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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 97

[Docket No. 31634; Amdt. No. 4191]

Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This rule establishes, amends, suspends, or removes Standard Instrument Approach Procedures (SIAPS) and associated Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure procedures (ODPs) for operations at certain airports. These regulatory actions are needed because of the adoption of new or revised criteria, or because of changes occurring in the National Airspace System, such as the commissioning of new navigational facilities, adding new obstacles, or changing air traffic requirements. These changes are designed to provide safe and efficient use of the navigable airspace and to promote safe flight operations under instrument flight rules at the affected airports.

DATES: This rule is effective November 13, 2025. The compliance date for each SIAP, associated Takeoff Minimums, and ODP is specified in the amendatory provisions.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of November 13, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Availability of matters incorporated by reference in the amendment is as follows:

For Examination

1. U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Ops–M30. 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Bldg., Ground Floor, Washington, DC 20590–0001.

2. The FAA Air Traffic Organization Service Area in which the affected airport is located;

3. The office of Aeronautical Information Services, 6500 South MacArthur Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73169 or,

4. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, visit *www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations* or email *fr.inspection@nara.gov.*

Availability

All SIAPs and Takeoff Minimums and ODPs are available online free of charge. Visit the National Flight Data Center at *nfdc.faa.gov* to register. Additionally, individual SIAP and Takeoff Minimums and ODP copies may be obtained from the FAA Air Traffic Organization Service Area in which the affected airport is located.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Romana Wolf, Manager (Acting), Flight Technologies and Procedures Division, Office of Safety Standards, Flight Standards Service, Aviation Safety, Federal Aviation Administration. Mailing Address: FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center, Flight Procedures and Airspace Group, 6500 South MacArthur Blvd., STB Annex, Bldg. 26, Room 217, Oklahoma City, OK 73099. Telephone (405) 954–1139.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule amends 14 CFR part 97 by establishing, amending, suspending, or removes SIAPS, Takeoff Minimums and/or ODPS. The complete regulatory description of each SIAP and its associated Takeoff Minimums or ODP for an identified airport is listed on FAA form documents which are incorporated by reference in this amendment under 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 1 CFR part 51, and 14 CFR 97.20. The applicable FAA Forms are 8260–3, 8260–4, 8260–5, 8260–15A, 8260–15B, when required by an entry on 8260–15A, and 8260–15C.

The large number of SIAPs, Takeoff Minimums and ODPs, their complex nature, and the need for a special format make publication in the **Federal Register** expensive and impractical. Further, pilots do not use the regulatory text of the SIAPs, Takeoff Minimums or ODPs, but instead refer to their graphic depiction on charts printed by publishers of aeronautical materials. Thus, the advantages of incorporation by reference are realized and publication of the complete description of each SIAP, Takeoff Minimums and ODP listed on FAA form documents is unnecessary. This amendment provides the affected CFR sections and specifies the types of SIAPS, Takeoff Minimums and ODPs with their applicable effective dates. This amendment also identifies the airport and its location, the procedure, and the amendment number.

Availability and Summary of Material Incorporated by Reference

The material incorporated by reference is publicly available as listed in the **ADDRESSES** section.

The material incorporated by reference describes SIAPS, Takeoff Minimums and/or ODPs as identified in the amendatory language for part 97 of this final rule.

The Rule

This amendment to 14 CFR part 97 is effective upon publication of each separate SIAP, Takeoff Minimums and ODP as amended in the transmittal. Some SIAP and Takeoff Minimums and textual ODP amendments may have been issued previously by the FAA in a Flight Data Center (FDC) Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) as an emergency action of immediate flights safety relating directly to published aeronautical charts.

The circumstances that created the need for some SIAP and Takeoff Minimums and ODP amendments may require making them effective in less than 30 days. For the remaining SIAPs and Takeoff Minimums and ODPs, an effective date at least 30 days after publication is provided.

Further, the SIAPs and Takeoff Minimums and ODPs contained in this amendment are based on the criteria contained in the U.S. Standard for Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS). In developing these SIAPs and Takeoff Minimums and ODPs, the TERPS criteria were applied to the conditions existing or anticipated at the affected airports. Because of the close and immediate relationship between these SIAPs, Takeoff Minimums and ODPs, and safety in air commerce, I find that notice and public procedure under 5 U.S.C. 553(b) are impracticable and contrary to the public interest and,

where applicable, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), good cause exists for making some SIAPs effective in less than 30 days.

The FAA has determined that this regulation only involves an established body of technical regulations for which frequent and routine amendments are necessary to keep them operationally current. It, therefore—(1) is not a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a ''significant rule'' under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034; February 26, 1979); and (3) does not warrant preparation of a regulatory evaluation as the anticipated impact is so minimal. For the same reason, the FAA certifies that this amendment will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

Lists of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 97

Air traffic control, Airports, Incorporation by reference, Navigation (air).

Issued in Washington, DC, on November 7, 2025.

Romana Wolf,

Aviation Safety, Manager (Acting), Flight Technologies & Procedures Division, Federal Aviation Administration.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me, 14 CFR part 97 is amended by establishing, amending, suspending, or removing Standard Instrument Approach Procedures and/or Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures effective at 0901 UTC on the dates specified, as follows:

PART 97—STANDARD INSTRUMENT APPROACH PROCEDURES

■ 1. The authority citation for part 97 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(f), 106(g), 40103, 40106, 40113, 40114, 40120, 44502, 44514, 44701, 44719, 44721–44722.

■ 2. Part 97 is amended to read as follows:

Effective 25 December 2025

Columbia, MO, COU, ILS OR LOC RWY 2, Amdt 18B
Columbia, MO, COU, RNAV (GPS) RWY 2, Amdt 3
Columbia, MO, COU, RNAV (GPS) RWY 20, Amdt 3A

Effective 22 January 2026

Gulkana, AK, GKN/PAGK, VOR–A, Orig, CANCELED
Cullman, AL, CMD, RNAV (GPS) RWY 2, Amdt 2A
Cullman, AL, CMD, RNAV (GPS) RWY 20, Amdt 2A
Guntersville, AL, 8A1, RNAV (GPS) RWY 25, Amdt 1
Helena/West Helena, AR, HEE, VOR RWY 36, Amdt 2, CANCELED
Jonesboro, AR, JBR, VOR RWY 23, Amdt 11C, CANCELED
Paragould, AR, PGR, VOR RWY 4, Amdt 5B, CANCELED
Mammoth Lakes, CA, MMH, RNAV (GPS) RWY 27, Amdt 2
Mountain View, CA, NUQ, Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle DP, Amdt 3
Petaluma, CA, O69, SCAGGS ISLAND ONE, Graphic DP
Petaluma, CA, O69, Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle DP, Amdt 3
Fort Myers, FL, FMY, VOR RWY 13, Amdt 1A, CANCELED
Jacksonville, FL, HEG, NDB–A, Amdt 1, CANCELED
Stuart, FL, SUA, RNAV (GPS) RWY 12, Amdt 2A
Stuart, FL, SUA, RNAV (GPS) RWY 30, Amdt 2
Adel, GA, 15J, RNAV (GPS) RWY 23, Amdt 3
Atlanta, GA, FFC, NDB RWY 31, Amdt 4, CANCELED
Atlanta, GA, FTY, Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle DP, Amdt 8A
Baxley, GA, BHC, NDB RWY 8, Amdt 2C, CANCELED
Cairo, GA, 70J, NDB RWY 13, Amdt 5A, CANCELED
Canton, GA, CNI, RNAV (GPS) RWY 5, Amdt 2
Canton, GA, CNI, RNAV (GPS) RWY 23, Amdt 2
Canton, GA, KCNI, Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle DP, Amdt 3
Cordele, GA, CKF, RNAV (GPS) RWY 6, Amdt 2
Cordele, GA, CKF, RNAV (GPS) RWY 24, Amdt 2
Cordele, GA, CKF, RNAV (GPS) RWY 28, Amdt 2
Eastman, GA, EZM, VOR/DME–A, Amdt 8A, CANCELED
Fitzgerald, GA, FZG, NDB RWY 2, Amdt 2A, CANCELED
Milledgeville, GA, MLJ, NDB RWY 28, Amdt 6, CANCELED
Thomasville, GA, TVI, NDB RWY 22, Amdt 7, CANCELED
Challis, ID, LLJ, RNAV (GPS)–A, Orig
Challis, ID, KLLJ, SALMON ONE, Graphic DP
Challis, ID, LLJ, Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle DP, Orig
Indianapolis, IN, 8A4, COPTER RNAV (GPS) 291, Orig-B, CANCELED
Indianapolis, IN, 8A4, COPTER VOR/DME 287, Amdt 2B, CANCELED
Atchison, KS, K59, RNAV (GPS) RWY 16, Orig-A, CANCELED
Atchison, KS, K59, Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle DP, Orig, CANCELED
Oberlin, KS, OIN, NDB RWY 35, Amdt 2, CANCELED
Mayfield, KY, M25, VOR/DME–A, Amdt 8B, CANCELED
New Orleans, LA, MSY, LOC RWY 20, Amdt 4
Provincetown, MA, PVC, NDB RWY 25, Amdt 2C, CANCELED
Churchville, MD, 0W3, RNAV (GPS) RWY 19, Orig
Churchville, MD, 0W3, RNAV (GPS)–B, Orig-C, CANCELED
Biddeford, ME, B19, VOR RWY 6, Orig-B, CANCELED
Wadena, MN, ADC, RNAV (GPS) RWY 16, Orig-B
Wadena, MN, ADC, RNAV (GPS) RWY 34, Amdt 1B
Wadena, MN, KADC, Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle DP, Amdt 2
Drew, MS, M37, VOR–A, Amdt 5A, CANCELED
Indianola, MS, IDL, VOR/DME–A, Amdt 9D, CANCELED
Indianola, MS, IDL, VOR/DME–B, Amdt 5D, CANCELED
Helena, MT, HLN, LOC BC–C, Amdt 6, CANCELED
Albemarle, NC, VUJ, NDB RWY 22L, Amdt 1A, CANCELED
Burlington, NC, BUY, RNAV (GPS) RWY 24, Orig-B
Elizabeth City, NC, ECG, ILS OR LOC RWY 10, Amdt 2
Elizabeth City, NC, ECG, RNAV (GPS) RWY 10, Amdt 2
Erwin, NC, HRJ, NDB RWY 23, Amdt 2B, CANCELED
Lincolnton, NC, IPJ, ILS Y OR LOC Y RWY 23, Orig-D
Lincolnton, NC, IPJ, ILS Z OR LOC Z RWY 23, Amdt 1
Roanoke Rapids, NC, IXA, VOR RWY 2, Amdt 1, CANCELED
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Shelby, NC, EHO, RNAV (GPS) RWY 5, Amdt 3
Whiteville, NC, CPC, NDB RWY 6, Amdt 6, CANCELED
Claremont, NH, CNH, NDB–A, Amdt 1D, CANCELED
Jaffrey, NH, AFN, VOR–A, Amdt 8B, CANCELED
Rochester, NH, DAW, NDB RWY 33, Amdt 4D, CANCELED
Pittstown, NJ, N85, VOR/DME RWY 8, Amdt 2, CANCELED
Farmingdale, NY, FRG, RNAV (GPS) RWY 1, Amdt 3B
New York, NY, LGA, RNAV (RNP) Z RWY 4, Amdt 2A, CANCELED
Mount Joy/Marietta, PA, N71, RNAV (GPS) RWY 28, Amdt 1
Mount Pocono, PA, MPO, VOR/DME RWY 13, Amdt 8B, CANCELED
Chester, SC, DCM, NDB RWY 35, Amdt 3, CANCELED
Mount Pleasant, SC, LRO, VOR/DME–A, Amdt 1D, CANCELED
Newberry, SC, EOE, NDB RWY 22, Amdt 6E, CANCELED
Summerville, SC, DYB, NDB RWY 6, Amdt 1C, CANCELED
Comanche, TX, MKN, RNAV (GPS) RWY 17, Amdt 1B
Comanche, TX, MKN, RNAV (GPS) RWY 35, Orig-C
Spanish Fork, UT, SPK, RNAV (GPS) RWY 12, Amdt 3
Spanish Fork, UT, SPK, RNAV (GPS) Y RWY 12, Amdt 2, CANCELED
Fredericksburg, VA, EZF, NDB RWY 24, Amdt 3A, CANCELED

South Boston, VA, W78, RNAV (GPS) RWY 19, Orig-A, CANCELED
Warrenton, VA, HWY, VOR RWY 15, Amdt 4D, CANCELED
Christiansted, VI, STX/TISX, VOR RWY 28, Amdt 19C, CANCELED
Marshfield, WI, MFI, RNAV (GPS) RWY 16, Amdt 1A

[FR Doc. 2025–19868 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 97

[Docket No. 31635; Amdt. No. 4192]

Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This rule amends, suspends, or removes Standard Instrument Approach Procedures (SIAPs) and associated Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures for operations at certain airports. These regulatory actions are needed because of the adoption of new or revised criteria, or because of changes occurring in the National Airspace System, such as the commissioning of new navigational facilities, adding new obstacles, or changing air traffic requirements. These changes are designed to provide for the safe and efficient use of the navigable airspace and to promote safe flight operations under instrument flight rules at the affected airports.

DATES: This rule is effective November 13, 2025. The compliance date for each SIAP, associated Takeoff Minimums, and ODP is specified in the amendatory provisions.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of November 13, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Availability of matter incorporated by reference in the amendment is as follows:

For Examination

1. U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Ops–M30, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Bldg., Ground Floor, Washington, DC 20590–0001;

2. The FAA Air Traffic Organization Service Area in which the affected airport is located;

3. The office of Aeronautical Information Services, 6500 South MacArthur Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73169 or,

4. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

For information on the availability of this material at NARA, visit *www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations* or email *fr.inspection@nara.gov.*

Availability

All SIAPs and Takeoff Minimums and ODPs are available online free of charge. Visit the National Flight Data Center online at *nfdc.faa.gov* to register. Additionally, individual SIAP and Takeoff Minimums and ODP copies may be obtained from the FAA Air Traffic Organization Service Area in which the affected airport is located.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Romana Wolf, Manager (Acting), Flight Technologies and Procedures Division, Office of Safety Standards, Flight Standards Service, Aviation Safety, Federal Aviation Administration. Mailing Address: FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center, Flight Procedures and Airspace Group, 6500 South MacArthur Blvd., STB Annex, Bldg. 26, Room 217, Oklahoma City, OK 73099. Telephone (405) 954–1139.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule amends 14 CFR part 97 by amending the referenced SIAPs. The complete regulatory description of each SIAP is listed on the appropriate FAA Form 8260, as modified by the National Flight Data Center (NFDC)/Permanent Notice to Airmen (P–NOTAM), and is incorporated by reference under 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 1 CFR part 51, and 14 CFR 97.20. The large number of SIAPs, their complex nature, and the need for a special format make their verbatim publication in the **Federal Register** expensive and impractical. Further, pilots do not use the regulatory text of the SIAPs, but refer to their graphic depiction on charts printed by publishers of aeronautical materials. Thus, the advantages of incorporation by reference are realized and publication of the complete description of each SIAP contained on FAA form documents is unnecessary. This amendment provides the affected CFR sections, and specifies the SIAPs and Takeoff Minimums and ODPs with their applicable effective dates. This amendment also identifies the airport and its location, the procedure and the amendment number.

Availability and Summary of Material Incorporated by Reference

The material incorporated by reference is publicly available as listed in the **ADDRESSES** section.

The material incorporated by reference describes SIAPs, Takeoff Minimums and ODPs as identified in the amendatory language for part 97 of this final rule.

The Rule

This amendment to 14 CFR part 97 is effective upon publication of each separate SIAP and Takeoff Minimums and ODP as amended in the transmittal. For safety and timeliness of change considerations, this amendment incorporates only specific changes contained for each SIAP and Takeoff Minimums and ODP as modified by FDC permanent NOTAMs.

The SIAPs and Takeoff Minimums and ODPs, as modified by FDC permanent NOTAM, and contained in this amendment are based on criteria contained in the U.S. Standard for Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS). In developing these changes to SIAPs and Takeoff Minimums and ODPs, the TERPS criteria were applied only to specific conditions existing at the affected airports. All SIAP amendments in this rule have been previously issued by the FAA in a FDC NOTAM as an emergency action of immediate flight safety relating directly to published aeronautical charts.

The circumstances that created the need for these SIAP and Takeoff Minimums and ODP amendments require making them effective in less than 30 days.

Because of the close and immediate relationship between these SIAPs, Takeoff Minimums and ODPs, and safety in air commerce, I find that notice and public procedure under 5 U.S.C. 553(b) are impracticable and contrary to the public interest and, where applicable, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), good cause exists for making these SIAPs effective in less than 30 days.

The FAA has determined that this regulation only involves an established body of technical regulations for which frequent and routine amendments are necessary to keep them operationally current. It, therefore—(1) is not a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a ''significant rule'' under DOT regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034; February 26, 1979); and (3) does not warrant preparation of a regulatory evaluation as the anticipated impact is so minimal. For the same reason, the FAA certifies that this amendment will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 97

Air traffic control, Airports, Incorporation by reference, Navigation (air).

Issued in Washington, DC, on November 7, 2025.

Romana Wolf,

Aviation Safety, Manager (Acting), Flight Technologies & Procedures Division, Federal Aviation Administration.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me, 14 CFR part 97 is amended by amending Standard Instrument Approach Procedures and Takeoff Minimums and ODPs, effective at 0901 UTC on the dates specified, as follows:

PART 97—STANDARD INSTRUMENT APPROACH PROCEDURES

■ 1. The authority citation for part 97 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(f), 106(g), 40103, 40106, 40113, 40114, 40120, 44502, 44514, 44701, 44719, 44721–44722.

■ 2. Part 97 is amended to read as follows:

By amending: § 97.23 VOR, VOR/DME, VOR or TACAN, and VOR/DME or TACAN; § 97.25 LOC, LOC/DME, LDA, LDA/DME, SDF, SDF/DME; § 97.27 NDB, NDB/DME; § 97.29 ILS, ILS/DME, MLS, MLS/DME, MLS/RNAV; § 97.31 RADAR SIAPs; § 97.33 RNAV SIAPs; and § 97.35 COPTER SIAPs, Identified as follows:

** * * Effective Upon Publication*

AIRAC date	State	City	Airport	FDC No.	FDC date	Procedure name
25–Dec–25	SD	Sioux Falls	Joe Foss Fld	5/8837	10/30/2025	RADAR–1, Amdt 11.

[FR Doc. 2025–19869 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 751

[EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0465; FRL–8155.1–02–OCSPP]

RIN 2070–AL28

Methylene Chloride; Regulation Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA); Compliance Date Extension

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA or Agency) is finalizing an extension to the compliance dates applicable to certain entities subject to the regulation of methylene chloride promulgated under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). Specifically, EPA is finalizing an 18-month extension of the Workplace Chemical Protection Program (WCPP) and associated recordkeeping compliance dates for industrial or commercial laboratories that are not owned or operated by Federal agencies or contractors acting on behalf of the Federal government. Under this final rule, all non-Federal laboratories will share the same compliance dates with Federal and Federally contracted laboratories. EPA is finalizing an extension of the compliance dates for associated laboratory activities detailed in this final rule to avoid disruption of important functions of non-Federal laboratories such as the use of environmental monitoring methods needed for cleanup sites and wastewater treatment, as well as activities associated with university laboratories or law enforcement laboratories.

DATES: This final rule is effective on December 15, 2025.

ADDRESSES: EPA has established a docket for this action under Docket ID No. EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0465. All documents in the docket are available on the Federal eRulemaking Portal at *https://www.regulations.gov.* Although listed in the index some information is not publicly available, *e.g.,* Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Certain other information, such as copyrighted material, will be available only in hard copy form.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

For technical information contact: Daniel Whitby, Existing Chemicals Risk Management Division, Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20460–0001; telephone number: (202) 564–0598; email address: *MethyleneChlorideTSCA@epa.gov.*

For general information contact: The TSCA Assistance Information Service Hotline, Goodwill Vision Enterprises, 422 South Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY 14620; telephone number: (800) 471–7127 or (202) 554–1404; email address: *TSCA-Hotline@epa.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Executive Summary

A. Does this action apply to me?

You may be potentially affected by this final rule if you use methylene chloride in a non-Federal laboratory setting for the following activities: the industrial or commercial use of methylene chloride in a laboratory process or in specialized laboratory equipment for instrument calibration/maintenance; chemical analysis, chemical synthesis, extracting and purifying other chemicals; dissolving other substances; executing research, development, test and evaluation methods; and similar activities, such as use as a solvent, reagent, analytical standard, or other experimental use. Such laboratory activities may also include methylene chloride use in sample extraction for analysis or preparation for standards for environmental testing, as a mobile phase component in thin-layer chromatography (TLC), as a solvent for column chromatography separation, or the preparation of gas chromatography analyses. Industrial and commercial use of methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical applies to all laboratories, including industrial, commercial, academic and research laboratories, except for those laboratories owned or operated by a Federal agency or a contractor acting on behalf of the Federal government for research, government, and academic institutions. Potentially affected entities may include, but are not limited to:

- Testing Laboratories (NAICS code 541380);
- Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology) (NAICS codes 541715 or 541710);
- Hazardous Waste Treatment and Disposal (NAICS code 562211);
- Solid Waste Combustors and Incinerators (NAICS code 562213);
- Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (NAICS code 611310); and
- Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories (NAICS codes 621511 or 621999).

B. What is the Agency's authority for taking this action?

Under TSCA section 6(a) (15 U.S.C. 2605(a)), if EPA determines that ''the manufacture, processing, distribution in commerce, use, or disposal of a chemical substance . . . presents an unreasonable risk of injury to health or the environment,'' EPA shall, by rule, ''apply one or more of [the requirements in TSCA section 6(a)(1) through (7)] to such substance . . . to the extent necessary so that the chemical substance . . . no longer presents such risk.''

