loads of fuel transferred per year per distributor. Total burden for all distributors is about 1,319 hours per year. There are no annual operating costs, purchased service costs or capital costs. Startup costs have been completed.

Burden means the total time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, or disclose or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions; develop, acquire, install, and utilize technology and systems for the purposes of collecting, validating, and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; adjust the existing ways to comply with any previously applicable instructions and requirements; train personnel to be able to respond to a collection of information; search data sources; complete and review the collection of information; and transmit or otherwise disclose the information.

Dated: April 23, 1998.

Sylvia K. Lowrance,

Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.

[FR Doc. 98–11875 Filed 5–4–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–M

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL–6009–6]

Agency Information Collection Activities: Renewal Comment Request; Acid Rain Program

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), this notice announces that EPA is planning to submit the following continuing Information Collection Request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB): Acid Rain Program ICR, EPA ICR Number: 1633.12, OMB Control Number: 2060–0258, Expiration Date: January 31, 1999. Before submitting the ICR to OMB for review and approval, EPA is soliciting comments on specific aspects of the proposed information collection as described below.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before July 6, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The current ICR is available on the internet at www.epa.gov/acidrain. For further information contact Kenon Smith (202–564–9164). Send written comments (in duplicate) regarding these burden estimates or any other aspect of this information collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Kenon Smith, 401 M Street, SW., 6204J, Washington, DC 20460 using regular or certified mail, or Kenon Smith, USEPA (6204J), 501 3rd Street, NW., Washington, DC 20001 using overnight mail.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Contact Kenon Smith at (202–564–9164) or (smith.kenon@epa.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Affected entities: Entities potentially affected by this action are those which participate in the Acid Rain Program.

Title: Acid Rain Program ICR; (OMB Control No. 2060–0258; EPA ICR No. 1633.12) expiring 1/31/1999.

Abstract: The Acid Rain Program was established under Title IV of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. The program calls for major reductions of the pollutants that cause acid rain while establishing a new approach to environmental management. This information collection is necessary to implement the Acid Rain Program. It includes burden hours associated with developing and modifying permits, transferring allowances, obtaining allowances from the conservation and renewable energy reserve and small diesel refinery program, monitoring emissions, participating in the annual auctions, completing annual compliance certifications, participating in the Opt-in program, and complying with Nox permitting requirements. Most of this information collection is mandatory under 40 CFR parts 72–78. Some parts of it are voluntary or to obtain a benefit, such as participation in the annual auctions under 40 CFR part 73, subpart E. 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. The OMB control numbers for EPA's regulations are listed in 40 CFR part 9 and 48 CFR Ch. 15. The EPA would like to solicit comments to:

(i) 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;

(ii) 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;

(iii) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(iv) 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.

Burden Statement: The annual public reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 273 hours per response and 3,344 hours per respondent. The annual operation and maintenance (O&M) costs are an estimated $61,431 per respondent. All the O&M costs and most of the burden hours are associated with the collection and reporting of continuous emission data, which is the foundation for the allowance trading system. Burden means the total time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, or disclose or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions; develop, acquire, install, and utilize technology and systems for the purposes of collecting, validating, and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; adjust the existing ways to comply with any previously applicable instructions and requirements; train personnel to be able to respond to a collection of information; search data sources; complete and review the collection of information; and transmit or otherwise disclose the information.

Respondents/Affected Entities: 849.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 849.

Frequency of Response: Varies by task.

Estimated Total Annual Hour Burden: 2,839,120 hours.

Estimated Total Annualized Cost Burden (All O&M): $44,660,000.

Dated: April 28, 1998.

Brian J. McLean,

Director, Acid Rain Division.

[FR Doc. 98–11876 Filed 5–4–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL–6009–8]

National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Sulfur Oxides (Sulfur Dioxide); Intervention Level Program

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The EPA is announcing today the following actions:

(1) The schedule for responding to the remand of the final decision on the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for sulfur dioxide (SO_2) published on May 22, 1996, and any final action on the proposed intervention level program (ILP) for the reduction of SO_2 emissions published on January 2, 1997.

(2) The interim actions EPA will take to address 5-minute peak SO_2 levels that may pose risk to sensitive asthmatic individuals.

(3) The solicitation of comments and associated information and analyses on 5-minute peak SO_2 concentrations in the ambient air, with emphasis on the characterization of the likelihood of exposure of sensitive asthmatic individuals to peak SO_2 concentrations at 0.6 parts per million (ppm) and above during exercise.

DATES: (1) The EPA will propose its response to the SO_2 NAAQS remand for public comment in the summer of 1999 and take final action no later than December 2000. The EPA will take any final action on the proposed ILP, consistent with its final action on the SO_2 NAAQS, no later than December 2000.

(2) In the interim, until such final actions are taken, EPA will now begin taking actions to address known problem areas with high 5-minute peak SO_2 levels that may pose risk to sensitive asthmatic individuals.

