

sheep or goats, at least one of whom should be involved in goat production. Board members manage and oversee the Center's activities. Nominations may only be submitted by National organizations that consist primarily of active sheep or goat producers in the United States and who have as their primary interest the production of sheep or goats in the United States. Nominating organizations should submit:

(1) Substantiation that the nominating organization is national in scope,

(2) The number and percent of members that are active sheep or goat producers,

(3) Substantiation of the primary interests of the organization, and

(4) An Advisory Committee Membership Background Information form (Form AD-755) for each nominee.

This action is taken to carry out section 759 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 for the establishment of a National Sheep Industry Improvement Center.

DATES: The closing date for acceptance of nominations is June 23, 1998.

Nominations must be received by, or postmarked, on or before, this date.

ADDRESSES: Submit nominations and statements on qualifications to Cooperative Services, RBS, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Stop 3252, Room 4204, Washington, DC 20250-3252, Attn.: National Sheep Improvement Center, Nominations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Thomas H. Stafford, Director, Cooperative Marketing Division, Cooperative Services, RBS, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Stop 3252, Washington, DC 20250-3252, telephone (202) 690-0368 (this is not a toll free number), FAX 202-690-2723, or e-mail thomas.stafford@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, known as the 1996 Farm Bill, established a National Sheep Industry Improvement Center. The Center shall: (1) Promote strategic development activities and collaborative efforts by private and State entities to maximize the impact of Federal assistance to strengthen and enhance production and marketing of sheep or goat products in the United States; (2) optimize the use of available human capital and resources within the sheep or goat industries; (3) provide assistance to meet the needs of the sheep or goat industry for infrastructure development, business development, production, resource development, and market and environmental research; (4) advance activities that empower and build the

capacity of the United States sheep or goat industry to design unique responses to special needs of the sheep or goat industries on both a regional and national basis; and (5) adopt flexible and innovative approaches to solving the long-term needs of the United States sheep or goat industry. The Center has a Revolving Fund established in the Treasury to carry out the purposes of the Center. Management of the Center is vested in a Board of Directors, which has hired an Executive Director and other staff to operate the Center.

The Board of Directors is composed of seven voting members of whom four are active producers of sheep or goats in the United States, two have expertise in finance and management, and one has expertise in lamb, wool, goat or goat product marketing. The two open positions are the producer seats, with at least one designated as representing goat producers. The Board also includes two non-voting members, the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development and the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Research, Education, and Economics. Board members will not receive compensation for serving on the Board of Directors, but shall be reimbursed for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses.

The Secretary of Agriculture shall appoint the voting members from the submitted nominations. Member's term of office shall be three years. Voting members are limited to two terms. The two positions for which nominees are sought are currently held by members serving their first term, thus are eligible to be re-nominated. The Board shall meet not less than once each fiscal year, but are likely to meet at least quarterly.

The statement of qualifications of the individual nominees is being obtained by using Form AD-755, "Advisory Committee Membership Background Information." The requirements of this form are incorporated under OMB number 0505-0001.

Dated: February 13, 1998.

Dayton J. Watkins,
Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

[FR Doc. 98-4428 Filed 2-20-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XY-U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water; Existing System North/Lyon County Phase and Northeast Phase Expansion Project

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability of draft environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is issuing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water Existing System North/Lyon County Phase and Northeast Phase Expansion Project. The Draft EIS was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (U.S.C. 4231 *et seq.*) in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508) and Agency regulations (7 CFR 1940-G). RUS invites comments on the Draft EIS.

The purpose of the EIS is to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of a project proposal located in southwestern Minnesota. The proposal to which the Agency is responding to involves providing financial assistance for the development and expansion of a public rural water system and a review of the environmental impacts from previous expansion phase activities. The applicant for this proposal is a public body named Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water (LPRW). LPRW's main offices are located in Lake Benton, MN. Specific project activities are and have included the development of groundwater sources and production well fields and the construction of water treatment facilities and water distribution networks. The counties in Minnesota affected by this proposal include Yellow Medicine, Lincoln, and Lyon Counties and Deuel County in South Dakota.