In 2024, EPA promulgated a final risk management rule under TSCA section 6(a) for methylene chloride. In 2025, EPA proposed revisions specific to the non-Federal laboratory requirements of the 2024 rule. Unless provided otherwise by law, agencies may change existing positions (*e.g.,* reconsider, revise, or rescind prior rules) provided that they acknowledge the change in position, offer a reasoned explanation for the change, and take any serious reliance interests into account. *See, e.g., FDA* v. *Wages & White Lion Invs., L.L.C.,* 145 S. Ct. 898, 917 (2025); *Encino Motorcars* v. *Navarro,* 579 U.S. 211, 221 (2016); *FCC* v. *Fox Television Stations, Inc.,* 556 U.S. 502, 515 (2009); *Motor Vehicle Mfrs. Ass'n* v. *State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co.,* 463 U.S. 29 (1983). For the reasons set out in Units I.D and III.A, EPA is finalizing its proposed rule revising the 2024 risk management rule for methylene chloride to extend the WCPP compliance dates by an additional 18 months for non-Federal laboratories. Based on information submitted by regulated entities, the Agency has determined that revising the compliance dates as proposed is necessary to provide adequate implementation time and to avoid disrupting environmental monitoring and associated laboratory-based activities discussed further in Unit III.A and in Unit II.C.3 of the 2025 proposed rule (Ref. 1).

C. What action is the Agency taking?

EPA is amending 40 CFR 751.109 to extend the WCPP compliance dates for non-Federally owned or operated industrial or commercial laboratories by an additional 18 months. This amendment aligns the compliance dates for non-Federally owned or operated industrial or commercial laboratories with the compliance dates established in the 2024 risk management rule for Federal agencies and their contractors (Ref. 2). Specifically, this final rule extends three compliance dates for non-Federally owned or operated industrial or commercial laboratories. For initial monitoring, the compliance date is extended from May 5, 2025, to November 9, 2026. For establishing regulated areas and ensuring compliance with the Existing Chemical Exposure Limit (ECEL), the compliance date is extended from August 1, 2025, to February 8, 2027. For ensuring the methods of compliance with EPA's exposure limits and for developing and implementing an exposure control plan, the compliance date is extended from October 30, 2025, to May 10, 2027. While the focus of this action is to extend the compliance dates of the WCPP for non-Federal laboratories using methylene chloride, EPA will consider all information received during this rulemaking towards future TSCA section 6(a) rulemakings.

D. Why is the Agency taking this action?

EPA is issuing this final rule to mitigate the unanticipated hardships inadvertently created for non-Federal laboratories by the WCPP compliance dates established as part of the May 2024 final rule on methylene chloride (Ref. 2). These hardships, due to the widespread, often mandatory, use of methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical, were not fully understood by EPA before the 2024 final rule was published. As discussed in greater detail in Unit I.D of the proposed rule, EPA was not aware of the breadth of laboratories needing to comply with the WCPP as a result of mandatory EPA analytical methods that require the use of methylene chloride to perform the analysis, posing unique compliance challenges when combined with other requirements of the WCPP such as conducting exposure monitoring, developing exposure control plans, and assess and acquire necessary personal protective equipment based on the exposure monitoring.

EPA recognizes that environmental monitoring services conducted on feeds, fertilizers, pesticides, agricultural samples, soil, water, sludge, solids, and air on behalf of states, private firms, and Federal agencies are vital in ensuring the protection of both human health and the environment. Therefore, EPA is finalizing the compliance date extension as proposed to ensure continuity of public safety services such as environmental monitoring services, the detection of explosives and other controlled substances, and forensic analyses conducted by law enforcement laboratories. The finalized compliance date extension would also mitigate disruptions to important laboratory functions that may indirectly benefit public health and/or safety through research and development and through academic grants for Research 1 universities under the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

E. What are the incremental economic impacts?

EPA evaluated the potential incremental economic impacts and determined that these changes would have minimal impacts on the estimated costs and benefits of the existing action and would primarily result in a delay in when those costs and benefits begin accruing, thereby resulting in cost savings related to the time value of money. Quantified costs are expected to be the same as estimated in the 2024 final rule but will not be incurred until the final compliance date extension expires. The extension would also delay when potential benefits begin to accrue. On balance, this final action which further extends the compliance dates is appropriate to prevent the disruptive consequences of requiring laboratories to begin implementing the WCPP by May 5, 2025, without a further compliance extension.

II. Background

A. Regulation of Methylene Chloride Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)

In May 2023, EPA proposed a rule under TSCA section 6(a) to address unreasonable risk posed by methylene chloride under its conditions of use (Refs. 3, 4, 5). The proposed rule included the requirement that industrial and commercial laboratories implement a WCPP. EPA received comments from laboratory-affiliated stakeholders that expressed concerns of the potential impacts for environmental testing and compliance activities required by EPA's analytical methods. The commenters requested that EPA adopt a risk management approach for laboratories that was similar to the perchloroethylene rule (89 FR 103560) (FRL–8329–01–OCSPP), or prior to promulgating the requirements of the WCPP, EPA should first remove the regulatory requirements under other EPA program's that require the use of analytical methods that use methylene chloride (Refs. 6, 7, 8). EPA considered these comments and, in the final rule promulgated in May 2024, extended the WCPP compliance dates by an additional six months. For more details, see the 2025 proposed rule (Unit II), the 2024 final rule (Unit III.D.1), and Response to Comments for the 2024 final rule (Section 5.1.7) (Refs. 1, 2, 6).

B. The 2025 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking To Extend Certain Compliance Dates

In May 2025, EPA proposed to extend the applicable compliance dates for non-Federal owners or operators that use methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical to align with the timeframes for Federal laboratories and Federal contractors. Under the 2025 proposed rule, laboratories would have until November 9, 2026, to conduct initial monitoring, until February 8, 2027, to establish regulated areas and ensure compliance with the ECEL and EPA STEL, and until May 10, 2027, to develop and implement an exposure control plan. As explained in Units II.C and III.B of the proposed rule, EPA based the compliance date revision on multiple factors including challenges of WCPP compliance identified by laboratories and methylene chloride's utility in support of: academia as a laboratory solvent; public health in environmental compliance testing; and in various city and state law enforcement crime laboratories. EPA provided a 30-day public comment period that concluded on June 26, 2025.

C. Summary of Public Comments

EPA received 28 comments from various universities, trade organizations, state government entities, an environmental laboratory, and several individuals, some of whom previously commented on the 2023 proposed rule. The vast majority of commenters supported the 2025 proposed rule to extend the WCPP compliance timeframes for non-Federal laboratories. One commenter disagreed with EPA's approach in the proposed rule approach and ''recommend[ed] the [EPA] immediately fully regulate methylene chloride and not extend the time for compliance for safety considerations.'' Some commenters additionally requested an exemption for the laboratory condition of use from the requirements of the WCPP, while others requested that EPA take alternative risk management approaches, develop alternative analytical methods prior to restrictions, or include additional COUs under the compliance extension. Several commenters submitted information related to compliance and impacts of the 2024 final rule on laboratories. For EPA's response to these comments, see the 2025 Response to Public Comments document that accompanies this final rule (Ref. 9).

III. Rationale

Based on public comments, EPA is finalizing the rule to extend the WCPP compliance timeframes by an additional 18 months for non-Federal laboratories as proposed. Units III.A and III.B set forth the information that EPA considered and EPA's rationale for the final rule.

A. Compliance Date Extension

For any TSCA section 6(a) rule, EPA must specify mandatory compliance dates that are ''as soon as practicable'' within the 5-year window after promulgating the rule, while allowing for ''a reasonable transition period.'' 15 U.S.C. 2605(d)(1)(B) and (E). EPA proposed to extend the WCPP compliance dates for non-Federally owned or operated industrial or commercial laboratories by an additional 18 months based on the challenges laboratories are facing to comply with the WCPP requirements, including their inability to choose a different, less toxic solvent when performing analyses, especially environmental monitoring sample analyses that must be performed in accordance with specified methods, and the availability and cost of industrial hygiene personnel to conduct initial monitoring. EPA proposed that this extension resulted in compliance dates that represent a reasonable transition period under TSCA section 6(d) (Ref. 1).

In Unit III.B of the 2025 proposed rule, EPA requested information including the viability of the proposed compliance dates, alternative timeframes for consideration, and compliance costs (Ref. 1). During the public comment period, EPA received additional information on regulatory impacts, realized and estimated costs, allocation of funding under research grants, the number of potentially exposed persons, professional safety services, exposure controls, the number of facilities, the number of laboratories, the frequency of tasks, the volumes of methylene chloride used, compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's laboratory standard (29 CFR 1910.1450) and adherence to voluntary consensus standards, use of similar exposure groups, and air monitoring measurements. Given the additional information from commenters, EPA determined that implementing a WCPP in a laboratory presents unique compliance challenges, particularly with respect to when implementing a WCPP is practicable and what amounts to a reasonable transition period for this use. EPA also recognizes that extrapolating the WCPP's requirements over numerous facilities, laboratories, and personnel, especially taking infrequent or low-volume use (laboratory scale) into account, can increase the magnitude of those challenges for some laboratories such as those owned or operated by large academic institutions.

For example, according to a comment submitted by a large university, without adequate time to implement the WCPP's requirements, some laboratories may be unable to meet the compliance timeframes. The university suggested that an extension of the compliance timeframes would allow them to complete initial monitoring for additional research groups (Ref. 10). EPA agrees that additional compliance time is necessary to avoid disruption of important laboratory functions, as well as allowing non-Federal laboratories sufficient time to come into compliance and fully protect potentially exposed persons from exposure. Similarly, a comment provided by a state Department of Environmental Quality also expressed support for a compliance timeframe extension and noted that their environmental laboratory, which has ceased certain environmental analyses that use of methylene chloride, would cease use of methylene chloride again once the revised compliance date was reached due to costs (Ref. 11). Based on comments like these, the Agency determined that extending the WCPP's compliance dates will result in compliance dates that represent a reasonable transition period, allowing for the continuity of vital laboratory functions that protect human health and the environment such as environmental monitoring analyses that serve communities across the United States and help facilitate clean soil, water, and air.

B. Data Supporting Alternative Risk Management Approaches for Laboratories

Laboratory-affiliated commenters also submitted information and data that could potentially support alternative risk management approaches for laboratories regulated under TSCA. While the focus of this final rulemaking is to extend compliance dates of the WCPP for non-Federal laboratories using methylene chloride, EPA will consider all submitted information from commenters in future TSCA rulemakings, as appropriate.

IV. Provisions of This Final Rule

EPA is finalizing this rule as proposed. EPA is aligning the compliance dates for non-Federal laboratories using methylene chloride with those for Federal agencies and their contractors in the 2024 final rule (Ref. 2). This extension of compliance

dates addresses the issues with the practicability of the originally promulgated compliance dates identified by non-Federal laboratories, including their inability to choose a different, less toxic solvent when performing analyses, especially environmental monitoring sample analyses that must be performed in accordance with specified methods, and cost of industrial hygiene personnel to conduct initial monitoring within an adequate amount of time. The Agency believes that these final compliance dates represent a reasonable transition period under TSCA section 6(d). Moreover, aligning with the compliance dates that were already established for Federal agencies and their contractors as part of the 2024 final rule will minimize confusion by consolidating multiple compliance dates. Specifically, non-Federal laboratories under this final rule will have until November 9, 2026, to conduct initial monitoring, until February 8, 2027, to establish regulated areas and ensure compliance with the ECEL and EPA STEL, and until May 10, 2027, to develop and implement an exposure control plan.

V. References

The following is a listing of the documents that are specifically referenced in this document. The docket includes these documents and other information considered by EPA, including documents that are referenced within the documents that are included in the docket, even if the referenced document is not physically located in the docket. For assistance in locating these other documents, please consult the technical person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

1. EPA. Methylene Chloride; Regulation Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA); Compliance Date Extensions; Proposed Rule. RIN 2070–AL28. **Federal Register** (90 FR 22214, May 27, 2025) (FRL–8155.1–01–OCSPP). *https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-05-27/pdf/2025-09421.pdf.*
2. EPA. Methylene Chloride; Regulation under the Toxic Substances Control Act; Final Rule. RIN 2070–AK70. **Federal Register** (89 FR 39254, May 8, 2024) (FRL–8155–01–OCSPP). *https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2024-05-08/pdf/2024-09606.pdf.*
3. EPA. Methylene Chloride; Regulation Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA); Proposed Rule. **Federal Register** (88 FR 28284, May 3, 2023) (FRL–8155–02–OCSPP). *https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-05-03/pdf/2023-09184.pdf.*
4. EPA. Risk Evaluation for Methylene Chloride (MC). EPA Document #740–R1–8010. June 2020.
5. EPA. Revised Unreasonable Risk Determination for Methylene Chloride (MC). EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0465–0116. October 2022.
6. EPA. Methylene Chloride; Regulation Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA); Response to Public Comments. RIN 2070–AK70. April 2024.
7. Judith Morgan and David Friedman. American Council of Independent Laboratories (ACIL). Comment EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0465–0258. June 6, 2023.
8. Judy Morgan. Pace Analytical. Comment EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0465–0274. July 7, 2023.
9. EPA. Methylene Chloride; Regulation Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA); Compliance Date Extensions. Response to Public Comments. RIN 2070–AL28. October 2025.
10. Katharine Bonneson. University of Minnesota. Comment EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0465–0475. June 26, 2025.
11. Jeff Starling. State of Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of Energy and Environment and Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ). Comment EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0465–0476. June 26, 2025.

VI. Statutory and Executive Order Reviews

Additional information about these statutes and Executive Orders can be found at *https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/laws-and-executive-orders.*

A. Executive Order 12866: Regulatory Planning and Review and Executive Order 13563: Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review

This action is not a significant regulatory action under Executive Order 12866 (58 FR 51735, October 4, 1993) and was therefore not submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review under Executive Orders 12866 and 13563 (76 FR 3821, January 21, 2011).

B. Executive Order 14192: Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation

This action is an Executive Order 14192 deregulatory action. This final rule will provide burden reduction by providing relief against existing compliance deadlines, thereby resulting in cost savings related to the time value of money. EPA is providing compliance relief to non-federal laboratories, including state and local affiliated laboratories that conduct environmental sampling analyses in support of clean air, water, and land for the American public, by aligning compliance timeframes with those separately established for federal agencies and their contractors in the 2024 final rule for methylene chloride, thereby streamlining requirements while mitigating confusion for all laboratories.

C. Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)

This action does not impose any new information collection activities or burden subject to OMB review and approval under the PRA, 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.* However, this action defers the costs associated with paperwork and recordkeeping burden for an existing information collection because the delayed compliance date alters the time horizon of the collection's analysis. Burden is defined in 5 CFR 1320.3(b). OMB has previously approved the information collection activities contained in the existing regulations and associated burden under OMB Control No. 2070–0229 (EPA ICR No. 2735.02). An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information that requires OMB approval under PRA, unless it has been approved by OMB and displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control numbers for EPA's regulations in title 40 of the CFR, after appearing in the **Federal Register**, are listed in 40 CFR part 9, and included on the related collection instrument or form, if applicable.

D. Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA)

I certify that this action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the RFA, 5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.* In making this determination, EPA concludes that the impact of concern for this action is any significant adverse economic impact on small entities, and the Agency is certifying that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities because the rule relieves regulatory burden. This action would extend the compliance dates for several provisions of the WCPP for approximately 18 months for the industrial and commercial use of methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical. EPA therefore concluded that this action would relieve regulatory burden for those entities engaged in the industrial and commercial use of methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical.

E. Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA)

This action does not contain an unfunded mandate of $100 million (in 1995 dollars and adjusted annually for inflation) or more as described in UMRA, 2 U.S.C. 1531–1538, and does not significantly or uniquely affect small governments. The costs involved in this action are estimated not to exceed $187 million in 2024$ ($100 million in

1995$, adjusted for inflation using the GDP implicit price deflator) or more in any one year.

F. Executive Order 13132: Federalism

This action does not have federalism implications as specified in Executive Order 13132 (64 FR 43255, August 10, 1999) because it will not have substantial direct effects on the states, on the relationship between the national government and the states, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

G. Executive Order 13175: Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments

This action does not have tribal implications as specified in Executive Order 13175 (65 FR 67249, November 9, 2000) because it does not have substantial direct effects on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes. Thus, Executive Order 13175 does not apply to this action.

H. Executive Order 13045: Protection of Children From Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks

This action is not a ''covered regulatory action'' under Executive Order 13045 (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997) because it is not a significant regulatory action under section 3(f)(1) of Executive Order 12866 and because the EPA does not believe the environmental health or safety risks addressed by this action present a disproportionate risk to children.

I. Executive Order 13211: Actions Concerning Regulations That Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use

This action is not subject to Executive Order 13211 (66 FR 28355, May 22, 2001), because it is not a significant regulatory action under Executive Order 12866.

J. National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA)

This action does not involve technical standards under the NTTAA section 12(d), 15 U.S.C. 272. Although EPA determined that the WCPP requirements of the May 2024 final rule involve environmental monitoring or measurement, specifically for occupational inhalation exposures to methylene chloride and, consistent with the Agency's Performance Based Measurement System, decided not to require the use of specific, prescribed analytic methods, this action simply extends the compliance dates for non-Federal laboratories.

K. Congressional Review Act (CRA)

This action is subject to the CRA, 5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.,* and EPA will submit a rule report to each House of the Congress and to the Comptroller General of the United States. This action is not a ''major rule'' as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 751

Environmental protection, Chemicals, Export notification, Hazardous substances, Import certification, Reporting and recordkeeping.

Lee Zeldin,

Administrator.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 40 CFR part 751 is amended as follows:

PART 751—REGULATION OF CERTAIN CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES AND MIXTURES UNDER SECTION 6 OF THE TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL ACT

■ 1. The authority citation for part 751 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 15 U.S.C. 2605, 15 U.S.C. 2625(l)(4).

■ 2. Amend § 751.109 by revising paragraphs (c), (d)(2), (e)(1)(i), (e)(2), (f)(1), and (g)(1) to read as follows:

§ 751.109 Workplace Chemical Protection Program.

* * * * *

(c) *Exposure limits*—(1) *ECEL.* The owner or operator must ensure that no person is exposed to an airborne concentration of methylene chloride in excess of 2 parts of methylene chloride per million parts of air (2 ppm) as an 8-hour TWA:

(i) After February 8, 2027, for Federal agencies, Federal contractors acting for or on behalf of the Federal Government;

(ii) After February 8, 2027, for non-Federal laboratories when using methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical;

(iii) After August 1, 2025, for other owners and operators; or

(iv) Beginning 4 months after the owner or operator introduces methylene chloride into the workplace, if methylene chloride use commences after May 5, 2025, consistent with paragraphs (d) through (f) of this section.

(2) *EPA STEL.* The owner or operator must ensure that no person is exposed to an airborne concentration of methylene chloride in excess of 16 parts of methylene chloride per million parts of air (16 ppm) as determined over a sampling period of 15 minutes:

(i) After February 8, 2027, for Federal agencies, Federal contractors acting for or on behalf of the Federal Government;

(ii) After February 8, 2027, for non-Federal laboratories when using methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical;

(iii) After August 1, 2025, for other owners and operators; or

(iv) Beginning 4 months after the owner or operator introduces methylene chloride into the workplace, if methylene chloride use commences after May 5, 2025, consistent with paragraphs (d) through (f) of this section.

(3) *Regulated areas.* The owner or operator must:

(i) Establish and maintain regulated areas in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.1052(e)(2) and (4) through (7):

(A) After February 8, 2027, for Federal agencies, Federal contractors acting for or on behalf of the Federal Government;

(B) After February 8, 2027, for non-Federal laboratories when using methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical;

(C) After August 1, 2025, for other owners and operators; or

(D) Within 3 months after the owner or operator's receipt of the results of any monitoring data consistent with paragraph (d) of this section.

* * * * *

(d) * * *

(2) *Initial monitoring.* (i) Unless otherwise specified in paragraphs (d)(2)(ii) or (iii) of this section, each owner or operator covered by this section must perform an initial exposure monitoring to determine each potentially exposed person's exposure:

(A) By November 9, 2026, for Federal agencies, Federal contractors acting for or on behalf of the Federal Government;

(B) By November 9, 2026, for non-Federal laboratories when using methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical;

(C) By May 5, 2025, for other owners and operators; or

(D) Within 30 days of the owner or operator introducing methylene chloride into the workplace, whichever is later.

(ii) An owner or operator has objective data generated within the last 5 years prior to May 8, 2024, that demonstrates to EPA that methylene chloride cannot be released in the workplace in airborne concentrations at or above the ECEL action level (1-ppm 8-hour TWA) or above the EPA STEL (16 ppm 15-minute TWA) and that the

data represents the highest methylene chloride exposures likely to occur under conditions of use described in paragraph (a) of this section; or

(iii) Where potentially exposed persons are exposed to methylene chloride for fewer than 30 days per year, and the owner or operator has measurements by direct-metering devices which give immediate results and which provide sufficient information regarding exposures to determine and implement the control measures that are necessary to reduce exposures to below the ECEL action level and EPA STEL.

* * * * *

(e) * * *

(1) *Methods of compliance.*

(i) The owner or operator must institute one or a combination of elimination, substitution, engineering controls, work practices, or administrative controls to reduce exposure to or below the ECEL and EPA STEL except to the extent that the owner or operator can demonstrate that such controls are not feasible:

(A) By May 10, 2027, for Federal agencies, Federal contractors acting for or on behalf of the Federal Government;

(B) By May 10, 2027, for non-Federal laboratories using methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical;

(C) By October 30, 2025, for other owners and operators; or

(D) Within 7 months of the owner or operator introducing methylene chloride into the workplace.

* * * * *

(2) *Exposure control plan.*

(i) *Exposure control plan deadlines.*

(A) By May 10, 2027, for Federal agencies, Federal contractors acting for or on behalf of the Federal Government;

(B) By May 10, 2027, for non-Federal laboratories using methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical;

(C) By October 30, 2025, for other owners and operators, the owner or operator must develop and implement an exposure control plan; or

(D) Within 7 months of the owner or operator introducing methylene chloride into the workplace.

(ii) *Exposure control plan contents.* The exposure control plan must include documentation of the following:

(A) Identification of exposure controls that were considered, including those that were used or not used to meet the requirements of paragraph (e)(1)(i) of this section, in the following sequence—elimination, substitution, engineering controls, and work practices and administrative controls;

(B) For each exposure control considered, a rationale for why the exposure control was selected or not selected based on feasibility, effectiveness, and other relevant considerations;

(C) A description of actions the owner or operator must take to implement the exposure controls selected, including proper installation, regular inspections, maintenance, training, or other actions;

(D) A description of regulated areas, how they are demarcated, and persons authorized to enter the regulated areas;

(E) A description of activities conducted by the owner or operator to review and update the exposure control plan to ensure effectiveness of the exposure controls, identify any necessary updates to the exposure controls, and confirm that all persons are properly implementing the exposure controls; and

(F) An explanation of the procedures for responding to any change that may reasonably be expected to introduce additional sources of exposure to methylene chloride, or otherwise result in increased exposure to methylene chloride, including procedures for implementing corrective actions to mitigate exposure to methylene chloride.

