

program to provide the general public and Federal agencies an opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA95) [44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)]. 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.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the ADDRESSES section of this notice on or before September 24, 1999.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is particularly interested in comments which:

- 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.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Karin G. Kurz, BLS Clearance Officer, Division of Management Systems, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Room 3255, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Washington, DC 20212. Ms. Kurz can be reached on 202-606-7628 (this is not a toll free number).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karin G. Kurz, BLS Clearance Officer. (See ADDRESSES section).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Proposed Collection

Currently, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is soliciting comments concerning the proposed revision of the "Cognitive and Psychological Research." A copy of the proposed information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the individual listed in the ADDRESSES section of this notice.

II. Background

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Behavior Science Research Laboratory (BSRL) conducts theoretical, applied, and evaluative research aimed at improving the quality of data collected and published by the BLS. Since its creation in 1988, the BSRL has advanced the study of survey methods research, approaching issues of non-sampling error within a framework that draws heavily on the theories and methods of the cognitive, statistical and social sciences. The BSRL research focuses primarily on the assessment of survey instrument design and survey administration, as well as on issues related to interviewer training and the interview process. Improvements in these areas result in better accuracy and response rates of BLS surveys, frequently reduce costs in training and survey administration, and further ensure the effectiveness of the overall BLS mission.

III. Current Actions

The purpose of this request for clearance is to conduct cognitive and psychological research designed to enhance the quality of BLS data collection procedures and overall data management. The BLS is committed to producing the most accurate and complete data within the highest quality assurance guidelines. The BSRL was created to aid in this effort, and over the past decade it has demonstrated the effectiveness and value of its approach. Over the next few years, demand for BSRL consultation is expected to rise, as information processing approaches to survey methods research become more common. Moreover, as the use of computers and web-based surveys continues to grow, so too will the need for careful tests of instrument design and usability, human-computer interactions, and other potential problems in data quality that these technologies bring. The BSRL is uniquely equipped to accommodate these demands.

Much of the work done by the BSRL is conducted under controlled laboratory conditions, and relies on the participation of volunteer subjects recruited from the general public. Retaining subjects as BSRL participants for multiple studies is necessary to minimize the costs of recruitment, and is often methodologically essential for studies investigating temporal effects or the effects of multiple treatments on subject responses. Competition with private research establishments, a perceived high burden to compensation ratio, and travel or scheduling

constraints often result in individuals dropping from BSRL rolls after only one study.

The revisions in this submission reflect an effort to reverse recent trends in BSRL subject attrition, and to accommodate increasing interest by BLS statistical program offices and other agencies in the methods used and results obtained by the BSRL. This submission reflects planned research and development activities for Fiscal Year 2000 through Fiscal Year 2002; its approval will enable the continued productivity of a state-of-the-art, multi-disciplinary program of behavioral science research to improve BLS survey methodology.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Agency: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Title: Cognitive and Psychological Research.

OMB Number: 1220-0141.

Affected Public: Individuals and Households; business and other for-profit; not-for-profit institutions; State, Local, or Tribal Government.

Total Respondents: 4,000.

Frequency: On occasion.

Total Responses: 4,000.

Average Time Per Response: 60 minutes.

Estimated Total Burden Hours: 4,000 hours.

Total Burden Cost (capital/startup): \$0

Total Burden Cost (operating/maintenance): \$0.

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

Signed at Washington, DC, this 20th day of July 1999.

W. Stuart Rust, Jr.,

*Chief, Division of Management Systems,
Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-390]

Tennessee Valley Authority; Notice of Withdrawal of Application for Amendment to Facility Operating License

The U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has granted a request to the Tennessee Valley Authority (the Licensee) to withdraw its December 23, 1998,

application for proposed amendment to Facility Operating License No. NPF-90 for the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, located in Rhea County, Tennessee.

The proposed amendment would have provided a temporary change, until the next time the unit entered Mode 3, to the ice condenser inlet door position monitoring system channel check methodology to account for the impact of an annunciator ground on the existing channel check methods.

The Commission had previously issued a Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment published in the **Federal Register** on December 31, 1998 (63 FR 72339). However, by letter dated March 9, 1999, the licensee withdrew the proposed change.