DATES: Written comments on the Draft EIS will be accepted on or before April 24, 1998.

ADDRESSES: To send comments or for more information, contact: Mark S. Plank, USDA, Rural Utilities Service, Engineering and Environmental Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, Stop 1571, Washington, DC 20250, telephone (202) 720-1649, fax (202) 720-0820, or e-mail: mplank@rus.usda.gov.

A copy of the Draft EIS or an Executive Summary can be obtained over the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/enviro.html>. The files are in a portable document format (pdf); in order to review or print the document, users need to obtain a free copy of Acrobat Reader. The Acrobat Reader can be obtained from <http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>.

Copies of the Draft EIS will be available for public review during

normal business hours at the following locations:

USDA Service Center, Rural

Development, 1424 E. College Drive, Suite 500, Marshall, MN 56258; (507) 532-3234, Ext. 203.

Limited copies of the Draft EIS will be available for distribution at this address.

Marshall Public Library, 301 W. Lyon, Marshall, MN 56258; (507) 537-7003.

Ivanhoe Public Library, P.O. Box 54, Ivanhoe, MN 56142; (507) 694-1555.

Canby Public Library, 110 Oscar Ave. N, Canby, MN 56220; (507) 223-5738.

Deuel County Extension Service, 419 3rd Ave. S, P.O. Box 350, Clear Lake, SD 57226; (605) 874-2681.

Lincoln County Extension Service, 402 N. Harold, Ivanhoe, MN 56142; (507) 694-1470.

Lyon County Extension Service, 1400 E. Lyon St., Marshall, MN 56258; (507) 537-6702.

Yellow Medicine County Extension Service, 1000 10th Ave., Clarkfield, MN 56223.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Some of the issues evaluated in this EIS date back to previous decisions made in funding one of the phases of a multi-phase system expansion project initiated by LPRW in 1991. Due to Congressional funding cycles, Rural Utilities Service (RUS) and LPRW have administratively pursued LPRW's requests for financial assistance of this expansion project in discrete fundable phases. As part of the last construction phase, known as the Existing System North/Lyon County (ESN/LC) Phase project, a water source was developed along with the construction of a Water Treatment Plant that was designed to provide potable water to the northern portion of LPRW's service area. The water source developed in this phase was the Burr Well Field. The Burr Well Field is located close to Burr, MN, between Clear Lake, SD, and Canby, MN, and is within 1/2 mile of the South Dakota-Minnesota state line. The water-bearing formations utilized at this well field underlie portions of both South Dakota and Minnesota.

During construction of the Burr Well Field (started on April 19, 1993) and subsequent to its operations, public and regulatory concerns were raised and continue to be raised regarding potential environmental effects of groundwater appropriations from one of the water-bearing formations (called the Burr Unit) utilized by the well field. The second aquifer utilized at the Burr Well

Field is called the Altamont aquifer. The Altamont is a deeper formation that appears to be hydraulically isolated from the Burr Unit.

Because of geologic factors and the topographic position of the Burr Unit in relation to ground surface elevations, groundwater from the Burr Unit discharges onto the land surface in both South Dakota and Minnesota as springs or seeps creating unique wetland features called patterned calcareous fens. In addition after performing geologic investigations in the area, the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources (SDDENR) concluded that one of the lakes in the area, Lake Cochrane, was also receiving groundwater discharges from the Burr Unit aquifer.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for the ESN/LC Phase project by the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) in accordance with its Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1940-G). FmHA published a Finding of No Significant Impact for the project on February 7, 1992. Because of concerns raised regarding the Burr Well Field, the EA was amended to address these concerns by an agency newly created by a 1993 USDA reorganization, the Rural Development Administration (RDA). RDA published a draft copy of the amended EA for public review and comment on October 14, 1994. Upon receipt of the public comments, it was decided to prepare an EIS. During the time this decision was being made USDA again reorganized its programs and the RDA programs were combined with the utility programs of the Rural Electrification Administration to form a new agency—the Rural Utilities Service.

