

Division, AMS, USDA, Stop 0224, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C., 20250-0224. Telephone number (202) 720-2259.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In July 1991, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) implemented the 1990 amendments to the Cotton Research and Promotion Act. These amendments provided for: (1) importer representation on the Cotton Board by an appropriate number of persons to be determined by the Secretary who import cotton or cotton products into the U.S., and are selected by the Secretary from nominations submitted by importer organizations certified by the Secretary; (2) assessments levied on imported cotton and cotton products at a rate determined in the same manner as for U.S. cotton; (3) increasing the amount the Secretary can be reimbursed for conduct of a referendum from \$200,000 to \$300,000; (4) reimbursing government agencies who assist in administering the collection of assessments on imported cotton and cotton products; and (5) terminating the right of producers to demand a refund of assessments.

Results of the July 1991 referendum showed that of the 46,220 valid ballots received; 27,879, or 60 percent of the persons voting, favored the amendments to the Order, and 18,341 or 40 percent opposed the amendments. AMS developed implementing regulations for the import assessment effective August 1, 1992, the elimination of the producer refund effective September 1, 1991, and provided for importer representation on the Cotton Board effective January 1, 1993. The addition of these new members brought the Cotton Board's membership to 25 (21 producer members and 4 importer members).

The Department has prepared a report which describes the impact of the Cotton Research and Promotion Program on the cotton industry and the views of those receiving its benefits. The report is based on a review conducted by AMS to determine whether to hold a referendum of producers and importers on continuation of the 1990 Act amendments. The review report is available upon written request to the Chief of the Cotton Research and Promotion Staff at the address provided above. Information included in the report was gathered from a variety of sources in order to develop a broad-base of opinion and data. Comments were solicited from persons who pay assessments as well as from organizations representing the cotton industry. Economic data was reviewed in order to report on the general climate of the cotton industry. Finally, a number

of independent sources of information were reviewed to help identify perspectives from outside the program.

The review report cited that the 1990 amendments to the Cotton Research and Promotion Act were successfully implemented and are operating as intended. The General Accounting Office found that USDA implemented rules and regulations consistent with the intention of the 1990 Act amendments, but criticized some of the procedures USDA implemented for exemptions and reimbursements of import assessments. However, USDA addressed these concerns and considered alternatives during the implementing rulemaking process. The U.S. Trade Representative found that the framework for implementing the import assessment was consistent with trade policy.

The report also noted that there is a general consensus within the cotton industry that the Cotton Research and Promotion Program and, in particular, the import assessment and the elimination of refunds are operating as intended. Written comments, survey responses and economic data support this conclusion. Industry comments cited examples of how the additional funding has already yielded benefits by increasing the demand for cotton and by the successful introduction of new cotton apparel products.

USDA found no compelling reason to conduct a referendum regarding the 1990 Act amendments to the Cotton Research and Promotion Order although certain program participants support a referendum. Therefore, USDA will allow all eligible persons to request the conduct of a continuance referendum on the 1990 amendments through a sign-up period. The sign-up period will be conducted November 25, 1996 through February 22, 1997. Eligible producers and importers may sign-up to request such a referendum at the county office of the Farm Service Agency (FSA), or by mailing such a request to the Secretary. The Secretary will conduct a referendum if requested by 10 percent or more of the number of cotton producers and importers voting in the most recent (July 1991) referendum, with not more than 20 percent of such requests from producers in one state or importers of cotton.

Eligible producers who wish to participate in the sign-up period to request a referendum may visit the FSA county office or county agent, serving the county in which the producer's farm is located. Importers who wish to request a referendum should mail such a request to USDA, AMS, Cotton Division, Stop 0224, 1400 Independence

Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC, 20250-0224. All requests must be made in person or postmarked by February 22, 1997.

The Secretary will announce the results of the sign-up period in a separate notice in the Federal Register.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 2101-2118.

Dated: September 30, 1996.