(3) Comments and associated information and analyses should be submitted on or before November 1, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments and associated information and analyses should be submitted to Ms. Susan Lyon Stone, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, MD–15, Research Triangle Park, NC 27711.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Susan Lyon Stone at the above address or telephone (919) 541–1146 on matters pertaining to 5-minute peak SO_2 levels and the SO_2 NAAQS remand. For information on the interim actions EPA plans to take to address 5-minute peak SO_2 levels and the ILP, contact Mr. Eric Crump at the same address or telephone (919) 541–4719.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

On May 22, 1996, EPA announced its final decision that revisions of the SO_2 NAAQS were not appropriate (61 FR 25566). At issue in making that decision was whether a new 5-minute NAAQS was appropriate to protect sensitive asthmatic individuals from the risk posed by exposure to 5-minute SO_2 levels of 0.6 ppm or above. Given the available health effects information; information as to the localized, infrequent, and site-specific nature of risk involved; and the advice of the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC), the Administrator concluded that short-term peak concentrations of SO_2 do not constitute the type of ubiquitous public health problem for which the establishment of a NAAQS would be appropriate.

Because of the localized, infrequent, and site-specific nature of the risk, as characterized in its final decision notice (61 FR 25575–25576), the Administrator further concluded that the residual health risk posed by short-term SO_2 concentrations remaining after attainment of the current SO_2 NAAQS are most appropriately addressed by the States. It was the Administrator's judgment that the States are in a far better position than EPA to assess the highly localized and site-specific factors that determine whether occurrences of 5-minute peak SO_2 concentrations in a given area pose a significant risk to sensitive asthmatic individuals in the local population, and if so, to fashion an appropriate remedial response. In light of its characterization of the nature of 5-minute peak SO_2 concentrations and the likelihood that these peaks would result in exposure conditions that could cause significant health effects in sensitive asthmatic individuals during exercise, EPA also announced that it intended to propose a new program and associated guidance to assist States in determining whether 5-minute peak concentrations of SO_2 in the range of 0.6 ppm to 2.0 ppm posed a significant health risk to sensitive asthmatic individuals in the local population, and if so, to identify appropriate remedial responses. Consistent with its final SO_2 NAAQS decision, EPA subsequently proposed for comment the intervention level program (ILP) for the reduction of SO_2 emissions on January 2, 1997 (62 FR 210). This proposed ILP was intended to supplement the protection provided by the existing primary and secondary SO_2 NAAQS.

A key element of the proposed ILP was the establishment (to be codified in part 51 of the CFR) of a concern level of 0.6 ppm, 5-minute average SO_2 concentration, and an endangerment level of 2.0 ppm, 5-minute average. The proposed ILP would require that State and tribal plans contain the authority to take whatever action is necessary to prevent further exceedances of such concern and endangerment levels when the State/tribe determines that intervention is appropriate. The proposed ILP includes a discussion of the factors that the State/tribe should consider in making such determinations, including the magnitude and frequency of peak concentrations exceeding these levels, the history and nature of any citizen complaints, available information on potential exposure of sensitive asthmatic individuals, and information about the source(s) causing the peak SO_2 concentrations. Based on the above factors, the proposed ILP provides for flexibility for the State/tribe to determine the nature and degree of intervention that is warranted in any area. The States/tribes are also given the flexibility in the proposed ILP to relocate existing monitors to areas where 5-minute peak concentrations may be of concern through changes to SO_2 monitoring requirements. The proposed ILP recognizes that authority to take such actions, when justified on a case-by-case basis, currently exists under section 303 of the Clean Air Act. Building upon this authority, the proposed ILP codifies the health benchmarks for such actions (i.e., the concern and endangerment levels) and provides guidance to assist States/tribes in identifying and taking appropriate actions.

SO_2 NAAQS Remand

In July 1996, the American Lung Association and the Environmental Defense Fund petitioned the District of Columbia Court of Appeals for judicial review of EPA's decision not to establish a new 5-minute NAAQS. On January 30, 1998, the court issued a decision in that case *American Lung Association* v. *Browner,* No. 96–1251 (D.C. Cir.). The court found that EPA failed to provide an adequate explanation for its determination that no revision to the SO_2 NAAQS was appropriate. As a result, the court remanded the case to permit EPA to more fully explain its decision not to set a standard for short-term peak SO_2 levels of 0.6 ppm or greater.

Schedule for EPA Final Actions

In remanding the case to EPA, the court did not establish a deadline for EPA to take action consistent with the remand. In lieu of pursuing further litigation to seek a court-ordered schedule for EPA's response to the SO_2 NAAQS remand, the petitioners in the case initiated discussions with EPA to establish such a schedule for EPA's response. Based on these discussions, it was agreed that EPA would take final action no later than December 2000. In order to meet this date for final action, EPA intends to propose for public comment its response to the remand by

the summer of 1999. In conjunction with taking final action on its response to the SO_2 NAAQS remand, EPA also intends to take any final action on the ILP no later than December 2000. In so doing, EPA will draw upon its response to the remand on the SO_2 NAAQS decision so as to ensure consistency between these actions.