RUS announced its intent to prepare an EIS and hold public scoping meetings in a Notice of Intent published in the **Federal Register** on June 8, 1995.

The primary issues evaluated in the EIS included the outstanding concerns from the earlier 1992 EA, that is, the environmental effects on fens and Lake Cochrane (herein referred to as surface water resources) from groundwater appropriations at the Burr Well Field, and the potential environment impacts from the construction of the Northeast Phase Expansion proposal. The primary objective of the Northeast Phase Expansion proposal is to provide rural water service to rural residents (240 rural users) who have requested service and to the rural communities of Hazel Run and Echo, Minnesota. The proposal

includes the installation of 170 miles of 2- to 8-in pipelines, an elevated water storage tank near Minneota, and a booster station near Green Valley. The overall purpose of this and previous actions by LPRW is to assist citizens in southwestern Minnesota in obtaining a consistent, reliable and safe supply of high-quality, affordable drinking water in an area that has difficulty in obtaining good quality drinking water.

Because all of the decisions and funding obligations have been made on the previous ESN/LC Phase project, the only decision facing the Agency at this time is whether or not to provide financial assistance to LPRW for the construction of the Northeast Phase Expansion proposal. All decisions regarding the issuance and disposition of the Water Appropriation Permit authorizing groundwater appropriations at the Burr Well Field are subject to the regulatory authority of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), Division of Water.

After the Agency made the decision to prepare an EIS, the Agency requested, pursuant to 40 CFR 1501.6, "Cooperating Agencies", that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Region 8 in Denver, CO, serve in the capacity of a cooperating agency. This request was made because of USEPA's specialized expertise in groundwater issues. USEPA agreed to the Agency's request, therefore, RUS is the lead agency for this action and was responsible for the preparation of the EIS, and USEPA provided technical assistance to RUS through its role as a cooperating agency.

For purposes of this EIS, the proposed action to which the Agency is responding to and for which all of the environmental impacts of past and present actions were evaluated, is the application LPRW submitted to the Agency to fund the Northeast Phase Expansion. In addition to this application, LPRW submitted a Water Appropriation Permit application to the MNDNR to increase groundwater appropriation rates from the present 750 gallons per minute (gpm) and 400 million gallons per year (Mgpy) to 1,500 gpm/800 Mgpy. Both of these actions encompass what was termed the "proposed action."

The Agency evaluated six alternatives to meeting the water supply needs of the LPRW system. The following table lists the alternatives considered.

LIST OF THE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative	Northeast phase expansion status	Burr Well Field status
Current Status	LPRW submitted application to RUS to fund construction of the Northeast Phase Expansion.	LPRW is authorized under their current Water Appropriation Permit to appropriate groundwater at the rate of 750 gpm/400 Mgpy. LPRW submitted an application to the MNDNR to increase groundwater appropriations to 1,500 gpm/800 Mgpy.
Proposed Action	Fund the Northeast Phase Expansion.	Increase groundwater appropriations at the Burr Well Field to 1,500 gpm/800 Mgpy.
Alternative 1	Fund the Northeast Phase Expansion.	Discontinue use of Burr Well Field.
Alternative 2	Fund the Northeast Phase Expansion.	Discontinue use of Burr Well Field. Supplement water needs from other sources: Adjacent rural water systems, Lewis and Clark system, Altamont aquifer, Canby aquifer, other aquifers.
Alternative 3	Fund the Northeast Phase Expansion.	Maintain current appropriations at Burr Well Field.
Alternative 4	Fund the Northeast Phase Expansion.	Maintain current or reduce appropriations at Burr Well Field; fund and construct new well field and Water Treatment Plant in the Wood Lake area.
Alternative 5	Do not fund the Northeast Phase Expansion; finance Point-of-Use systems in Northeast Phase Expansion area.	Maintain current appropriations at Burr Well Field.
Alternative 6—No Action Alternative.	Do not fund the Northeast Phase Expansion.	Maintain current appropriations at Burr Well Field.