(iii) *Exposure control plan requirements.*

(A) The owner or operator must not implement a schedule of personnel rotation as a means of compliance with the ECEL.

(B) The owner or operator must maintain the effectiveness of any controls, instituted under paragraph (e) of this section.

(C) The exposure control plan must be reviewed and updated as necessary, but at least every 5 years, to reflect any significant changes in the status of the owner or operator's approach to compliance with paragraphs (c) through (e) of this section.

(iv) *Availability of exposure control plan.*

(A) Owners or operators must make the exposure control plan and associated records, including exposure monitoring, respiratory protection program implementation, and dermal protection program implementation records, available to potentially exposed persons.

(B) Owners or operators must notify potentially exposed persons of the availability of the plan and associated records within 30 days of the date that the exposure control plan is completed and at least annually thereafter. The notification must be provided in accordance with the requirements of paragraph (d)(5)(iii) of this section.

(C) Upon request by the potentially exposed person, the owner or operator must provide the specified records at a reasonable time, place, and manner. If the owner or operator is unable to provide the requested records within 15 days, the owner or operator must, within those 15 days, inform the potentially exposed person requesting the record(s) of the reason for the delay and the earliest date when the record can be made available.

* * * * *

(f) * * *

(1) *Respirator conditions.* The owner or operator must provide respiratory protection to all potentially exposed persons in the regulated area as outlined in paragraph (c)(3) of this section, and according to the provisions outlined in 29 CFR 1910.134(a) through (l) (except 29 CFR 1910.134(d)(1)(iii)) and as specified in this paragraph (f) for potentially exposed persons exposed to methylene chloride in concentrations above the ECEL or the EPA STEL. For the purpose of this paragraph (f), the maximum use concentration (MUC) as used in 29 CFR 1910.134 must be calculated by multiplying the assigned protection factor (APF) specified for a respirator by the ECEL or EPA STEL:

(i) After February 8, 2027, for Federal agencies, Federal contractors acting for or on behalf of the Federal Government;

(ii) After February 8, 2027, for non-Federal laboratories using methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical;

(iii) After August 1, 2025, for other owners and operators; or

(iv) Within 3 months after the owner or operator's receipt of the results of any exposure monitoring as described in paragraph (d) of this section.

* * * * *

(g) * * *

(1) The owner or operator must require the donning of gloves that are chemically resistant to methylene chloride with activity-specific training where dermal contact with methylene chloride is possible, after application of the requirements in paragraph (e) of this section, in accordance with the NIOSH hierarchy of controls:

(i) After February 8, 2027, for Federal agencies, Federal contractors acting for or on behalf of the Federal Government;

(ii) After February 8, 2027, for non-Federal laboratories using methylene chloride as a laboratory chemical; or

(iii) After August 1, 2025, for other owners and operators.

* * * * *

■ 3. Amend § 751.113 by revising paragraph (e) to read as follows:

§ 751.113 Recordkeeping requirements.

* * * * *

(e) *Availability of exposure control plans.* Owners or operators must

document the notice to and ability of any potentially exposed persons to access the exposure control plan and other associated records in accordance with § 751.109(e)(2)(iv).

* * * * *

[FR Doc. 2025–19881 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

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Proposed Rules

Federal Register
Vol. 90, No. 217
Thursday, November 13, 2025

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

12 CFR Part 1002

[Docket No. CFPB–2025–0039]

RIN 3170–AB54

Equal Credit Opportunity Act (Regulation B)

AGENCY: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

ACTION: Proposed rule; request for public comment.

SUMMARY: The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Bureau or CFPB) is issuing a proposed rule for public comment that amends provisions related to disparate impact, discouragement of applicants or prospective applicants, and special purpose credit programs under Regulation B, the regulation implementing the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA or Act). The amendments would facilitate compliance with ECOA by clarifying the obligations imposed by the statute.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before December 15, 2025.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by Docket No. CFPB–2025–0039 or RIN 3170–AB54, by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal: https://www.regulations.gov.* Follow the instructions for submitting comments. A brief summary of this document will be available at *https://www.regulations.gov/docket/CFPB-2025-0039.*
- *Email: 2025-NPRM-ECOA@cfpb.gov.* Include Docket No. CFPB–2025–0039 or RIN 3170–AB54 in the subject line of the message.
- *Mail/Hand Delivery/Courier:* Comment Intake—2025 NPRM ECOA, c/o Legal Division Docket Manager, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 1700 G Street NW, Washington, DC 20552.

Instructions: The CFPB encourages the early submission of comments. All submissions should include the agency name and docket number or Regulatory Information Number (RIN) for this rulemaking. Because paper mail is subject to delay, commenters are encouraged to submit comments electronically. In general, all comments received will be posted without change to *https://www.regulations.gov.*

All submissions, including attachments and other supporting materials, will become part of the public record and subject to public disclosure. Proprietary information or sensitive personal information, such as account numbers or Social Security numbers, or names of other individuals, should not be included. Submissions will not be edited to remove any identifying or contact information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dave Gettler, Paralegal Specialist, Office of Regulations, at 202–435–7700 or *https://reginquiries.consumerfinance.gov/.* If you require this document in an alternative electronic format, please contact *CFPB_Accessibility@cfpb.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Summary

Pursuant to its authority under ECOA, 15 U.S.C. 1691b(a), and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank Act), 12 U.S.C. 5512(b), the Bureau is proposing to amend provisions in Regulation B, 12 CFR part 1002, pertaining to: whether disparate impact is cognizable under the Act; under what circumstances a creditor may be deemed to be discouraging an applicant or prospective applicant; and under what conditions may a creditor offer special purpose credit programs.

In 2020, the Bureau issued a Request for Information on ECOA and Regulation B (RFI).[1] The RFI solicited information about disparate impact, prospective applicants, and special purpose credit programs, among other topics. The Bureau reviewed the comments submitted in response to the RFI and obtained other information in the course of carrying out its statutory responsibilities.

In order to carry out the purposes of ECOA, the Bureau proposes changes to Regulation B to provide that ECOA does not authorize disparate-impact liability (effects test), further define discouragement, and add prohibitions and restrictions for special purpose credit programs.

II. Background

A. Introduction

Congress enacted ECOA in 1974 (1974 Act) ''to insure that various financial institutions and other firms engaged in the extensions of credit exercise their responsibility to make credit available with fairness, impartiality, and without discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status.'' To that end, section 701(a) of ECOA made it ''unlawful for any creditor to discriminate against any applicant on the basis of sex or marital status with respect to any aspect of a credit transaction.'' The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (Board) promulgated regulations implementing ECOA. In 1976, Congress reenacted ECOA in its entirety, amending ECOA to add additional categories of prohibited discrimination (1976 Act). Since 1976, ECOA makes it unlawful for ''any creditor to discriminate against any applicant, with respect to any aspect of a credit transaction (1) on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or marital status, or age (provided the applicant has the capacity to contract); (2) because all or part of the applicant's income derives from any public assistance program; or (3) because the applicant has in good faith exercised any right under [the Consumer Credit Protection Act]'' (prohibited basis).[2] The Board, which at the time had exclusive rulemaking authority under ECOA, promulgated regulations, after notice-and-comment, to implement the 1976 Act.

In 2011, the Dodd-Frank Act transferred responsibility for ECOA from the Board to the Bureau.[3] It granted primary authority to the Bureau to supervise and enforce compliance with ECOA and Regulation B for entities within the Bureau's jurisdiction and to issue regulations and guidance to implement and interpret ECOA.[4] The

[1] 85 FR 46600 (Aug. 3, 2020).

[2] 15 U.S.C. 1691(a).

[3] Public Law 111–203, 124 Stat. 1376 (2010).

[4] Dodd-Frank Act section 1029 generally excludes from this transfer of authority, subject to certain exceptions, any rulemaking authority over a motor vehicle dealer that is predominantly engaged in the

Continued

Bureau's Regulation B substantially duplicates the Board's Regulation B making only certain non-substantive, technical, formatting, and stylistic changes.[5]

In 2020, the Bureau published an RFI seeking comments and information to identify opportunities to prevent credit discrimination, encourage responsible innovation, promote fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory access to credit, address potential regulatory uncertainty, and develop viable solutions to regulatory compliance challenges under ECOA and Regulation B.[6] The RFI requested information related to disparate impact, prospective applicants, and special purpose credit programs (SPCPs), among other issues. In response to the RFI, the Bureau received and reviewed over 35 comment letters. In addition, the Bureau has obtained pertinent information in the course of carrying out its supervisory and enforcement responsibilities.

In 2025, the President issued several Executive Orders relevant to the Bureau's administration of ECOA. Executive Order 14173, entitled ''Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity,'' states in part that ''[t]he Federal Government is charged with enforcing our civil-rights laws. The purpose of this order is to ensure that it does so by ending illegal preferences and discrimination.'' [7] Executive Order 14281, entitled ''Restoring Equality of Opportunity and Meritocracy,'' states in part that ''[i]t is the policy of the United States to eliminate the use of disparate-impact liability in all contexts to the maximum degree possible to avoid violating the Constitution, Federal civil rights laws, and basic American ideals.'' [8]

Consistent with these actions, the Bureau proposes this rule to (i) provide that ECOA does not authorize disparate impact claims; (ii) amend the prohibition on discouraging applicants or prospective applicants to clarify that it prohibits statements of intent to discriminate in violation of ECOA and is not triggered merely by negative consumer impressions, and to clarify that encouraging statements by creditors directed at one group of consumers is not prohibited discouragement as to applicants or prospective applicants who were not the intended recipients of the statements; and (iii) amend the standards for SPCPs offered or participated in by for-profit organizations to include new standards and related restrictions. The proposed rule is discussed further below. The Bureau seeks comments on the entire proposal.

B. Disparate Impact

In *Griggs* v. *Duke Power Co.*[9] and subsequent cases, the Supreme Court held that certain provisions in antidiscrimination statutes may authorize disparate-impact claims. Under a disparate-impact claim, a plaintiff may challenge as unlawful discrimination facially neutral policies that have a disproportionate effect along prohibited basis lines. The Supreme Court has noted that ''[i]n contrast to a disparate-treatment case, . . . a plaintiff bringing a disparate-impact claim challenges practices that have a disproportionately adverse effect on minorities and are otherwise unjustified by a legitimate rationale.'' [10]

In *Griggs,* the Supreme Court held that disparate impact claims are cognizable under section 703(a)(2) of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in employment practices. In *Smith* v. *City of Jackson,*[11] a plurality of the Supreme Court held that the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) authorizes disparate-impact claims. Most recently, in *Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs* v. *The Inclusive Communities Project, Inc.,*[12] the Supreme Court held that disparate-impact claims are cognizable under the Fair Housing Act (FHA). However, the Supreme Court has not held that disparate-impact claims are necessarily available under all antidiscrimination statutes. Instead, the Court has reviewed each statutory provision, when challenged, to determine whether it authorizes disparate-impact claims, whether disparate-impact claims are consonant with the intended operation of the statute, and in particular whether the statutory provisions have ''effects-based'' language that indicates that Congress intended for the statutory provision to permit disparate-impact claims.

The Supreme Court has not determined whether a disparate-impact claim is permitted under ECOA. As noted above, section 701(a) of ECOA, as enacted in 1974, made it ''unlawful for any creditor to discriminate against any applicant on the basis of sex or marital status with respect to any aspect of a credit transaction.'' In the 1976 Act, ECOA makes it unlawful for ''any creditor to discriminate against any applicant, with respect to any aspect of a credit transaction (1) on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or marital status, or age (provided the applicant has the capacity to contract); (2) because all or part of the applicant's income derives from any public assistance program; or (3) because the applicant has in good faith exercised any right under [the Consumer Credit Protection Act].'' [13]

The text of ECOA does not state that disparate-impact claims are cognizable under ECOA, nor does it contain effects-based language of the type that has been found in other statutes to invoke disparate-impact liability. However, in promulgating Regulation B, the Board relied on legislative history to support authorizing disparate-impact liability. For example, the Senate Report accompanying the 1976 Act stated:

> In determining the existence of discrimination on these grounds, as well as on the other grounds discussed below, courts or agencies are free to look at the effects of a creditor's practices as well as the creditor's motives or conduct in individual transactions. Thus judicial constructions of anti-discrimination legislation in the employment field, in cases such as *Griggs* . . . and *Albemarle Paper Company* v. *Moody,* are intended to serve as guides in the application of this Act, especially with respect to the allocations of burdens of proof.[14]

A House Report similarly provides evidence that ECOA authorizes disparate-impact claims.[15]

The Board's regulations to implement the 1976 Act explicitly and solely relied on this legislative history to conclude that Congress intended for ECOA to permit an ''effects test concept,'' *i.e.,* disparate-impact proof of liability.[16] Although there have been minor amendments to the relevant language in Regulation B since 1977, Regulation B has continued to point to the legislative history of ECOA to support the

sale and servicing of motor vehicles, the leasing and servicing of motor vehicles, or both.

[5] 76 FR 79442 (Dec. 21, 2011).

[6] 85 FR 46600 (Aug. 3, 2020).

[7] 90 FR 8633 (Jan. 31, 2025).

[8] 90 FR 17537 (Apr. 28, 2025).

[9] 401 U.S. 424 (1971).

[10] *Texas Dep't of Hous. & Cmty. Affairs* v. *The Inclusive Cmtys. Project, Inc.,* 576 U.S. 519, 524 (2015).

[11] 544 U.S. 228 (2005) (plurality op.).

[12] 576 U.S. 519 (2015).

[13] 15 U.S.C. 1691(a).

[14] S. Rep. No. 94–589, at 4–5 (1976).

[15] H. Rep. No. 94–210, at 5 (1975).

[16] 42 FR 1242, 1255 n.7 (Jan. 6, 1977) (''The legislative history of the Act indicates that the Congress intended an ''effects test'' concept, as outlined in the employment field by the Supreme Court in the cases of *Griggs,* 401 U.S. 424, and *Albemarle Paper Co.,* 422 U.S. 405, to be applicable to a creditor's determination of creditworthiness.''). This footnote was later moved to the text of § 1002.6 when the Bureau republished Regulation B after responsibility for the rule was transferred from the Board to the Bureau. *See* 76 FR 79442 (Dec. 21, 2011).

conclusion that disparate-impact claims are cognizable under ECOA.[17]

Current Rule

Regulation B currently provides in § 1002.6 that the legislative history of ECOA indicates that the Congress intended an ''effects test'' concept, as outlined in the employment field by the Supreme Court in the cases of *Griggs,* 401 U.S. 424, and *Albemarle Paper Co.,* 422 U.S. 405, to be applicable to a creditor's determination of creditworthiness. Comment 6(a)–2 explains the ''effects test,'' cites to the legislative history of ECOA, and provides an example. Comment 2(p)–4, which relates to the definition of ''empirically derived and other credit scoring systems,'' refers to the ''effects test,'' noting that neutral factors used in credit scoring systems could nonetheless be subject to challenge under the effects test and cross-referencing comment 6(a)–2.

Section III.A below discusses the ways in which this proposed rule would change the current rule regarding disparate impact.

C. Discouragement

Regulation B § 1002.4(b) currently provides that, ''[a] creditor shall not make any oral or written statement, in advertising or otherwise, to applicants or prospective applicants that would discourage on a prohibited basis a reasonable person from making or pursuing an application.'' [18] Current comments 4(b)–1 and (b)–2 provide additional details about conduct prohibited or permitted under the provision.

The Board adopted a precursor to current § 1002.4(b) in its 1975 final rule implementing the 1974 Act.[19] The 1974 Act did not specifically mention discouragement of applicants or prospective applicants. To adopt the provision, the Board thus relied on its authority under ECOA section 703(a)—authority that the Dodd-Frank Act subsequently transferred to the Bureau—to make adjustments in Regulation B that, in its judgment, were necessary or proper to effectuate ECOA's purposes.[20] Specifically, ECOA section 703(a) provides that the Bureau (previously the Board) ''shall prescribe regulations to carry out the purposes of [ECOA],'' and that such regulations:

> [M]ay contain but are not limited to such classifications, differentiation, or other provision, and may provide for such adjustments and exceptions for any class of transactions, as in the judgment of the Bureau are necessary or proper to effectuate the purposes of [ECOA], to prevent circumvention or evasion thereof, or to facilitate or substantiate compliance therewith.

In its rulemaking, the Board stated that it believed that a prohibition against discouragement was ''necessary to protect applicants against discriminatory acts occurring before an application is initiated.'' [21]

In 1975, ECOA applied only to discrimination based on sex or marital status, and the discouragement prohibition as initially adopted was limited accordingly. In 1977, consistent with the 1976 Act that expanded ECOA to prohibit discrimination based on protected characteristics beyond sex or marital status, the Board revised the discouragement provision to its current phrasing, prohibiting discouragement ''on a prohibited basis.'' [22] The Board later added commentary providing examples of prohibited conduct.[23] In 1991, Congress amended ECOA to require enforcing regulatory agencies to refer to the Department of Justice cases that the agencies believed involved a pattern or practice of one or more creditors *discouraging* or denying applications for credit in violation of ECOA section 701(a).[24]

In 2011, the Bureau republished Regulation B's discouragement provision without material change in what is now § 1002.4(b) and the commentary thereto. In 2024, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit held that Regulation B's prohibition against discouragement is consistent with the plain text of the ECOA. In so holding, the court observed that the discouragement provision had been adopted pursuant to the Board's (now the Bureau's) broad authority to ''prescribe regulations to carry out the purposes of [ECOA],'' and to ''provide for such adjustments and exceptions'' that, in the Bureau's judgment, ''are necessary or proper to effectuate the purposes of [ECOA], to prevent circumvention or evasion thereof, or to facilitate or substantiate compliance therewith.'' [25]

Section III.B below discusses the ways in which this proposed rule would change the current rule regarding discouragement.

D. Special Purpose Credit Programs

As noted above, ECOA prohibits a creditor from discriminating on a prohibited basis regarding any aspect of a credit transaction. At the same time, ECOA section 701(c)(3) (15 U.S.C. 1691(c)(3)) states that it does not constitute discrimination under the Act for a creditor ''to refuse to extend credit offered pursuant to'' ''any special purpose credit program offered by a profit-making organization to meet special social needs which meets standards prescribed in regulations by the [Bureau].'' [26]

The intent of ECOA section 701(c)(3), as reflected in the legislative history, is as follows:

> [I]n the case of special purpose credit programs offered by profit-making organizations, the Conferees approved the language common to both the House bill and the Senate amendment exempting such programs from the restrictions of the Act so long as they conform to Board regulations. The intent of this section of the statute is to authorize the Board to specify standards for the exemption of classes of transactions when it has been clearly demonstrated on the public record that without such exemption the consumers involved would effectively be denied credit.[27]

The Board promulgated regulations implementing the 1976 Act's special purpose credit program (SPCP) provision in what was then § 202.8.[28] As noted above, the Dodd-Frank Act transferred ECOA rulemaking authority to the Bureau, which in 2011 republished Regulation B's SPCP provision without material change in what is now § 1002.8 and the commentary thereto. More recently, the Bureau in January 2021 issued an advisory opinion (AO) addressing SPCPs implemented by for-profit organizations to meet special social needs.[29] The AO clarified the content that a for-profit organization must include in a written plan that

[17] *See, e.g.,* 50 FR 48018, 48050 (Nov. 20, 1985) (adopting official staff commentary, including comment 6(a).2, which explains that the ''effects test'' is a ''judicial doctrine'' that Congress intended to ''apply to the credit area'').

[18] Regulation B § 1002.2(z) defines ''prohibited basis'' as ''race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, or age (provided that the applicant has the capacity to enter into a binding contract); the fact that all or part of the applicant's income derives from any public assistance program; or the fact that the applicant has in good faith exercised any right under the Consumer Credit Protection Act or any state law upon which an exemption has been granted by the Bureau.''

[19] 40 FR 49298 (Oct. 22, 1975).

[20] 15 U.S.C. 1691b(a). For ease of reference, the Bureau refers to this authority herein as ''adjustment'' authority.

[21] 40 FR 49298, 49299 (Oct. 22, 1975).

[22] 42 FR 1242 (Jan. 6, 1977).

[23] 50 FR 48018 (Nov. 20, 1985).

[24] 15 U.S.C. 1691e(g) (emphasis added).

[25] *Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau* v. *Townstone Fin., Inc.,* 107 F.4th 768, 774, 777 (7th Cir. 2024).

[26] *See* Public Law 94–239, section 701(c)(3), 90 Stat. 251, 251 (1976).

[27] *Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee of the Conference,* Cong. Rec. H5493 (daily ed. Mar. 4, 1976) (text appears in House and Senate Reports).

[28] *See* 42 FR 1242 (Jan. 6, 1977).

[29] 86 FR 3762 (Jan. 15, 2021).

establishes and administers an SPCP under Regulation B.[30]

Current Rule

Under Regulation B, a for-profit organization that offers or participates in an SPCP to meet special social needs must establish and administer the SPCP pursuant to a written plan that identifies the class of persons the program is designed to benefit and sets forth the procedures and standards for extending credit pursuant to the program.[31] In addition, the for-profit organization must establish and administer the SPCP to extend credit to a class of persons who, under the organization's customary standards of creditworthiness, probably would not receive such credit or would receive it on less favorable terms than are ordinarily available to other applicants applying to the organization for a similar type and amount of credit.[32]

A for-profit organization's SPCP qualifies as such only if it was established and is administered so as not to discriminate against an applicant on any prohibited basis.[33] However, the SPCP may require its participants to share one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be ECOA prohibited bases so long as the program does not evade the requirements of ECOA or Regulation B.[34] If the SPCP does require its participants to share one or more common characteristics, and if the program otherwise complies with Regulation B, a creditor may request and consider information regarding the common characteristic(s) in determining the applicant's eligibility for the program.[35]

The Bureau discusses the ways in which this NPRM would change the current rule regarding SPCPs provided by for-profit organizations in section III.C below.

