

farm, ranch, and forest land to voluntarily make that land available for access by the public for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation. Grant recipients may also use VPA-HIP funds to improve habitat on enrolled public access program lands.

NRCS expects most actions carried out with VPA-HIP funds to follow NRCS conservation practice standards and fall within existing categorical exclusions. Although VPA-HIP applicants that agree to follow NRCS conservation practice standards will receive preference for acceptance and funding, there is no requirement they do so. It is also possible some actions may not fall within a categorical exclusion. Therefore, NRCS decided to prepare a Programmatic EA to review the effects of activities that are likely to occur with VPA-HIP grants.

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action is to award VPA-HIP grants as authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill, as amended. Under this alternative, NRCS will provide an opportunity for State and Tribal governments to apply for grants to encourage owners and operators of privately held farm, ranch, and forest land to voluntarily make that land available for access by the public for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation, and to improve and manage fish and wildlife habitat on their land under programs administered by State or Tribal governments. Grants will be awarded through a competitive process.

Alternatives: The Programmatic EA evaluates the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and the no-action alternative. The Proposed Action is the agency's preferred alternative, and it meets the purpose of and need for the project with only minor, short-term adverse impacts to the environment anticipated. The no-action alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the action, and results in more adverse impacts to the environment than the preferred alternative.

Scoping: In developing the Programmatic EA, NRCS conducted internal scoping with various agency discipline experts, and used experience gained from previous VPA-HIP grants and associated EAs. Potential adverse impacts identified through the scoping process include localized, temporary, minor increases in soil erosion, sediment transport, and particulate matter from ground-disturbing activities and the use of agricultural equipment during the installation of conservation practices. In the longer term, there will be habitat improvements, and increased recreational and economic benefits. NRCS solicited comments from the

public for 30 days on its analysis and received only one comment that expressed no concerns.

Other Environmental Review and Coordination Requirements: VPA-HIP grant recipients will conduct site-specific evaluations of lands where habitat improvement projects are planned to address project compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including NEPA, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. NRCS will conduct or oversee any required consultation with the VPA-HIP grant recipients in accordance with applicable regulations.

Signed this 22nd day of July 2015, in Washington, DC.

Jason A. Weller,

Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

[FR Doc. 2015-19036 Filed 8-3-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Upper North River Watershed Dam No. 77, Augusta County, Virginia

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to Section 102[2][c] of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations [40 CFR part 1500]; and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regulations [7 CFR part 650]; the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is not being prepared for the rehabilitation of Upper North River Watershed Dam No. 77, Augusta County, Virginia.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John A. Bricker, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 1606 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 209, Richmond, Virginia 23229. Telephone (804) 287-1691, email jack.bricker@va.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental assessment of this federally assisted action indicates that the project will not cause significant local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. As a result of these findings, John A. Bricker, State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an

environmental impact statement is not needed for this project.

The project purpose is continued flood prevention. The planned works of improvement include upgrading an existing floodwater retarding structure.

The Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been forwarded to the various Federal, State, and local agencies and interested parties. A limited number of the FONSI are available to fill single copy requests at the above address. Basic data developed during the environmental assessment are on file and may be reviewed by contacting John A. Bricker at the above number.

No administrative action on implementation of the proposal will be taken until 30 days after the date of this publication in the **Federal Register**.

John A. Bricker,

State Conservationist.

[This activity is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.904, Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention, and is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires inter-government consultation with State and local officials].

[FR Doc. 2015-19091 Filed 8-3-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of the Census

[Docket Number 150721631-5631-01]

2017 Economic Census

AGENCY: Bureau of the Census, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of Determination and Request for Comment.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of the Census (U.S. Census Bureau) publishes this notice to announce that it is planning to conduct the 2017 Economic Census. The Census Bureau also is requesting public comment on the 2017 Economic Census content. This collection will be fully electronic using a secure encrypted Internet data collection system called Centurion. The Economic Census is conducted at 5-year intervals (years ending in 2 and 7) and is the most comprehensive compilation of statistics about U.S. businesses and the economy. The granting of specific authority to conduct the program is Title 13, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 131, which authorizes and requires the Economic Census.

DATES: The Census Bureau will begin the electronic mailout for the 2017 Economic Census in the Fall of 2017,

and responses will be due by February 12, 2018. Written comments must be submitted on or before October 5, 2015 to ensure consideration of your comments on the 2017 Economic Census content.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments regarding the 2017 Economic Census to Kevin Deardorff, Chief, Economy Wide Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Room 8K154, Washington, DC 20233; or Email [ec.frn17@census.gov].

