Comments Received :

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed revisions to the Household Pulse Survey Phase 3.6. I'm an economist with longtime experience with household and consumer surveys asking about economic topics, including the University of Michigan's Survey of Consumer Sentiment and the Conference Board's Consumer Confidence Survey. I believe the initial lead-in question INFLATE1, as currently worded, risks causing confusion as to what the question is asking about.

>> INFLATE1 In the area where you live and shop, do you think the prices for goods and services have changed in the last two months? Select only one answer.

According to recent results from the Michigan Survey, sky high gas prices are weighing heavily consumers' minds (https://data.sca.isr.umich.edu/fetchdoc.php?docid=70216). Your INFLATE1 draft question asks about "goods and services," where you likely want people to answer thinking of prices of goods and services generally, possibly including gas. But the "goods and services" terminology isn't necessarily familiar to everyone; a good share of respondents may read this question, have trouble figuring out what exactly they're supposed to report on (e.g. should they be thinking of gas prices?), and wind up skipping the question(s).

The Michigan Survey questionnaire asks about "prices in general" (e.g., "in the next 12 months, do you think that prices in general will go up, go down, or stay where they are now?"). Changing the INFLATE1 wording "prices for goods and services" to "prices in general" would avoid the problem of possibly unfamiliar terminology, while also conveying that you'd like them to thinking of prices of all the types of items they buy or may possibly buy.

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