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Information Clearance Officer, United States Department of Transportation.

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Federal Highway Administration

[FHWA Docket No. 97-10]

Highway Performance Monitoring System—Strategic Reassessment

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice requests public comment on issues related to a strategic reassessment of the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) that the FHWA is initiating. Public comments are solicited at this time on the conceptual plan for the reassessment described in this notice, in addition to comments on other issues that should be considered in planning and conducting the reassessment. The FHWA working papers developed during the conduct of this reassessment will be placed in the docket for review and comment.

DATES: This docket will remain open until the reassessment is complete. However, in order for comments to be considered in the early stages of the reassessment, comments should be submitted on or before February 21, 1997.

ADDRESSES: All signed, written comments should refer to the FHWA Docket Number 97-10, and must be submitted to the Office of the Chief Counsel, Federal Highway Administration, HCC-10, Room 4232, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Those desiring notification of receipt of comments must include a self-addressed, stamped postcard/envelope.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. James Getzewich, Highway System Performance Division, Office of Highway Information, (202) 366-0175, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The HPMS was developed in 1978 as a national highway transportation system data base. In its current configuration, the HPMS includes limited data on all public roads, more detailed data for a sample of the arterial and collector functional systems, and area-wide summary information for urbanized, small urban, and rural areas. The HPMS replaced numerous uncoordinated annual State data reports and biennial special studies conducted by each State for the FHWA. These reports and biennial special studies were conducted to provide information to support requirements of title 23, U.S.C., section 307(h), which calls for a biennial report to Congress on the future highway needs of the Nation. The first report, entitled 1968 National Highway Needs Report, was submitted to Congress in January 1968. The first report to make use of the HPMS data base, entitled *The Status of the Nation's Highways: Conditions and Performance*, was submitted to Congress in January 1981.

A major purpose of the HPMS has always been to provide data that reflects the extent, condition, performance, use, and operating characteristics of the Nation's highways. In order to meet this primary objective, the HPMS has gone through an evolutionary process that has recognized over time the changing needs for accurate and timely data related to these purposes.

The HPMS was originally implemented in 1978 as a national sample-based monitoring system designed to assess the use and condition of the Nation's highway systems. The sample data was supplemented with area-wide mileage, travel, and other data as a means to provide control total information and for other analytical purposes. In 1980, the HPMS merged with the Mileage Facilities Reporting System (MFRS), which was a basic inventory system that included facility mileage, travel, and accident statistics. After the HPMS and MFRS systems merged, a single system evolved to include the universe data attributes of the MFRS, and the sample and area-wide data attributes of the original HPMS.

In 1988, the HPMS was again enhanced with the addition of more detailed pavement data, including International Roughness Index (IRI) measurements of surface roughness. Most recently, in 1993, the HPMS was again revised to meet needs brought about by changes in the FHWA analysis and simulation models, including the shift to a geographic information system (GIS) environment; the effects of the 1990 Census; the Intermodal Surface

Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), Pub. L. 102-240, 105 Stat. 1914; the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, Pub. L. 101-549, 104 Stat. 2399; and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements concerning vehicle miles of travel (VMT) tracking data in air quality non-attainment areas. See Section 187, VMT Forecasting and Tracking Guidance, 57 FR 9549 (March 19, 1992). The 1993 revision of the HPMS added nearly a dozen universe data items to be collected for the National Highway System (NHS) and other principal arterials. The amount of sample traffic data for urbanized air quality non-attainment areas was increased, as were the percent truck data requirements. Several pavement data items were deleted in their entirety, as were sample data items for rural minor collectors.

For the most part, changes to the HPMS over its nearly 20 year life reflect an evolutionary process by which the HPMS data base adjusts responsively to legislative changes and other changes in the focus of the highway program. The HPMS has evolved over time to stay responsive to the demands placed upon it.

Purpose

The purpose of the strategic reassessment is to review the HPMS in light of contemporary issues and anticipated future needs, and determine what changes, if any, are necessary at this time. The reauthorization of the ISTEA provides an appropriate opportunity and framework for the FHWA to undertake a reassessment of the HPMS. Also providing an impetus to this strategic review, are constant changes in technology, the development and deployment of Intelligent Transportation Infrastructure (ITI), requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Pub. L. 103-62, 107 Stat. 285, changes to State data requirements, increased State use of management systems, and reassessment of the roles of government and the private sector.

Study Plan

The FHWA will undertake a multi-step approach to complete the strategic reassessment. The first step will focus on the development of an FHWA working paper that will explore several potential alternatives for a future HPMS. The working paper will be placed in the docket noted above for review and comment upon its completion. Completion of the working paper is expected by December 31, 1996. The working paper intends to address alternative HPMS futures including, but

not necessarily limited to, the following scenarios:

- (a) Redefining the federal role in monitoring highway condition and performance through the HPMS, to a role that concentrates on the NHS;
- (b) Establishing a data collection process to replace the HPMS that would focus, primarily, on the federal collection of a nationally significant data sample to assess, and report on, conditions and performance for all non-local functional systems;
- (c) Changing the HPMS, while continuing to focus on a State significant HPMS data sample that will serve both Federal and State level policy and planning needs;
- (d) Placing greater reliance on other sources for HPMS data, such as State management systems and intelligent transportation system (ITS) deployments; and,
- (e) Maintaining the status quo—minor, or no change. Comments on these, or other appropriate, scenarios are invited.