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated December 23, 1998, and the licensee's letter dated March 9, 1999, which withdrew the application for this license amendment. The above documents are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC and at the local public document room located at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Library, 1001 Broad Street, Chattanooga, TN 37402.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 16th day of July, 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Robert E. Martin,

Senior Project Manager, Section 2, Project Directorate II, Division of Licensing Project Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 99-18984 Filed 7-23-99; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Public Comment on the Pilot Program for the New Regulatory Oversight Program

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Request for public comment.

SUMMARY: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is proposing significant revisions to its processes for overseeing the safety performance of commercial nuclear power plants that include integrating the inspection, assessment, and enforcement processes. As part of its proposal, the NRC staff established a new regulatory oversight framework with a set of performance indicators and associated thresholds, developed a new baseline inspection program that supplements and verifies

the performance indicators, and created a continuous assessment process that includes a method for consistently determining the appropriate regulatory actions in response to varying levels of safety performance. The changes are the result of continuing work on concepts as described in SECY-99-007,

"Recommendations for Reactor Oversight" dated January 8, 1999, and SECY-99-007A, "Recommendations for Reactor Oversight Improvements (Follow-Up to SECY-99-007)" dated March 22, 1999. In June 1999, the NRC began a six-month pilot program with two sites participating from each region. The purpose of the pilot program is to exercise the new oversight process, identify problems, develop lessons learned, and make any necessary changes before full implementation at all sites. The NRC is soliciting comments from interested public interest groups, the regulated industry, States, and concerned citizens. The NRC staff will consider comments it receives for further development and refinement of the new oversight process.

DATES: The comment period expires November 30, 1999. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the Commission is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be submitted either electronically or via U.S. mail.

Submit written comments to: Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mail Stop: T-6 D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Hand deliver comments to: 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, between 7:45 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on Federal workdays. Copies of comments received may be examined at the NRC's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW (Lower Level), Washington, DC.

Comments may be submitted electronically at the "NRC Initiatives 1999" web page at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/COMMISSION/INITIATIVES/1999/COMMENTS/2a_cmt.html

Copies of the Pilot Program Guidelines may be obtained at the following web site: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/index.html>

Additional information on the pilot program may be obtained from the NRC's Public Document Room at 2120 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20003-1527, telephone 202-634-3272.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Alan Madison, Mail Stop: O-5 H4, Inspection Program Branch, Office of

Nuclear Reactor Regulation, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, telephone 301-415-1490.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

In September 1997, the NRC began an integrated review of the process used for assessing safety performance by commercial nuclear power plant licensees. The NRC staff presented a conceptual design for a new integrated assessment process to the Commission in Commission paper SECY-98-045, dated March 9, 1998.

In parallel with the staff's work on the integrated review of the assessment processes (IRAP) and the development of other assessment tools, the nuclear power industry independently developed a proposal for a new assessment and regulatory oversight process. This proposal, developed by the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), took a risk-informed and performance-based approach to the inspection, assessment, and enforcement of licensee activities on the basis of the results of a set of performance indicators.

The staff set out to develop a single set of recommendations for making improvements to the regulatory oversight processes in response to NEI's proposal, the Commission's comments on the IRAP proposal, comments made at a Commission meeting on July 17, 1998, with public and industry stakeholders and the hearing before the Senate on July 31, 1998. The IRAP public comment period (which ended in October 1998), during which the NRC conducted a four day public workshop in the Fall of 1998, was used to facilitate internal and external input into the development of these recommendations.

Following the public workshop, the NRC staff formed three task groups to complete the work begun at the workshop and to develop the recommendations for the integrated oversight processes: A technical framework task group, an inspection task group, and an assessment process task group. The technical framework task group was responsible for completing the assessment framework and for identifying the performance indicators (PIs) and appropriate thresholds that could be used to measure safety performance. The inspection task group was responsible for developing the scope, the depth, and the frequency of a risk-informed baseline inspection program that would be used to supplement and verify the PIs. The assessment process task group developed methods for integrating PI data and inspection data, determining