E. Consultation

Consistent with section 1022(b)(2)(B) of the CFPA, the Bureau offered to consult with the appropriate agencies, including regarding consistency with any prudential, market, or systemic objectives administered by these agencies.

[30] *Id.*

[31] 12 CFR 1002.8(a)(3)(i).

[32] 12 CFR 1002.8(a)(3)(ii).

[33] 12 CFR 1002.8(b)(2).

[34] *Id.*

[35] 12 CFR 1002.8(c).

III. Discussion of the Proposed Rule

A. Disparate Impact

The Bureau is proposing changes to § 1002.6(a) and its accompanying commentary. Consistent with Executive Order 14281, the Bureau has examined Regulation B and considered whether disparate-impact claims may be cognizable under ECOA. The Bureau has preliminarily determined that, under the best reading of the statute, disparate-impact claims are not applicable under ECOA. As a result, the Bureau is proposing to delete language in § 1002.6(a) and its accompanying commentary indicating that disparate-impact liability, which is referred to in the rule as the ''effects test,'' may be applicable under ECOA, and add language stating that the Act does not recognize the ''effects test.'' The Bureau is also proposing to delete the language in comment 2(p)–4 referring to the effects test. The Bureau is requesting comment on these proposed changes and on its preliminary determination that disparate-impact claims are not applicable under ECOA.

ECOA and Disparate Impact

The Bureau has preliminarily determined that Regulation B's conclusion that disparate-impact claims may be cognizable under ECOA is not the best interpretation of ECOA. In particular, the Bureau has preliminarily determined that the Board (and later the Bureau) relied solely on the legislative history of ECOA to support its conclusion and failed to consider whether ECOA's statutory language authorized disparate-impact liability. The Bureau has preliminarily determined that ECOA's statutory language does not authorize disparate-impact liability and that the application of disparate impact liability in the credit context may undermine ECOA's purposes.

The Board's regulations to implement the 1976 Act relied solely on the legislative history to support its conclusion that Congress intended for ECOA to permit an ''effects test concept'' (*i.e.,* disparate-impact) proof of liability. Section 202.6(a), the precursor to § 1002.6(a), provided in a footnote that the legislative history of the Act indicates that the Congress intended an ''effects test'' concept, as outlined in the employment field by the Supreme Court in the cases of *Griggs,* 401 U.S. 424, and *Albemarle Paper Co.,* 422 U.S. 405, to be applicable to a creditor's determination of creditworthiness.[36] Further discussion of the effects test was later added to the commentary to what is now § 1002.6(a).[37] Although there have been minor revisions to what is now § 1002.6(a), that provision has continued to provide, based solely on the legislative history, that disparate-impact liability may apply to ECOA.

Since *Griggs,* the Supreme Court has closely examined the relevant statutory language of other antidiscrimination laws to determine whether disparate-impact liability is authorized by those laws. In particular, the Supreme Court has examined whether the statute in question includes language focused on the effects of the action rather than the motivation for the action. For example, in *Smith* v. *City of Jackson,* the Supreme Court emphasized that section 4(a)(2) of the ADEA and section 703(a)(2) of Title VII—which was found to authorize disparate-impact claims in *Griggs*—both contain language that ''prohibit[s] such actions that deprive any individual of employment opportunities or *otherwise adversely affect* his status as an employee, because of such individual's race or age.'' [38] In *Inclusive Communities,* the Supreme Court concluded that ''*Griggs* holds and the plurality in *Smith* instructs that antidiscrimination laws must be construed to encompass disparate-impact claims when their text refers to the consequences of actions and not just to the mindset of actors, and where that interpretation is consistent with statutory purpose.'' [39] The Supreme Court held in *Inclusive Communities* that the language ''otherwise make unavailable'' in section 804(a) of the FHA refers to the consequences of an action rather than the actor's intent and therefore supports recognizing disparate-impact claims.[40]

In contrast, the relevant language of ECOA does not include similar effects-based language supporting disparate-impact liability. Section 701(a)(1) of ECOA makes it unlawful for any creditor to discriminate against any applicant, with respect to any aspect of a credit transaction on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or

[36] 42 FR 1242, 1255 n.7 (Jan. 6, 1977). As noted in part II, this footnote was later moved to the text of § 1002.6(a) when the Bureau republished Regulation B after responsibility for the rule was transferred from the Board to the Bureau. *See* 76 FR 79442 (Dec. 21, 2011).

[37] *See* 50 FR 48018 (Nov. 20, 1985).

[38] 544 U.S. 228, 235 (2005) (citation omitted).

[39] 576 U.S. 519, 533 (2015).

[40] *Id.* at 534. Section 804(a) provides that it shall be unlawful ''[t]o refuse to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer, or to refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, or national origin.'' 42 U.S.C. 3604(a).

marital status, or age.[41] ECOA does not contain any language like ''otherwise make unavailable'' or ''otherwise adversely affect'' that suggests that disparate impact claims are cognizable.

The Bureau recognizes that in *Inclusive Communities,* the Supreme Court held that, like section 804(a), section 805(a) of the FHA also authorizes disparate-impact claims, even though section 805(a) does not include effects-based language. Section 805(a) provides that it is unlawful ''for any person or other entity whose business includes engaging in residential real estate-related transactions to discriminate against any person in making available such a transaction, or in the terms or conditions of such a transaction, because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.'' [42] The Supreme Court provided limited explanation for concluding that section 805(a) authorizes disparate-impact claims, noting only that it has construed statutory language similar to section 805(a) to include disparate-impact liability, citing *Bd. of Educ. of City Sch. Dist. of New York* v. *Harris,* 444 U.S. 130 (1979).[43] Because the Supreme Court provided no meaningful analysis of the statutory language of section 805(a) in *Inclusive Communities,* it provides little insight into how that holding should apply to ECOA, if at all. In the absence of such guidance, the Bureau relies on the analysis in *Harris* to inform the interpretation of ECOA, consistent with the Court's approach in *Inclusive Communities.*

The statute in *Harris,* section 706(d)(1) of the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA), made an agency ineligible for assistance if it ''had in effect any practice, policy or procedure which results in the disproportionate demotion or dismissal of instructional or other personnel from minority groups in conjunction with desegregation . . . or otherwise engaged in discrimination based upon race, color, or national origin in the hiring, promotion, or assignment of employees.'' [44] The Supreme Court noted that the first portion of the statute ''clearly speaks in term of effect or impact'' but that the second portion (otherwise engaged in discrimination) ''might be said to possess an overtone of intent.'' [45] The Court noted, however, that the use of the word ''otherwise'' in the second portion suggests that the disparate-impact standard should also apply to that provision. The Court noted that absent a good reason, ''one would expect that for such closely connected statutory phrases, a similar standard'' would apply. The Supreme Court noted that ESAA's language ''suffers from imprecision of expression and less than careful draftsmanship'' and therefore found it necessary to consider other factors to interpret the statutory language.[46] The Court looked to the structure, context and legislative history of the statute to conclude that disparate-impact liability also applied to the second portion of the provision.

In contrast to the statute at issue in *Harris,* section 701(a) of ECOA does not suffer from ESAA's less than careful draftsmanship that would render it similarly ambiguous and therefore require additional consideration of the structure, history, and purpose to interpret its meaning. ECOA does not include any effects-based language supporting disparate-impact liability, nor any ''otherwise'' language, as in ESAA, that may cloud the directness of its prohibition. ECOA section 701(a) is a straightforward, plainly stated prohibition against discrimination on the basis of certain characteristics. As a result, the Bureau preliminarily determines that section 701(a) does not authorize disparate-impact claims.

Even if it were necessary to resort to other considerations to interpret section 701(a), the wording (discussed above), structure, and context all differ from the statutory provisions at issue in *Harris* and *Inclusive Communities* in ways that counsel reaching a different conclusion. (As discussed below, the Bureau does not find the legislative history to be a sufficient basis to override the conclusions drawn from the other factors.) After balancing these factors, giving the most weight to the language of the statute, the Bureau preliminarily determines that the best interpretation of ECOA is that section 701(a) does not authorize disparate-impact claims. In terms of its structure, ECOA differs from both ESAA and FHA. As noted above, the Supreme Court in *Inclusive Communities* carefully analyzed the statutory language of section 804(a), along with other factors, to determine that section 804(a) authorized disparate-impact liability. However, the Supreme Court provided no meaningful analysis of the statutory language of section 805(a) and cited to *Harris* to support the principle that the Court had found similar language to support disparate-impact liability. Read together, *Harris* and *Inclusive Communities* suggest that a statutory provision without effects-based language may be ambiguous as to whether it authorizes disparate-impact liability when there is closely connected statutory language that provides for disparate-impact liability.

Unlike the statutory provisions at issue in *Harris* and *Inclusive Communities,* however, neither section 701(a) of ECOA nor any closely connected statutory provisions include any effects-based language supporting disparate-impact liability. In the absence of such closely connected effects-based language, the best interpretation of the text of section 701(a) is that it does not provide for disparate-impact liability.

The Bureau also preliminarily determines that interpreting ECOA as not authorizing disparate-impact claims is consistent with the statutory purposes of ECOA, suggesting that the credit market context of ECOA also militates against the statute encompassing disparate impact. As noted in part II, ECOA was adopted to ensure that various financial institutions and other firms engaged in the extensions of credit exercise their responsibility to make credit available with fairness, impartiality, and without discrimination on the basis of prohibited characteristics. The Bureau, in exercising its expertise, is concerned that disparate-impact liability may lead some creditors to consider prohibited characteristics in developing policies and procedures, contrary to ECOA's purposes, in order to minimize potential liability. Under a regime with disparate-impact liability, creditors may believe that they are required not only to consider the impact of facially neutral policies and procedures on protected classes, but to adjust those policies with the goal of achieving particular protected class outcomes, in order to avoid potential disparate-impact claims. This may even involve policy changes that disadvantage certain protected classes in an effort to reduce the disadvantages for others. That the application of disparate-impact liability may promote, rather than prohibit, such intentional protected class discrimination further indicates that interpreting ECOA as not permitting disparate-impact claims is the most

[41] 15 U.S.C. 1691(a)(1).

[42] 42 U.S.C. 3605(a).

[43] *Inclusive Communities,* 576 U.S. at 534.

[44] Emergency School Aid Act, Public Law 89–10, section 706(d)(1)(B), 86 Stat. 354, 358 (1972) (emphasis added) (original version at 20 U.S.C. 1606(d)(1)(B) (1976)), *repealed by and reenacted* by Public Law 95–561, tit. VI, section 601(b)(2), Nov. 1, 1978, 92 Stat. 2268 (1978); *see also Bd. of Educ. of City Sch. Dist. of New York* v. *Harris,* 444 U.S. 130, 130 (1979).

[45] *Harris,* 444 U.S. at 138–39.

[46] *Id.* at 138.

appropriate reading of the statute.[47] Moreover, the Bureau is concerned that creditors may be deterred from pursuing innovative and/or cost-reducing policies and procedures because they are uncertain about the impact on protected classes. The Bureau requests comment on its preliminary determination that interpreting ECOA as not authorizing disparate-impact liability is consistent with the statutory purpose.

The Bureau recognizes that Regulation B currently relies on the legislative history of ECOA for evidence of congressional intent that disparate-impact claims may be cognizable under ECOA. If ECOA contained effects-based language or if the statutory language were ambiguous—as with the FHA and the since-repealed ESAA—then the legislative history would provide stronger evidence to support an interpretation that disparate-impact liability is permitted under ECOA. However, consistent with Supreme Court precedent, the most important consideration is the statutory language.[48] The Bureau preliminarily determines, therefore, that the evidence from the legislative history is insufficient to support an effects test given the statutory language and the absence of effects-based language in section 701 or anywhere else in ECOA. The Bureau requests comment on this preliminary determination.

The Bureau preliminarily concludes that any reliance interests in the existing regulatory interpretation permitting disparate-impact liability would not outweigh revising Regulation B to bring it into closer alignment with the statutory text. Consumers who may be affected by creditors' facially neutral policies that have disparate effects may have reliance issues in the existing framework. Creditors may have developed compliance systems consistent with the existing framework. However, consumers would remain protected under ECOA from disparate treatment, including facially neutral policies and procedures that creditors adopt as proxies for intentional discrimination. Creditors would have greater flexibility to adopt facially neutral policies and procedures. The Bureau requests comment on this preliminary determination.

Notwithstanding *Griggs* and its progeny, there may be serious concerns about the constitutionality of disparate-impact liability as to certain ECOA-protected classes. The Supreme Court has recently emphasized that policies and procedures that attempt to achieve certain outcomes for protected classes may run afoul of the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection, noting that ''[o]utright racial balancing is patently unconstitutional.'' [49] To the extent ECOA, if read as encompassing disparate impact, would functionally require creditors to engage in such deliberate balancing of protected class outcomes (as described above), this recent jurisprudence would cast substantial doubt on its consistency with equal protection. The Bureau makes no conclusion as to these constitutional questions, but notes that its finding that ECOA does not encompass disparate impact liability appropriately avoids such potential constitutional defects.

The Bureau notes that, alternatively, it could remove the provisions relating to disparate impact, given the statutory text and based on the fact that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court has made a specific holding with respect to this theory and ECOA. As the Supreme Court made clear in *Loper Bright Enterprises* v. *Raimondo,*[50] courts are the ultimate arbiters of statutory meaning. The Bureau requests comment on this alternative rationale for removing the provisions related to disparate impact.

The specific proposed changes to the rule with respect to disparate-impact liability are discussed below.

Section 1002.6(a)—General Rule Concerning Use of Information

Current § 1002.6(a) provides in the first sentence that, except as otherwise provided in the Act and this part, a creditor may consider any information obtained, so long as the information is not used to discriminate against an applicant on a prohibited basis. The second sentence provides that the legislative history of the Act indicates that the Congress intended an ''effects test,'' (disparate impact) to apply to a creditor's determination of creditworthiness. For the reasons explained above, the Bureau is proposing to delete the second sentence and add a new sentence stating that the Act does not provide that the ''effects test'' applies for determining whether there is discrimination in violation of the Act.

Current comment 6(a)–2 explains the effects test and states that the Act and regulation may prohibit a creditor practice that is discriminatory in effect because it has a disproportionately negative impact on a prohibited basis, even though the creditor has no intent to discriminate and the practice appears neutral on its face, unless the creditor practice meets a legitimate business need that cannot reasonably be achieved as well by means that are less disparate in their impact. The comment also provides an example. The Bureau is proposing to delete the current text of comment 6(a)–2 for the reasons explained above and to add a new title ''Disparate treatment'' and new language providing as follows: The Act prohibits practices that discriminate on a prohibited basis regarding any aspect of a credit transaction. The Act does not provide for the prohibition of practices that are facially neutral as to prohibited bases, except to the extent that facially neutral criteria function as proxies for protected characteristics designed or applied with the intention of advantaging or disadvantaging individuals based on protected characteristics.

Section 1002.2(p)—Definition of Empirically Derived and Other Credit Scoring Systems

Current comment 2(p)–4 to the definition of empirically derived and other credit scoring system is entitled ''Effects test and disparate treatment.'' The comment states that neutral factors used in credit scoring systems could nonetheless be subject to challenge under the effects test and refers to comment 6(a)–2 for a discussion of the effects test. The Bureau is proposing to delete ''effects test'' from the title and

[47] As Justice Alito noted in his dissenting opinion in *Inclusive Communities,* where disparate-impact liability frustrates the purposes of the statute, this also demonstrates congressional intent. *See* 576 U.S. at 585–86 (''No matter what the Department decides, one of these respondents will be able to bring a disparate-impact case. And if the Department opts to compromise by dividing the credits, both respondents might be able to sue. Congress surely did not mean to put local governments in such a position.'').

[48] *See Bostock* v. *Clayton Cnty., Georgia,* 590 U.S. 644, 673–74 (2020) (''This Court has explained many times over many years that, when the meaning of the statute's terms is plain, our job is at an end. The people are entitled to rely on the law as written, without fearing that courts might disregard its plain terms based on some extratextual consideration.''). Some are critical of using legislative history to interpret statutory language. ''The greatest defect of legislative history is its illegitimacy. We are governed by laws, not by the intentions of legislators. As the Court said in 1844: 'The law as it passed is the will of the majority of both houses, and the only mode in which that will is spoken is in the act itself.' '' *Conroy* v. *Aniskoff,* 507 U.S. 511, 519 (1993) (Scalia, J., concurring) (quoting *Aldridge* v. *Williams,* 44 U.S. (3 How.) 9, 24 (1844)); see also Frank H. Easterbrook, Text, History, and Structure in Statutory Interpretation, 17 Harv. J.L. & Pub. Pol'y 61, 68 (1994) (''Intent is elusive for a natural person, fictive for a collective body.'').

[49] *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc.* v. *President & Fellows of Harvard Coll.,* 600 U.S. 181, 223–24 (2023) (internal quotations omitted).

[50] 603 U.S. 369 (2024).

delete the sentence discussing the effects test and the reference to comment 6(a)–2.

B. Discouragement

The Bureau is proposing changes to § 1002.4(b) and its accompanying commentary. These Regulation B provisions prohibit creditors from making oral or written statements to applicants or prospective applicants that would discourage a reasonable person from applying for credit. As noted in part II, the Board first adopted a precursor to current § 1002.4(b) in its 1975 final rule implementing ECOA, as an exercise of its adjustment authority under ECOA section 703(a).

In its 1975 final rule, the Board determined that prohibiting discouragement was ''necessary to protect applicants against discriminatory acts occurring before an application is initiated.'' [51] Indeed, ECOA section 701(a) prohibits creditors from discriminating on a prohibited basis against applicants for credit,[52] a term the statute defines as a ''person who *applies* to a creditor'' for credit.[53] In the absence of a discouragement provision, creditors could sidestep this prohibition entirely by discouraging prospective applicants from applying for credit in the first place. For example, in the absence of a discouragement provision, a creditor could post a sign outside its office stating, ''Credit available only to applicants under age 65,'' arguably without violating ECOA as to individuals who choose not to apply for credit because of the sign. A well-tailored discouragement provision that prohibits such practices protects ECOA's purpose of making credit available on a non-discriminatory basis.

However, the Bureau has preliminarily determined in its expertise that, in the years since the Board first adopted the discouragement provision, the provision has been interpreted to prohibit conduct that it is not necessary or proper to prohibit to prevent the circumvention or evasion of ECOA's purposes. The Bureau is concerned that this, in turn, has had an unnecessarily chilling effect on creditors' business practices and exercise of their rights to speak about matters of public interest. Pursuant to its authority under ECOA section 703(a), and in consideration of what it preliminarily finds is necessary and proper given the purposes of ECOA and facilitating compliance therewith, the Bureau therefore proposes to revise § 1002.4(b) and its commentary as described below.[54]

Furthermore, and independent of the above, the Bureau is concerned that the overbroad coverage of the regulation and its potential interpretations may constrain free speech and commercial activity in ways that are unwarranted. The Bureau preliminarily determines that, given this potential impact, and in consideration of its expertise as a regulator in the marketplace, the proposed revisions would continue to prohibit illegal discouragement of potential applicants without exceeding that purpose in ways that may impose unnecessary constraints in the marketplace. The Bureau requests comment on its preliminary determinations.

The proposed revisions would address several different aspects of § 1002.4(b): (1) what constitutes an oral or written statement, (2) what constitutes a statement to an applicant or prospective applicant, and (3) the standard for showing prohibited discouragement. As described below, the Bureau proposes to revise all these aspects of § 1002.4(b) together. The Bureau requests comment, however, on the merits of an alternative approach in which the Bureau would revise only one or two of these three aspects of § 1002.4(b) and, if such an approach were adopted, which aspects of § 1002.4(b) should be revised.

Oral or Written Statement

Current § 1002.4(b) prohibits creditors from making ''any oral or written statement'' to applicants or prospective applicants that would discourage a reasonable person from making or pursuing an application for credit. The regulation text itself does not define ''oral or written statement.'' Comment 4(b)–1, which the Board added to Regulation B in 1985 without substantive explanation, states, in part, that § 1002.4(b) covers ''acts or practices'' by creditors that could discourage on a prohibited basis a reasonable person from applying for credit.

The Bureau preliminarily determines that the inclusion of the phrase ''acts or practices'' in comment 4(b)–1 has resulted in § 1002.4(b) being interpreted overly broadly to apply to business practices that, though they may have some communicative effect, do not reflect the circumvention or evasion of ECOA's prohibition against discrimination that the discouragement provision was designed to address. Such practices include, for example, business decisions about where to locate branch offices, where to advertise, or where to engage with the community through open houses or similar events. In the Bureau's view, such practices do not constitute ''oral or written statements'' to applicants or prospective applicants within the meaning of § 1002.4(b) and do not, in and of themselves, demonstrate prohibited discouragement. The Bureau proposes to revise § 1002.4(b) to reflect this interpretation.

Specifically, the Bureau proposes to add language to § 1002.4(b) clarifying that ''oral or written statement'' means spoken or written words, or visual images such as symbols, photographs, or videos. This would include any visual images used in advertising or marketing campaigns. The Bureau also proposes to align the text of comment 4(b)–1 with the text of current § 1002.4(b) by replacing current references in the comment to ''acts or practices'' or ''practices'' with references to ''oral or written statements'' or ''statements,'' respectively.

Under the proposed revisions, the business practices noted above would not constitute prohibited discouragement even if they had some communicative effect that some consumers could arguably find discouraging. Instead, the discouragement provision would cover only actual oral or written statements by creditors to applicants or prospective applicants. The Bureau has preliminarily determined that clarifying the discouragement provision as described would facilitate compliance with ECOA and Regulation B and result in more targeted and effective enforcement of conduct designed to circumvent the statute's prohibition against discrimination. The Bureau requests comment on the proposed revisions.

Statement to Applicants or Prospective Applicants

As noted, § 1002.4(b) prohibits creditors from making any oral or written statement to applicants or prospective applicants that would discourage a reasonable person from making or pursuing an application for

[51] 40 FR 49298, 49299 (Oct. 22, 1975).

[52] 15 U.S.C. 1691(a).

[53] 15 U.S.C. 1691a(b) (emphasis added).

