



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act.

*Agency:* U.S. Census Bureau.

*Title:* Survey of Housing Starts, Sales & Completions.

*OMB Control Number:* 0607-0110.

*Form Number(s):* SOC-Q1/SF.1, SCO-Q1/MF.1.

*Type of Request:* Revision of a currently approved collection.

*Number of Respondents:* 19,440.

*Average Hours Per Response:* 5 minutes.

*Burden Hours:* 150,066.

*Needs and Uses:* The U. S. Census Bureau is requesting a revision and extension of the currently approved collection for the Survey of Housing Starts, Sales, and Completions, otherwise known as the Survey of Construction (SOC). Government agencies and private companies use statistics from SOC to monitor and evaluate the large and dynamic housing construction industry. Data for two Principal Federal Economic Indicators are produced from the SOC: New Residential Construction (housing starts and housing completions) and New Residential Sales. In addition, a number of other statistical series are produced, including extensive information on the physical characteristics of new residential buildings, and indexes measuring rates of inflation in the price of new buildings. The collection of data on housing units sold and completed and physical characteristics is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) via a reimbursable agreement with the Census Bureau. HUD uses data on housing market conditions to inform its policies. These statistics are based on a sample of residential buildings in

permit-issuing places and a road canvass in a sample of land areas not covered by building permit systems.

The respondents are homebuilders, real estate agents, rental agents, or new homeowners of sampled residential buildings. Field Representatives contact respondents multiple times based on the number of projects in the sample and the number of months required to complete the project (usually about 8 months).

After discussions with HUD and other key data users, we identified one new data item on ceiling height to be added to the single-family questionnaire.

The Census Bureau uses the information collected in the SOC to publish estimates of the number of new residential housing units started, under construction, completed, and the number of new houses sold and for sale. The Census Bureau also publishes many

financial and physical characteristics of new housing units. Government agencies use these statistics to evaluate economic policy, measure progress towards the national housing goal, make policy decisions, and formulate legislation. For example, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System uses data from this survey to evaluate the effect of interest rates in this interest-rate sensitive area of the economy. The Bureau of Economic Analysis uses the data in developing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The private sector uses the information for estimating the demand for building materials and the many products used in new housing and to schedule production, distribution, and sales efforts. The financial community uses the data to estimate the demand for short-term (construction loans) and long-term (mortgages) borrowing.

*Affected Public:* Individuals; Businesses.

*Frequency:* Monthly.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Voluntary.

*Legal Authority:* Title 13, United States Code, Sections 131 and 182.

This information collection request may be viewed at *www.reginfo.gov*. Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to OIRA\_Submission@omb.eop.gov or fax to (202)395-5806.

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