A second step will focus on an outside study of the existing HPMS. This outside study will also include making an assessment on a number of critical issues related to the future form, and direction, of the HPMS. Completion of this step is expected by April 15, 1997. The parameters of the outside study will likely include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following issues:

- (a) The purpose, scope and objectives of the existing HPMS;
- (b) Whether collection of HPMS data is necessary;
- (c) Uses, and users, of HPMS data;
- (d) Better integration of the HPMS and the existing State, and local, data processes;
- (e) More effective collection of HPMS data; and,
- (f) Appropriate alternatives to the current HPMS.

Comments on these, or other appropriate, issues are invited.

The third step will focus on the development, and execution, of a public outreach and involvement program. The objective of this step is to provide maximum opportunity for participation in the strategic reassessment of the HPMS by those customers, stakeholders, partners, and other interests that are impacted by the HPMS. This step is expected to be completed by July 31, 1997. Mechanisms that are being considered for this effort include, but are not limited to, the following elements:

- (a) Participation of the general public and interest groups through the review and comment process of working

documents, as well as interim and final products submitted pursuant to this notice and docket;

(b) Participation of the general public and interest groups through attendance at national workshop(s) and/or meeting(s);

(c) Participation of the transportation community at large through the Transportation Research Board (TRB);

(d) Participation of States through the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO);

(e) Participation of the metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) through the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO);

(f) Participation of organizations which represent non-government users of the HPMS data; and,

(g) Continued participation by the existing HPMS Steering Committee. Comments on the elements of an appropriate outreach program are invited.

The final step will focus upon the synthesis of the working paper on alternatives, the outside study of the HPMS, and the results of the outreach and involvement program to define appropriate changes to the HPMS. The synthesis is expected to be completed by September 30, 1997; and the results will be published for comment. The FHWA is initiating this strategic reassessment with the intention to maximize public input and provide as much flexibility as possible in meeting future HPMS data needs. However, there are a number of principal objectives that will guide the outcome of the reassessment effort. First, the future HPMS will need to support any changes to the FHWA's stewardship responsibilities that may result from the reauthorization of the ISTEA. In addition, the future HPMS will need to continue to support various Congressional requirements, including the Conditions and Performance Reports and those imposed by the GPRA. Finally, the outcome of the strategic reassessment process must recognize the national interest in the NHS and the need to continue to assess highway conditions and performance at the national level.

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 315; 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on: December 12, 1996.

Rodney E. Slater,

Federal Highway Administrator.

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National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket Number 96-120; Notice 1]

Proposed Collection; Comment Request for 49 CFR 537

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Request for public comment on proposed collections of information.

SUMMARY: The Department of Transportation, 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, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 United States Code (U.S.C.) 3506 (c)(2)(A)). Currently, NHTSA is soliciting comments concerning 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 537—Automotive Fuel Economy Reports.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 21, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments must refer to the docket and notice number cited at the beginning of this notice and be submitted to Docket Section, Room 5109, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, Southwest, Washington, D.C. 20590. Please identify the proposed collection of information for which a comment is provided, by referencing its OMB Clearance Number. It is requested, but not required, that one original plus two copies of the comments be provided. The Docket Section is open on weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Complete copies of each request for collection of information may be obtained at no charge from Mr. Edward Kosek, NHTSA Information Collection Clearance Officer, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, Southwest, Room 6123, Washington, D.C. 20590. Mr. Kosek's telephone number is (202) 366-2590. Please identify the relevant collection of information by referring to its OMB Clearance Number.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: 49 CFR 537—Automotive Fuel Economy Reports.

OMB Number: 2127-0019.

Form Number: This collection of information uses no standard form.

Abstract: Part 537 requires that automobile manufacturers submit semi-annual reports to NHTSA regarding their efforts to improve fuel economy.

Type of Review: Reinstatement of a previously approved collection.

Affect Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 18.

Requested Expiration Date: Three years from approval date.

Summary of the Collection of Information: NHTSA ensures that automobile manufacturers comply with 49 CFR Part 537—Automotive Fuel Economy Reports. Part 537 requires that automobile manufacturers submit reports to NHTSA regarding their efforts to improve automotive fuel economy.

Section 32907 of Chapter 329 of Title 49 of the United States Code requires each automobile manufacturer (other than those low volume manufacturers which were granted an alternative fuel economy standard under section 32902 (d)) to submit semi-annual reports to the agency relating to that manufacturers' efforts to comply with average fuel economy standards. One report is due during the 30-day period preceding the beginning of each model year (the "pre-model year report") and the other is due during the 30-day period beginning on the 180th day of the model year (the "mid-model year report").

Section 32907 (a)(1) of Chapter 329 provides that each report must contain a statement as to whether the manufacturer will comply with average fuel economy standards for that year, a plan describing the steps the manufacturer took or will take to comply with the standards, and any other information the agency may require. Whenever a manufacturer determines that a plan it has submitted in one of its reports is no longer adequate to assure compliance, it must submit a revised plan.

Description of the Need for the Information and Proposed Use of the Information

This information assists NHTSA in evaluating automobile manufacturers' plans for complying with average fuel economy standards and in preparing an annual review of the average fuel economy standards. The information is collected by NHTSA by having the automobile manufacturers mail their semi-annual automotive fuel economy reports and/or submit a copy on computer diskette to the agency. The required information is used for four basic purposes. These purposes are: (a) to give NHTSA advance indication if any manufacturer will fail to comply with the applicable average fuel economy standards; (b) to give NHTSA necessary information to prepare its annual fuel economy report to Congress, as required by 49 U.S.C. 32916; (c) to assist NHTSA in responding to general