

services to the plan or who are affiliated with such service providers that otherwise might be prohibited under sections 406 and 407(a) of ERISA. Without this exemption, these types of short term transactions might not be permitted.

In order to ensure that the exemption is not abused, that the rights of participants and beneficiaries are protected, and that the conditions of the exemption have been satisfied, the Department has included in the exemption two basic disclosure requirements. Both affect only the portion of the exemption dealing with repurchase agreements. The first requirement calls for the repurchase agreements between the seller and the plan to be in writing. The second requirement obliges the seller of such repurchase agreements to agree to provide financial statements to the plan at the time of the sale and as future statements are issued. The seller must also represent, either in the repurchase agreement or prior to the negotiation of each repurchase agreement transaction, that there has been no material adverse change in the seller's financial condition since the date that the most recent financial statement was furnished which has not been disclosed to the plan fiduciary with whom the written agreement is made.

Without the recording and disclosure requirements included in this ICR, participants and beneficiaries of a plan would not be protected in their investments, the Department would be unable to monitor a plan's activities for compliance, and plans would be at a disadvantage in assessing the value of certain short-term investment activities.

## II. Desired Focus of Comments

The Department of Labor is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected;
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or

other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

## III. Current Actions

The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) approval of this ICR will expire on March 31, 2008. After considering comments received in response to this notice, the Department intends to submit the ICR to OMB for continuing approval. No change to the existing ICR is proposed or made at this time. Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval of the information collection request; they will also become a matter of public record.

*Agency:* Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration.

*Title:* Prohibited Transaction Class Exemption 81-8 for Investment of Plan Assets in Certain Types of Short-Term Investments.

*Type of Review:* Extension of a currently approved collection of information.

*OMB Number:* 1210-0061.

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households; Business or other for-profit; Not-for-profit institutions.

*Total Respondents:* 45,969.

*Total Responses:* 229,845.

*Frequency of Response:* On occasion.

*Estimated Burden Hours:* 31,900.

*Estimated Burden Costs:* \$85,000.

Dated: December 10, 2007.

**Joseph S. Piacentini,**

*Director, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Office of Policy and Research.*

[FR Doc. E7-24804 Filed 12-20-07; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4510-29-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

### Employee Benefits Security Administration

#### Proposed Extension of Information Collection Request Submitted for Public Comment and Recommendations: Prohibited Transaction Class Exemption 96-62

**AGENCY:** Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a preclearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed

and continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA 95) (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). This helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Employee Benefits Security Administration is soliciting comments concerning the extension of a currently approved collection of information, Prohibited Transaction Class Exemption 96-62.

A copy of the proposed information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the office listed below in the addresses section of this notice.

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted on or before February 19, 2008.

**ADDRESSES:** Gerald B. Lindrew, Office of Policy and Research, U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room N-5718, Washington, DC 20210, (202) 693-8410, FAX (202) 693-4745. These are not toll-free numbers.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### I. Background

Section 408(a) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) provides that the Secretary of Labor may grant exemptions from the prohibited transaction provisions of sections 406 and 407(a) of ERISA, and directs the Secretary to establish an exemption procedure with respect to such provisions. On July 31, 1996, the Department published Prohibited Transaction Exemption 96-62, which, pursuant to the exemption procedure set forth in 29 CFR 2570, subpart B, permits a plan to seek approval on an accelerated basis of otherwise prohibited transactions. A class exemption will only be granted on the conditions that the plan demonstrate to the Department that the transaction is substantially similar to those described in at least two prior individual exemptions granted by the Department and that it presents little, if any, opportunity for abuse or risk of loss to a plan's participants and beneficiaries. This ICR is intended to provide the Department with sufficient information to support a finding that the exemption meets the statutory standards of section 408(a) of ERISA, and to provide affected parties with the opportunity to comment on the proposed transaction, while at the same time reducing the

regulatory burden associated with processing individual exemptions for transactions prohibited under ERISA.

## II. Review Focus

The Department is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

## III. Current Actions

The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) approval of this ICR will expire on March 31, 2008. After considering comments received in response to this notice, the Department intends to submit the ICR to OMB for continuing approval. No change to the existing ICR is proposed or made at this time. Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB.

**Agency:** Employee Benefits Security Administration.

**Title:** Prohibited Transaction Exemption 96-62; Accelerated Approval of an Otherwise Prohibited Transaction.

**Type of Review:** Extension of a currently approved collection of information.

**OMB Number:** 1210-0098.

**Affected Public:** Business or other for-profit, Not-for-profit institutions, Individuals.

**Total Respondents:** 42.

**Total Responses:** 42.

**Frequency:** On occasion.

**Estimated Total Burden Hours:** 53.

**Total Annual Costs (Operating and Maintenance):** \$43,491.

Dated: December 10, 2007.

**Joseph S. Piacentini,**

Director, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Office of Policy and Research.

[FR Doc. E7-24806 Filed 12-20-07; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4510-29-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

### Employee Benefits Security Administration

#### Proposed Extension of Information Collection Request Submitted for Public Comment and Recommendations; Prohibited Transaction Class Exemption 98-54—Foreign Exchange Transactions Executed Pursuant to Standing Instructions

**AGENCY:** Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a preclearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA 95). This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Employee Benefits Security Administration is soliciting comments on the proposed extension of the information collection provisions of Prohibited Transaction Exemption 98-54 (PTE 98-54).

A copy of the information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the individual shown in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted to the office shown in the **ADDRESSES** section on or before February 19, 2008.

**ADDRESSES:** Gerald B. Lindrew, Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room N-5718, Washington, DC 20210, (202) 693-8410, FAX (202) 693-4745 (these are not toll-free numbers).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Background

PTE 98-54 permits certain foreign exchange transactions between employee benefit plans and certain banks, broker-dealers, and domestic affiliates thereof, which are parties in interest with respect to such plans, pursuant to standing instructions. In the absence of an exemption, foreign exchange transactions pursuant to

standing instructions would be prohibited under circumstances where the bank or broker-dealer is a party in interest or disqualified person with respect to the plan under the Employee Retirement Income Securities Act (ERISA) or the Internal Revenue Code (Code).

The class exemption has five basic information collection requirements. The first requires the bank or broker-dealer to maintain written policies and procedures for handling foreign exchange transactions for plans for which it is a party in interest which ensure that the party acting for the bank or broker-dealer knows it is dealing with a plan. The second requires that the transactions are performed in accordance with a written authorization executed in advance by an independent fiduciary of the plan. The third requires that the bank or broker-dealer provides the authorizing fiduciary with a copy of its written policies and procedures for foreign exchange transactions involving income item conversions and *de minimis* purchase and sale transactions prior to the execution of a transaction. The fourth requires the bank or broker-dealer to furnish the authorizing fiduciary a written confirmation statement with respect to each covered transaction within five days of execution. The fifth requires that the bank or broker-dealer maintains records necessary for plan fiduciaries, participants, and the Department and Internal Revenue Service to determine whether the conditions of the exemption are being met for a period of six years from the date of execution of a transaction.

By requiring that records pertaining to the exempted transaction be maintained for six years, this ICR insures that the exemption is not abused, the rights of the participants and beneficiaries are protected, and that compliance with the exemption's conditions can be confirmed. The exemption affects participants and beneficiaries of the plans that are involved in such transactions as well as certain banks, broker-dealers, and domestic affiliates thereof.

##### II. Review Focus

The Department of Labor (Department) is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the