

of the workshop will focus on the Multi-Agency Radiation Survey & Site Investigation Manual (MARSSIM) evolution into Geostatistical and Bayesian approaches to surficial and, in particular, volumetric contamination characterization and analysis. This information will be useful to the NRC in developing realistic guidance for implementations requiring sub-surface or volumetric knowledge. All interested licensees and members of the public are invited to attend this workshop.

**DATES:** The workshop will be held on May 4th and 5th, 2004 from 8 a.m. to about 5 p.m. Registration is requested at <http://www.tiem.utk.edu/-sada/> to help plan for security issues and determine how many CD copies of the Beta SADA software will have to be prepared for distribution.

**ADDRESSES:** The public workshop will be held in the NRC auditorium at Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Designated Federal Official: Cheryl A. Trottier (301) 415-6232. General Information: George E. Powers, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, telephone (301) 415-6212, fax (301) 415-5385, e-mail: [GEP@NRC.GOV](mailto:GEP@NRC.GOV). The workshop program can be viewed at <http://www.tiem.utk.edu/-sada/>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This workshop is one of a series of interactions with the Agreement States, licensees, and the public to inform and gather suggestions and ideas for improving performance based protocols for conducting surveys that must consider volumetric geometries. Techniques that apply Bayesian and geostatistical methods are showing promise in reducing the resources required to evaluate volumetric contamination while increasing the accuracy and precision of the results. Therefore, the NRC staff is considering expanding and extending the performance guidance for conducting volumetric surveys by applying statistics such as Bayesian and geostatistical analysis that may be more appropriate for use in assessments. The workshop will include brief formal presentations by invited speakers from DOE national laboratories, EPA and other Federal Agencies. These presentations will address survey techniques that can be applied up to the initiation of volumetric sampling and analysis. Question and answer periods will be provided.

Visitor parking around the NRC building is limited; however, the

workshop site is located adjacent to the White Flint Station on the Metro Red Line. Seating for the public will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 12th day of April, 2004.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission,  
**Cheryl A. Trottier,**  
*Chief, Radiation Protection and Health Effects Branch, Division of Regulatory Applications, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research.*

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## **PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION**

### **Required Interest Rate Assumption for Determining Variable-Rate Premium for Premium Payment Years Beginning in January Through April 2004**

**AGENCY:** Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

**ACTION:** Notice of interest rate assumptions.

**SUMMARY:** This notice informs the public of the interest rate assumptions to be used for determining the variable-rate premium under part 4006 of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation regulations for premium payment years beginning in January through April 2004. These interest rate assumptions can be derived from rates published elsewhere, but are collected and published in this notice for the convenience of the public. Interest rates are also published on the PBGC's Web site (<http://www.pbgc.gov>).

The provisions of the Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002 that temporarily increased the required interest rate to be used to determine the PBGC's variable-rate premium to 100 percent (from 85 percent) of the annual yield on 30-year Treasury securities expired at the end of 2003. The Pension Funding Equity Act of 2004, which was signed into law by the President on April 10, 2004, changes the rules for determining the required interest rate for premium payment years beginning in 2004 or 2005. On April 15, 2004, the PBGC published a notice informing the public of interest rates and assumptions to be used under certain PBGC regulations. The April 15, 2004, notice stated that the PBGC intended shortly to publish a **Federal Register** notice reflecting the new required interest rates. The PBGC is now informing the public of those new required interest rates for premium payment years beginning in January through April 2004.

**DATES:** The required interest rate assumption for determining the variable-rate premium under part 4006 applies to premium payment years beginning in January through April 2004.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Harold J. Ashner, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 1200 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20005, 202-326-4024. (TTY/TDD users may call the Federal relay service toll-free at 1-800-877-8339 and ask to be connected to 202-326-4024.)

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **Variable-Rate Premiums**

Section 4006(a)(3)(E)(iii)(II) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and § 4006.4(b)(1) of the PBGC's regulation on Premium Rates (29 CFR part 4006) prescribe use of an assumed interest rate (the "required interest rate") in determining a single-employer plan's variable-rate premium. The required interest rate is the "applicable percentage" (currently 85 percent) of the annual yield on 30-year Treasury securities for the month preceding the beginning of the plan year for which premiums are being paid (the "premium payment year"). The provisions of the Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002 that temporarily increased the required interest rate to be used to determine the PBGC's variable-rate premium to 100 percent (from 85 percent) of the annual yield on 30-year Treasury securities expired at the end of 2003.

The Pension Funding Equity Act of 2004, which was signed into law by the President on April 10, 2004, changes the rules for determining the required interest rate for premium payment years beginning in 2004 or 2005. For premium payment years beginning in 2004 or 2005, the required interest rate is the "applicable percentage" (currently 85 percent) of the annual rate of interest determined by the Secretary of the Treasury on amounts invested conservatively in long-term investment grade corporate bonds for the month preceding the beginning of the plan year for which premiums are being paid. On April 12, 2004, the Internal Revenue Service issued Notice 2004-34 announcing the composite corporate bond rates needed to determine the required interest rates for premium payment years beginning in January through April 2004. (See Table 1 of IRS Notice 2004-34.)

