

requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Employee Benefits Security Administration is soliciting comments on the proposed extension of the collection of information included in the alternative method of compliance for certain simplified employee pensions regulation (29 CFR 2520.104-49).

A copy of the information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the individual shown in the ADDRESSES section of this notice.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office shown in the ADDRESSES section on or before January 31, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Gerald B. Lindrew, Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20210, (202) 693-8410, FAX (202) 693-4745 (these are not toll-free numbers).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Section 110 of the Employment Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) authorizes the Secretary to prescribe alternative methods of compliance with the reporting and disclosure requirements of Title I of ERISA for pension plans. Simplified employee pensions (SEPs) are established in section 408(k) of the Internal Revenue Code (Code). Although SEPs are primarily a development of the Code and subject to its requirements, SEPs are also pension plans subject to the reporting and disclosure requirements of Title I of ERISA.

The Department previously issued a regulation under the authority of section 110 of ERISA (29 CFR 2520.104-49) that intended to relieve sponsors of certain SEPs from ERISA's Title I reporting and disclosure requirements by prescribing an alternative method of compliance. These SEPs are, for purposes of this Notice, referred to as "non-model" SEPs because they exclude (1) those SEPs which are created through use of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 5305-SEP, and (2) those SEPs in which the employer limits or influences the employees' choice to IRAs into which employers' contributions will be made and on which participant withdrawals are prohibited. The disclosure requirements in this regulation were developed in conjunction with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS Notice 81-1). Accordingly, sponsors of "non-model" SEPs that satisfy the limited disclosure requirements of the regulation are relieved from otherwise

applicable reporting and disclosure requirements under Title I of ERISA, including the requirements to file annual reports (Form 5500 Series) with the Department, and to furnish summary plan descriptions and summary annual reports to participants and beneficiaries.

This ICR includes four separate disclosure requirements. First, at the time an employee becomes eligible to participate in the SEP, the administrator of the SEP must furnish the employee in writing specific and general information concerning the SEP; a statement on rates, transfers and withdrawals; and a statement on tax treatment. Second, the administrator of the SEP must furnish participants with information concerning any amendments. Third, the administrator must notify participants of any employer contributions made to the IRA. Fourth, in the case of a SEP that provides integration with Social Security, the administrator shall provide participants with statement on Social Security taxes and the integration formula used by the employer.

II. Review Focus

The Department of Labor (Department) is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate 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;
- Evaluate 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;
 - Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
 - 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, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

III. Current Actions

The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) approval of this ICR will expire on February 28, 2005. The ICR should be continued because the alternative disclosure arrangement provided through this regulation relieves sponsors of "non-model" SEPs of most of the reporting and disclosure requirements under Title I of ERISA. Additionally, the disclosure requirements set forth in this regulation,

insure that administrators of "non-model" SEPs provide participants with specific written information concerning SEPs. After considering comments received in response to this notice, the Department intends to submit the ICR to OMB for continuing approval. No change to the existing ICR is proposed or made at this time.

Agency: Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor.

Title: Alternative Method of Compliance for Certain SEPs pursuant to 29 CFR 2520.104-49.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection of information.

OMB Number: 1210-0034.

Affected Public: Individuals or households; business or other for-profit; not-for-profit institutions.

Respondents: 460.

Responses: 20,700.

Frequency of Response: On occasion.

Average Response Time: 35 minutes.

Estimated Total Burden Hours: 2,000.

Total Burden Cost (operating/maintenance): \$7,900.

Dated: November 24, 2004.

Gerald B. Lindrew,

Deputy Director, Office of Policy and Research, Employee Benefits Security Administration.

[FR Doc. 04-26545 Filed 12-1-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4510-29-P

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employee Benefits Security Administration

Proposed Extension of Information Collection Request Submitted for Public Comment and Recommendations; Prohibited Transaction Class Exemption 98-54—Foreign Exchange Transactions Executed Pursuant to Standing Instructions

AGENCY: Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a preclearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA 95). This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized,

collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Employee Benefits Security Administration is soliciting comments on the proposed extension of the information collection provisions of Prohibited Transaction Exemption 98-54 (PTE 98-54).

A copy of the information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the individual shown in the ADDRESSES section of this notice.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office shown in the ADDRESSES section on or before January 31, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Gerald B. Lindrew, Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20210, (202) 693-8410, FAX (202) 693-4745 (these are not toll-free numbers).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

PTE 98-54 permits certain foreign exchange transactions between employee benefit plans and certain banks, broker-dealers, and domestic affiliates thereof, which are parties in interest with respect to such plans, pursuant to standing instructions. In the absence of an exemption, foreign exchange transactions pursuant to standing instructions would be prohibited under circumstances where the bank or broker-dealer is a party in interest or disqualified person with respect to the plan under the Employee Retirement Income Securities Act (ERISA) or the Internal Revenue Code (Code).

The class exemption has five basic information collection requirements. The first requires the bank or broker-dealer to maintain written policies and procedures for handling foreign exchange transactions for plans for which it is a party in interest which ensure that the party acting for the bank or broker-dealer knows it is dealing with a plan. The second requires that the transactions are performed in accordance with a written authorization executed in advance by an independent fiduciary of the plan. The third requires that the bank or broker-dealer provides the authorizing fiduciary with a copy of its written policies and procedures for foreign exchange transactions involving income item conversions and *de minimis* purchase and sale transactions prior to the execution of a transaction. The fourth requires the bank or broker-dealer to furnish the authorizing

fiduciary a written confirmation statement with respect to each covered transaction within five days of execution. The fifth requires that the bank or broker-dealer maintains records necessary for plan fiduciaries, participants, and the Department and Internal Revenue Service to determine whether the conditions of the exemption are being met for period of six years from the date of execution of a transaction.

By requiring that records pertaining to the exempted transaction be maintained for six years, this ICR insures that the exemption is not abused, the rights of the participants and beneficiaries are protected, and that compliance with the exemption's conditions can be confirmed. The exemption affects participants and beneficiaries of the plans that are involved in such transactions as well as certain banks, broker-dealers, and domestic affiliates thereof.

II. Review Focus

The Department of Labor (Department) is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate 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;
- Evaluate 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;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- 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, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

III. Current Actions

The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) approval of this ICR will expire on February 28, 2005. After considering comments received in response to this notice, the Department intends to submit the ICR to OMB for continuing approval. No change to the existing ICR is proposed or made at this time.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of the information collection

request; they will also become a matter of public record.

Agency: Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor.

Title: Prohibited Transaction Class Exemption 98-54 relating to Certain Employee Benefit Plan Foreign Exchange Transactions Executed Pursuant to Standing Instructions.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection of information.

OMB Number: 1210-0111.

Affected Public: Individuals or households; Business or other for-profit; Not-for-profit institutions.

Respondents: 35.

Responses: 8,400.

Average Response Time: 30 minutes.

Estimated Total Burden Hours: 4,200.

Total Annualized Capital/Startup Costs: \$0.

Total Annual Costs (operating/maintaining systems or purchasing services): \$0.

Dated: November 24, 2004.

Gerald B. Lindrew,

Deputy Director, Office of Policy and Research, Employee Benefits Security Administration.

[FR Doc. 04-26546 Filed 12-1-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4510-29-P

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employee Benefits Security Administration

Proposed Extension of Information Collection Request Submitted for Public Comment and Recommendations; Delinquent Filer Voluntary Compliance Program

AGENCY: Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a preclearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA 95) (Public Law 104-13, 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35). This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Employee Benefits