Of the six alternatives considered, the Agency performed an economic analysis on three of the alternatives determined to be reasonable. In addition, an economic analysis was performed on Agency's preferred alternative. The only alternatives considered to be economically and technically viable included continuing to appropriate groundwater from the aquifers utilized at the Burr Well Field. Therefore, the EIS focussed its analyses on evaluating the potential environmental effects on surface water resources from continued pumping at the Burr Well Field.

Based on the analyses performed in the EIS concerning the relationship of surface water resources and pumping at the Burr Well Field, the Agency concludes the following:

As a result of detailed investigations of water chemistry, changes in hydraulic head during production pumping and pump tests, tritium content and age-dating of aquifer water and water being discharged at two of the area's fens that were monitored—the Fairchild and Sioux Nation Fens—it has been clearly demonstrated and established that a hydraulic connection exists between the Burr Unit and the fens. In addition, further evidence indicates that reductions in the potentiometric surface caused by pumping the Burr Unit at the Burr Well Field causes reciprocal responses in the hydraulic head measured in observation wells and piezometers installed in and adjacent to selected fens. No evidence of a similar hydraulic connection between the Altamont aquifer and the fens was observed.

Drawing conclusions based on limited information concerning Lake Cochrane was not as conclusive. However, based on the information that is available, the Agency has concluded that all lines of evidence indicate that it is likely Lake Cochrane is receiving a groundwater contribution to its water budget from both shallow and deeper (Burr Unit) aquifers. The information that would be necessary to quantify the overall percentage of groundwater contribution in relation to surface water inputs to Lake Cochrane's water budget and the percentage of the contribution from shallow aquifers versus the Burr Unit is incomplete and unavailable. The cost and technical difficulty of obtaining such information for evaluating reasonably foreseeable impacts by the Agency has been determined to be exorbitant and unreasonable.

Based on a systematic and objective evaluation of the environmental and economic issues related to the remaining alternatives, the Agency has concluded that the proposed action (to appropriate groundwater at 1,500 gpm/800 Mgpy from the Burr Unit at the Burr Well Field) poses an unreasonable environmental risk to surface water resources in the area. Because of the uncertainty and potential for long-term environmental impacts on surface water resources in the area around the Burr Well Field, the Agency has concluded that pumping at the proposed appropriation rate under drought conditions is likely to cause significant adverse environmental impacts to these resources.

Conversely, in analyzing the information available, the Agency has concluded that through mitigation and a groundwater appropriation rate lower than the proposed action, adverse environmental effects could be avoided or minimized. Therefore, it could be feasible to continue using the Burr Well Field at certain appropriation rates without causing significant adverse environmental effects.

Attempting to establish an appropriation rate that could avoid or minimize adverse environment effects to the fens and Lake Cochrane was the major dilemma of the EIS. Because of limited baseline data and period of record, the only information that can be evaluated is data that has been collected since 1992. The entire time period since 1992 to the present has been dominated by a sustained period of relatively high precipitation. Therefore, these climatic conditions have prevented detailed observations of aquifer responses from pumping during a drought cycle or what effects current pumping has had on surface water resources. Because of this uncertainty and the reality of periodic and cyclic drought conditions, it is prudent to manage this aquifer system and withdrawals from it in a conservative manner.

Notwithstanding a lack of long-term data, taking into account current data sets and through consultations with state and federal agencies and experts in the field of hydrogeology, the Agency has concluded the following:

1. There could be effects to Lake Cochrane from long-term pumping from the Burr Unit at the Burr Well Field.

Based on data collected from the various pump tests and in consultation with experts in the field of hydrology and geology, it is the Agency's opinion that effects to Lake Cochrane from the continuation of pumping from wells screened in the Burr Unit at the Burr Well Field at the rate of 400–525 gpm would not have significant environmental impacts. That is not to say that Lake Cochrane could not be affected, but that in the range of 400–525 gpm it is unlikely that any effects would have significant consequences. In addition, at these appropriation rates it would be extremely difficult to distinguish any impacts from reduced groundwater inputs into the lake from the biological effects of ongoing management practices or human influences at the lake.

