

substantially increased funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) as well as other conservation programs; a portion of the technical assistance funds for conservation programs has been allocated for use in assessing the environmental benefits of these conservation practices. The assessment will be used to report progress annually on Farm Bill implementation to Congress and the general public.

NRCS is leading a multi-agency effort to estimate the environmental benefits of conservation practices. Benefit measures will include soil quality enhancement, erosion reduction, reduction in nutrient and sediment losses from farm fields, soil carbon sequestration, water use efficiency, and reductions in in-stream nutrient and sediment concentrations. Investments are being made in additional model development to address benefits associated with reductions in pesticide losses, air quality, and wildlife habitat.

The assessment is designed to be national and regional in scope. A sampling and modeling approach has been adopted to avoid the high costs associated with expanded reporting by NRCS field staff.

Benefits will be estimated by applying transport models and other physical process models at sample sites associated with the National Resources Inventory (NRI) sampling frame. The NRI is a scientifically-based, longitudinal panel survey designed to assess conditions and trends of soil, water, and related resources of the Nation's non-federal lands. The NRI is conducted for the U.S. Department of Agriculture by NRCS in cooperation with the Iowa State University Center for Survey and Statistical Methods and provides critical information to address agri-environmental issues at national, regional, and State levels.

Data gathered in the NRI are linked to NRCS soil survey and climate databases. These linked data, along with NRI's historical data for 1982–2002, form the basis for unique modeling applications and analytical capabilities. The NRI sampling frame will be used for this project because it captures the diversity of the Nation's agricultural resource base (soils, topography, and climate), which is a critical factor in estimating benefits of conservation practices. Also critical are the historical and linked data that already exist for each NRI sample site. The assessment of benefits is not possible, however, without augmenting these existing data with additional information on land management and conservation practice adoption.

NASS will collaborate with NRCS in the acquisition of this additional information by conducting a survey for a sub-sample of NRI sample units in the contiguous 48 States. The survey will utilize personal interviews to administer a questionnaire that is designed to obtain from farm operators field-specific data associated with the selected sample units. Specific questions are asked about physical characteristics of the field, pesticide and fertilizer applications, and technical aspects of conservation practices associated with the field. Several other questions deal with production activities before and after implementation of specific conservation practices and with the operator's participation in conservation programs.

The survey design calls for conducting 7,500–12,000 interviews annually. The number of samples for a given year reflects changes in the budget. Approximately 30,000 completed responses will be “pooled” using statistical time series procedures. Interviews have already been conducted in the fall of 2003 and 2004 using this survey process. The 2005 survey represents the third year of this data collection effort. Each year's data collection will be for a different set of agricultural land units. If analysis indicates that more samples are needed to adequately estimate the benefits of conservation practices nationally, then data collection will be extended to include 2007.

These data will be collected under the authority of 7 U.S.C. 2204(a). Individually identifiable data collected under this authority are governed by Section 1770 of the Food Security Act of 1985, 7 U.S.C. 2276, which requires USDA to afford strict confidentiality to non-aggregated data provided by respondents.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 70 minutes per response.

Respondents: Farm operators.

Estimated Number of Annual

Respondents: 12,000 maximum potential respondents.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 14,000 hours maximum.

Copies of this information collection and related instructions can be obtained without charge from Ginny McBride, NASS Clearance Officer, at (202) 720–5778.

Comments: Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate

of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All responses to this notice will become a matter of public record and be summarized in the request for OMB approval.

Signed at Washington, DC, February 22, 2005.

Rich Allen,

Deputy Administrator Program and Products.
[FR Doc. 05–5505 Filed 3–18–05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–20–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Proposed Change to Section IV of the Virginia State Technical Guide

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of proposed changes in the Virginia NRCS State Technical Guide for review and comment.

SUMMARY: It has been determined by the NRCS State Conservationist for Virginia that changes must be made in the NRCS State Technical Guide specifically in practice standards: #386, Field Border; #393, Riparian Herbaceous Cover; and #393, Filter Strip Facility. These practices will be used to plan and install conservation practices on cropland, pastureland, woodland, and wildlife land.

