

August 13, 2021

Mr. Thomas J. Smith  
U.S. Census Bureau  
4600 Silver Hill Rd  
Washington, DC 20233

RE: *Federal Register* notice of July 23, 2021, for the 2017 Commodity Flow Survey (OMB Number: 0607-0932)

Dear Mr. Smith:

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) strongly supports the continued collection of data by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Commodity Flow Survey (CFS). The survey data, co-sponsored by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), are critical to the quality of several key components of BEA's economic statistics.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) relies heavily on data from the CFS to prepare the industry economic accounts of the United States. The CFS is BEA's primary source of data for distributing the cost of transportation across individual commodities.

BEA uses information from the CFS to produce estimates on the use of transportation services by commodity in the benchmark input-output accounts (I-O). The benchmark I-O accounts are used in-turn in the estimation of BEA's national income and product accounts, annual industry accounts, and travel and tourism satellite accounts. These accounts are widely used by business, government, and researchers to analyze industry performance and the changing structure of the U.S. economy.

CFS data are BEA's primary inputs for estimating each private industry's purchases of transportation services by mode of transport. Without these data, the accuracy of BEA's estimates of value added (i.e., contribution to GDP) for every private industry would be reduced. A list of specific survey items that are used is attached.

To improve the BEA usefulness of the CFS data, BEA suggests the collection of data on freight charges associated with the commodities transported in addition to the shipment characteristics currently collected. This information would greatly improve the BEA estimates for commodity freight charges.

Please keep BEA informed about any modifications to these forms. We are particularly interested in any modifications proposed during the forms' approval process that would substantially affect our use of these data. For additional information, please contact Tiffany Burrell, Source Data Coordinator, on 301-278-9618, or by email at [tiffany.burrell@bea.gov](mailto:tiffany.burrell@bea.gov). Should you need assistance in justifying these forms to the Office of Management and Budget, please do not hesitate to contact BEA.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Fixler  
Chief Economist

**Attachment**

**Current Use of CFS-1000 and CFS-2000 in BEA's Accounts**

Items Used:	Used in Estimation of:
<p>Both forms: Shipment Characteristics</p> <p>CFS-2000: Third Party Logistics</p>	<p>Purchases of transportation services for:</p> <p>Benchmark I-O, Annual I-O, National Accounts, Travel and Tourism Satellite Account</p>



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Maritime  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

October 1, 2021

Mr. Thomas J. Smith  
U.S. Census Bureau  
4600 Silver Hill Rd  
Washington, DC  
20233

RE: *Federal Register* notice of July 23, 2021, for the 2017 Commodity Flow Survey (OMB  
Number:0607-0932)

Dear Mr. Smith:

The Department of Transportation – Maritime Administration (MARAD) adamantly supports continuation of data collection by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Commodity Flow Survey (CFS). The data provided by this survey are critical to MARAD’s strategic planning and decision making.

MARAD uses the CFS data directly to ascertain multimodal domestic freight flows on our nation’s transportation system. As you may be aware, the CFS provides the only nationally consistent data set for multimodal domestic transportation. The CFS data form the basis of many national level multimodal freight analysis models, including the Freight Analysis Framework (FAF) that is managed jointly between the Federal Highway Administration and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

MARAD also relies on CFS data indirectly through the Bureau of Economic Analysis’s benchmark input-output (I-O) accounts. MARAD relies on I-O account data as input into numerous studies that promote and protect the U.S. maritime industry. Recently, MARAD in conjunction with the American Waterways Operators completed a study on the importance of the tug and barge industry.

MARAD suggests, that if practical, the survey be designed to be conducted more frequently (biennially) to capture relatively rapid changes in transportation logistics.

Please keep MARAD informed as you make decisions regarding the future of the CFS.

Sincerely,

Douglas McDonald

Director, Office of Policy and Plans  
U.S. Department of Transportation –  
Maritime Administration



## Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

October 13, 2021

Mr. Thomas J. Smith  
U.S. Census Bureau  
4600 Silver Hill Rd  
Washington, DC 20233

RE: *Federal Register* notice of July 23, 2021, for the 2022 Commodity Flow Survey (OMB Number: 0607-0932)

Dear Mr. Smith:

The Energy Information Administration (EIA) strongly supports the continued collection of data by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Commodity Flow Survey (CFS). The survey data, co-sponsored by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), are critical to the quality of EIA's Annual Energy Outlook (AEO), which is mandated by Congress.

EIA relies heavily on data from the CFS to prepare its projections of energy use by fuel type and mode of transport. In particular, the data collected from CFS and the international trade in goods data from the U.S. Census Bureau flow into the Department of Transportation's Freight Analysis Framework, which serves EIA's primary source of data for shipping vehicle miles traveled and ton-miles.