2. During all of the pump tests and production pumping for the last three years at current and maximum pumping rates of 400–525 gpm (1997 appropriations from the Burr Unit equaled 274 million gallons for an average of 521 gallons per minute), the effects from pumping at the Burr Well Field at the fens, as represented by the Sioux Nation Fen and measured by three piezometers installed at various depths in the fen dome, have been minor. At no time did the hydraulic head or water table elevations in the fens or potentiometric surface fall close to or below the surface elevations of the peat domes. Therefore, the Agency has concluded that as long as the hydraulic gradient remains above the surface elevation of the fen dome and the dome itself remains under saturated conditions it appears unlikely that appropriation rates between the range of 400–525 gpm will adversely affect the fens.

In order to avoid or minimize any adverse environmental effects to surface water resources, the Agency has developed mitigation measures it believes could be protective of surface water resources and at the same time support LPRW in its need to secure a reliable water supply for the northern portions of its service area. The mitigation measures listed below constitute the Agency's preferred alternative. It is estimated that if these mitigation measures are implemented, user rates for the overall system would increase approximately 21 percent. Although this rate increase is higher than the proposed action, LPRW concludes that its membership would be able to sustain this increase. The Agency believes that implementing the preferred alternative will help meet LPRW and its customers' long-term water supply needs, but yet be

protective of the area's surface water resources.

The Agency's preferred alternative includes:

1. Continue to maintain the Burr Well Field as a primary water source. The Agency supports reducing or limiting ground water appropriations at the Burr Well Field from each of the two aquifers—the Burr Unit and Altamont aquifer—to 400–525 gpm with a corresponding annual appropriation rate.

2. Supplement existing wells at the Burr Well Field with a new well field in an area south-southeast of the current Burr Well Field. This new well field could utilize both the Burr Unit and Altamont aquifers in a configuration similar to that at the Burr Well Field. Water from the new wells could be transported to the Burr Water Treatment Plant for treatment and distribution to LPRW customers.

3. The Agency recommends that the appropriation rates of the supplemental wells be similar to those permitted at the Burr Well Field or higher in the case of the Altamont aquifer. This configuration would give LPRW two well fields and enable it to continue utilizing the existing treatment capacity at the Burr Water Treatment Plant to meet the primary and secondary needs in the northern portion of its service area. This recommendation would likely "spread out" the effects or reductions in the potentiometric surface of the Burr Unit caused by production pumping, thus potentially avoiding or minimizing any adverse effects to surface water resources in the area.

4. The Agency recommends that MNDNR establish, as part of its permitting requirements for LPRW, protocols and standard operating procedures for well field operations that are designed to minimize drawdowns in the potentiometric surface in the Burr Unit. These protocols could include regulating pumping rates and annual withdrawals for each well and aquifer.

5. Formalize a water resource management plan that will continue to use existing monitoring points at fen locations and observation wells in the Burr Unit in Minnesota and South Dakota. This monitoring plan would enable LPRW and natural resource management agencies in both Minnesota and South Dakota to monitor and develop a long-term strategy for evaluating groundwater appropriations and their effects on surface water features in the area.

The Agency will condition approval on LPRW's application for financial assistance for the Northeast Phase Expansion and other associated costs on

successful completion of the following terms. This approval is subject to LPRW's being able to obtain the appropriate water appropriation permit(s) from the MNDNR.

1. Explore the development of a supplemental well field in the area south of the Burr Well Field determined by various geologic exploration efforts as containing aquifer materials that would be capable of supplying municipal quantities of water. The new well field should utilize both the Burr Unit and the Altamont aquifer providing for more reliance on the Altamont than it does at the Burr Well Field. Raw water from this well field should be transported to the existing Burr Water Treatment Plant to take advantage of the facility's existing water treatment capacity.