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Economy-Wide Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, Room 6K141, Washington, DC 20233-6700, by phone (800) 242-2184, or by email [ec.frn17@census.gov].

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Background

Section 131 of Title 13 U.S.C. directs the Secretary [of Commerce] to “. . . take, compile, and publish censuses of manufactures, of mineral industries, and of other businesses, including the distributive trades, service establishments, and transportation (exclusive of means of transportation for which statistics are required by law to be filed with, and are compiled and published by, a designated regulatory body), in the year 1964, then in the year 1968, and every fifth year thereafter, and each such census shall relate to the year immediately preceding the taking thereof.”

This notice announces that the Census Bureau is preparing to conduct the 2017 Economic Census. The Economic Census is the U.S. Government's official 5-year measure of American Business and the economy, and has been taken periodically since 1810. The Economic Census is the most comprehensive source of information about American businesses from the national to the local level. These Economic Census data products provide uniquely detailed basic measures that are summarized by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industry for the U.S., states, metropolitan areas, counties, economic places, and ZIP Code areas. Data include details on the product composition of industry sales, receipts, revenue, or shipments; and on a great variety of industry-specific subjects. Additionally, the Economic Census produces statistics about businesses in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and it provides data on selected special-interest topics, including the characteristics of business owners, domestic freight shipments, and

business expenses. Published data cover close to 1,000 industries, 8,000 goods and services, every state, the District of Columbia, over 3,000 counties and 15,000 cities and towns.

The Economic Census is a primary source of facts about the structure and functioning of the U.S. economy. Economic Census statistics are more complete, specific, and reliable than any other single set of economic information. It provides comprehensive, detailed, high quality, and authoritative statistics that meet the needs of government, businesses, policymakers, academic researchers, and the American public. The program's data products inform policies and programs that promote business vitality, job creation, and sustainable growth. Moreover, they provide the official measures of output for industries and geographic areas and serve much of the foundation for the National Income and Product Accounts, Gross Domestic Product estimates, and other composite measures of the Nation's economic performance. These data supply weights and benchmarks for indexes of industrial production, productivity, and prices; and provide benchmarks for other Federal statistical series. Some of these statistical series include current business surveys done by the Census Bureau, which are used by trade associations, business organizations, economic development agencies, and individual businesses to assess and improve business performance.

B. Electronic Collection

The 2017 Economic Census will be the first to be conducted completely by electronic collection (100 percent Internet Collection). The electronic instrument, Centurion, provides improved quality with automatic data checks and is context-sensitive to assist the data provider in identifying potential reporting problems before submission, thus reducing the need for follow-up. Centurion is Internet-based, eliminating the need for downloading software and increasing the integrity and confidentiality of the data. The Census Bureau will furnish usernames and passwords for the electronic instrument to the organizations included in the survey, and an image of the electronic instrument will be available on the 2017 Economic Census Web site once the census has launched.

C. Economic Census Content

The Census Bureau posted copies of the 2012 Economic Census forms on its Web site at: <https://bhs.econ.census.gov/ec12/php/census-form.php>. Please take a moment to review the forms relevant

to your interests and provide us with your comments for us to consider as we prepare content for the 2017 questionnaires. In particular, Item 26 “Special Inquiries” may be of the most interest to you. The Special Inquiries item is dedicated to variable questions of particular interest to the industries to which the questionnaire is directed. While general questions are asked of all establishments, these variable questions allow special data to be collected, which measure important changes in our economy and support the needs of individual industries. We are particularly interested in comments on the usefulness of existing inquiries for continued inclusion and in suggestions for new measures that would be appropriate to include in the Economic Census.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) unless that collection of information displays a current valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The Census Bureau, through the proper established procedures, will be obtaining an OMB control number under the PRA as we get closer to launching the program in 2017.

I have, therefore, directed that the 2017 Economic Census be conducted for the purpose of collecting these data.

Dated: July 30, 2015.

John H. Thompson,

Director, Bureau of the Census.

[FR Doc. 2015-19147 Filed 8-3-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-07-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Census Bureau

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; 2016 Census Test

AGENCY: U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

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.

DATES: To ensure consideration, written comments must be submitted on or before October 5, 2015.