



Environmental Council of the States

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January 9, 2025

Aarti Iyer
Office of the Chief Financial Officer
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Via email and [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov): Docket ID EPA-HQ-OCFO-2024-0107-0042

Re: Comments on U.S. EPA's Proposed General Performance Reporting for Assistance Programs

Dear Senior Social Scientist Iyer,

States and territories through ECOS ("states") appreciate U.S. EPA's response to comments submitted in October by ECOS and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) contained in the Federal Register [Docket ID EPA-HQ-OCFO-2024-0107 \(specifically-0042\)](#) on General Performance Reporting for Assistance Programs as well as U.S. EPA's proposed adjustments to the Information Collection Request (ICR). Given the significant amount of information included in the ICR, states also appreciate the inclusion of an additional comment period to review the full package and the latest changes.

Response to Comments

In several areas, states' concerns regarding the proposed forms have been addressed, including the removal of the labor and workforce reporting forms and the optional program-specific forms. States appreciate that U.S. EPA provides further written clarification that Performance Partnership Grants (PPGs) "supersede the administrative requirements for stand-alone grants." However, further clarification is recommended below.

States appreciate that EPA has provided direction that grant programs that already have established reporting frameworks and systems are expected to maintain their existing practices.

Reporting Frequency and Consistency

Although this ICR does not impact the Terms and Conditions of existing grants, new U.S. EPA awards to states would be covered by this ICR. The ICR provides flexibility for U.S. EPA programs to require reporting frequency as often as quarterly. While the agency's response on reporting frequency refers to PPGs superseding other reporting requirements, quarterly reporting remains an option for Regions to select when a PPG is not in place. As mentioned in past comments, unless there are performance issues, this may lead to some states in some regions reporting more frequently than a state in another region based on an EPA regional office or program preference rather than national consistency and little transparency as to why. ECOS recommends that semi-annual and annual reporting be the only options offered, consistent with EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment [Grants Policy Issuance \(GPI\) 15-01 - Performance Partnership Grants for States](#), for grants awarded via a PPG. While these ICR forms may be used for reporting by non-profit organizations and EPA programs may have a reason to seek quarterly reporting, it should be made clear that for state programs, U.S. EPA shall maintain the burden reductions previously agreed to, unless there are performance issues. ECOS recommends U.S. EPA again institutionalize with this ICR the burden reduction gains made via the U.S. EPA-state workgroup and memorialized in GPI 15-01 on annual or semi-annual reporting frequency. Specifically, ECOS recommends the following adjustment to Supplement A, pg. 6 (-0043):

James Kenney
New Mexico Environment
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Indiana Department of
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ECOS Vice President

Vacant
ECOS Secretary-Treasurer

Myra Reece
South Carolina Department of
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ECOS Past President

Ben Grumbles
ECOS Executive Director

2 CFR Sections 200.301, 200.302, 200.328, and 200.329 require recipients to submit interim performance reports. Interim reports are collected quarterly, semi-annually, or annually, based on the schedule along which progress on project activities can be documented and reported or based on superseding requirements; this varies based on program objectives and goals. When states and Tribes have set up a single Performance Partnership Grant (PPG), the PPG requirements would supersede the administrative requirements for stand-alone grants and would include semi-annual or annual reporting only.

Costs and Burden Estimates

Reflecting on the comments from TCEQ, other states have affirmed that burden estimates to collect and review the required information were too low in the initial package. While U.S. EPA made adjustments in the latest package published in December, the burden estimates still fall short of the estimates recommended by TCEQ. As ECOS noted in past comments, federal resources for state grants are flat or have declined. Focusing resources on program outcomes rather than excessive program reporting will preserve funding resources to the greatest extent for environmental benefits. Overly burdensome reporting may lead states to reconsider their ability to accept EPA grant funding.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide input and for your consideration of these comments as well as comments from other state co-regulators.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Grumbles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Ben Grumbles
ECOS Executive Director