Lon Hatamiya,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 96-25704 Filed 10-07-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of the Census

Quarterly Survey of the Finances of Public Employee Retirement Systems

ACTION: Proposed agency information collection activity; 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 December 9, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Acting Departmental Forms 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 William C. Hulcher, Bureau of the Census, Governments Division, Washington, DC 20233-6800, (301) 457-1502.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This quarterly survey was initiated by the Bureau of the Census at the request of both the Council of Economic Advisors and the Federal Reserve Board. It gathers data on the assets of the 104 largest State and local government public employee retirement systems. These systems hold over three quarters of a trillion dollars in assets, which represents approximately 80 percent of all State and Local government public employee retirement system assets.

These important data are used by the Federal Reserve Board to track the public sector portion of the flow of funds accounts. The Bureau of Economic Analysis uses the data on corporate stock holdings to estimate dividends received by State and local government public employee retirement systems. These estimates, in turn, are used as a component in developing the national income and product accounts.

II. Method of Collection

This a mail canvass survey. Responses are screened manually and then entered on a microcomputer. No statistical methods are used to calculate the data. If those rare instances do occur when we are not able to obtain a response, estimates are made for nonrespondents by using:

- A. Historical data for the same system
- B. Latest available annual data
- C. Estimates received by telephone calls to respondents

III. Data

OMB Number: 0607-0143.

Form Number: F-10.

Type of Review: Regular.

Affected Public: State and local governments.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 104.

Estimated Time Per Response: 1 hour.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 416 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Cost: The estimated cost to the respondents is \$6,252.48. The estimated cost to the Federal Government is contained in the Annual Surveys of State and Local Government Finance. In total, these cost an estimated \$2.8 million during FY 1996.

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

Legal Authority: Title 13 U.S.C., Section 182.

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 also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: October 2, 1996.

Linda Engelmeier,

Acting Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Office of Management and Organization.

[FR Doc. 96-25669 Filed 10-7-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-07-P

1997 Census of Governments

ACTION: Proposed Agency Information Collection Activity; 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 December 9, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Acting Departmental Forms 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 Henry Wulf or Donna Hirsch, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Governments Division, Washington, DC 20233-6800, 800-242-2184 (telephone), hwulf@census.gov or dhirsch@census.gov (Internet e-mail address).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This census provides government organization, employment and finance data for state and local governments. The data are used to calculate the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), to monitor the government sector of the economy, and to formulate, develop, and review public policy.

The organization phase provides statistics on the number of local governments by type and by selected characteristics. The employment phase collects data on employment and payrolls of state and local governments. In the finance phase, the information relates to several aspects of state and

local government public finance: revenues, including related property tax bases; expenditures by function and character; indebtedness and debt transactions; and cash and security holdings.

The 1997 Census of Governments excludes two portions of information collected in the 1992 quinquennial census; There will not be a taxable property value phase and the organization phase will exclude data relating to elected officials. In addition, there are two significant methodological changes; The reference date for the Employment phase will be March 12, 1997 instead of October 12, 1997 and all organization phase mail data will be obtained on joint employment/organization forms (EGO-forms).

II. Method of Collection

Canvass methodology consists of a mail out/mail back questionnaire. Responses will be screened manually, then put into an electronic format. Other methods used to collect data and maximize response include central data collection, electronic reporting, solicitation of printed reports in lieu of a completed questionnaire, and use of the Census Bureau's Federal Single Audit Clearinghouse. The organization phase includes, in addition, extensive legal research to determine the existence and organizational ties of governmental entities.

III. Data

OMB Number: Not available.

Form Number: F-1, F-5, F-5A, F-11, F-12, F-13, F-21, F-22, F-25, F-28, F-29, F-32, F-42, E-1, E-2, E-3, E-6, E-7, E-9, EGO-3, EGO-4, EGO-6, EGO-7.

Type of Review: Regular.

Affected Public: State, local or tribal government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 134,119.

Estimated Time Per Response: 1.27.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 170,017.

Estimated Total Cost: The estimated cost to respondents for all phases of the Census of Governments is \$2,261,226. The estimated cost to the Federal government is contained in the budgetary plans of the 1997 Census of Governments. In total, these amounts are projected to be about \$13.4 million.

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

Legal Authority: Title 13 USC, Section 161.

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