2. LPRW shall formalize a water resource management plan with the MNDNR to establish monitoring procedures and protocols to evaluate the effects of pumping the Burr Unit on surface water resources in Minnesota. Included within this plan LPRW shall develop standard operating procedures to manage and implement groundwater appropriations from the Burr Unit at both the new well field and Burr Well Field to minimize drawdown of the potentiometric surface from production pumping.

3. LPRW shall formalize an agreement with SDDENR to establish monitoring procedures and protocols to evaluate the effects of pumping the Burr Unit on surface water resources in South Dakota.

Provided these conditions are met and LPRW has formalized all the above with the appropriate regulatory authorities, the Agency is prepared to approve LPRW's application for construction of the Northeast Phase Expansion proposal, subject to the availability of funding.

All direct construction related activities associated with the funding of the Northeast Phase Expansion by themselves will have no significant environmental impact. The environmental effects of constructing an elevated water storage tank near Minneota, booster stations near Minneota and Green Valley, and 170 miles of pipeline will be minimal consisting of temporary disturbances consistent with standard construction practices. All environmental impacts will be mitigated as is appropriate for these individual construction activities.

No historic or cultural resources or threatened and endangered species will be affected by the Northeast Phase Expansion action. Less than 2 acres of important farmland will be converted at the water storage and booster station

sites. However, the majority of the land within the Northeast Phase Expansion area has been identified as important farmland, so the overall impact to this resource will be minimal.

For a detailed analysis of the data supporting the above conclusions, see the Draft EIS.

Dated: February 12, 1998.

John P. Romano,

Deputy Administrator, Water and Environmental Program.

[FR Doc. 98-4484 Filed 2-20-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of Export Administration

Export of Parcels Through the Postal Service; 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: Written comments must be submitted on or before April 24, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Departmental Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5327, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument(s) and instructions should be directed to Ms. Dawn Battle, Department of Commerce, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, room 6877, Washington, DC 20230.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

Persons exporting through the U.S. Postal Service must place on the parcel the authorization for the export—either the validated export license number or the General License symbol, as appropriate. If a General License is utilized, the exporter must also show on the parcel the phrase "Export License Not Required".

II. Method of Collection

Submitted on parcel.

III. Data

OMB Number: 0694-0095.

Form Number: Not applicable.

Type of Review: Regular submission for extension of a currently approved collection.

Affected Public: Individuals, businesses or other for-profit, and not-for-profit institutions.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 8,000,000.

Estimated Time Per Response: 5 seconds per response.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 11,110.

Estimated Total Annual Cost: \$0 (no capital expenditures are required).

IV. Request for 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 shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (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 respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: February 17, 1998.

Linda Engelmeier,

Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Office of Management and Organization.

[FR Doc. 98-4476 Filed 2-20-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-33-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of Export Administration

Five-Year Record Retention Period; 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: Written comments must be submitted on or before April 24, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Departmental Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5327, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument(s) and instructions should be directed to Ms. Dawn Battle, Department of Commerce, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, room 6877, Washington, DC 20230.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

Exporters are required to maintain records of export transactions. The recordkeeping requirement corresponds with the five-year statute of limitations for criminal actions brought under the Export Administration Act of 1979 and predecessor acts, and the five-year statute for administrative compliance proceedings. Without this authority, potential violators could discard records demonstrating violations of the EAR prior to the expiration of the five-year statute of limitations.

II. Method of Collection

Recordkeeping.

III. Data

OMB Number: 0694-0096.

Form Number: Not applicable.

Type of Review: Regular submission for extension of a currently approved collection.

Affected Public: Individuals, businesses or other for-profit, and not-for-profit institutions.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 154,816.

Estimated Time Per Response: 10 seconds per response.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 259.

Estimated Total Annual Cost: \$0—no capital expenditures are required.

IV. Request for 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 shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (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 respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques