

1Supporting Statement A

USGS Water Use Data and Research Program

OMB Control Number 1028-0118

Terms of Clearance: None.

Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.**

The SECURE Water Act of 2009 (42 USC 10361-10368) authorizes the U. S. Geological Survey (USGS) to support water use research and data collection activities through assistance (grants and cooperative agreements) to State water resource agencies. The USGS Water Availability and Use Science Program (WAUSP) fulfills the Water Resources Mission Area's objectives to provide comprehensive water availability and use science to the Nation by advancing the understanding of processes that determine water availability. The WAUSP includes the USGS National Water Use Science Project and is responsible for compiling and disseminating the nation's water-use data, working in cooperation with local, State, and Federal environmental agencies to collect water-use information. USGS compiles these data to produce water-use information aggregated at the county, state, and national levels. The assistance application instructions, specific objectives, and reporting requirements are identified in program announcements posted to Grants.gov.

- 2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection. Be specific. If this collection is a form or a questionnaire, every question needs to be justified.**

State Water Resources agencies are eligible to submit proposals to acquire funding to support research related to water use data collection, development of estimation techniques and methods, and data delivery. The WUDR uses the requested information to determine the eligibility of the applicants and as the basis for approval or disapproval of proposed data collection activities and research. This collection ensures that sufficient and relevant information is available to evaluate and select applications for funding. Financial assistance is awarded following the evaluation and ranking of applications by a review panel familiar with the objectives of the WUDR.

The technical narrative of the proposal for assistance support is used to help the WUDR program manager understand the proposed research or data collection activities, and is also used by the technical review panel to evaluate the research or operations against established WUDR evaluation criteria. The application's uniform appearance and assembly minimizes the time required by the bureau to determine applicant eligibility and for review and oversight. Reporting requirements are the minimum required by the OMB Circulars. Final technical reports and annual progress reports are used

for technical monitoring of the projects to assure consistency with the objectives of the program's legislation. The technical reports have only general format requirements. Re-prints of peer-reviewed articles submitted for publication in journals will be accepted as final technical reports.

The maximum length of the application is 10 pages. The final technical reports will be accessible, in their entirety (maximum of 10 MB, including figures), on the WUDR website, part of the USGS website. Data collected are stored in USGS databases, a requirement of SECURE Water Act of 2009 (42 USC 10361-10368) which requires datasets be integrated into the appropriate USGS database(s).

- 3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden and specifically how this collection meets GPEA requirements.**

All applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). The progress and final reports will be submitted directly to the program coordinator via e-mail (gs-wudr-coordinator@usgs.gov) and are posted for public use at <http://water.usgs.gov/wausp/wudr/index.html>.

- 4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

The information is used solely for this program and is not duplicated. The subject matter of each application and report are unique to each applicant each year. There is no similar information available which could be used or modified for this purpose.

- 5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

The information collection will not impact small businesses or entities as they are not eligible for application.

- 6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

Funding for the WUDR is appropriated on a fiscal year basis as part of the USGS annual appropriation. The program priorities may change each year as directed by Congress. Consequently, the issuance of announcements and submission of applications must be scheduled no less frequently than annually.

If the collection is not conducted annually, then the federal government will not have systematic data-gathering needed to ensure the necessary water resources are available in sufficient quantities to support (A) increasing populations; (B) economic growth; (C) irrigated agriculture; (D) energy production; and (E) the protection of aquatic ecosystems (42 USC 10361-10368). Sufficient

information may not be available to protect the water resources of the United States due to changes in precipitation throughout the nation. This collection also supports the States in carrying out data collection and monitoring of water resources (42 USC 10361-10368). Without this collection vital information to understand the impacts of human activity on water and ecological resources cannot be collected, and water resource managers will not have the necessary information to assess whether surface and groundwater will be available to meet the future needs of the United States (42 USC 10361-10368).

