

# PUBLIC SUBMISSION

**As of:** 2/16/21 9:31 AM  
**Received:** February 14, 2021  
**Status:** Pending\_Post  
**Tracking No.** kl5-jmv5-zehc  
**Comments Due:** February 16, 2021  
**Submission Type:** Web

**Docket:** PTO-T-2020-0069

Applications for Trademark Registration

**Comment On:** PTO-T-2020-0069-0001

Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposals, Submissions, and Approvals: Applications for Trademark Registration

**Document:** PTO-T-2020-0069-DRAFT-0003

Comment on FR Doc # 2020-27904

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## General Comment

Two collections of information should be disapproved. The public estimates burden at \$50 million. The December 18 notice in the Federal Register does not disclose this new burden, does not book it in the estimates, and does not offer any disagreement with the public's burden estimate. The Office offers no objective support for its estimate of zero.

First, in 2019, the Trademark Office issued guidance that requires disclosure of a trademark applicant's "domicile address." For many trademark owners, this means putting personal address information into the public record. Gathering of information, and updating existing files, are substantial burden. Further, for trademark owners that are individuals, disclosure of personal information places them at personal risk.

Second, in 2019, Trademark Office promulgated a final rule that requires disclosure of attorney bar information. But the Office didn't update its forms and filing practices or information technology to make this easy. Attorneys are forced to go through some rather baroque contortions to comply.

The Office's non-observance of law is shocking. In both cases, the Trademark Office evaded the public comment requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act and under the Paperwork Reduction Act. Instead, both collections of information were promulgated either as guidance with no regulatory support, or dropped into a

final rule without notice and comment. The PTO never asked the four questions required by 44 U.S.C. § 3506(c)(2)(A) and 5 C.F.R. § 1320.8(d)(1) to allow the public to offer alternative means to the Trademark Office's end, nor to correct the Trademark Office's misestimate of burden. A petition for rulemaking that estimates burden at \$50 million was filed over a year ago; the Trademark Office has taken no action.

Several of the Office's certifications in this ICR are false. This information is not "necessary;" the trademark system has worked without these two bits of information for a century. The information lacks "practical utility"—the Office uses it in only a tiny minority of cases. Both increase burden on small entity applicants and small entity law firms. The Office gave no apparent consideration to "nature and extent of confidentiality"—email lists among trademark attorneys have noted scams that seem to be driven by the Office's mishandling of this information. Implementation is inconsistent with current reporting and recordkeeping—this information was not required in the past, and the PTO's forms and IT infrastructure were not restructured to make this easy. The Trademark Office does not "make appropriate use of information technology" to reduce burden.

Please state explicitly in your filings to OMB that these two collections of information are dropped, and issue a Federal Register notice stating that they have been rescinded.