Interim Actions

Between now and when final action on the SO_2 NAAQS remand and the ILP is taken, EPA intends to work with States/tribes with known areas of high 5-minute peak SO_2 concentrations to undertake a number of actions. These actions include the following: determining whether the existing SO_2 NAAQS and State Implementation Plan (SIP) requirements are being met in such areas; taking regulatory action in such areas where appropriate (e.g., SIP calls); and initiating enforcement review/action to ensure SIP requirements are met. The EPA also plans to issue monitoring and other guidance to States/tribes/regions to assist them in identifying and addressing high 5-minute peak problems.

Solicitation of Information on 5-Minute Peak SO_2 Concentrations

To supplement its current information on 5-minute peak SO_2 concentrations and exposures of sensitive asthmatic individuals to peak levels of concern, EPA is soliciting comments and associated information and analyses on such 5-minute peak SO_2 concentrations. The EPA will consider this information in the context of the interim actions described above and in its response to the remand and in its final ILP decision. More specifically, EPA solicits information and analyses on the following: sources or source types and the nature of events that are most likely to give rise to short-term peak SO_2 levels; the magnitude and frequency of such peaks; the time of day of the occurrence of such peaks; meteorological conditions in the area in which such peaks occur; the density of the population near the source(s) involved; and the frequency with which asthmatic individuals would likely be exposed to peak SO_2 concentrations at 0.60 ppm and above while at elevated ventilation rates (i.e., during exercise).

Dated: April 29, 1998.

Richard D. Wilson,

Acting Assistant Adminstrator for Air and Radiation.

[FR Doc. 98–11874 Filed 5–4–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL–6009–4]

Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board, Meeting Date and Agenda

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will convene an open meeting of the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) on June 4, 1998, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. This meeting will be conducted by teleconference. The public is invited to join Ms. Ramona Trovato in Room 911, West Tower, Waterside Mall, 401 M Street, SW., Washington, DC.

The agenda will include discussion on the newly established working group on Third Party Assessors; Consensus Position from EPA's Environmental Monitoring Management Council; Continuation of ELAB vs. former NELAC Coordination Committee; Conflict-of-Interest Issues with respect to the Accreditation Authorities; Training of Assessors; Method Specific Checklists; Simultaneous Approval of Laboratories; and the Agenda for July 1, 1998, meeting at NELAC IV.

The public is encouraged to attend. Time will be allotted for public comment. Written comments are encouraged and should be directed to Ms. Jeanne Mourrain; Designated Federal Officer; USEPA; NCERQA (MD–75); Research Triangle Park, NC 27711. If questions arise, please contact Ms. Mourrain at 919/541–1120, fax 919/541–4261, or e-mail mourrain.jeanne@epamai.epa.gov.

Dated: April 24, 1998.

Nancy W. Wentworth,

Director, Quality Assurance Division.

[FR Doc. 98–11877 Filed 5–4–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Joint EPA/State Agreement To Pursue Regulatory Innovation

[FRL–6008–7]

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of Joint EPA/State Innovation Agreement.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and senior State environmental officials recently signed an agreement entitled Joint EPA/State Agreement to Pursue Regulatory Innovation (hereafter ''Innovations Agreement''). The purpose of the Innovations Agreement is to improve environmental protection in the United States, improve EPA/State environmental management practices, and provide timely decision-making on good ideas. These goals will be achieved through innovation proposals by States, with the intent that many successful innovations will lead to system-wide improvements in environmental protection.

The Innovations Agreement embodies a set of general principles and a process for EPA/State innovation activities that includes:

—Statements of purpose and scope of the agreement;
—Over-arching principles that will govern joint EPA/State regulatory innovation activities;
—The process EPA and the States will use to identify good ideas, including both the continuation of existing State/EPA interactions to start innovation projects, and the establishment of a new mechanism for making decisions on innovative proposals that do not fit into ongoing reinvention programs; and
—Guidelines for how EPA and the States will evaluate the success of innovation activities carried out under this agreement.

This Innovations Agreement builds on the many reinvention efforts that are underway in the States and EPA. It is intended to ensure joint decision-making, timely review, broad public involvement, and continued progress in fostering and implementing ideas that are good for our environment and the people we serve.

ADDRESSES: An electronic version of the Innovations Agreement is available on EPA's Office of Reinvention internet home page at http://www.epa.gov/reinvent. Interested parties can obtain a single copy of the report by contacting Louise McLaurin (phone 202–260–4261 or e-mail mclaurin.louise@epamail.epa.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For questions on the joint EPA/State Innovations Agreement, please contact John Glenn, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Reinvention, (1803), 401 M Street, S.W., Washington, DC, 20460, phone 202–260–5029, e-mail glenn.john@epamail.epa.gov; or Bruce Brott, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, phone 612–297–8380, e-mail bruce.brott@pca.state.mn.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: To find new, better, and more efficient and