



August 22, 2018

Reference Number 400

Ms. Jennifer Jessup
Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer
Department of Commerce, Room 6616
14th and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20230

RE: *Federal Register* notice of July 16, 2018, for the U.S. Census Bureau's Annual Capital Expenditures Survey (OMB Number: 0607-0782)

Dear Ms. Jessup:

BLS welcomes the addition of the questions on expenditures on robotics to the Annual Capital Expenditures Survey (ACES), as it will help fill an important data gap in our measures of capital services. As technology is evolving, we are constantly receiving inquiries concerning the effects of automation on U.S. productivity. The robotics questions will help us provide answers to our customers. These data will improve our measures of capital services, allow us to assess the effects of R&D, and provide valuable information on sources of economic growth and productivity.

BLS currently uses ACES detailed equipment and structure investment data collected in Economic Census years in our 4-digit multifactor statistics produced by the BLS Industry Productivity Studies (IPS) program. Currently, IPS uses the ACES data to update its Capital Flows Table, which is used to generate annual estimates of investment by 4-digit industry and type of asset. At the major sector and National Income and Product accounts industry level, BLS's Major Sector Productivity (MSP) program uses equipment and structure investment data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, which is a key stakeholder of the ACES data. The ACES data are vital to our measures of multifactor productivity.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Lucy P. Eldridge", is positioned above the typed name.

Lucy P. Eldridge, Ph. D.
Associate Commissioner for
Productivity and Technology