[54] In addition to the revisions discussed below, the Bureau proposes to make two non-substantive changes to comment 4(b)–1. The Bureau proposes to revise the heading of comment 4(b)–1 from ''prospective applicants'' to ''discouragement'' to conform with the current heading of § 1002.4(b) and to reflect the fact that the text of current comment 4(b)–1 refers to both applicants and prospective applicants. Similarly, the Bureau proposes to revise the introductory text of comment 4(b)–1 to provide that prohibited discouraging statements are those that ''would'' discourage (rather than ''could'' discourage) a reasonable person, on a prohibited basis, from applying for credit. Again, this change would conform commentary text to current text of § 1002.4(b).

credit. Section 1002.4(b) has been interpreted to prohibit the selective encouragement of certain applicants or prospective applicants (for example, geographically targeted advertising) on the basis that such encouragement could discourage applicants or prospective applicants who did not receive it.

The Bureau has preliminarily determined that this interpretation is overbroad relative to the intended purposes of the discouragement prohibition. The purpose of ECOA is to make credit available to all applicants on a non-discriminatory basis, and § 1002.4(b) helps to achieve that purpose by prohibiting creditors from *discouraging* applicants or prospective applicants. The Bureau proposes that, when a creditor directs *encouraging* statements to certain applicants or prospective applicants, this is not an action intended to (or even likely to) discourage *other* applicants or prospective applicants, who did not receive the statements and might, in fact, have been entirely unaware of them, from applying for credit. Such conduct is not typically an evasion of ECOA's prohibitions, nor is prohibiting it necessary or proper to achieve the purposes of ECOA. As such, the Bureau preliminarily determines that encouraging statements by creditors directed at one group of consumers is not prohibited discouragement as to applicants or prospective applicants who were not the intended recipients of the statements.

Under this interpretation, any person whom a creditor could reasonably expect to receive a particular statement would be an intended recipient of the statement. Factors that could help determine a statement's intended recipients include the method or mechanism used to communicate it. For example, the intended recipients of a statement made by a creditor on a public television or radio broadcast would be anyone within the area of that broadcast. The intended recipients of a mailer would be those to whom the mailer is sent.

The Bureau proposes to revise § 1002.4(b) and its accompanying commentary in several ways to reflect the suggested limitation. First, § 1002.4(b) would provide that prohibited discouragement occurs when a creditor makes any oral or written statement ''directed at'' applicants or prospective applicants that would discourage on a prohibited basis a reasonable person from applying for credit.

Comment 4(b)–1 would be revised to provide that encouraging statements directed at one group of consumers cannot discourage applicants or prospective applicants who were not the intended recipients of the statements. In addition, the example in current comment 4(b)–1.ii (which would be redesignated as comment 4(b)–1.i.B under the proposed rule) [55] would be narrowed to provide an example of a statement that would constitute prohibited discouragement under the proposed limitation. The revised example would provide that prohibited discouragement includes statements directed at the public that express a discriminatory preference or policy of exclusion against consumers based on one or more prohibited basis characteristics.

Finally, comment 4(b)–1.ii.A would be added to provide an example of a statement that would *not* constitute prohibited discouragement under the proposed rule. The example would provide that statements directed at a particular group of consumers, encouraging that group of consumers to apply for credit, do not constitute prohibited discouragement. The Bureau requests comment on the proposed revisions, including on whether additional or different regulatory language or commentary examples would facilitate compliance with the proposed interpretation.

Standard for Discouragement

As noted, the prohibition against discouragement was adopted to prevent creditors from circumventing ECOA's prohibition against discrimination by deterring prospective applicants from even applying for credit. While this is an appropriate goal, the Bureau preliminarily concludes that § 1002.4(b) has been interpreted to apply to scenarios that should not be characterized as prohibited discouragement under ECOA. These are scenarios that—though they may involve potentially controversial statements by creditors—do not involve statements that an objective creditor would know, or should know, would cause a reasonable person to believe that the creditor would deny them credit or offer them credit on less favorable terms than other borrowers. That is, the Bureau believes that there is a difference between a statement by a creditor that an applicant or potential applicant may not like or may disagree with, and a statement that would cause a reasonable person to be discouraged from applying for credit with that creditor. The Bureau believes that difference should be better reflected in Regulation B and accordingly proposes the following revisions.

First, the Bureau proposes to revise § 1002.4(b) and its accompanying commentary to provide that a statement is prohibited discouragement only if a creditor ''knows or should know'' that the statement would cause a reasonable person to be discouraged.

Second, the Bureau proposes to revise § 1002.4(b) and its accompanying commentary to clarify that the standard is not whether a creditor's statement ''would discourage on a prohibited basis a reasonable person,'' but rather that discouragement occurs only if the creditor's statement ''would cause a reasonable person to believe that the creditor would deny, or would grant on less favorable terms, a credit application by the applicant or prospective applicant because of the applicant or prospective applicant's prohibited basis characteristic(s).'' Under this revision, prohibited discouragement would occur only when the creditor's statement was the proximate cause of the applicant's or prospective applicant's belief about their ability to obtain credit on non-discriminatory terms. The revision thus would narrow the prohibition to cover only statements that *themselves* would cause a reasonable person to believe that the creditor would make a different decision about credit terms or availability based on the applicant or prospective applicant's prohibited basis characteristic(s).

Consistent with the proposed revision, the Bureau would narrow current comment 4(b)–1.ii (proposed comment 4(b)–1.i.A). The comment currently provides that prohibited discouraging statements include those that ''express, imply, or suggest'' a discriminatory preference or policy of exclusion in violation of ECOA. The Bureau proposes to narrow the comment to refer only to statements that express a discriminatory preference or policy of exclusion.[56]

To facilitate compliance, the Bureau also proposes to add three examples to the commentary of the types of statements that a creditor would not (or should not) know would cause a reasonable person to believe that the creditor would deny (or would grant on less favorable terms) credit to an applicant or prospective applicant based on their prohibited basis characteristic(s). These are illustrative

[55] The other two examples in current comment 4(b)–1 would be redesignated under the proposed rule as comments 4(b)–1.i.A and 4(b)–1.i.C, without substantive change.

[56] The Bureau discusses other proposed changes to the text of current comment 4(b)–1.ii in part III.B, ''Statement to applicants or prospective applicants.''

examples of non-prohibited statements that a creditor may make, directed at an applicant or prospective applicant: (1) in support of local law enforcement, (2) recommending that, before buying a home in a particular neighborhood, consumers investigate, for example, the neighborhood's schools, its proximity to grocery stores, and its crime statistics, and (3) encouraging consumers to seek out resources to develop their financial literacy. The Bureau requests comment on the proposed revisions, including on whether additional or different examples would be helpful in clarifying the types of statements that would be permissible if the proposed rule were adopted.

Comment 4(b)–2

Current comment 4(b)–2 provides that creditors may affirmatively solicit or encourage members of traditionally disadvantaged groups to apply for credit, especially groups that might not normally seek credit from that creditor. The Bureau proposes to strike this comment as unnecessary; no substantive change is intended. The Bureau requests comment on the proposed revision.

Technical Revision Related to Prospective Applicants

Consistent with ECOA section 704A, Regulation B § 1002.15 sets forth incentives for creditors to self-test for compliance with ECOA and Regulation B and to correct any issues found.[57] Section 1002.15(d)(1)(ii) currently states that the report or results of a privileged self-test may not be obtained or used ''[b]y a government agency or an applicant (including a prospective applicant who alleges a violation of § 1002.4(b)) in any proceeding or civil action in which a violation of the Act or this part is alleged.'' The Bureau proposes to strike from § 1002.15(d)(1)(ii) the current reference to prospective applicants. This revision would conform the language of § 1002.15(d)(1)(ii) with the statutory language of ECOA sections 704A(a)(2) and 706.[58] No substantive change is intended. The Bureau requests comment on the proposed revision.

C. Special Purpose Credit Programs

Pursuant to its authority under 15 U.S.C. 1691(c)(3) and 15 U.S.C. 1691b(a), the Bureau proposes changes to the Regulation B provisions governing SPCPs offered by for-profit organizations. As noted above, that statutory provision permits ''any special purpose credit program offered by a profit-making organization to meet special social needs *which meets standards prescribed in regulations by the Bureau.*'' (emphasis added). Further, as noted above, ECOA authorizes the Bureau to write regulations to carry out ECOA's purposes and also provides the Bureau with adjustment authority to effectuate those purposes.[59] ECOA's purpose is to require that firms engaged in the extension of credit make that credit equally available to all credit-worthy customers without regard to prohibited bases.[60] In sum, just as ECOA authorized the Board's initial regulatory promulgation setting the standards for permissible SPCPs offered or participated in by for-profit organizations, the Bureau has preliminarily determined that it also authorizes the revision of those standards to carry out and more closely align them with the statutory purpose, including appropriate, necessary, or proper additional prohibitions and restrictions in the standards for such SPCPs to prevent unlawful discrimination, as the Bureau now proposes.

More specifically, the Bureau proposes to prohibit an SPCP offered or participated in by a for-profit organization from using the prohibited basis of race, color, national origin, or sex, or any combination thereof, of the applicant, as the common characteristic in determining eligibility for the SPCP. See proposed § 1002.8(b)(3). In addition, the Bureau also proposes in § 1002.8(a) and (b) several new restrictions (discussed in more detail below) on such an SPCP that uses any permissible common characteristic that would otherwise be a prohibited basis as eligibility criteria. Under the Bureau's proposal, these prohibitions and restrictions would become effective if and when a Bureau rule finalizing the proposal were to become effective. Thus, at that time, an SPCP offered or participated in by a for-profit organization would be (1) *prohibited* from using race, color, national origin, or sex as eligibility criteria and (2) *restricted,* as discussed below, in using religion, marital status, age, or income derived from a public assistance program as eligibility criteria. The Bureau proposes the restrictions independently of and in addition to the prohibitions. That is, under the Bureau's proposal, if the Bureau's proposed prohibitions were to not be finalized or to otherwise become inoperative, the proposed restrictions would then be operative with respect to an SPCP offered or participated in by a for-profit organization that uses race, color, national origin, or sex as eligibility criteria, and would continue to be operative with respect to such an SPCP that uses religion, marital status, age, or income derived from a public assistance program as eligibility criteria. In other words, the Bureau independently proposes *both* the prohibitions and the restrictions such that, were the prohibitions to become inoperative, any SPCP offered or participated in by a for-profit organization that uses any otherwise prohibited basis (as defined in § 1002.2(z)) as eligibility criteria would be subject to the restrictions the Bureau now proposes. The Bureau is proposing the above-described prohibitions and restrictions at the present time for the following reasons.

While the Bureau declines in this proposal to reach a conclusion about whether ECOA's SPCP provision permitting discrimination in favor of groups with special social needs—typically minority groups—is unconstitutional, the Bureau is mindful of recent Supreme Court decisions highlighting the legal infirmity under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of laws that enable such discrimination.[61] The constitutional guarantee of equal protection generally prohibits the government from discriminatory treatment on the bases of race, color, national origin, or sex; where those categories are implicated, it requires a thorough examination of the purported need for such discrimination and whether it is appropriately limited. Consistent with that precedent and the purposes of ECOA, and pursuant to its authority provided by 15 U.S.C. 1691(c)(3) to set standards for SPCPs offered or participated in by for-profit organizations to meet special social needs, the Bureau has reexamined the provisions of Regulation B that allow such SPCPs to use a prohibited basis—including but not limited to race, color, national origin, or sex—as common characteristics.

Additionally, the Bureau preliminarily concludes that significant changes in the legal landscape and in credit markets mean that such SPCPs

[57] 15 U.S.C. 1691c–1 (Incentives for self-testing and self-correction).

[58] 15 U.S.C. 1691c–1(a)(2), 1691e.

[59] 15 U.S.C. 1691b(a).

[60] Public Law 93–495, tit. V, section 502, 88 Stat. 1521 (1974).

[61] *See, e.g., Students for Fair Admissions, Inc.* v. *President & Fellows of Harvard Coll.,* 600 U.S. 181 (2023). *Cf. Ames* v. *Ohio Dep't of Youth Servs.,* 605 U.S. 303 (2025) (affirming that there is no exception to civil rights laws (*e.g.,* Title VII) that allows for discrimination against majority groups). *See also Nuziard* v. *Minority Bus. Dev. Agency,* 721 F. Supp. 3d 431, 465 (N.D. Tex. 2024), appeal dismissed, No. 24–10603, 2024 WL 5279784 (5th Cir. July 22, 2024); *Strickland* v. *United States Dep't of Agric.,* 736 F. Supp. 3d 469, 480 (N.D. Tex. 2024).

based on certain prohibited bases no longer serve the particular social needs envisioned in the 1976 Act. When Congress enacted ECOA, the legal framework and the market environment as to credit discrimination were rapidly evolving. The FHA was enacted in 1968. The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) was enacted in 1975 to enable data collection on mortgage lending in order to address ongoing concerns about redlining and credit shortages in certain neighborhoods. The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), intended to promote the availability of financial services in areas that had been underserved, had not yet been enacted, but was enacted in 1977. State laws addressing credit discrimination, for the limited number of states that had enacted them, were typically only a few years old.[62] In general, the legal framework was in the course of transforming from one in which credit discrimination was condoned, and was sometimes official policy, to one in which it was—and remains—prohibited.

Robust data regarding the nature and extent of credit discrimination at the time of ECOA's passage are sparse. HMDA data were not yet available. Assessing the prevalence and effect of credit discrimination was typically done through individual academic, government, or nonprofit research projects, or personal narratives, all with limited scope. Nonetheless, it is clear that at that time market-wide intentional credit discrimination was a fact of the then-recent past and a matter of ongoing concern.[63]

Further, the congressional record accompanying ECOA's adoption reflects the problems Congress sought to address. A National Commission's report on credit availability that informed ECOA's drafting found widespread sex discrimination in credit.[64] The Senate Committee Report accompanying the 1976 Act noted that the legislative record included ''instances of discrimination against racial minorities'' and that ''studies conducted by federal agencies have indicated the strong probability of race discrimination in mortgage credit.'' [65] Another report at the time recounts the experiences of black businessmen being effectively shut out from small business lending.[66] ECOA's purpose was to prevent and prohibit such discrimination.

But also at that time, some organizations sought to fill the gap by making credit available especially to individuals who had been otherwise excluded from the credit marketplace.[67] Through ECOA's provision for SPCPs (15 U.S.C. 1691(c)), Congress sought to enable these programs that served then-extant special social needs to continue.[68] To accomplish this objective, at the same time that Congress broadly prohibited credit discrimination, Congress added provisions allowing the continued operation of credit assistance programs ''expressly authorized by law for an economically disadvantaged class of persons'' [69] or ''administered by a nonprofit organization for its members or an economically disadvantaged class of persons.'' [70] Congress additionally ''authorize[d] the Board to prescribe standards [by which] profit-making organizations (commercial creditors)'' could offer programs, with the expectation that they be ''designed to increase access to the credit market by persons previously foreclosed from it'' [71] and that, ''without such exemption the consumers involved would effectively be denied credit.'' [72]

In its reexamination of the use of race, color, national origin, and sex as participant eligibility criteria for SPCPs offered or participated in by for-profit organizations, the Bureau has preliminarily determined that, to the extent the current Regulation B standards for such SPCPs authorize credit programs beyond what is necessary to meet the expressly limited congressional intent for such SPCPs, the standards are working counter to ECOA's purpose of preventing discrimination and are potentially inconsistent with constitutional guarantees of equal protection. The Bureau preliminarily finds that fifty years of legal prohibitions against credit discrimination—at the Federal and State level and across multiple laws working in concert—have substantially reshaped credit markets relative to what Congress, the Board, and consumers would have encountered in 1976. Regardless of whether instances of credit discrimination continue to occur in the marketplace, the Bureau is not aware of any credit markets in which consumers would be ''effectively denied credit'' because of their race, color, national origin, or sex in the absence of SPCPs offered or participated in by for-profit organizations. The Bureau requests comment on whether and the extent to which there may remain any such credit markets. For comparison purposes, the Bureau also requests comment on the nature and extent of credit discrimination at the time of ECOA's passage. The Bureau particularly requests quantitative data in these respects.

For these reasons, the Bureau has preliminarily determined that it is no longer appropriate (in light of ECOA's purpose of preventing discrimination) or that it is no longer necessary or proper (in light of changed circumstances and ECOA's purposes) for the SPCP standards in Regulation B to permit such SPCPs to use the common characteristics of race, color, national origin, or sex as eligibility criteria. Accordingly, pursuant to the Bureau's authority provided by ECOA, including its authority to set standards, and as applicable its ''adjustment and exception'' authority, the Bureau proposes to prohibit them from doing so. As noted, the Bureau sets forth this

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[62] *See Credit Discrimination: Hearing on H.R. 14856 and H.R. 14908 Before the H. Subcomm. on Consumer Affairs of the H. Comm. on Banking and Currency,* 93d Cong. at 509 (reprinting Sylva L. Beckey, *Woman and Credit: Available Legal Remedies Against Discriminatory Practices,* Cong. Res. Serv. (Mar. 13, 1974)) (surveying state credit antidiscrimination laws). The report, included in the congressional record, finds that fourteen states and the District of Columbia had statutes prohibiting credit discrimination against women (and, in some cases, on other bases). Of those fifteen laws, twelve are identified as having been enacted in 1973, and six appear to have provisions covering race, color, or national origin.

[63] *See, e.g.,* Linda Charlton, *2-to-1 Turndown of Minorities For Mortgage Loans is Found,* N.Y. Times (July 26, 1975) (describing the results of a government survey of 185 lenders across six metropolitan areas in 1974).

[64] *See, e.g.,* Senate Comm. on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, Truth in Lending Act Amendments, S. Rep. No. 93–278, at 16–18 (1973) (citing the National Commission on Consumer Finance's 1972 report, which found widespread barriers to credit access for women).

[65] S. Rep. No. 94–589, at 3 (1976). *See also Credit Discrimination: Hearing on H.R. 14856 and H.R. 14908 Before the H. Subcomm. on Consumer Affairs of the H. Comm. on Banking and Currency,* 93d Cong. 5, 63 (1974) (describing a lending institution that assigned point values for race and national origin).

[66] *Credit Discrimination: Hearing on H.R. 14856 and H.R. 14908 Before the H. Subcomm. on Consumer Affairs of the H. Comm. on Banking and Currency,* 93d Cong., at 150–51 (reprinting *Obstacles to Financing Minority Enterprises,* D.C. Advisory Committee to the U.S. Comm'n on Civil Rights, Feb. 1974).

[67] Among other examples, this included municipal programs for minority business lending, s*ee* 121 Cong. Rec. 16743 (1975) (statements of Congressman Wylie) (describing a City of Columbus program for minority business lending), banks establishing minority-focused urban affairs lending divisions, *see* U.S. Comm'n on Civil Rights, *Greater Baltimore Commitment: A Study of Urban Minority Economic Development,* at 31 (Apr. 1983), as well as the establishment of Feminist Federal Credit Unions, *see* Michael Knight, *Feminists Open Own Credit Union,* N.Y. Times (Aug. 27, 1974); Anne Sinila, *Feminist Federal: Economic Self-Help,* Ann Arbor Sun (July 15, 1976).

[68] H. Rep. No. 94–879, at 8 (Mar. 4, 1976). *See also* 121 Cong. Rec. 16743 (1975) (statements of Congressman Wylie).

[69] 15 U.S.C. 1691(c)(1).

[70] 15 U.S.C. 1691(c)(2).

[71] S. Rep. No. 94–589, at 7 (1976).

[72] H. Rep. No. 94–879, at 8 (Mar. 4, 1976).

prohibition in proposed § 1002.8(b)(3), which is discussed in the section-by-section analysis below. The Bureau seeks comment on this proposed prohibition and on whether the proposed SPCP restrictions would, if finalized in the absence of the prohibition, better serve ECOA's purposes and the purposes of ECOA's SPCP provision.

Proposed SPCP Restrictions

Independent from and in addition to the above-described prohibitions, the Bureau has also preliminarily determined that additional restrictions in the Regulation B standards for SPCPs offered or participated in by for-profit organizations are necessary and appropriate; these restrictions are also discussed in the section-by-section analysis below. As part of its basis for the proposed restrictions, the Bureau incorporates by reference here the justifications set forth above in this section III.C, including but not limited to the Bureau's concerns regarding recent Supreme Court decisions highlighting the constitutional infirmity of laws that enable discrimination and, independently, the Bureau's finding that fifty years of legal prohibitions against credit discrimination have reshaped credit markets relative to 1976.

More specifically, the Bureau preliminarily determines as a matter of its policy discretion provided by 15 U.S.C. 1693b(a) to adopt regulations proper to effectuate the purposes of ECOA that the proposed additional restrictions—independent of the proposed prohibitions described above—would appropriately bring the regulation's standards for such SPCPs—as expressly authorized by 15 U.S.C. 1691(c)(3)—into closer alignment with congressional intent, as indicated in the legislative history (quoted above). That is, the Bureau preliminarily determines that the proposed additional restrictions would appropriately increase the likelihood that such SPCPs provide credit to consumers who would otherwise be denied the credit and that the for-profit organizations that offer or participate in such SPCPs will have and provide evidence that supports the need for the SPCPs. The Bureau also preliminarily determines that this increase in likelihood would appropriately help ensure that such SPCPs are not inconsistent with ECOA's purpose of preventing credit discrimination. The Bureau's reasoning follows.

In light of changed circumstances (discussed in more detail above), the Bureau preliminarily finds that the current Regulation B SPCP standards applicable to for-profit organizations have become inappropriately permissive. The current standards permit for-profit organizations to offer or participate in SPCPs even when there has been no showing that discrimination based on protected class membership is what is causing program participants to be unable to obtain credit. That is, the regulation's SPCP standards may have been appropriate when the Board promulgated them, given societal circumstances at that time. But in light of changed circumstances, and because an SPCP that bases eligibility on protected class membership inherently discriminates against excluded individuals, the Bureau has preliminarily determined that the regulation's standards should be amended to require any such SPCP to be predicated on formal (and regulatorily required) evidence and documentation by the creditor that it is the fact of protected class membership that is causing program participants to be unable to obtain credit. If considerations *other* than that fact are what is causing the inability to obtain credit, then an SPCP based on protected class membership is not necessary to address the inability. Further, the Bureau preliminarily finds that in such cases it also is not appropriate to use an SPCP to address the inability. Any protected-class SPCP that is not necessary—and which unavoidably discriminates against ineligible individuals—is inconsistent with ECOA's purpose of making credit equally available to all without regard to prohibited bases. The Bureau requests comment on whether there are existing SPCPs that would no longer qualify for SPCP status under the Bureau's proposed additional restrictions, and on what new credit programs could qualify for SPCP status, if any.

