation statistics.

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

Respondent feedback, data user needs, and burden research from the 2022 CFS were used to drive development and implementation of features and functionality, modernizing the 2027 CFS collection instrument to reduce burden.

The Census Bureau has taken the following steps in the design of the 2027 CFS to reduce reporting burden:

<u>Pre-Screener Survey</u>

The 2027 CFS will incorporate a pre-screener survey designed to reduce respondent burden and improve the efficiency of the data collection process. The pre-screener serves as a short, targeted questionnaire that allows select establishments to quickly confirm their eligibility before receiving the full set of CFS questions. By limiting detailed reporting only to establishments that are actively engaged in qualifying shipment activities, the pre-screener helps ensure that respondents spend less time reviewing instructions, navigating complex questions, and completing sections that are not applicable to their operations.

<u>Assistance on the CFS Internet site</u>

For the 2027 CFS, the Census Bureau will assist respondents on the CFS Internet site, such as answers to frequently asked questions, guidance on quickly identifying hazardous material codes, references to collection materials, conversion charts for weights to pounds, and a contact page. Respondents completing the survey through the Centurion site will not have to determine their shipment sample size or take-every number. The Centurion instrument will determine this information for them.

Consolidated Reporting

As needed, the Census Bureau will work with respondents to provide the ability for consolidated reporting, which allows one respondent to complete the survey for multiple establishments within the same company. This reduces burden by only requiring one log in and reduces the need to provide duplicate information for each establishment.

Machine Learning for Standard Classification of Transported Goods (SCTG)

The 2022 CFS utilized machine learning for the first time to assign standard product codes for most shipments for the CFS survey process. For 2027, the need for respondents to look up product codes is eliminated using machine learning. Respondents can provide a plain English description of their product or commodity instead and a machine learning model, built into the collection instrument, will generate a commodity code based on this description. If the machine learning model has difficulty identifying the correct code, the respondent will only be prompted to clarify the description. As a change from the 2022 CFS, respondents will no longer be asked to select the best fit of commodity from a generated top prediction's picklist. The machine learning process will greatly lower the time required for classifying commodities, especially in cases where a company ships many different commodities.

Weight Unit Conversion

To further minimize respondent burden in the 2027 CFS, the reporting process for shipment weights will be improved. In the 2022 CFS, respondents were required to report shipment weights exclusively in pounds, which often necessitated manual conversion from other units and increased the complexity of survey completion. For the 2027 CFS, respondents will no longer be required to convert their shipment weights to pounds. Instead, they may select or write in the unit of measurement that best aligns with their business records. Available unit options will include Pounds (lbs), Ounces (oz), Short tons (ton – 2,000 lbs), Kilograms (kg), Grams (g), Metric tons (t or tonne), Gallons (gal), Liters (L), Cubic feet (ft^3), Cubic yards (yd^3), Other, and Unknown. This change is designed to reduce the time and effort required to complete the survey, allowing respondents to report shipment weights in the units they already use and thereby improving both data quality and respondent experience.

Use of Estimates

Respondents for the establishments selected to report in the 2027 CFS are not required to create or maintain data not readily available in their records. Instructions within the questionnaire indicate that prepared estimates are acceptable when book figures are unavailable.

Option of Sampling

The stratified random sample design used for CFS is a design that uses the least number of sampling units required to produce estimates with the desired level of reliability, thus minimizing respondent burden. Per research into 2017 and 2022 burden by response mode, and based on respondent feedback, sampling of shipments may not save time for all responding businesses. Like the 2022 CFS, 2027 CFS respondents will have the option to provide all their shipment data for the requested reporting period, if sampling their shipments will add an extra step and require more time and increase burden.

Removal of Supplemental CFS Hazmat Questions

For the 2022 CFS, at the request of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), supplemental survey questions were added to the first and fourth quarters. The supplemental questions collected data about the packaging types used to transport hazardous materials in 2021 and 2022. The 2027 CFS will no longer ask these supplemental packaging questions. This change will reduce the total number of sampled establishments by more than 20 thousand establishments, as well as reduce the burden hours associated with the packaging questions for those establishments shipping hazardous materials. Respondents will continue to be asked to identify the United Nations/North American (UN/NA) code for each hazardous material shipment.