- 7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:**
- * requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
 - * requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
 - * requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
 - * requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;**
 - * in connection with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
 - * requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
 - * that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
 - * requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information, unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

There are no circumstances that require us to collect the information in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

- 8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and in response to the PRA statement associated with the collection over the past three years, and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every three years — even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

The 60-day FRN was published October 25, 2018 at 83 FR 53895.

We consulted with the individuals listed in the table to obtain their views on the information presented in our instrument. Most comments received indicated that overall, the instrument contained the information necessary to complete an application. One reviewer commented that the length of the application was 2 pages more than others that they have prepared, but that it gave them the space to include information that they generally leave out of the other similar applications. They also requested reminder emails be sent out when progress reports were due. Another reviewer suggested minor changes to text in the instrument to keep wording consistent and to clarify text in several locations in the instrument. Two reviewers had no comments. Based on all the comments, several minor modifications were made to text in the instrument. The program has also begun sending out reminder emails when progress reports are due.

Table 1: Collaboration on Design

North Dakota State University, Natural Resource Management Program Fargo, ND	Western States Water Council Water Data Exchange (WaDE) Program Manager Salt Lake City, Utah
Vermont Geological Survey Department of Environmental Conservation Montpelier, VT	Idaho Department of Water Resources Water Resource Information Section Boise, ID

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

Except for the remuneration of grantees, no payments or gifts are provided to the respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No assurance of confidentiality is provided.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the

explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

No sensitive questions are asked.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

- * Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.**
- * If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens.**
- * Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here.**

Our estimates, in Table 2 below, are based on our own knowledge with the past 3 years of the grant program plus the outreach described in item 8.

State Water Resource Agencies read instructions: We estimate that it will take each agency's personnel approximately 1 hour to read the instructions (totaling 30 hours).

Narrative/Proposal Preparation: We anticipate that it will take each applicant approximately 40 hours to complete the project narrative and to provide any other relevant supporting documents as a proposal for assistance support (totaling 560 hours). Based on previous years, we anticipate that 14 respondents will submit applications.

Semi-annual Progress Reports and Final Report Preparation: We anticipate awarding an average of 12 grants per year. The 12 award recipients are required to submit progress reports 2 times per year (24 total responses) and a final technical report. We estimate that it will take an average of 32 hours to complete these reports, 4 hours for each of the semi-annual progress report and 24 hours for the final report (totaling 384 hours).

We estimate that the total burden for this collection will be 974 hours, as shown in Table 2 below (first 4 columns).

To estimate the dollar values of burden hours in Table 2, we used data from Bureau of Labor Statistics USDL-18-1451, *Employer Costs for Employee Compensation*, dated March 20, 2018, average wage for State and Local government mean hourly wages (\$49.19) to account for individuals from State Water Resource agencies. These values include benefits and overtime.

Table 2: Responder Burden

Participant / Activity	Number of Responses	Minutes per response	Burden Hours	Burden Value
State Water Resource Agency - reads instructions	30	60	30	\$1,476
State Water Resource Agency - completes application	14	2400	560	\$27,546
State Water Resources Agency – Semi-annual Progress Reports	24	240	96	\$4,722
State Water Resources Agency – Final Reports	12	1440	288	\$14,167
Total Burden			974	\$47,911

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual non-hour cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected in item 12.)

- * **The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life) and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information (including filing fees paid for form processing). Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and record storage facilities.**
- * **If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents (fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.**
- * **Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government, or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices.**

We have identified no reporting and recordkeeping “non-hour cost” burdens associated with this proposed collection of information.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The estimated annual cost to the Federal Government is \$213,050 as itemized in Table 3, below. The table shows Federal Staff and grade level performing various tasks associated with this collection of information and time spent processing and reviewing information received as a result of this collection. Primary USGS staff involved are the Contracting Officer, Staff Support, and Program Coordinator for developing the program announcement, organizing the proposals, completing all logistics for the peer panel meetings to review proposals, notifying recipients of awards, preparing requisitions, making awards, and requesting and reviewing required reports. Grade levels, time, and annual costs for each of the three individuals are provided below. Several USGS scientific staff also serves as panel members; these panel members spend 80 hours on average per person for reviews, meeting participation, and travel. We have provided an aggregated grade level and annual cost below for USGS panel members.