DATES: Comments will be received for a 30-day period commencing with the date of this publication.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Inquire in writing to M. Denise Doetzer, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 1606 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 209, Richmond, Virginia 23229–5014; Telephone number (804) 287–1665; Fax number (804) 287–1736. Copies of the practice standards will be made available upon written request to the address shown above or on the Virginia NRCS Web site <http://www.va.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/draftstandards.html>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 343 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 states that revisions made after enactment of the law to NRCS State technical guides used to carry out highly erodible land and wetland provisions of the law shall be made available for public review and comment. For the next 30 days, the NRCS in Virginia will receive comments relative to the proposed changes. Following that period, a determination will be made by the NRCS in Virginia regarding disposition of those comments and a final determination of change will be made to the subject standards.

Dated: March 9, 2005.

Kenneth E. Carter,

*Assistant State Conservationist (Programs),
Natural Resources Conservation Service,
Richmond, Virginia.*

[FR Doc. 05-5456 Filed 3-18-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Title: Prohibited Species Donation Program.

Form Number(s): None.

OMB Approval Number: 0648-0316.

Type of Request: Regular submission.

Burden Hours: 229.

Number of Respondents: 21.

Average Hours Per Response: 7 minutes (0.12 hours).

Needs and Uses: A prohibited species donation (PSD) program for salmon and halibut was approved by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and implemented by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). This program has effectively reduced regulatory discard of salmon and halibut by allowing fish that would otherwise be discarded to be donated to needy individuals through tax-exempt organizations. The vessels and processing plants participating in the donation program voluntarily retain and process salmon and halibut bycatch. An authorized, tax-exempt, distributor, chosen by NMFS is responsible for monitoring the retention and processing of fish donated by vessels and processors. The authorized distributor

also coordinates the processing, storage, transportation, and distribution of salmon and halibut. The PSD program requires a collection-of-information so that NMFS can monitor the authorized distributors' ability to effectively supervise program participants and ensure that donated fish are properly processed, stored, and distributed.

Affected Public: Not-for-profit institutions; Business or other for-profit organizations; State, Local or Tribal Government.

Frequency: Triennially and on occasion.

Respondent's Obligation: Required to obtain or retain benefits.

OMB Desk Officer: David Rostker, (202) 395-3897.

Copies of the above information collection proposal can be obtained by calling or writing Diana Hynek, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, (202) 482-0266, Department of Commerce, Room 6625, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at dHynek@doc.gov).

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to David Rostker, OMB Desk Officer, FAX number (202) 395-7285, or David_Rostker@omb.eop.gov.

Dated: March 16, 2005.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 05-5522 Filed 3-18-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Census Bureau

Current Population Surveys (CPS) Housing Vacancy Survey (HVS)

ACTION: Proposed collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Submit written comments on or before May 20, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Diana Hynek, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer,

Department of Commerce, Room 6625, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at DHynek@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Dennis Clark, U.S. Census Bureau, FOB 3, Room 3340, Washington, DC 20233-8400, (301) 763-3806.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The Census Bureau is requesting clearance for the collection of data concerning the HVS. The current clearance expires October 31, 2005. The HVS has been conducted in conjunction with the CPS since 1956 and serves a broad array of data users as described below.

We conduct the HVS interviews with landlords or other knowledgeable people concerning vacant housing units identified in the monthly CPS sample and meeting certain criteria. The HVS provides the only quarterly and annual statistics on rental vacancy rates and home ownership rates for the United States, the four census regions, the 50 states and the District of Columbia, and the 100 largest metropolitan areas (MAs). Private and public sector organizations use these rates extensively to gauge and analyze the housing market with regard to supply, cost, and affordability at various points in time.

In addition, the rental vacancy rate is a component of the index of leading economic indicators published by the Department of Commerce. Policy analysts, program managers, budget analysts, and congressional staff use these data to advise the executive and legislative branches of government with respect to the number and characteristics of units available for occupancy and the suitability of housing initiatives. Several other government agencies use these data on a continuing basis in calculating consumer expenditures for housing as a component of the gross national product; to project mortgage demands; and to measure the adequacy of the supply of rental and homeowner units. In addition, investment firms use the HVS data to analyze market trends and for economic forecasting.

II. Method of Collection

Field representatives collect this HVS information by personal-visit interviews in conjunction with the regular monthly CPS interviewing. We collect HVS data concerning units that are vacant and