The required interest rate to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning

in January 2004 is 4.94 percent (*i.e.*, 85 percent of the 5.81 percent composite corporate bond rate announced in IRS Notice 2004-34 for December 2003).

The required interest rate to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning in February 2004 is 4.83 percent (*i.e.*, 85 percent of the 5.68 percent composite corporate bond rate announced in IRS Notice 2004-34 for January 2004).

The required interest rate to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning in March 2004 is 4.79 percent (*i.e.*, 85 percent of the 5.63 percent composite corporate bond rate announced in IRS Notice 2004-34 for February 2004).

The required interest rate to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning in April 2004 is 4.62 percent (*i.e.*, 85 percent of the 5.44 percent composite corporate bond rate announced in IRS Notice 2004-34 for March 2004).

The following table lists the required interest rates to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning between May 2003 and April 2004. Note that the required interest rate for premium payment years beginning in May through December 2003 were determined under the Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002, and that the required interest rate for premium payment years beginning in January through April 2004 were determined under the Pension Funding Equity Act of 2004.

For premium payment years beginning in:	The required interest rate is:
May 2003* .....	4.90
June 2003* .....	4.53
July 2003* .....	4.37
August 2003* .....	4.93
September 2003* .....	5.31
October 2003* .....	5.14
November 2003* .....	5.16
December 2003* .....	5.12
January 2004** .....	4.94
February 2004** .....	4.83
March 2004** .....	4.79
April 2004** .....	4.62

\*The required interest rates for premium payment years beginning in May through December 2003 were determined under the Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002.

\*\*The required interest rates for premium payment years beginning in January through April 2004 were determined under the Pension Funding Equity Act of 2004.

Issued in Washington, DC, on this 13th day of April, 2004.

**Joseph H. Grant,**

*Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.*

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**BILLING CODE 7708-01-P**

## OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

### Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request for a New Information Collection: General Population Rental Equivalency Survey

**AGENCY:** Office of Personnel Management.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13, May 22, 1995), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget a request for a review of a new information collection. OPM plans to conduct a General Population Rental Equivalency Survey (GPRES) on a one-time basis to collect information on actual and estimated rents and rental characteristics from homeowners and renters in Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Washington, DC, area.

OPM will use this information to determine whether (1) differences between homeowner rent estimates and rental rates for comparable housing vary among the nonforeign cost-of-living allowance (COLA) areas and the Washington, DC, area; (2) rents vary among areas based on how long renters live in their rental units; and (3) rental data collected in GPRES differ on average from rental data that OPM collects in the COLA surveys. OPM regulations, adopted pursuant to the stipulation of settlement in *Caraballo v. United States*, No. 1997-0027 (D.V.I.), August 17, 2000, require the survey of rents and rental equivalence (homeowner estimates of the rental value of their homes).

OPM will collect information from approximately 5,000 to 8,000 respondents and estimates the total time per respondent will be 8 minutes, for a total burden of 670 to 1070 hours.

For copies of this proposal, contact Mary Beth Smith-Toomey on (202) 606-8358, fax: (202) 418-3251, or e-mail: [MaryBeth.Smith-Toomey@opm.gov](mailto:MaryBeth.Smith-Toomey@opm.gov). Please include a mailing address with your request.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before May 17, 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** Send or deliver comments to:

- Donald J. Winstead, Deputy Associate Director for Pay and Performance Policy, Office of Personnel Management, Room 7H31, 1900 E Street NW., Washington, DC 20415-8200; fax: (202) 606-4264; or e-mail: [cola@opm.gov](mailto:cola@opm.gov); and

- Joseph F. Lackey, OPM Desk Officer, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, New Executive Office Building, NW., Room 10235, Washington, DC 20503.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Donald L. Paquin, (202) 606-2838.

U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

**Kay Coles James,**

*Director.*

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## RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD

### Proposed Collection; Comment Request

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the requirement of section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 which provides opportunity for public comment on new or revised data collections, the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) will publish periodic summaries of proposed data collections.

*Comments are invited on:* (a) Whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information has practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the RRB's estimate of the burden of the collection of the information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden related to the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

*Title and purpose of information collection:* Public Service Pension Questionnaires; OMB 3220-0136. Public Law 95-216 amended the Social Security Act of 1977 by providing, in part, that spouse or survivor benefits may be reduced when the beneficiary is in receipt of a pension based on employment with a Federal, State, or local governmental unit. Initially, the reduction was equal to the full amount of the government pension.

Public Law 98-21 changed the reduction to two-thirds of the amount of the government pension.

Public Law 108-203, the Social Security Protection Act of 2004, was