We used the Office of Personnel Management Salary Table for WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE-ARLINGTON, DC-MD-VA-WV-PA for 2018 (https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/18Tables/html/DCB_h.aspx) to determine the hourly rate. We multiplied the hourly rate by 1.6 to account for overhead costs.

In addition to the salaries and benefits, we estimate \$20,000 for the proposal review panel meeting required each fiscal year for transportation and per diem for outside peer reviewers and USGS staff (no salaries or stipends are paid to non-federal personnel that participate on the panel reviews). USGS facilities are used for panel meetings, so no room rental fees are incurred.

Table 3: Federal Labor Table

Federal Govt cost	Year 1	Hourly Rate	Annual Hours by Fed	Fully Loaded Rate	Total Labor Value
WUDR Program Coordinator	GS 14/5	\$62.23	522	\$99.57	\$51,976
Hydrologist – Staff Support	GS 12/6	\$45.59	1040	\$72.94	\$75,858
Contracting Officer	GS 13/10	\$60.40	120	\$96.64	\$11,597
Application Review Panel – Federal Members only					
2 Hydrologists (80 total annual hours each)	GS 14/6	\$64.06	160	\$102.50	\$16,400
2 Hydrologists (80 total annual hours each)	GS 13/6	\$54.21	160	\$86.74	\$13,878
4 Hydrologists	GS 12/6	\$45.59	320	\$72.94	\$23,341

Other expenses to Federal Government					
Travel and per diem for Review Panel (Fed only)					\$20,000
Total Federal Government Cost			2322		\$213,050

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments in hour or cost burden.

Overall, the total hours and cost burden are anticipated to decline for the program.

State Water Resource Agencies - reads instructions: We anticipate that the number of State Water Resource Agencies that read the instructions will decline from 52 to 30 because some states: a) already have been awarded grants that they are currently working on, b) do not have the staff resources to compete in the grant, or c) have reached or are close to reaching the maximum funding available to them through the financial assistance program and they are no longer participating. This will decrease the burden hours from 52 to 30 hours.

Proposal Preparation: We anticipate that the number of states that complete the application will decrease from 52 to 14. In fiscal year 2015, funding was distributed to State Water-Resource Agencies non-competitively and most of the States have applied for this grant. In fiscal year 2016 and subsequent years, funding has been distributed under a competitive proposal process and the number of states that have applied each year has declined. The average of the last two years was 13 applications. This will decrease the burden hours from 2,028 hours to 560 hours.

Semi-annual Progress Reports: We anticipate awarding an average of 12 grants per year (based on

the last two years), a decrease from 15 grants per year. The burden hours have slightly increased from 60 hours to 96 hours. As many states are choosing a 2-year grant, and because progress reports are required every 6 months, more reports will be provided cumulatively over the extent of the agreements.

Final Report: Similar to the progress reports, we anticipate awarding an average of 12 grants per year based on the average of grants awarded in the past two years. This is a decline from 15 grants per year estimated in 2016. We estimate that the total burden for this collection will increase (288 hours instead of 120 hours). The final report burden has increased based on outreach with state agency representatives described in item 8. As the program has developed in the last 3 years, the time burden for the final report has increased slightly because: 1) there is a better understanding of the time needed for the final report and 2) the final report has developed to assure consistency with the objectives of the program.

The public burden hours have declined from 2,260 hours to 974 hours and the anticipated burden costs have declined from \$100,931 to \$47,911.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

This is information collection without an ending date. No statistical analysis, tabulation, or publication is planned for this information.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The expiration date is being displayed, so no exception is requested.

18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

No exceptions to the certification are being made.