News Release

U. S. Labor Department Extends Annual Reports Deadline After Severe Storms Hit Ohio

WASHINGTON—The U. S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) today announced an extension of the deadline for filing Form 5500 and Form 5500 EZ annual report/returns due to damages from severe storms in Ohio.

President Bush has declared a major disaster in 15 counties in Ohio, due to the damage caused by the storms. The extension applies to plan administrators, employers and other entities located in areas directly affected, as identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The extension also applies to firms located outside the affected areas who are unable to obtain the necessary information from service providers, banks or insurance companies whose operations were directly affected by the hurricane.

Under this relief, Form 5500 series filings required to be filed between Aug. 27, 2004 and Nov. 18, 2004, are granted an extension until Nov. 18, 2004. Plan filers entitled to an extension of relief should check Part I, Box D on the Form 5500 or Part 1 on Form 5500-EZ and attach a statement to the form in accordance with the instructions.

For more information about disaster relief, contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency at 1-800-621-3362 or (202) 621-FEMA or the Internal Revenue Service at **www.irs.gov** under "Disaster Area Tax Relief. Filers who have additional questions may contact the EBSA's EFAST Help Line at 1-866-463-3278.

###