Criteria for Total Annual Value of Shipments

For the 2022 CFS, all respondents were asked for the 2021 Total Annual Value of Shipments for their establishments. From post-collection statistical research from the 2022 CFS, the information for this question was only needed for certain industries. For the 2027 CFS, selected retail and auxiliary-related establishments will be asked to report their 2026 Total Annual Value of Shipments. This approach will reduce the burden on industries other than those retail and auxiliary-related establishments.

Toll-free Telephone Number

A toll-free telephone number for respondents to use for questions or assistance will be available. In addition, the Census Bureau offers a platform to email securely via the E-Correspondence system for those respondents with a preference for communicating via e-mail.

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.

The survey is conducted at 5-year intervals as part of the Economic Census and covers the same data year. Linking and integrating the 5-year program of commodities manufactured, mined, and traded (Economic Census) with how and where they are moved (CFS) will improve the utility of both data sets. In addition, Economic Census data are used in the process of producing the CFS estimates.

If the data were collected less frequently, transportation policy makers and planners at the

Federal, state, and local levels would lose significant utility from a critical source of transportation statistics (see response to question 2 above). With transportation practices and trends changing at an ever-increasing rate, less frequent collection of these data would severely restrict data users' ability to accurately analyze and improve the transportation services, facilities, and infrastructure.

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

   - **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
   - **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
   - **requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
   - **requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
   - **in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
   - **requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
   - **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
   - **requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

   This information collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with each of the OMB guidelines above and there are no special circumstances.

8. **If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications 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.**

   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.

A presubmission notice was published in the Federal Register May 20, 2026, on pages 29449 and 29450 with the title "Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Commodity Flow Survey (CFS)."

During the 60-day public comment period, the Census Bureau received nine comments/letters of support from federal agencies, academia, and members of the public. A summary of each submission and the Census Bureau's response is provided below. Copies of all comments with merit are included as Attachment D to this Supporting Statement. No direct responses were issued to commenters.

Federal Agencies

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)
Summary: BEA expressed strong support for the CFS, noting its importance for industry input-output accounts, national accounts, prototype merchandise trade by state, and future state-level GDP estimation. BEA recommended consideration of collecting freight charge information and requested notification of any form modifications.
Census Bureau Response: The Census Bureau values BEA's extensive use of CFS data. Suggestions for expanding collection to include freight charges or commodity detail will be evaluated for feasibility and respondent burden. BEA will be notified of relevant content changes during the OMB review.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Summary: USACE expressed strong support for continued CFS data collection. The letter noted that CFS data are critical for understanding multimodal freight interactions, supply chain resiliency, freight-shed dynamics, and for informing federal navigation infrastructure investment decisions.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Summary: USDA submitted a letter of support citing the CFS as essential for analyzing agricultural commodity flows, identifying bottlenecks, understanding refrigerated product movements, and assessing agricultural modal dependencies. USDA emphasized CFS's role as a foundational input into the Freight Analysis Framework (FAF).

U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA)
Summary: EIA provided a letter of support stating that CFS-derived FAF data are critical inputs to the Annual Energy Outlook, particularly for transportation demand modeling. The letter described how CFS data inform estimates of freight travel demand, ton-miles, mode-specific movement projections, and fuel consumption. EIA also asked to be kept informed of any proposed form modifications that may affect commodity or modal detail

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)
Summary: The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), U.S. Department of Transportation, endorses the continued collection of Commodity Flow Survey (CFS) data, emphasizing its essential role in risk assessment and regulatory decision-making for hazardous materials transportation. CFS data enables PHMSA to quantify shipments, prioritize safety actions, and identify cost savings, such as the $145 million in savings from recent placarding changes for

some fuel shipments. PHMSA urges the ongoing collection and improvement of the CFS to support its safety mission.

