



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

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**With Public in Mind, OIRA Administrator Targets Five Agencies for Violations;  
Number of Unresolved Paperwork Violations “Unacceptable,” Graham Says in Memo**

**Washington, DC** -- In a memo to federal agencies released today, the OMB Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) asked all federal agencies to provide strategies for eliminating violations of the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), and targeted five federal agencies for special efforts. A copy of the memo follows this release.

“Unnecessary paperwork burdens cost the public precious time and money. The Bush Administration is committed to ensuring that all federal agencies comply fully with the Paperwork Reduction Act,” said OIRA Administrator John D. Graham

Information collected by federal agencies affects the administration of many vital government programs. Currently, several of these programs are conducting information collections that violate PRA. For example, the Farm Service Agency within the Department of Agriculture requires producers to certify acreage and other crop information. This information collection expired in 1997 and has yet to be reapproved.

The typical violation of the PRA involves an information collection imposed on the public without valid and up-to-date OMB approval. This year’s Information Collection Budget (ICB) documented 406 violations, down from 486 in the previous year’s ICB.

While these figures represent a positive trend downward, the number of overall and unresolved violations is still unacceptably high according to OIRA Administrator Graham, who has placed renewed emphasis on eliminating violations of the PRA, especially ones that have persisted for years or impose a substantial burden on the public.

The five agencies targeted by OMB based on the high number of overall, long-standing, or high-burden PRA violations are:

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of State
- Department of Veterans Affairs

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The PRA, last amended in 1995, is aimed at reducing the amount of paperwork faced by citizens, small businesses, farmers, and State and local governments while maintaining the ability of federal agencies to gather information necessary to perform agency functions. The PRA requires that OMB review all information collections proposed by federal agencies.

-- memo follows --

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICERS  
GENERAL COUNSELS AND SOLICITORS

FROM: John D. Graham, Ph.D.  
Administrator  
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs

SUBJECT: Ensuring Full Compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act

We are writing to again emphasize the importance of the Federal Government complying fully with the information collection provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA). While our memo dated November 14, 2001 has helped to resolve a number of PRA violations, and undoubtedly helped to reduce the number of future violations, we are again asking your assistance in eliminating still-existing PRA violations and avoiding future violations.

The PRA requires agencies and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to ensure that information collected from the public minimizes burden and maximizes practical utility. The Act assigns each agency's Chief Information Officer (CIO) the responsibility for ensuring that the agency complies with the PRA. OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) is responsible for conducting reviews under the PRA.

In last year's Information Collection Budget (ICB), OMB documented 487 violations of the PRA, of which 191 remained unresolved as of the cut-off date for that ICB's publication. In this year's ICB, there were 406 violations, of which 109 remained unresolved as of March 12, 2002 (the cut-off date for this year's ICB). Of those unresolved violations, 47 are known to be long-standing (i.e., in violation prior to FY 2001). While these figures do represent a continuation in the recent downward trend in the number of PRA violations, the number of overall and unresolved violations is still unacceptably high.

In light of this continuing problem, we are asking each agency to do the following:

- We have attached a list of all of your agency's violations from the FY 2001 reporting period that were unresolved as of April 26, 2002 (if applicable). Please review this list carefully and indicate, for each individual collection, if your agency (1) has already requested a reinstatement of the OMB approval, (2) is planning to request a reinstatement of the OMB approval, or (3) has discontinued its use. Each collection in the first two categories has been in violation of the PRA for at least six months. This is unacceptable. For each of the violations in these categories, provide a timetable for resolution, including publication of all relevant Federal Register notices and submission to OMB.

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- Provide a list of all collections that are currently in violation since September 30, 2001, with an indication of the status of the collection and plans for resolution (as detailed in the bullet above).
- Describe the procedures that you (and your agency) have in place to prevent future violations, both through your monthly review of OMB's computer-generated reports and through your general oversight and participation in the agency's programmatic functions.

Please provide this information to your OIRA Desk Officer by July 6, 2002. In addition to information requested above, we will be scheduling meetings in early summer with the CIOs and GCs of the five agencies with the highest number of overall, long-standing, or high-burden violations to further discuss the resolution of these violations. These agencies are:

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of State
- Department of Veterans Affairs

If you have any questions about this effort, please contact us directly or have agency staff contact your OIRA Desk Office

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