The following section-by-section analysis discusses in more detail the Bureau's proposed prohibitions and restrictions in the Regulation B standards for SPCPs in § 1002.8.[73]

Section 1002.8(a)(3)—Special Purpose Credit Programs Offered by For-Profit Organizations

Section 1002.8(a)(3) governs any SPCP offered by a for-profit organization, or in which such an organization participates, to meet special social needs.[74] The Bureau observes, as an initial matter, that the provisions of § 1002.8(a)—*i.e.,* the provisions discussed immediately below—are subordinate to the provisions of § 1002.8(b) (discussed farther below).[75] As noted, the prohibitions described above are set forth in proposed § 1002.8(b)(3). Thus, all of the following proposed restrictions in § 1002.8(a)(3) are subordinate to the proposed prohibitions in § 1002.8(b)(3).

i. SPCPs Offered by For-Profit Organizations, Written Plan (§ 1002.8(a)(3)(i))

Under current § 1002.8(a)(3)(i), a for-profit organization must establish and administer an SPCP pursuant to a written plan that identifies the class of persons that the program is designed to benefit and sets forth the procedures and standards for extending credit pursuant to the program.[76] The Bureau proposes to separate this current provision into § 1002.8(a)(3)(i)(A) and (B). Proposed § 1002.8(a)(3)(i)(A) would retain the current requirement that the written plan identify the class of persons that the program is designed to benefit; proposed § 1002.8(a)(3)(i)(B) would retain the current requirement that the written plan set forth the procedures and standards for extending credit pursuant to the program. The Bureau also proposes to add new requirements for the written plan in § 1002.8(a)(3)(i)(C), (D), and (E) as follows.

In new § 1002.8(a)(3)(i)(C) the Bureau proposes to require the SPCP's written plan to provide evidence of the need for the SPCP. The Bureau preliminarily determines that this proposed new restriction would more closely align the regulation's written-plan standard with ECOA's purposes and the congressional intent expressed in the legislative history. Although, as noted above, legislative history is limited in its value when statutory text, context, and purpose provide sufficient meaning, the SPCP provision in ECOA as to for-profit entities is deliberately open-ended, referring to ''special social needs'' and expressly granting the Bureau discretion to set relevant standards. The Bureau therefore finds it appropriate to look to Congress's stated goals, as a means of ensuring that this exercise of discretion is appropriately cabined and

[73] A few Regulation B provisions outside § 1002.8 refer to the SPCP provisions in § 1002.8. The Bureau has preliminarily determined that no changes are necessary to these cross references. *See* § 1002.11(b)(1)(v) and comments 5(a)(2)–3, 6(b)(1)–1, 6(b)(2)–1, and 11(a)–1 and (a)–2.

[74] 12 CFR 1002.8(a)(3).

[75] *See* § 1002.8(a) introductory text (emphasis added): ''(a) Standards for programs. *Subject to the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section,* the Act and this part permit a creditor to extend special purpose credit to applicants who meet eligibility requirements under the following types of credit programs:'').

[76] 12 CFR 1002.8(a)(3)(i).

directionally consistent with the statute. In enacting the SPCP provision, Congress indicated its expectation that the exemption for SPCPs by for-profit organizations would allow for lending where ''it has been clearly demonstrated on the public record that without such exemption the consumers involved would effectively be denied credit.'' [77] The Bureau preliminarily interprets *effectively* in the legislative history to mean ''in effect.'' [78] Pursuant to that interpretation, the Bureau preliminarily finds that the consumers involved would *effectively* be denied credit if in the absence of the SPCP they ''would not receive'' such or similar credit, irrespective of whether the consumers had actually applied for such credit or actually been denied such credit by a creditor. The Bureau requests comment on this interpretation.

In new § 1002.8(a)(3)(i)(D) the Bureau proposes to require the SPCP's written plan to explain why, under the for-profit organization's standards of creditworthiness, the class of persons would not receive such credit in the absence of the program. As with (a)(3)(i)(C), this new proposed restriction for the written plan would apply irrespective of whether the SPCP requires its participants to share a common characteristic that would otherwise be a prohibited basis. The Bureau preliminarily determines that this proposed new restriction would more closely align the regulation's written-plan standard with ECOA's purposes and the congressional intent expressed in the legislative history.

Proposed new § 1002.8(a)(3)(i)(E) would apply, in addition to § 1002.8(a)(3)(i)(A), (B), (C), and (D), to SPCPs that require the persons in the class served by the program to share one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis. The provision's proposed new restrictions would require the written plan of such an SPCP to explain why meeting the special social needs addressed by the program necessitates that its participants share the specific common characteristic that would otherwise be a prohibited basis and cannot be accomplished through a program that does not use otherwise prohibited bases as participant eligibility criteria. As is discussed in more detail above, the Bureau has preliminarily determined that these proposed new restrictions in the standards for SPCPs would more closely align the regulation with the statutory purpose of ''mak[ing] . . . credit equally available to all credit-worthy customers without regard to [prohibited bases].'' Specifically, the Bureau has preliminarily determined that it is inconsistent with ECOA's purpose—preventing discrimination—for an SPCP that uses an otherwise prohibited basis to discriminate against ineligible individuals, unless the SPCP's use of the otherwise prohibited basis is necessary to overcome an inability to access credit that is specifically based on those same characteristics.

ii. SPCPs Offered by For-Profit Organizations, Class of Persons (§ 1002.8(a)(3)(ii))

Current § 1002.8(a)(3)(ii) requires that a for-profit organization offering an SPCP establish and administer the program to extend credit to a class of persons who, under the organization's customary standards of creditworthiness, probably would not receive such credit or would receive it on less favorable terms than are ordinarily available to other applicants applying to the organization for a similar type and amount of credit. This provision applies irrespective of whether the SPCP requires its participants to share a common characteristic that would otherwise be a prohibited basis. The Bureau proposes three changes to this standard, as follows.

First, the Bureau proposes to strike the clause that begins with ''or would receive it on less favorable terms . . . .'' This change would restrict permissible SPCPs offered by a for-profit organization to those that are established and administered to extend credit to a class of persons who would otherwise not receive the type and amount of credit, as opposed to those who would receive it on less favorable terms. Second, the Bureau proposes to strike the term ''customary;'' and, third, the Bureau proposes to strike the term ''probably.'' These latter two changes would restrict permissible SPCPs offered by a for-profit organization to those that are established and administered to extend credit to a class of persons who *actually* (in lieu of ''probably'') would not receive such credit under the organization's *actual* (in lieu of ''customary'') credit standards. In sum, the three proposed changes would restrict a for-profit organization to offering an SPCP to a class of persons to whom, under the organization's actual credit standards, the organization would actually deny credit in the absence of the SPCP.[79] The Bureau requests comment on this standard of ''actual'' for establishing and administering an SPCP offered or participated in by a for-profit organization and, in particular, on whether there might be an another standard that would better facilitate compliance while achieving the Bureau's objective of a standard that is more than a mere probability.

The Bureau has preliminarily determined that each of the three proposed restrictions, and the three proposed restrictions in combination, would more closely align the regulatory standards for an SPCP offered by a for-profit organization with ECOA's purposes and with the congressional intent expressed in the legislative history: that without the SPCP ''the consumers involved would effectively be denied credit.'' [80] Furthermore these proposed restrictions, as a preliminary matter, are appropriate, necessary, and proper to carry out the purposes of ECOA, for the reasons above.

iii. SPCPs Offered By For-Profit Organizations, Determining Need (Comment 8(a)–5)

Current comment 8(a)–5 addresses SPCPs offered by for-profit organizations. Under the Bureau's proposal, the comment would continue to clarify that a for-profit organization's determination of the need for an SPCP ''can be based on a broad analysis using the organization's own research or data from outside sources, including governmental reports and studies.'' [81]

For the reasons set forth above, the Bureau proposes changes to comment 8(a)–5 that would conform the comment's text to the proposed changes to the regulatory text of § 1002.8(a)(3), as follows. For precision, and because the comment addresses only SPCPs provided by for-profit organizations, the Bureau proposes to change the comment's citation to the regulatory text from ''§ 1002.8(a)'' to ''§ 1002.8(a)(3),'' which is the paragraph that addresses such SPCPs. The Bureau also proposes to strike the phrase ''or would receive it [credit] on less favorable terms,'' for the same reasons that the Bureau is

[77] *Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee of the Conference,* Cong. Rec. H5493 (daily ed. Mar. 4, 1976).

[78] Effectively, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/effectively* (defining ''effectively'' as ''in effect: virtually'' ''by withholding further funds they effectively killed the project.'') (last visited Aug. 19, 2025).

[79] In combination, textually, the three proposed changes would revise § 1002.8(a)(3)(ii) to require that a for-profit organization offering an SPCP establish and administer the program to extend credit to a class of persons who, under the organization's standards of creditworthiness, would not receive such credit.

[80] *Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee of the Conference,* Cong. Rec. H5493 (daily ed. Mar. 4, 1976).

[81] Regulation B comment 8(a)–5.

proposing to strike the corresponding phrase from the regulatory text of § 1002.8(a)(3)(ii), discussed above.

The third and fourth sentences of comment 8(a)–5 set forth two examples of the types of research or data that a for-profit organization may use for the analysis on which it bases its determination of the need for the SPCP. The Bureau proposes edits to the examples' text to conform to the proposed regulatory changes discussed above. The proposed edits would neither intend nor effect any change to the types of research or data that a for-profit organization may use.

The Bureau requests comment on the restrictions that the Bureau proposes in § 1002.8(a)(3) and, in particular, on the proposed evidentiary requirements and on whether there might be another standard(s) that would better facilitate compliance while achieving the Bureau's objective of ensuring that any SPCP offered or participated in by a for-profit organization provides credit only to participants who would not receive such credit in the absence of the SPCP.

Section 1002.8(b)(2)—Common Characteristics

Current § 1002.8(b)(2) provides that a credit program qualifies as an SPCP only if the program was established and is administered so as not to discriminate against an applicant on any prohibited basis. It also provides that all program participants may be required to share one or more common characteristics (for example, race, national origin, or sex) so long as the program is not established and is not administered with the purpose of evading the requirements of ECOA or Regulation B. The Bureau proposes to amend the section to make it subordinate to the new proposed prohibitions and restrictions in § 1002.8(b)(3) and (4), which are discussed below.

For clarity, the Bureau proposes to strike the parenthetical in § 1002.8(b)(2)—''(for example, race, national origin, or sex)''—and replace it with the text ''that would otherwise be a prohibited basis.'' The Bureau would neither intend nor effect any change in substance with this proposed change, because § 1002.2(z) defines ''prohibited basis'' to include race, national origin, and sex. Also for clarity, the Bureau also proposes to add new comment 8(b)–2 to explain the § 1002.8(b)(2) regulatory text. In 1977, when the Board promulgated what was then § 202.8(b)(2) to implement the 1976 Act, the Board's section-by-section analysis of the regulatory text stated:

> Section 202.8(b)(2) provides that a creditor may determine eligibility for a special purpose credit program using one or more of the prohibited bases; but, once the characteristics of the class of beneficiaries are established, a creditor may not discriminate among potential beneficiaries on a prohibited basis. For example, a creditor might establish a credit program for impoverished American Indians. If the program met the requirements of § 202.8(a), the creditor could refuse credit to non-Indians but could not discriminate among Indian applicants on the basis of sex or marital status.[82]

The Bureau proposes to incorporate the substance of the Board's section-by-section analysis in new comment 8(b)–2. Specifically, the proposed comment would clarify that § 1002.8(b)(2)—subject to the prohibitions and restrictions in § 1002.8(b)(3) and (4), as well as the other requirements of 12 CFR part 1002—permits a creditor to determine eligibility for an SPCP using one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis. The proposed comment would also clarify that under § 1002.8(b)(2), once the characteristics of the program's class of participants are established, the creditor is prohibited from discriminating among potential participants on a prohibited basis.

Proposed New § 1002.8(b)(3)—Prohibited Common Characteristics

The Bureau proposes to add to the regulation new § 1002.8(b)(3), which would prohibit an SPCP offered or participated in by a for-profit organization from using the common characteristic of race, color, national origin, or sex, or any combination thereof, as a factor in determining eligibility for the program. For the reasons discussed above, the Bureau has preliminarily determined that it is no longer necessary (in light of changed circumstances) or appropriate (in light of ECOA's purpose of preventing discrimination) for the SPCP standards in Regulation B to permit such SPCPs to use the common characteristics of race, color, national origin, or sex as eligibility criteria.

The Bureau requests comment on the prohibitions that the Bureau proposes in § 1002.8(b)(3).

Proposed New § 1002.8(b)(4)—Otherwise Prohibited Bases in For-Profit Programs

The Bureau proposes to add to the regulation new § 1002.8(b)(4), which, for characteristics not prohibited under proposed § 1002.8(b)(3), would apply when an SPCP offered or participated in by a for-profit organization requires its participants to share one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis. The new proposed section (subject to § 1002.8(b)(3)) would require the organization to provide evidence for each participant who receives credit through the program that, in the absence of the program, the participant would not receive such credit as a result of those specific characteristics.

As is discussed in more detail above, the Bureau has preliminarily determined that these proposed new restrictions in the standards for SPCPs would more closely align the regulation with the statutory purpose of ''mak[ing] . . . credit equally available to all credit-worthy customers without regard to [prohibited bases].'' Specifically, because an SPCP that bases eligibility on protected class membership inherently discriminates against ineligible individuals, the Bureau has preliminarily determined that it is inconsistent with ECOA's purpose (preventing discrimination) for an SPCP to use an otherwise prohibited basis (and thereby discriminate against ineligible individuals) unless the SPCP's use of the otherwise prohibited basis is necessary to overcome an inability to access credit that is specifically based on those same characteristics.

The Bureau requests comment on the restrictions that the Bureau proposes in § 1002.8(b)(4) and, in particular, on the standard of requiring a for-profit organization to provide evidence for each participant; and, on whether there might be an another standard that would better facilitate compliance while achieving the Bureau's objective of ensuring that any SPCP offered or participated in by a for-profit organization that uses one or more prohibited-basis common characteristics provides credit only to participants who in the absence of the SPCP would not receive such credit as a result of the participants' specific characteristics.

Section 1002.8(c)—Special Rule Concerning Requests and Use of Information

In § 1002.8(c) and the commentary thereto the Bureau proposes nonsubstantive changes for clarity. The Bureau proposes to strike the section's parenthetical—''(for example, race, national origin, or sex)''—and replace it with the text ''that would otherwise be a prohibited basis.'' This proposed change would neither intend nor effect any change in substance, because § 1002.2(z) defines ''prohibited basis'' to include race, national origin, and sex. The Bureau also proposes to make explicit that § 1002.8(c) is subordinate to § 1002.8(b), including its newly proposed prohibitions and restrictions,

[82] 42 FR 1242, 1248 (Jan. 6, 1977).

discussed above. This proposed change would neither intend nor effect any change in substance because current § 1002.8(c) is expressly subordinate to § 1002.8(a) and current § 1002.8(a) is expressly subordinate to § 1002.8(b); thus, § 1002.8(c) is subordinate to § 1002.8(b). Finally, the Bureau proposes to delete one of the examples from comment 8(c)–2 regarding programs under a Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Corporation. This proposed deletion would neither intend nor effect any change in substance because as a general matter examples do not carry legal force.

The Bureau requests comment on the changes that the Bureau proposes in § 1002.8(c) and its commentary.

IV. Proposed Effective Date

The Bureau proposes that a final rule relating to this proposal would have an effective date of [90 days after publication in the **Federal Register**]. This would provide creditors sufficient time to evaluate existing SPCPs to ensure compliance with the final rule for extensions of credit on or after the effective date. Where creditors have already extended credit prior to the effective date under existing SPCPs, those credit extensions would be grandfathered and their programs must qualify as SPCPs under the rule in effect at the time of the credit extensions. The Bureau does not anticipate as much time, if any, would be needed for creditors to comply with a final rule relating to disparate impact and discouragement. The Bureau seeks comment on the proposed effective date, including whether it should be at a different time, and if so, when and why.

V. CFPA Section 1022(b) Analysis

A. Overview

The Bureau is considering the potential benefits, costs, and impacts of the proposed rule.[83] The Bureau requests comments on the preliminary discussion presented below, as well as submissions of additional information and data that could inform the Bureau's consideration of the benefits, costs, and impacts of the proposed rule. As discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this NPRM, the Bureau is proposing to amend provisions related to disparate impact, discouragement, and SPCPs under Regulation B, which implements ECOA.

The Bureau believes that the amendment to the provisions related to disparate impact and discouragement are largely deregulatory in nature and therefore are expected to reduce burden for the covered persons. The Bureau also has reason to believe that the current number of SPCPs is small and therefore proposed changes to SPCPs as part of this proposed rule would have limited impacts. The discussion below further considers the benefits, costs, and impacts of the proposed provisions to consumers and covered persons in detail.

B. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Regulation B is to promote the availability of credit to all creditworthy applicants without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, or age (provided the applicant has the capacity to contract); to the fact that all or part of the applicant's income derives from a public assistance program; or to the fact that the applicant has in good faith exercised any right under the Consumer Credit Protection Act.[84] The Bureau is proposing to amend the regulation as follows: (1) provide that ECOA does not authorize disparate impact claims; (2) amend the prohibition on discouraging applicants or prospective applications to clarify that it prohibits statements of intent to discriminate in violation of ECOA and is not triggered merely by negative consumer impressions, and to clarify that encouraging statements by creditors directed at one group of consumers is not prohibited discouragement as to applicants or prospective applicants who were not the intended recipients of the statements; and (3) amend the standards for SPCPs offered or participated in by for-profit organizations to include new standards and related restrictions.

C. Baseline for Consideration of Analysis

The Bureau has discretion in any rulemaking to choose an appropriate scope of consideration with respect to potential benefits and costs and an appropriate baseline. Accordingly, this analysis considers the benefits, costs, and impacts of the proposed provisions against Regulation B prior to its amendment as a baseline, *i.e.,* the current state of the world before the Bureau's proposed provisions are implemented. Under this baseline, the Bureau assumes that institutions are complying with regulations that they are currently subject to. The Bureau believes that such a baseline will provide the public with better information about the benefits and costs of the proposed amendment.

D. Data Limitations and Quantification of Benefits, Costs, and Impacts

The discussion below relies on data that the Bureau has obtained from publicly available sources. However, limitations on what data are available restrict the Bureau's ability to quantify the potential costs, benefits, and impacts of the proposed rule. Therefore, the discussion below generally provides a qualitative consideration of the benefits, costs, and impacts of the proposed rule. General economic principles, together with the limited data available, provide insights into these benefits, costs, and impacts. Where possible, the Bureau has made quantitative estimates based on these principles and the available data. The Bureau seeks comments on the appropriateness of the approach described below, including submissions of additional data relevant to the benefits and costs to consumers and covered persons.

Benefits to Covered Persons

As discussed further below, most provisions of the proposal would benefit covered persons. Quantifying and monetizing the benefits to covered institutions would require identifying costs of compliance under the baseline and quantifying the magnitude of the covered persons' cost savings arising from the proposed provisions. For example, the Bureau believes that the proposed provisions are deregulatory in nature and hence would benefit covered persons in the long run by reducing compliance burden. The Bureau anticipates these cost savings to vary with the covered person's size and the complexity of operations. However, the Bureau is unaware of any data that would enable reliable quantitative estimation of these benefits. Therefore, the Bureau seeks comment and data regarding the benefits to covered persons of the proposed provision. The Bureau is particularly interested in the number of employee hours, or estimates of total costs that covered persons anticipate saving as a result of the proposed rule.

Costs to Covered Persons

Certain costs to covered persons are difficult to quantify. For example, the Bureau anticipates that covered persons would incur costs associated with implementing changes to their internal

[83] Specifically, section 1022(b)(2)(A) of the Dodd-Frank Act calls for the Bureau to consider the potential benefits and costs of a regulation to consumers and covered persons, including the potential reduction of access by consumers to consumer financial products or services; the impact on depository institutions and credit unions with $10 billion or less in total assets as described in section 1026 of the Dodd-Frank Act; and the impact on consumers in rural areas.

[84] *See* § 1002.1(b).

processes that result from the proposed provisions. The Bureau categorizes costs required to comply with the proposed provision into ''one-time'' and ''ongoing'' costs. ''One-time'' costs refer to expenses that the covered persons would incur only once to implement operational changes arising from the proposal. On the other hand, ''ongoing'' costs refer to expenses incurred as a result of the ongoing compliance of the rule. The Bureau also expects both of these types of costs to vary with a covered person's size and complexity of operations. The Bureau is unaware of any data that would help to quantify such costs and seeks data from available sources to quantify the costs to covered persons and seeks comment or data that may help quantify these types of costs.

Benefits to Consumers

Due to the deregulatory nature of the proposed provisions, covered persons can potentially pass on the saved compliance costs to consumers by offering lower prices or better products. However, the Bureau is unable to quantify these potential benefits because it lacks relevant data. The Bureau seeks additional comments, including submissions of relevant data, that would help quantify the benefits of the proposed provisions to consumers.

Costs to Consumers

According to economic theory, in a perfectly competitive market where covered persons are profit maximizers, reductions in the marginal cost of operation would be passed on to consumers, and firms would absorb one-time fixed costs of compliance. However, covered persons' response likely varies with supply, demand, and competitive conditions. Moreover, in addition to any costs that covered persons may pass onto consumers, the proposed provisions concerning disparate impact and discouragement may potentially limit legal protections for consumers and affect consumers' access to credit. Because of the lack of data to quantify such costs, the Bureau seeks information on the number of consumers potentially affected by the proposed rules as well as the data that would allow quantification of costs to consumers.

E. Potential Benefits and Costs of the Proposed Rule to Consumers and Covered Persons

Covered Persons Under the Proposed Rule

The three categories of proposed changes to Regulation B would apply to all covered persons that meet the definition of creditor under Regulation B. To estimate the total number of persons covered by the proposed changes, the Bureau relies on the total number of entities subject to Regulation B as estimated in the approved Paperwork Reduction Act supporting statement (OMB Control Number 3170–0013) last updated in 2024.[85] The Bureau estimates that there are about 12,000 depository institutions and 482,000 non-depository institutions that are subject to Regulation B.

