



## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

#### **Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Licensing of Private Remote-Sensing Space Systems**

**AGENCY:** National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of information collection, request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment preceding submission of the collection to OMB.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at [NOAA.PRA@noaa.gov](mailto:NOAA.PRA@noaa.gov). Please reference OMB Control Number 0648-0174 in the subject line of your comments. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to Dr. Sarah Brothers, Director, Commercial Remote Sensing Regulatory Affairs, 1401 Constitution Avenue, NW Room 31027, Washington, DC 20230; (771) 216-4112; [sarah.brothers@noaa.gov](mailto:sarah.brothers@noaa.gov).

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*I. Abstract*

This is a request for revision and extension to an approved information collection.

The Department of Commerce (DOC), through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Space Commerce (OSC) Commercial Remote Sensing Regulatory Affairs (CRSRA), has the authority to regulate private space-based remote sensing under the Land Remote Sensing Policy Act of 1992, 51 U.S.C. 60101 *et seq.* (the Act) and regulations at 15 CFR Part 960. The regulations facilitate the development of the U.S. private remote sensing industry and thus promote the collection and widespread availability of remote sensing data while preserving essential U.S. national security interests and observing international obligations.

The proposed revisions in this notice are primarily tied to the development of a new, online platform to manage license actions called the Commerce Licensing and Compliance System for Space (CLCSS). CLCSS is intended to streamline the process for communications with CRSRA regarding applications, notices, modification requests, and annual compliance certifications. CRSRA is committed to improving the user experience and providing a simplified license application and management process for all licensees. The forms discussed below and their integration with CLCSS will streamline, clarify, and expedite paperwork submissions required to support regulation of the private space-based remote sensing industry.

Applications are made in response to the requirements in the Act, as amended. At present, CRSRA sends the applicant an Application Guide, which repeats the application questions and criteria listed in Appendix A to 15 CFR part 960 with an additional explanatory text. In the future, the CLCSS system will incorporate these questions and response criteria in a fillable, online form format. The application information received is used to determine if the applicant meets the legal criteria for issuance of a license to operate a private remote sensing space system, i.e., the proposed system will be operated in accordance with the Act, U.S. national security concerns and international obligations. Application information includes information about the applicant (such as corporate information), the launch dates of any

components going to space, and technical specifications of all components of the remote sensing system. CRSRA has observed that relying on both the Appendix and the Application Guide creates confusion and has led to the submission of incomplete applications. CRSRA anticipates the fillable format, which combines both the Application Guide and criteria in Appendix A, will help any new applicant accurately provide the necessary information.

If a licensee wishes to modify its license, either to reflect changes in its business practices or technical changes to its system, or to request different license conditions, it may submit such a request to CRSRA and explain why the change is sought. CRSRA needs this information to be able to keep licenses accurate and to respond to the regulated community's needs. CRSRA is incorporating a new form called the License Modification Form with a standard set of questions licensees can provide for the modification request to be processed. Licensees will identify the relevant license provisions, the requested changes to those provisions, and the date upon which the requested change will take effect. CRSRA anticipates this will expedite how quickly the requests are processed and remove a moderate amount of paperwork by clarifying what to include with a modification request.

Licensees are required to notify CRSRA when a spacecraft launches or deploys; upon disposal of an on-orbit component of the licensed system; upon detection of an anomaly; and upon the licensee's financial insolvency or dissolution. The existing information collection already allows for the collection of this information through the Licensee Notification Form (LNF). The approved LNF can already ease the burden on licensees when reporting this already-required information. This information is critical to fulfilling one of the United States' key international obligations, which is to authorize and continually supervise U.S. nationals' activities in space. CRSRA, therefore, must be notified when spacecraft are deployed and disposed of so that CRSRA can supervise the space activities of U.S. nationals. Similarly, anomalies may indicate loss of control of a spacecraft, so CRSRA must monitor any anomalies to meaningfully supervise the activities of U.S. nationals in space. Finally, the financial

insolvency or dissolution of a licensee may indicate that a change in control of the spacecraft will follow, because an insolvent licensee may go through a bankruptcy process that might put the licensed system's ownership in question. It is critical that CRSRA be able to intervene as early as possible in this process so that a sensitive system does not pass into the ownership of an entity who might jeopardize national security or international obligations. The LNF ensures that only required information is submitted, thereby reducing unnecessary paperwork and/or follow-up correspondence. The LNF will be integrated into CLCSS to clarify content, make the LNF more accessible, and further reduce the paperwork burden.

Pursuant to the regulations, CRSRA requires licensees to submit an annual compliance certification. In the certification, licensees verify that all facts in the license remain true. Facts that must be verified in this certification include the technical specifications of the system and other foundational facts that CRSRA relies upon in reviewing license applications. This information is critical to ensuring that only those entities who are legally fit to obtain a license do so. In order to integrate this process with CLCSS, CRSRA will turn the standard verification requirement into a form. There will be no substantive change in what information needs to be provided by licensees.

CRSRA will renew the optional Initial Contact Form (ICF) that includes contact information and general remote sensing system information with a few changes for clarity that include rephrasing a few questions and removing one or two. The ICF may be submitted electronically through the NOAA website prior to the submission of a full application and will also be integrated into CLCSS. The ICF information received is used to determine if the applicant is required to submit a full application for the issuance of a license to operate a private remote sensing space system, i.e., the proposed system falls under the authority defined in the Act and the regulations. If NOAA determines after reviewing the ICF that an application is not required, the potential applicant will save 40-50 hours of paperwork by not submitting the application.

Finally, CRSRA is renewing the optional Data Availability Notification (DAN) which includes contact information and general data availability information. The DAN may be submitted electronically through the NOAA website during the application process, while an applicant holds a license, or by any interested party. The DAN will be integrated with CLCSS as well. The DAN information received is used to help determine the availability of unenhanced data from a foreign or domestic remote sensing system, which may then be compared to unenhanced data produced by an applicant's system for the purpose of adjusting the conditions and/or restrictions in a license. The DAN form ensures that only required information is submitted, thereby reducing unnecessary paperwork and/or follow-up correspondence.

## *II. Method of Collection*

Information is collected electronically through the NOAA website and through the coming online platform Commerce Licensing and Compliance System for Space (CLCSS).

## *III. Data*

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0174.

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Review:* Regular (revision and extension of a current information collection).

*Affected Public:* Business or other for-profit organizations.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 100

*Estimated Time Per Response:* 25 hours for the submission of a license application (one time for the entire license); 1 hour for the submission of a license amendment; 30 minutes each for a notification of disposal of on-orbit component, notification of detection of anomaly, and notification of financial insolvency or dissolution using the Licensee Notification Form; 30 minutes each for notification of launch or deployment of spacecraft; 3 hours for the annual compliance certification; and 20 minutes for the Initial Contact Form; and 10 minutes for the Data Availability Notification.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 100 hours.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$0.*

*Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory. The ICF and DAN are voluntary.*

*Legal Authority: Land Remote Sensing Policy Act of 1992, 51 U.S.C. 60101 et seq; and 15 CFR Part 960 - Licensing of Private Remote Sensing Space Systems.*

*IV. Request for Comments*

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Sheleen Dumas,**

*Departmental PRA Clearance Officer,*

*Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs,*

*Commerce Department.*