Maritime Administration (MARAD)
Summary: The Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) strongly supports the continued collection of Commodity Flow Survey (CFS) data by the U.S. Census Bureau. MARAD relies on CFS data for strategic planning, decision making, and as a foundation for modern analytical tools that require real-world validation and stakeholder feedback. The CFS provides the only nationally consistent dataset for multimodal domestic transportation, forming the basis for national freight analysis models such as the Freight Analysis Framework. MARAD also uses CFS data indirectly through benchmark input-output accounts for studies supporting the U.S. maritime industry. MARAD recommends conducting the survey more frequently to better capture rapid changes in transportation logistics.
Census Bureau Response: The Census Bureau acknowledges and appreciates MARAD's recommendation to conduct the CFS more frequently. While Census currently has no plans to conduct a more frequent CFS, any change in frequency would require careful evaluation of operational impacts, risk assessments, and sponsor collaboration to ensure data quality and continuity.

Academia

George Washington University
Summary: A research professor submitted a letter supporting OMB clearance for the 2027 CFS, citing its importance for informed public and private decision-making and national economic competitiveness. The commenter recommended highlighting the CFS's role in global value chain analysis and the BTS Freight Logistics Optimization Works (FLOW) project in Section 2 of the Supporting Statement.
Census Bureau Response: The Census Bureau will review the recommended additions to Section 2 to ensure CFS's relevance to emerging economic research areas is appropriately reflected.

Public Commenters

Public Commenter #1

Summary: A commenter recommended replacing the Standard Classification of Transported Goods (SCTG) with the North American Product Classification System (NAPCS) to improve harmonization with other Census Bureau programs, reduce complexity associated with multiple classification systems, and enhance integration with BEA accounts.
Response: The Census Bureau will evaluate potential paths toward adopting NAPCS or hybrid approaches in future CFS cycles. This evaluation will consider interoperability, respondent burden, operational requirements, and coordination with BTS, BEA, and Statistics Canada.

Public Commenter #2

Summary: A commenter expressed concern regarding environmental impacts associated with home-delivery practices (e.g., Amazon, Walmart) compared with personal shopping trips. The commenter asked whether such impacts could be assessed using CFS data.

Census Bureau Response: The CFS collects data on commercial shipments and is not designed to evaluate the comparative environmental impacts of delivery systems. No methodological changes are warranted based on this comment.

The Census Bureau developed the methodology and questionnaire design for the 2027 CFS jointly with the survey co-sponsor, BTS. The technical documentation available on the CFS website provides further details and is continually updated each cycle to capture changes.

The contact at BTS is:

Stephanie Lawrence
Director for Office of Statistical and Economic Analysis
Bureau of Transportation Statistics
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590
Telephone: (202) 493-1376

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

The Census Bureau does not pay respondents and does not provide them with gifts in any form to report requested information to the Commodity Flow Survey.

10. **Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.**

The 2027 CFS will mail notification letters that inform respondents what sections of Title 13 and Title 49 U.S.C. authorize the survey, require them to respond, and that their responses will be kept confidential. These statements will also be displayed in the online survey instrument.

The statutory basis for this assurance of confidentiality is Title 13 U.S.C., Section 9. All activities relating to the collection and use of the 2027 CFS data satisfy requirements of this law.

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.**

The information collected is not of a sensitive nature and does not concern matters that are commonly considered private.

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. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.**
- **If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens.**
- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included under 'Annual Cost to Federal Government' (Item #14).**

The 2027 CFS pre-screener survey will request information from approximately 45,000 establishments prior to the main survey. We estimate that on average, each questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

For the main 2027 CFS survey, the Census Bureau will request information from approximately 140,000 establishments four times each during the 2027 survey cycle. We estimate that on average, each questionnaire will take approximately 1.5 hours to complete, or about the same as the median burden from the 2022 CFS (Quarters 2 and 3). FYI: Quarters 1 and 4 of the 2022 CFS included an expanded hazmat supplement, which took an additional 1 hour to complete. Based on the removal of the PHMSA supplemental questions (outlined on page 8), an hour of response burden was removed. The 2027 estimate is based on previous CFS burden estimates using the questionnaire's "time to complete" responses. The table below breaks down the burden estimates that contribute to the total annual response burden of 843,750 hours. This total annual response burden estimate is slightly more than the 840,000 hours provided in the presubmission notice published May 20, 2026, due to the inclusion of the screener survey.