Provisions Concerning Disparate Impact

i. Benefits to Covered Persons

The proposed provisions would likely allow covered persons to save on ongoing compliance costs. For example, covered persons may save time and resources presently spent on creating, testing, validating, and auditing models for potential disparate impact risks in their lending strategy or portfolio. Resources dedicated to statistical testing, documenting business necessities of policies and evaluating alternative lending strategies may be saved or redirected to other uses. Covered persons may also save costs by reducing spending associated with fair lending exams and training loan officers, compliance staff, contractors, and modelers of disparate impact risks. Lastly, the proposed change can reduce the potential litigation risks to the extent lenders would have otherwise had to defend against lawsuits under a disparate impact theory of discrimination. Fewer enforcement actions and private claims premised on disparate impact theories as a result of the proposed provisions would reduce defense burden and any financial costs related to remediation. The compliance cost saving from the proposed provisions likely varies by the size and complexity of the operational structure of the institutions.

Covered persons' profitability could increase as a result of the proposed provisions by improving operational flexibility and spurring innovation in the credit application process. For example, covered persons could more freely experiment with risk-based pricing and automated underwriting with reduced risk of facially neutral policies with disproportionate effects triggering liability without intent. The proposed provisions may result in an adoption of new modeling techniques that use additional data sources. These benefits, however, may be limited by the ongoing need to comply with other State and Federal fair lending laws. Due to lack of available data, the Bureau cannot provide quantitative estimates of potential cost savings and increased profits by covered persons and seeks comment and data that would allow quantification of these cost savings.

ii. Costs to Covered Persons

Covered persons may incur one-time adjustment costs resulting from these proposed provisions. These one-time costs include updating policies, practices, procedures, and control systems; verifying, updating and reviewing compliance; and training staff and third parties. In addition, covered persons already incur ongoing compliance costs associated with the current Regulation B. Therefore, the Bureau expects the one-time cost and any ongoing costs that may arise from the proposed provisions to be small.

The Bureau does not have the data to provide quantitative estimates of the one-time costs that covered persons may incur but can propose a rough estimate based on one-time costs estimated for other rules. For example, the Bureau recently estimated a one-time cost of each covered small non-depository entity for implementing the Automated Valuation Models (AVM) Rule to be $23,000: $7,000 for drafting and developing policies, practices, procedures, and control systems, $10,000 for verifying compliance, and $6,000 for training.[86] Furthermore, the Bureau estimated the ongoing costs to be one-third of the one-time costs (*i.e.,* $7,667). Since the proposed provisions involves updating existing policies rather than implementing new policies, the Bureau expects the cost of the proposed provisions to be closer to the AVM Rule's total ongoing cost of $7,667.

The one-time costs of updating policies and procedures and training personnel likely vary with the size and the type of covered person. For example, the Bureau recently in the Small Business Lending (1071) Rule estimated that the one-time cost of developing policies and procedures to range between $2,500 and $4,300 while the cost of training staff and third parties to range between $3,100 and $5,300 depending on the size and the type of institutions.[87] Given that these estimates are for implementing a new rule, whereas the proposed provisions only updates an existing rule, the Bureau expects the total one-time cost associated with the proposed provisions

[85] *https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAViewDocument?ref_nbr=202402-3170-001.*

[86] 12 CFR part 1026 AVM Final Rule, 89 FR 64538, 64569 (Aug. 7, 2024).

[87] 1071 Final Rule, 88 FR 35150, 35507–35510 (May 31, 2023).

to be smaller than the estimated one-time costs for implementing the 1071 Rule. In other words, the Bureau expects the upper bound of the cost to vary between $5,600 and $9,600, which is consistent with what was estimated from the AVM Rule.

The Bureau emphasizes that it lacks data with which to estimate implementation costs for the proposed provisions concerning disparate impact, and that the cost estimates above are based on costs that were estimated for other rules. As such, these estimates may not be close to the actual costs that covered persons would incur as a result of the proposed provisions. The Bureau seeks comments and data related to the one-time costs that covered persons would incur to implement the proposed provisions.

iii. Benefits to Consumers

Covered persons may pass on compliance cost savings to consumers, who may benefit as a result. According to standard economic theory, the degree to which consumers would benefit from lower prices would depend on competitive market conditions and the shapes of market demand and supply, as well as firm characteristics. In addition, some consumers may experience a faster credit application process and greater product variety as some covered persons would reallocate cost savings arising from proposed provisions to improving operational efficiency and developing new products and services. The Bureau lacks data with which to estimate these benefits to consumers and seeks comments and data that would allow quantifying these benefits.

iv. Costs to Consumers

To the extent that legal liability discourages covered persons from implementing policies that lead to disparate impact, removing such liability could potentially have a negative impact on some consumers. Consumers who are adversely affected by neutral policies would lose legal options and opportunities for redress. Some consumers may be more likely to be denied credit or to pay higher prices without effects-based legal protection. However, such costs to consumers may be limited; covered persons are still liable under other antidiscrimination statutes such as the FHA and state laws similar to ECOA, so the incentives for covered persons to implement policies or engage in practices that lead to disparate impact may be limited.

The Bureau has also considered the possibility of one-time costs that covered persons incur because of the proposed provisions being passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices. The Bureau believes that this is unlikely to occur since economic theory generally views changes in fixed costs as unrelated, all other things equal, to changes in price.

Provisions Concerning Discouragement

v. Benefits to Covered Persons

The proposed provisions would limit legal liability for covered persons and can reduce compliance burden as a result. For example, covered persons may reduce spending related to limiting liability as to prospective applicants by decreasing the amount of time and resources spent monitoring marketing strategies and materials, and by adjusting marketing to focus on areas where they expect the greatest return on investment. In addition, covered persons may spend less on training loan officers, compliance staff, contractors, and other employees on legal and compliance risks related to prospective applicants. Lastly, the proposed change would limit potential litigation risks from enforcement actions based on allegations of discouragement of prospective applicants. The proposed change would reduce legal exposure to the extent lenders would have had to defend against lawsuits under broader legal liability in the baseline. As a result, covered persons may save costs related to legal counsel.

The proposed provisions would potentially increase covered persons' profitability by allowing additional operational flexibility. For example, lenders who under the baseline choose not to focus on offering certain products to certain groups of consumers would be able to potentially increase their revenues by offering products that are better tailored to the demands of different groups of consumers. In other words, under this proposal, some covered persons would be able to conduct more targeted advertising campaigns and offer certain products to subsets of consumers (when they otherwise would not have been able to under the baseline). Covered persons may choose to relocate branch locations that are less profitable and reallocate resources that were previously spent on oversight of marketing materials and interactions with prospective applicants at call centers and branches to other uses. On the other hand, requirements to serve community credit needs under the CRA would still be in effect and could mitigate such business decisions. The benefits to covered persons that arise as a result of these proposed provisions likely vary with the size and type of each covered person. However, the Bureau lacks data with which to reliably estimate these benefits, and seeks comment and data that may help quantify these benefits to covered persons.

vi. Costs to Covered Persons

Covered persons may incur adjustment costs associated with the proposed change in liability for discrimination against prospective applicants. Covered persons may need to update their policies, procedures, and systems to accommodate changes resulting from the proposed provisions. However, these adjustment costs would be incurred only once and are unlikely to have a significant long-term impact on covered entities. The one-time costs associated with these proposed provisions would be similar in scope to the one-time costs associated with the change to the disparate impact provisions above. The Bureau lacks data with which to reliably estimate the potential cost to covered persons arising from these proposed provisions and seeks comments and data that would help quantify these costs.

vii. Benefits to Consumers

The proposed provisions on discouragement limits may result in ongoing cost savings for covered entities, which could be passed on to consumers through lower prices. The rate of pass through generally varies with demand and supply conditions, as well as firm characteristics. The Bureau lacks data with which to reliably estimate the benefits to consumers arising from the proposed provisions and seeks comments and data that would help quantify these benefits.

viii. Costs to Consumers

The proposed provisions may result in consumers not applying for credit and facing greater barriers to accessing credit than they otherwise would have under the existing rule. For example, covered persons may exclude certain groups of consumers from advertising campaigns or may choose to engage less with certain groups of consumers. As a result, some consumers may not be aware of credit products from all available covered persons. Moreover, some consumers may lose convenient access to financial services if covered persons alter their branch location decisions as a result of these proposed provisions. In particular, elderly, minority, and low-income consumers are more likely to rely on brick-and-mortar branch services instead of online or mobile banking. If covered persons alter their branch location decisions, then these customers may no longer be

able to easily access financial services and products. As before though, requirements to serve community credit needs under the CRA could mitigate such impacts.

Consumers would have less protection against discouragement at a pre-application stage under the proposed provisions compared to the baseline. Under a narrower standard of liability, lenders may be more likely to discourage or informally reject certain consumers, among other things, before credit is formally sought.[88] The proposed provisions could lead to some consumers being discouraged in ways not captured by the proposed prohibition, constituting a cost to these consumers. The Bureau lacks data with which to reliably estimate such costs to consumers arising from the proposed provisions and seeks comments and data that would help quantify these costs.

While the proposed provisions limit covered persons' liability on discouragement, it does not eliminate it. Covered persons will remain prohibited by the proposed discouragement prohibition from expressing to applicants or prospective applicants an intention to discriminate against them on a prohibited basis. Moreover, covered persons would still be subject to other statutes such as the FHA and state laws similar to ECOA. While the proposed provisions reduce legal liability for covered persons under ECOA, the legal risk under other statutes remains unchanged and therefore the incentives for covered persons to significantly change their policies as a result from the proposed provisions may be limited. Thus, the costs to consumers may be limited. The Bureau seeks comments on the potential costs of the proposed provisions to consumers.

Provisions Concerning Special Purpose Credit Programs

The Bureau also proposes changes to Regulation B's provisions regarding SPCPs. The proposed changes can be grouped into two categories for the purposes of discussing their potential impacts. First, the Bureau proposes to prohibit an SPCP offered or participated in by a for-profit organization from using a common characteristic of race, color, national origin, or sex, or any combination thereof, as a factor in determining eligibility for the SPCP. Second, the Bureau also proposes several new restrictions on such SPCPs that use *any* prohibited basis common characteristic as eligibility criteria. Among these new restrictions are additional requirements that a for-profit organization establish the fact that applicants with common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis would not receive credit under the organization's current standards due to the common characteristic and that providing credit of the type and amount sought could not be accomplished through a program that does not use an otherwise prohibited basis as eligibility criteria.

Compared to the baseline, the overall effect of these two categories of proposed changes is to place additional restrictions on the design of lenders' existing SPCPs and the development of new SPCPs. The Bureau considers the costs and benefits of these restrictions below.

ix. Benefits to Covered Persons

At baseline, Regulation B permits creditors to create SPCPs and prescribes the procedures for doing so but does not require any creditor to create an SPCP. The Bureau, consistent with standard economic theory, assumes that creditors only decide to create SPCPs if the incremental benefits from doing so outweigh the incremental costs from creating and administering the SPCP. Since the proposed changes to Regulation B may make it more difficult or costly to create an SPCP, the Bureau does not expect the proposed changes to the SPCP provisions to generate benefits to covered persons from credit provided or not provided under the revised SPCP provisions.

x. Costs to Covered Persons

At baseline, Regulation B permits creditors to create SPCPs and prescribes the procedures for doing so but does not require any creditor to create an SPCP. Under standard economic theory, a creditor would only create an SPCP if the expected benefit of doing so is greater than the costs of creating and administering the program. Creditors may benefit, for example, from the public relations value that such a program may provide. Owners of a for-profit credit provider may also derive some non-monetary benefit from the creation of an SPCP. Setting up an SPCP involves ''significant effort'' in following the proper procedures for doing so.[89] Many existing SPCPs also involve the creditor taking on additional risk because they may involve providing credit to applicants the creditor would have otherwise denied or providing credit at terms that would have otherwise been more favorable to the creditor. The Bureau assumes that, if a creditor implements an SPCP, they do so because the benefits outweigh the costs.

The effects of the proposed Regulation B provisions affecting SPCPs are to impose restrictions on creditors' ability to create an SPCP and, therefore, reduce the expected net benefit of the programs relative to the baseline. In some cases, the proposed changes would prohibit some types of SPCPs. For example, an SPCP that currently uses race as a common characteristic would be prohibited under the proposed changes. In other cases, the proposed changes would impose additional costs on creditors' who attempt to develop an SPCP. Such would be the case when a creditor must establish the fact that members of a protected class would otherwise be unable to receive credit in the absence of an SPCP. Imposing such restrictions could make it difficult to achieve the intended effect of an SPCP or otherwise reduce the net benefit of doing so. This change imposes a cost on affected creditors who either have an SPCP or would otherwise create an SPCP in the absence of the proposed changes to Regulation B. As a result, fewer SPCPs may exist under the NPRM relative to the baseline.

However, such costs could be mitigated to the extent that creditors could redesign programs to use criteria that are not prohibited under the proposed changes to Regulation B. For example, if a creditor has an existing SPCP that uses race as a common characteristic determining eligibility to reach a certain segment of socioeconomically disadvantaged borrowers, it may be able to preserve much of its program in a form that is open to such socioeconomically disadvantaged borrowers without regard to prohibited basis characteristics. In this case, the creditor would incur both the one-time cost of the program redesign and any costs arising if the redesigned program is unable to achieve the intended results as effectively.

While the Bureau is unaware of data that could be used to comprehensively measure the scale of existing SPCPs, the Bureau does have reason to believe that the overall market effect of these proposed limits is likely to be small. Historically, few SPCPs existed prior to

[88] *See, e.g.,* Andrew Hanson et al., *Discrimination in mortgage lending: Evidence from a correspondence experiment,* 92 J. Urban Econ. 48–65 (2016); Neil Bhutta et al., *How much does racial bias affect mortgage lending? Evidence from human and algorithmic credit decisions,* 80(3) J. Fin. 1463–1496 (2025).

[89] Comment from the JPMorgan Chase & Co., OCC–2022–0002–0252 (June 6, 2022), *https://www.regulations.gov/comment/OCC-2022-0002-0252.*

the Bureau's advisory opinion in January 2021, when the Bureau last assessed the market.[90] In August 2020, the Bureau issued a Request for Information on the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and Regulation B.[91] Multiple commenters noted that, despite a long history of being allowed under Regulation B, most lenders have not used SPCPs.[92] In 2021, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development noted in its statement on SPCPs that ''very few of these Programs have been established to create homeownership opportunities for affected communities.'' [93]

Since 2021, there has been growth in the number of SPCPs, with prominent examples from large banks, large non-depository institutions, and several non-profit organizations.[94] However, available information suggests that the use of SPCPs is likely still limited. The Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) released a report in 2024 showing that government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs) acquired almost 15,000 mortgages originated through SPCPs in 2023, or 0.8 percent of the total mortgages GSEs acquired that year.[95] With respect to small business lending, the American Bankers Association (ABA), as of 2025, also notes that few lenders have implemented SPCPs for small business lending.[96]

The Bureau also expects that SPCPs are even less likely to be provided by small lenders, compared to larger ones. In a 2022 comment letter, J.P. Morgan Chase Bank (JPMC) described that launching an SPCP required ''significant effort'' because they ''often necessitate modifications to existing processes, close monitoring of execution and results, engagement with community leaders, adjustments to the program over time, updates to documentation, and consistent engagement with the relevant supervisory agency.'' [97]

While certain government agencies have sought to encourage SPCPs in recent years, the information available to the Bureau indicates that the actual prevalence of SPCPs, is quite low. Therefore, while the Bureau cannot quantify with any precision the number of potentially affected lenders, it has documented reasons to believe that the number is small.

The Bureau also does not have detailed information on the amount of lending that SPCPs represent as a fraction of a creditor's portfolio. However, some individual lenders have made available information on their existing SPCPs. As one case study stated, ''Wells Fargo [in the spring of 2022] set aside $150 million to lower interest rates on mortgages for Black customers'' [98] under SPCPs. However, this amount only constituted a small percentage of Wells Fargo's overall lending business.[99] Large lenders such as Wells Fargo (one of the largest in the country) are best positioned to create and benefit from SPCPs. Given research showing that net interest margins increase with bank size, and the fixed administrative costs and credit risks of operating a SPCP, it seems likely that SPCP lending would represent an even smaller fraction of lending for smaller lenders.[100]

Since, based on the limited information available, few lenders appear to have developed SPCPs and, for an individual lender, it seems to represent a small fraction of existing lending, the Bureau expects the total cost to covered persons by the proposed changes to Regulation B to be small relative to the total dollar amount of lending. The Bureau requests comment on the size and extent of existing SPCPs and the costs to covered persons described in this section.

xi. Benefits to Consumers

Some consumers may benefit from the proposed changes in the form of additional credit availability. Designing and operating SPCPs involves meaningful administrative costs as well as, in many cases, accepting higher levels of risk from program participants. It is possible that creditors decide to provide fewer loans outside of the SPCP in response to these costs. Thus, consumers who do not qualify for an existing SPCP may see additional credit availability if the proposed changes cause creditors to discontinue their SPCPs and make those funds available to borrowers at large, or else to broaden the eligibility criteria for existing SPCPs previously limited to certain prohibited basis groups. For reasons explained above, the Bureau has reason to believe that SPCPs currently account for an insignificant portion of consumer lending. The Bureau therefore believes that the extent to which consumers will benefit from additional credit availability as a result of this regulatory change is likely insignificant.

The Bureau lacks sufficient data to quantify these potential benefits and seeks comments on the extent to which consumers may benefit in this way from the proposed changes.

xii. Costs to Consumers

Consumers who could have expected to benefit from an SPCP under the baseline could see this benefit reduced or removed under the proposed changes. This includes consumers who receive credit from an SPCP when they otherwise would not have, as well as consumers who receive more favorable credit terms under an SPCP than they otherwise would have in the absence of the SPCP. To the extent that the proposed changes cause lenders to remove SPCPs or redesign programs such that these consumers no longer benefit, customers would incur a cost.

The Bureau lacks the necessary data to estimate the total cost of the proposed regulations to consumers. However, as described in the previous section, the Bureau has reason to believe that the prevalence of SPCPs is quite low and, at a market level, the total number of consumers receiving benefits under SPCPs likely represents a small portion of total credit. Therefore, the Bureau expects the costs to consumers to be

[90] 86 FR 3762 (Jan. 15, 2021).

[91] Request for Information on the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and Regulation B, *https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2020-16722.*

[92] See comment from Nat'l Fair Hous. All., *https://www.regulations.gov/comment/CFPB-2020-0026-0133,* and Mortg. Banker's Ass'n, *https://www.regulations.gov/comment/CFPB-2020-0026-0115.*

[93] Memorandum from Demetria L. McCain, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity, U.S. Dep't of Hous. & Urban Dev., to Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (Dec. 7, 2021), *FHEO's Statement by HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity on Special Purpose Credit Programs as a Remedy for Disparities in Access to Homeownership, https://web.archive.org/web/20241024180840/https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FHEO/documents/FHEO_Statement_on_Fair_Housing_and_Special_Purpose_Programs_FINAL.pdf.*

[94] U.S. Dep't of Hous. & Urb. Dev., *Market examples of SPCPs—SPCP Toolkit for Mortgage Lenders, https://spcptoolkit.com/market-examples-of-spcps/* (last visited Sept. 9, 2025).

[95] Inside Mortg. Fin., *Special Purpose Credit Program Mortgages a Fraction of GSE Business* (Oct. 19, 2023), *https://www.insidemortgagefinance.com/articles/230785-special-purpose-credit-program-mortgages-a-fraction-of-gse-business;* Fed. Hous. Fin. Agency, *Mission Report 2023* (2024), *https://www.fhfa.gov/reports/mission-report/2023.*

[96] Am. Banker's Ass'n, *Special Purpose Credit Programs, https://www.aba.com/banking-topics/commercial-banking/small-business/special-purpose-credit-programs* (last visited Sept. 9, 2025).

[97] *https://www.regulations.gov/comment/OCC-2022-0002-0252.*

[98] Orla McCaffrey, *JPMorgan Chase takes special-purpose credit program national* (Nov. 18, 2022), Am. Banker, *https://www.americanbanker.com/news/jpmorgan-chase-takes-special-purpose-credit-program-national.*

[99] According to 2024 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, Wells Fargo originated $38 billion in total mortgage volume. *See https://ffiec.cfpb.gov/data-publication/modified-lar/2024* (last visited Sept. 9, 2025).

[100] W. Blake Marsh & Taisiya Goryacheva, *Do Net Interest Margins for Small and Large Banks Vary Differently with Interest Rates?,* Fed. Rsrv. Bank of Kan. City (Feb. 10, 2022), *https://www.kansascityfed.org/research/economic-review/do-net-interest-margins-for-small-and-large-banks-vary-differently-with-interest-rates/.*

small from the proposed changes to Regulation B related to SPCPs. The Bureau requests comment on the overall cost to consumers from the proposed changes to SPCP provisions in Regulation B.

F. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Rule on Depository Institutions and Credit Unions With $10 Billion or Less in Total Assets, as Described in Section 1026

The Bureau believes that nearly all depository institutions and credit unions with $10 billion or less in total assets would be subject to Regulation B and therefore subject to the proposals described above. To estimate the number of covered depository institutions with $10 billion or less in total assets, the Bureau uses data collected by the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council's (FFIEC's) Reports of Condition and Income (Call Reports). To estimate the number of credit unions with $10 billion or less in total assets, the Bureau uses data collected by the National Credit Union Administration's (NCUA) Call Reports. Based on the 2024Q4 FFIEC Call Reports, there are 4,328 banks with $10 billion or less in total assets. Based on 2025Q2 NCUA Call Report data, there are 4,348 credit unions with $10 billion or less in total assets.

The Bureau believes that the proposed changes to disparate impact liability and liability for discouragement will likely lead institutions with $10 billion or less in total assets to save on ongoing compliance costs. As described above, financial institutions may save time and resources creating, testing, validating, and auditing models for potential disparate impact risks in their lending strategy or portfolio, although the need to comply with other fair lending laws may limit this benefit. The institutions may also reduce spending associated with compliance activities and training relevant staff, contractors, and modelers on disparate impact risks. Institutions may also reduce the time and resources associated with monitoring marketing, pre-application conversations, and preliminary inquiries. Both proposed changes also reduce potential litigation risk from enforcement actions or private claims based on disparate impact theories or allegations of discouragement or discrimination prior to applying for credit. The Bureau lacks the necessary data to quantify the extent of these benefits.

