

communications between operators and MMS. By obtaining continued approval for these three kinds of reporting requirements, MMS will be able to select the types of directed communications needed for each situation and include only those types in a "Dear Operator" letter appropriate to the operation.

The types of communication and the supporting data MMS will require operators to use in setting up the monthly delivery of RIK to the purchaser are standard business practices in the oil and gas industry. The information in the directed communication is essential to the delivery and acceptance of verifiable quantities and qualities of oil and gas and is exchanged as a normal part of the conduct of those business activities, even when the operators are not directed to do so.

In addition, due to their similarity, we are merging this ICR with OMB Control Number 1010-0130, Directed Communications between Operators of Federal RIK Leases and Deliverers of Equivalent Oil Production to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR).

On February 11, 1999, DOI announced that it would assist in an initiative to refill the SPR. This initiative involved collecting RIK oil production from Federal lessees in the Gulf of Mexico and transferring it to the Department of Energy (DOE). DOE issued contracts to companies to take

Federal RIK crude oil delivered by MMS's operators and, in exchange, to deliver to DOE's SPR an equivalent volume and quality of crude oil. DOE was projected to use 28 million barrels of RIK oil to refill the SPR.

On November 6, 2001, President Bush announced an initiative to refill the SPR. MMS, in coordination with DOE, entered into a joint, 3-year initiative to fill the remaining capacity of the SPR. Operators of Federal leases in the Gulf of Mexico will deliver MMS's royalty oil to MMS's exchange partner at or near the lease. MMS's exchange partner will then deliver similar quantities of crude oil to MMS or its designated agent at Gulf Coast market centers. MMS's designated agent will be either DOE or its exchange contractor. DOE will then contract for the exchange or direct movement of exchange oil to the SPR.

MMS, as responsible steward of oil royalties, must direct operators of affected MMS leases to carry out three types of communication with MMS. The types of information operators must provide are as stated previously.

These types of information are necessary so that DOE's exchange contractors can arrange to timely accept accurate amounts and qualities of royalty oil that will be delivered by MMS's exchange partner and for MMS to verify timely fulfillment of operators' and lessees' royalty obligations to the Federal Government.

MMS received OMB approval for the three types of communications between MMS operators and MMS rather than approval of a single "Dear Operator" letter directing these communications. By obtaining approval for these kinds of reporting requirements, MMS is able to draft situation-specific "Dear Operator" letters—that is, letters addressing only the types of directed communications and other issues relevant to the specific situation.

MMS is requesting OMB's approval to continue to collect this information. Not collecting this information would limit the Secretary's ability to discharge her duties. No proprietary information will be submitted to MMS under this collection. No items of a sensitive nature are collected. The requirement to respond is mandatory.

*Frequency:* Intra-Monthly (variable).

*Estimated Number and Description of Respondents:* 145 lessees or operators of Federal oil and gas leases participating in RIK.

*Estimated Annual Reporting and Recordkeeping "Hour" Burden:* 4,050 hours.

The following chart details the individual components and estimated hour burdens. In calculating the burdens, we assumed that respondents perform certain requirements in the normal course of their activities. Therefore, we consider these to be usual and customary and took that into account in estimating the burden.

RESPONDENT ANNUAL BURDEN HOUR CHART

Reporting requirement	Burden hour per response	Annual number of responses	Annual burden hours
Wyoming Oil (OMB Control Number 1010-0126) .....	1	100	100
Natural Gas (Texas 8G and GOM) (OMB Control Number 1010-0126) .....	1	3,600	3,600
GOM Oil (OMB Control Number 1010-0126) .....	1	50	50
SPR Fill Initiative (OMB Control Number 1010-0130) .....	1	300	300
Totals .....	.....	4,050	4,050

*Estimated Annual Reporting and Recordkeeping "Non-Hour Cost" Burden:* We have identified no cost burdens for this collection.

*Public Disclosure Statement:* The PRA (44 U.S.C. 3501, *et seq.*) provides that 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.

*Comments:* Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA requires each agency " \* \* \* to provide notice \* \* \* and otherwise consult with members of the public and affected agencies concerning each

proposed collection of information \* \* \*." Agencies must specifically solicit comments to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the agency to perform its duties, including whether the information is useful; (b) evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) enhance the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) minimize the burden on the respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

To comply with the public consultation process, we published a notice in the **Federal Register** on December 21, 2002 (67 FR 79142), announcing that we would submit this ICR to OMB for approval. The notice provided the required 60-day comment period. We received no comments in response to this notice.

If you wish to comment in response to this notice, you may send your comments to the offices listed under the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice. OMB has up to 60 days to approve or disapprove the information collection but may respond after 30 days.