

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY****[FRL-5652-6]****Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Environmental Leadership Program****AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), this notice announces that EPA is planning to submit the following proposed and/or continuing Information Collection Request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB): Environmental Leadership Program, EPA ICR number 1794.01. Before submitting the ICR to OMB for review and approval, EPA is soliciting comments on specific aspects of the proposed information collection as described below.

**DATES:** Comments must be submitted on or before January 17, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Tai-ming Chang (2223A) or Debby Thomas (2223A), U.S. EPA, 401 M St., S.W., Washington D.C. 20460. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the ICR without charge by calling Tai-ming Chang at (202) 564-5081.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Tai-ming Chang, (202) 564-5081, or Debby Thomas, (202) 564-5041. Fax number: (202) 564-0050.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Affected entities:* Entities potentially affected by this action are those which voluntarily choose to participate in the full-scale Environmental Leadership Program.

*Title:* Environmental Leadership Program.

*Abstract:* The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is developing the Environmental Leadership Program (ELP). The ELP is a voluntary program designed to accomplish several goals, including better protecting the environment and human health by

promoting a systematic approach to managing environmental issues and by encouraging environmental enhancement activities (e.g., biodiversity, energy conservation). The Agency also hopes to increase identification and timely resolution of environmental compliance issues by ELP participants. The Mentoring component of the ELP attempts to multiply compliance assistance efforts by incorporating industry as mentors. The overall Program should serve to foster constructive and open relationships between agencies, the regulated community, and the public.

The proposed framework and program requirements as outlined below are also available for comment. As part of the application process for the ELP, facilities will be asked to submit information about their environmental management systems (EMS), compliance and EMS auditing programs, and community outreach and employee involvement programs. Federal facilities applying to the Program must submit a statement affirming they endorse the Code of Environmental Management Principles.

EPA will assess each applicant's information and determine whether they meet Program requirements. For those that do meet the requirements, EPA will conduct a compliance screening and provide a 30-day comment period to the public. A third party auditor that meets ELP EMS auditor qualifications (which may include EPA or State staff) will then verify that the ELP EMS elements are met by the applicant and that the facility has implemented ELP EMS standards.

Upon acceptance to the Program, facilities will be required to submit annual performance reports as a term of participation. The annual performance report should contain the following seven sections: a boiler plate section on EMS activities; objective, goals, and measures for EMS; a table of information on the formal audit (EMS and compliance) for years 2 and 5 of the 6-year participation period; an EMS performance evaluation (results and

measures); a table of information on agency inspections; compliance issues and status summary for the year; other environmental enhancement activities; and highlights from community outreach/employee involvement and mentoring programs.

The submission of information for the purposes of application to the ELP is voluntary. The ELP will use a disclosure and confidentiality policy that includes 40 CFR Part 2 and reference to any State-specific regulations of confidentiality. During the application process to ELP, the Incentives for Self-Policing: Discovery, Disclosure, Correction and Prevention of Violations Policy, dated December 22, 1995 (Federal Register Vol. 60, No. 246) will apply. Information submitted as part of the annual performance report is required for participation in the Program. The annual performance report will be made available to the public. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control numbers for EPA's regulations are listed in 40 CFR Part 9 and 48 CFR Chapter 15.

EPA is soliciting comments to:

(i) 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;

(ii) 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;

(iii) enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(iv) minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

*Burden Statement:* It is estimated that approximately 75 facilities may voluntarily apply to the Environmental Leadership Program annually. An estimated 72 hours will be expended to provide EPA with data for application to the ELP. This burden hour estimate translates to a cost of approximately \$3,175 per facility [(\$21/hour×110% overhead) times 72 hours] and a total cost to industry of approximately \$238,125 (\$3,175 per facility times 75 facilities) in the first year of the program. Facilities will also need 150 hours for preparing the annual performance report. This represents an additional cost to industry of \$6,615 per facility and a total cost to industry of \$496,125. Burden means the total time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, or disclose or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions; develop, acquire, install, and utilize technology and systems for the purposes of collecting, validating, and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; adjust the existing ways to comply with any previously applicable instructions and requirements; train personnel to be able to respond to a collection of information; search data sources; complete and review the collection of information; and transmit or otherwise disclose the information.

Dated: November 1, 1996.

Elaine Stanley,

*Director, Office of Compliance.*

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