The estimated total annual response burden provided represents the maximum burden and uses the total sample size, which includes several non-shippers that are out of scope to the CFS, but for which we don't have sufficient information to remove from the sample prior to collection.

Information Collection Instrument	# of Respondents (a)	Annual # of Responses/ Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hours/ Response (d)	Total Annual Burden Hours (e) = (c) x (d)
Quarter 0	45,000	1	45,000	5 min	3,750
Quarter 1	140,000	1	140,000	1.5 hrs	210,000
Quarter 2	140,000	1	140,000	1.5 hrs	210,000
Quarter 3	140,000	1	140,000	1.5 hrs	210,000
Quarter 4	140,000	1	140,000	1.5 hrs	210,000
Totals			**605,000**		**843,750**

We estimate the cost to respondents to be $27,118,125. This is based on the response burden estimate of 843,750 hours and the mean hourly wage of $32.14. [The wage figure is an estimate, based on Metropolitan Statistical Areas data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2025; First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Machine Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling taken from https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes531047.htm]

13. Provide an estimate for 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 already reflected on the burden worksheet).

The Census Bureau does not expect respondents to incur any costs other than that of their time to respond. The information requested is of the type and scope normally carried in company records and no special hardware or accounting software or system is necessary to provide answers to this information collection. Therefore, respondents are not expected to incur any capital and start-up costs or system maintenance costs in responding. Furthermore, purchasing of outside accounting or information collection services, if performed by the respondent, is part of usual and customary business practices and not specifically required for this information collection.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The cost to the government for the 2027 CFS is estimated at $22.5 million over a 5-year period. BTS will incur approximately 80 percent of the cost, and the Census Bureau will incur approximately 20 percent of the cost. This includes expenses for sample design, data collection (including nonresponse follow-up), data capture and processing, data review and editing, publication, equipment, overhead, and support staff.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.

The 2027 CFS will include a pre-screener survey, in addition to the main survey. The main survey will no longer include the supplemental questions on hazardous material packaging that were in the 2022 CFS. This change will reduce the total number of sampled establishments in the main survey from 165,000 in 2022 to 140,000 in 2027. It will also reduce the estimated burden hours for each respondent in the first and fourth quarters from 2.5 hours in 2022 to 1.5 hours in 2027. The changes mentioned above will decrease the total annual burden hours from 1,280,000 in 2022 to 843,750 in 2027.

16. For collections of information whose results will 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.

The Census Bureau will mail the pre-screener survey letters in January 2027 and finish collection for that survey in February 2027. Mailing for the main survey letters will begin in March 2027 and collection and follow up activities will continue through May 2028. We plan to make estimates and create tables very similar to 2022 CFS data products with the goal of publishing as much usable data as possible for the general public. A general timetable for major activities is listed below:

Activity	Start	Finish
Select Sample	Dec 2026	Dec 2026
Mail Pre-Screener Survey Letters	Jan 2027	Jan 2027
Pre-screener Follow Up	Jan 2027	Feb 2027
Mail Main Survey Letters	Mar 2027	Feb 2028
Non-response Follow up	May 2027	May 2028
Check-in, Editing, Problem Resolution	Apr 2027	Jul 2028

Data Estimation & Analysis	Jul 2028	Apr 2030
Publication Release - Final	May 2030	May 2030

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.

The agency plans to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on all survey instruments.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

The agency certifies compliance with 5 CFR 1320.9 and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3). There are no exceptions to the certification.

[1] All references to 'establishment' in this document refer to collections of establishments at the same physical address belonging to the same company.