

techniques to the following addresses. Please refer to EPA ICR# 1834.01 in any correspondence.

Ms. Sandy Farmer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, OPPE Regulatory Information Division (2137), 401 M Street, SW, Washington, DC 20460; and

Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Attention: Desk Officer for EPA, 725 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20503.

Dated: April 2, 1998.

**Richard T. Westlund,**

*Acting Director, Regulatory Information Division.*

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-5993-5]

### Agency Information Collection Activities: Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request; Four Private Party Surveys Regarding Prospective Purchaser Agreements and Comfort/Status Letters

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), this document announces that the following Information Collection Request (ICR) has been forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval: Four Private Party Surveys Regarding Prospective Purchaser Agreements and Comfort/Status Letters (EPA ICR #1837.02). The ICR describes the nature of the information collection and its expected burden and cost; where appropriate, it includes the actual data collection instrument.

**DATES:** Comments must be submitted on or before May 11, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Contact Sandy Farmer at EPA by phone at (202) 260-2740, by email at farmer.sandy@epamail.epa.gov, or download off the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/icr> and refer to EPA ICR #1837.02.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title:* Four Private Party Surveys Regarding Prospective Purchaser Agreements and Comfort/Status Letters (EPA ICR #1837.02). This is a new collection.

*Abstract:* In 1995, EPA issued guidance and policies concerning the

use of Prospective Purchaser Agreements and Comfort/Status Letters. (See *Guidance on Settlements with Prospective Purchasers of Contaminated Property*, published in the **Federal Register** on July 3, 1995 (60 FR 34792), and *Policy on the Issuance of Comfort/Status Letters*, published in the **Federal Register** on January 30, 1997 (62 FR 4624). Since that date, EPA has entered into 76 Prospective Purchaser Agreements and issued approximately 200 Comfort/Status Letters. OSRE will use four surveys to collect information from private parties (non-government personnel) at Brownfield sites where Prospective Purchaser Agreements and Comfort/Status Letters have been issued, or where they have been sought but not obtained. OSRE will use the information collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance on Prospective Purchaser Agreements and the Comfort/Status Letter policy, consider revisions to the guidance and policy, and consider expanding the use of Prospective Purchaser Agreements and Comfort/Status Letters to other EPA media programs. Responses to this information collection are strictly voluntary, and the information collection is a one-time effort.

OSRE will ensure the confidentiality of the responses to the information collection by employing contractor support to collect and analyze the information and by barring access to individual responses. Using contractors to collect the information through telephone surveys is expected to increase the candor of the responses. Contractors will transcribe responses onto survey forms and will compile the information. EPA and other personnel will not have access to individual responses. All EPA personnel, as well as other interested parties, will be limited to examining only compiled summaries of data. This process will safeguard the confidentiality of the information. All contractors involved in the information collection have signed non-disclosure statements and Conflict of Interest assessments. These documents ensure that the contractors have examined the information collection assignment for possible conflicts of interest and have found none. They also ensure that contractors will not reveal any information they collect while conducting the surveys.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control numbers for EPA's regulations are listed in 40 CFR part 9 and 48 CFR Chapter

15. A **Federal Register** document was published on 11/26/97 (62 FR 63158) soliciting comments on this collection of information, as required under 5 CFR 1320.8(d); no comments were received.

*Burden Statement:* The annual public reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 45 minutes per response. Burden means the total time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, or disclose or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions; develop, acquire, install, and utilize technology and systems for the purposes of collecting, validating, and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; adjust the existing ways to comply with any previously applicable instructions and requirements; train personnel to be able to respond to a collection of information; search data sources; complete and review the collection of information; and transmit or otherwise disclose the information.

*Respondents/Affected Entities:* Personnel at Brownfield sites.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 600.

*Frequency of Response:* one time only.

*Estimated Total Annual Hour Burden:* 488 hours.

*Estimated Total Annualized Cost Burden:* \$18,700.

Send comments on the Agency's need for this information, the accuracy of the provided burden estimates, and any suggested methods for minimizing respondent burden, including through the use of automated collection techniques to the following addresses. Please refer to EPA ICR #1837.02 in any correspondence.

Ms. Sandy Farmer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, OPPE Regulatory Information Division (2137), 401 M Street, SW, Washington, DC 20460; and

Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Attention: Desk Officer for EPA, 725 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20503.

Dated: April 3, 1998.

**Richard T. Westlund,**

*Acting Director, Regulatory Information Division.*

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