EIA uses information from the Freight Analysis Framework to examine the impact of vehicle miles traveled and ton-miles on energy markets as they relate to the transportation sector in both baseline AEO projections and policy case scenarios. Without CFS data, the quality of these projections intended to provide useful information to support efficient decision making in the private sector and support evidence based policy making would suffer.

Please keep EIA informed about any modifications to these forms. We are particularly interested in any modifications proposed during the forms' approval process that would substantially affect our use of these data. Should you need assistance in justifying these forms to the Office of Management and Budget, please do not hesitate to contact EIA.

Sincerely,

Charles Ian Mead  
Director  
Office of Energy Demand and Integrated Statistics  
U.S. Energy Information Administration



Mr. Thomas J. Smith  
U.S. Census Bureau  
4600 Silver Hill Rd  
Washington, DC 20233

RE: Federal Register notice of July 23, 2021, for the 2022 Commodity Flow Survey (OMB Number: 0607-0932)

Dear Mr. Smith:

This email is to express support for the Census Bureau to continue to survey and collect data for the Transportation-Commodity Flow Survey (CFS), jointly published by the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Transportation. The CFS is the only publicly available source of national activity data that illustrates and helps its users to understand freight flows across the country's transportation infrastructure. This data includes information on the flow of freight by commodity type, weight, value, and distance (origin and destination) and how that freight is moving: by highway, railroad, and waterway.

EPA's SmartWay program has found the CFS data to be useful in its research and analyses of trends in freight. These analyses have contributed to our understanding of the modal choices made by industries that are responsible for moving high volumes and heavy loads of freight, and the efficiency gains and potential emissions benefits associated with those choices. SmartWay has used the CFS data as a source of information to improve our understanding of the general performance of the freight transportation system, in particular the use of multimodal freight networks within the system. Many of EPA's SmartWay partners are pursuing multimodal solutions as a way to move their goods more efficiently, and through our analyses using CFS data, we have been able to validate the benefits of pursuing multimodal shipping options.

CFS survey results are key to understanding a range of important trends and developments in goods movement, and through analyses can provide useful insights into the freight industry and its use of the country's infrastructure.

Thank you for considering this note of support for the CFS.

Denise Kearns  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Transportation and Air Quality  
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Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
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CEERD-HN-C

October 5th, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO:

Mr. Thomas J. Smith  
U.S. Census Bureau  
4600 Silver Hill Rd  
Washington, DC 20233

SUBJECT: *Federal Register* notice of July 23, 2021, re: 2017 Commodity Flow Survey (OMB Number: 0607-0932)

Dear Mr. Smith:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Navigation R&D program strongly encourages the sustained collection of data by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Commodity Flow Survey (CFS). The CFS data are critical to research efforts conducted by the USACE to better understand the contributions of the marine transportation system to the broader multimodal freight network.

Specifically, the USACE needs to understand the critical nationwide freight corridors and where and when the marine mode of transportation provides additional system capacity and resiliency as well as locations where it potentially acts as a network bottleneck. The origin-destination cargo flow details needed to determine these insights are provided by the Freight Analysis Framework (FAF), which uses the CFS data as its primary source of input. In fact, USACE researchers consider the FAF to be the only comprehensive nationwide multimodal freight data source, providing insights into mode share in a way that no other readily available dataset can. Thanks to the underlying CFS data, USACE researchers can use the FAF for detailed analyses of freight volumes (tonnage and cargo value) by mode, commodity, and shipment distances for states and metropolitan areas with marine port activities enabled by federal navigation projects.

The USACE Navigation mission encompasses a vast, aging portfolio of marine transportation infrastructure containing over 200 lock and dam structures, over 1,000 rubble-mound jetty and breakwater structures, and over 10,000 miles of maintained navigation channels at deep-draft coastal ports and shallow-draft inland waterways across the country. Rational allocation of limited resources, whether they be tactical operations and maintenance funds or more strategic, long-term investments, requires a quantitative understanding of how this critical marine transportation network supports and otherwise interacts with the landside network of road, rail, and pipeline infrastructure. The richness contained within the CFS data enables the important research that USACE is conducting to develop this key understanding and improve the efficiency and reliability of its navigation mission.

If you have any questions or feel that I can be of further assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me at 601-529-9005 or via e-mail at [Kenneth.n.mitchell@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kenneth.n.mitchell@usace.army.mil).

Kenneth Ned Mitchell, PhD  
Research Civil Engineer  
U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center  
Vicksburg, MS