With respect to the proposed changes regarding disparate impact or discouragement, the Bureau expects depository institutions or credit unions with $10 billion or less in total assets to incur one-time costs associated with updating policies, practices, procedures, and control systems; verifying, updating and reviewing compliance; and training staff and third parties on changed policies. As described above, the Bureau has reason to believe that institutions are likely to incur one-time costs similar to that of the Bureau's previous AVM Rule. As discussed above, the Bureau expects, as an upper bound, each institution with $10 billion or less in total assets to incur a cost of between $5,600 to $9,600 in one-time costs associated with each of the two categories of proposals. The Bureau seeks comment on the one-time cost of the proposed rule on depository institutions with $10 billion or less in total assets.

The Bureau also expects that the proposed revisions regarding SPCPs will impose additional restrictions on any depository institution with $10 billion or less in total assets who either has or would have had an SPCP. As described above, the new restrictions may reduce the net benefit that a depository institution derives from implementing an SPCP. However, for the reasons described above, the Bureau expects that few depository institutions with $10 billion or less in total assets have or would be expected to create an SPCP and that it represents a small part of any individual institution's lending. For this reason, the Bureau expects the proposed SPCP changes to have a small impact on depository institutions with $10 billion or less.

G. Potential Impacts on Consumers in Rural Areas, as Described in Section 1026

This section assesses the potential impact of the proposed amendments to Regulation B on rural consumers. The Bureau evaluates the proposed provisions jointly given their overall implications on fair lending protections and credit access for rural consumers.

Consumers in rural areas may experience greater impact from fewer protections against disparate impact because of the proposed changes to Regulation B. Without disparate impact liability, covered persons may curtail their efforts in reviewing and mitigating neutral policies that could disproportionately exclude rural borrowers. One potential reason for this exclusion is that the loan application process in rural areas often involve consideration of informal or soft information, given the small-dollar or agricultural nature typical of such rural loans.

The Bureau expects that rural consumers would face many of the same costs and benefits from the proposed changes to discouragement provisions as described above in Section E. It is possible that rural consumers could be excluded from advertising about products from which they may have benefitted, relative to the baseline. They also may experience fewer protections from discouraging behavior by lenders made at the pre-application stage, relative to the baseline.

Restriction of SPCP eligibility criteria would curtail programs designed to increase lending to consumers of prohibited basis groups in rural areas. Consumers who benefit from targeted mortgages and small business SPCPs could face higher barriers to credit access and fewer opportunities for entrepreneurship. However, as described in the previous section, the Bureau believes that the prevalence of SPCPs is quite low and the total number of consumers receiving benefits under SPCPs represent a small portion of any credit market. Therefore, the proposed changes to SPCPs will likely have a small impact on rural consumers. The Bureau seeks comment as to the proposed rule's effect on rural consumers.

VI. Regulatory Flexibility Act Analysis

The Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, requires each agency to consider the potential impact of its regulations on small entities, including small businesses, small governmental units, and small not-for-profit organizations.[101] The RFA defines a ''small business'' as a business that meets the size standard developed by the Small Business Administration pursuant to the Small Business Act.[102] Potentially affected small entities include depository and non-depository providers of credit.

The RFA generally requires an agency to conduct an initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA) and a final regulatory flexibility analysis (FRFA) of any rule subject to notice-and comment rulemaking requirements, unless the agency certifies that the rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small

[101] 5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.* The Bureau is not aware of any small governmental units or not-for-profit organizations to which the proposal would apply.

[102] 5 U.S.C. 601(3) (the Bureau may establish an alternative definition after consultation with the Small Business Administration and an opportunity for public comment).

entities.[103] The Bureau also is subject to certain additional procedures under the RFA involving the convening of a panel to consult with small business representatives prior to proposing a rule for which an IRFA is required.[104]

An IRFA is not required for this proposal because the proposal, if adopted, would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The Bureau does not expect the rule to impose significant economic impacts on small entities relative to the baseline. Any effects, including one-time costs, would be expected to be small for each entity. In part V.E.x, the Bureau described how the size of SPCPs as a share of a lender's overall portfolio is expected to be small based on existing evidence. In part V.E.x, the Bureau also described how the prevalence of SPCPs is low and the Bureau expects this would also be true of (and especially for) small entities. Therefore, the Bureau does not expect the SPCPs provisions to affect a substantial number of small entities.

Accordingly, the Acting Director certifies that this proposal, if adopted, would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The Bureau requests comment on its analysis of the impact of the proposed rule on small entities and requests any relevant data.

Paperwork Reduction Act

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are generally required to seek the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)'s approval for information collection requirements prior to implementation. The collections of information related to Regulation B have been previously reviewed and approved by OMB and assigned OMB Control Number 3170–0013 (Regulation B). Under the PRA, the Bureau may not conduct or sponsor and, notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person is not required to respond to an information collection unless the information collection displays a valid control number assigned by OMB.

The Bureau has determined that this proposed rule would not impose any new or revised information collection requirements (recordkeeping, reporting or disclosure requirements) on covered entities or members of the public that would constitute collections of information requiring OMB approval under the PRA.

The Bureau welcomes comments on this determination, which may be submitted to the Bureau at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Attention: PRA Office), 1700 G Street NW, Washington, DC 20552, or by email to *CFPB_PRA@cfpb.gov.* All Comments are matters of Public Record.

VII. Severability

The Bureau preliminarily intends that the provisions of the rule are separate and severable from one another. If any provision of the final rule, or any application of a provision, is stayed or determined to be invalid, the remaining provisions or applications are severable and shall continue to be in effect. The Bureau has designed each provision to operate independently so that the effect of each provision will continue regardless of whether one or another provision is not effectuated. Therefore, proposed provisions related to disparate impact, discouragement, and special purpose credit programs are intended to be separate and severable. Moreover, aspects of these provisions are also intended to be severable, if any portion is not effectuated, including the changes proposed to the discouragement provision and the prohibitions and restrictions proposed for special purpose credit programs.

Executive Order 12866

Executive Orders 12866 and 13563 direct agencies to assess all costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, if regulation is necessary, to select those regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety, and other advantages; and distributive impacts). Section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866 defines a ''significant regulatory action'' as any regulatory action that is likely to result in a rule that may: (1) have an annual effect on the economy of $100 million or more or adversely affect in a material way the economy, a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local, or tribal governments or communities; (2) create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency; (3) materially alter the budgetary impact of entitlements, grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or (4) raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, or the President's priorities. The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has determined that this action is a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866. Accordingly, OMB has reviewed this action.

List of Subjects in

12 CFR Part 1002

Banks, Banking, Civil rights, Consumer protection, Credit, Credit unions, Marital status discrimination, National banks, Penalties, Religious discrimination, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Savings associations, Sex discrimination.

Authority and Issuance

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, the Bureau proposes to amend Regulation B, 12 CFR part 1002, as set forth below:

PART 1002—EQUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITY ACT (REGULATION B)

■ 1. The authority citation for part 1002 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 12 U.S.C. 5512, 5581; 15 U.S.C. 1691b. Subpart B is also issued under 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2.

SUBPART A—GENERAL

■ 2. Amend § 1002.4 by revising paragraph (b) to read as follows:

§ 1002.41002.4 General rules.

* * * * *

(b) *Discouragement.* A creditor shall not make any oral or written statement, in advertising or otherwise, directed at applicants or prospective applicants that the creditor knows or should know would cause a reasonable person to believe that the creditor would deny, or would grant on less favorable terms, a credit application by the applicant or prospective applicant because of the applicant or prospective applicant's prohibited basis characteristic(s). For purposes of this paragraph (b), oral or written statements are spoken or written words, or visual images such as symbols, photographs, or videos.

* * * * *

■ 3. Amend § 1002.6(b) *Discouragement.* A creditor shall not make any oral or written statement, in advertising or otherwise, directed at applicants or prospective applicants that the creditor knows or should know would cause a reasonable person to believe that the creditor would deny, or would grant on less favorable terms, a credit application by the applicant or prospective applicant because of the applicant or prospective applicant's prohibited basis characteristic(s). For purposes of this paragraph (b), oral or written statements are spoken or written words, or visual images such as symbols, photographs, or videos.

[103] 5 U.S.C. 603 through 605.

[104] 5 U.S.C. 609.

3. Amend § 1002.6 by revising paragraph (a) to read as follows:

§ 1002.61002.6 Rules concerning evaluation of applications.

(a) *General rule concerning use of information.* Except as otherwise provided in the Act and this part, a creditor may consider any information obtained, so long as the information is not used to discriminate against an applicant on a prohibited basis. The Act does not provide that the ''effects test'' applies for determining whether there is discrimination in violation of the Act.

* * * * *

■ 4. In § 1002.8(a) *General rule concerning use of information.* Except as otherwise provided in the Act and this part, a creditor may consider any information obtained, so long as the information is not used to discriminate against an applicant on a prohibited basis. The Act does not provide that the ''effects test'' applies for determining whether there is discrimination in violation of the Act.

* * * * *

4. In § 1002.8, revise paragraphs (a)(3)(i) and (ii), the heading of paragraph (b), and paragraphs (b)(2) and (c), and add paragraphs (b)(3) and (4), to read as follows:

§ 1002.81002.8 Special purpose credit programs.

(a) * * *

(3) * * *

(i) * * *

(A) Identifies the class of persons that the program is designed to benefit;

(B) Sets forth the procedures and standards for extending credit pursuant to the program;

(C) Provides evidence of the need for the program;

(D) Explains why, under the organization's standards of creditworthiness, the class of persons would not receive such credit in the absence of the program; and

(E) When the persons in the class are required to share one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis, explains why meeting the special social needs addressed by the program:

(*1*) Necessitates that its participants share the specific common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis; and

(*2*) Cannot be accomplished through a program that does not use otherwise prohibited bases as participant eligibility criteria; and

(ii) The program is established and administered to extend credit to a class of persons who, under the organization's standards of creditworthiness, would not receive such credit.

(b) *Controlling provisions*—

* * * * *

(2) *Common characteristics.* A program described in paragraphs (a)(2) or (a)(3) of this section qualifies as a special purpose credit program only if it was established and is administered so as not to discriminate against an applicant on any prohibited basis; however, except as provided in paragraphs (b)(3) and (b)(4) of this section, all program participants may be required to share one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis so long as the program was not established and is not administered with the purpose of evading the requirements of the Act or this part.

(3) *Prohibited common characteristics.* A special purpose credit program described in paragraph (a)(3) of this section shall not use the race, color, national origin, or sex, or any combination thereof, of the applicant, as a common characteristic or factor in determining eligibility for the program.

(4) *Otherwise prohibited bases in for-profit programs.* Subject to paragraph (b)(3) of this section, a special purpose credit program described in paragraph (a)(3) of this section may require its participants to share one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis only if the for-profit organization provides evidence for each participant who receives credit through the program that in the absence of the program the participant would not receive such credit as a result of those specific characteristics.

(c) *Special rule concerning requests and use of information.* If participants in a special purpose credit program described in paragraph (a) of this section are required to possess one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis and if the program otherwise satisfies the requirements of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, a creditor may request and consider information regarding the common characteristic(s) in determining the applicant's eligibility for the program.

* * * * *

■ 5. Amend § 1002.1002.8 Special purpose credit programs.

(a) * * *

(3) * * *

(i) * * *

(A) Identifies the class of persons that the program is designed to benefit;

(B) Sets forth the procedures and standards for extending credit pursuant to the program;

(C) Provides evidence of the need for the program;

(D) Explains why, under the organization's standards of creditworthiness, the class of persons would not receive such credit in the absence of the program; and

(E) When the persons in the class are required to share one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis, explains why meeting the special social needs addressed by the program:

(*1*) Necessitates that its participants share the specific common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis; and

(*2*) Cannot be accomplished through a program that does not use otherwise prohibited bases as participant eligibility criteria; and

(ii) The program is established and administered to extend credit to a class of persons who, under the organization's standards of creditworthiness, would not receive such credit.

(b) *Controlling provisions*—

* * * * *

(2) *Common characteristics.* A program described in paragraphs (a)(2) or (a)(3) of this section qualifies as a special purpose credit program only if it was established and is administered so as not to discriminate against an applicant on any prohibited basis; however, except as provided in paragraphs (b)(3) and (b)(4) of this section, all program participants may be required to share one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis so long as the program was not established and is not administered with the purpose of evading the requirements of the Act or this part.

(3) *Prohibited common characteristics.* A special purpose credit program described in paragraph (a)(3) of this section shall not use the race, color, national origin, or sex, or any combination thereof, of the applicant, as a common characteristic or factor in determining eligibility for the program.

(4) *Otherwise prohibited bases in for-profit programs.* Subject to paragraph (b)(3) of this section, a special purpose credit program described in paragraph (a)(3) of this section may require its participants to share one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis only if the for-profit organization provides evidence for each participant who receives credit through the program that in the absence of the program the participant would not receive such credit as a result of those specific characteristics.

(c) *Special rule concerning requests and use of information.* If participants in a special purpose credit program described in paragraph (a) of this section are required to possess one or more common characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis and if the program otherwise satisfies the requirements of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, a creditor may request and consider information regarding the common characteristic(s) in determining the applicant's eligibility for the program.

* * * * *

5. Amend § 1002.15 by revising paragraph (d)(1)(ii) to read as follows:

§ 1002.15 Incentives for self-testing and self-correction.

(d) * * *

(1) * * *

(ii) By a government agency or an applicant in any proceeding or civil action in which a violation of the Act or this part is alleged.

* * * * *

■ 6. In Supplement I to part 1002:

■ a. Under *Section 1002.2—Definitions,* revise *Paragraph 2(p)(4),* including the heading.

■ b. Under *Section 1002.4—General Rules,* revise *Paragraph 4(b),* including the heading.

■ c. Under *Section 1002.6—Rules Concerning Evaluation of Applications,* revise *6(a)—General rule concerning use of information,* by revising *Paragraph (6)(a)(2).*

■ d. Under *Section 1002.8—Special Purpose Credit Programs,* revise *8(a)—Standards for programs* by revising *Paragraph (8)(a)(5),* revise *8(b)—Rules in other sections* by revising the heading and adding *Paragraph (8)(b)(2),* revise *8(c)—Special rule concerning requests and use of information* by revising *Paragraph (8)(c)(2).*

The revisions and additions read as follows:

Supplement I to Part 1002—Official Interpretations

* * * * *

Section 1002.2—Definitions

* * * * *

2(p) Empirically derived and other credit scoring systems.

* * * * *

4. *Disparate treatment.* An empirically derived, demonstrably and statistically sound, credit scoring system may include age as a predictive factor (provided that the age of an elderly applicant is not assigned a negative factor or value). Besides age, no other prohibited basis may be used as a variable. Generally, credit scoring systems treat all applicants objectively and thus avoid problems of disparate treatment. In cases where a credit scoring system is used in conjunction with individual discretion, disparate treatment could conceivably occur in the evaluation process.

* * * * *

Section 1002.4—General Rules

* * * * *

Paragraph 4(b).

1. *Discouragement.* Generally, the regulation's protections apply only to persons who have requested or received an extension of credit. In keeping with the purpose of the Act—to promote the availability of credit on a nondiscriminatory basis—§ 1002.4(b) prohibits creditors from making oral or written statements directed at applicants or prospective applicants that the creditor knows or should know would cause a reasonable person to believe that the creditor would deny their credit application, or would grant it on less favorable terms, because of their prohibited basis characteristic(s). For purposes of § 1002.4(b), encouraging statements directed at one group of consumers cannot discourage other consumers who were not the intended recipients of the statements.

i. Statements prohibited by § 1002.4(b) include:

A. A statement that the applicant should not bother to apply, after the applicant states that he is retired.

B. Statements directed at the general public that express a discriminatory preference or a policy of exclusion against consumers based on one or more prohibited basis characteristics in violation of the Act.

C. The use of interview scripts that discourage applications on a prohibited basis.

ii. Statements not prohibited by § 1002.4(b) include:

A. Statements directed at one group of consumers, encouraging that group of consumers to apply for credit.

B. Statements in support of local law enforcement.

C. Statements recommending that, before buying a home in a particular neighborhood, consumers investigate, for example, the neighborhood's schools, its proximity to grocery stores, and its crime statistics.

D. Statements encouraging consumers to seek out resources to develop their financial literacy.

* * * * *

Section 1002.6—Rules Concerning Evaluation of Applications

6(a) General rule concerning use of information.

1. *General.* When evaluating an application for credit, a creditor generally may consider any information obtained. However, a creditor may not consider in its evaluation of creditworthiness any information that it is barred by § 1002.5 from obtaining or from using for any purpose other than to conduct a self-test under § 1002.15.

2. *Disparate treatment.* The Act prohibits practices that discriminate on a prohibited basis regarding any aspect of a credit transaction. The Act does not provide for the prohibition of practices that are facially neutral as to prohibited bases, except to the extent that facially neutral criteria function as proxies for protected characteristics designed or applied with the intention of advantaging or disadvantaging individuals based on protected characteristics.

* * * * *

Section 1002.8—Special Purpose Credit Programs

8(a) Standards for programs.

1. *Determining qualified programs.* The Bureau does not determine whether individual programs qualify for special purpose credit status, or whether a particular program benefits an ''economically disadvantaged class of persons.'' The agency or creditor administering or offering the loan program must make these decisions regarding the status of its program.

2. *Compliance with a program authorized by Federal or state law.* A creditor does not violate Regulation B when it complies in good faith with a regulation promulgated by a government agency implementing a special purpose credit program under § 1002.8(a)(1). It is the agency's responsibility to promulgate a regulation that is consistent with Federal and state law.

3. *Expressly authorized.* Credit programs authorized by Federal or state law include programs offered pursuant to Federal, state, or local statute, regulation or ordinance, or pursuant to judicial or administrative order.

4. *Creditor liability.* A refusal to grant credit to an applicant is not a violation of the Act or regulation if the applicant does not meet the eligibility requirements under a special purpose credit program.

5. *Determining need.* In designing a special purpose credit program under § 1002.8(a)(3), a for-profit organization must determine that the program will benefit a class of people who would otherwise be denied credit. This determination can be based on a broad analysis using the organization's own research or data from outside sources, including governmental reports and studies. For example, a creditor might design new products to reach consumers who would not meet its traditional standards of creditworthiness due to such factors as credit inexperience or the use of credit sources that may not report to consumer reporting agencies. Or, a bank could review Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data along with demographic data for its assessment area.

6. *Elements of the program.* The written plan must contain information that supports the need for the particular program. The plan also must either state a specific period of time for which the program will last, or contain a statement regarding when the program will be reevaluated to determine if there is a continuing need for it.

8(b) Controlling provisions.

1. *Applicability of rules.* A creditor that rejects an application because the applicant does not meet the eligibility requirements (common characteristic or financial need, for example) must nevertheless notify the applicant of action taken as required by § 1002.9.

2. *Use of common characteristics.* Section 1002.8(b)(2) permits a creditor to determine eligibility for a special purpose credit program using one or more common

characteristics that would otherwise be a prohibited basis only so long as that section's requirements, the requirements of § 1002.8(b)(3) and (4), and the other requirements of this part are satisfied. Under § 1002.8(b)(2), once the characteristics of the program's class of participants are established, the creditor is prohibited from discriminating among potential participants on a prohibited basis.

8(c) Special rule concerning requests and use of information.

1. *Request of prohibited basis information.* This section permits a creditor to request and consider certain information that would otherwise be prohibited by §§ 1002.5 and 1002.6 to determine an applicant's eligibility for a particular program.

2. *Example.* An example of a program under which the creditor can ask for and consider information about a prohibited basis is an energy conservation program to assist the elderly, for which the creditor must consider the applicant's age.

* * * * *

Russell Vought,

Acting Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

[FR Doc. 2025–19864 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810–AM–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 705

[EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0549; FRL–7902.3–01–OCSPP]

RIN 2070–AL29

Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Data Reporting and Recordkeeping Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA); Revision to Regulation

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA or Agency) is proposing amendments to the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) regulation for reporting and recordkeeping requirements for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). As promulgated in October 2023, the regulation requires manufacturers (including importers) of PFAS in any year between 2011–2022 to report certain data to EPA related to exposure and environmental and health effects. EPA is proposing to incorporate certain exemptions and other modifications to the scope of the reporting regulation. These exemptions would maintain important reporting on PFAS, consistent with statutory requirements, while exempting reporting on activities about which manufacturers are least likely to know or reasonably ascertain.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before December 29, 2025. Comments on the information collection provisions of this proposed rule under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) must be received by the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OMB–OIRA) on or before December 15, 2025. Please refer to the PRA section under ''Statutory and Executive Order Reviews'' in this preamble for specific instructions.

ADDRESSES: Submit your comments, identified by docket identification (ID) number EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0549, through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at *https://www.regulations.gov*. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments. Do not submit electronically any information you consider to be Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information for which disclosure is restricted by statute. Additional instructions on commenting or visiting the docket, along with more information about dockets generally, is available at *https://www.epa.gov/dockets*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

For technical information contact: Megan Nelson, Chemical Information, Prioritization, and Toxics Release Inventory Division (7406M), Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20460–0001; telephone number: (202) 498–1248; email address: *nelson.megan.m@epa.gov*.

For general information contact: The TSCA Assistance Information Service Hotline, Goodwill Vision Enterprises, 422 South Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY 14620; telephone number: (202) 554–1404; email address: *TSCA-Hotline@epa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Executive Summary

A. Does this action apply to me?

This action may apply to you if you have manufactured (defined by statute at 15 U.S.C. 2602(9) to include import) PFAS for a commercial purpose at any time from January 1, 2011, through December 31, 2022. The following list of North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes is not intended to be exhaustive but rather provides a guide to help readers determine whether this document applies to them. Potentially affected entities may include:

- Utilities (NAICS code 22);
- Manufacturing (NAICS codes 31 through 33);
- Wholesale trade (NAICS code 42); and
- Waste management and remediation services (NAICS code 562).

This list details the types of entities EPA is currently aware could potentially be impacted by this action. Other types of entities could also be impacted. To determine whether your entity is impacted by this action, please examine the applicability criteria found in 40 CFR 705.10 and 705.12. If you have questions regarding the applicability of this action to a particular entity, consult the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section.

Any use of the term ''PFAS'' or ''perfluoroalkyl or polyfluoroalkyl substance'' refers to chemical substances that meet the structural definition of PFAS codified at 40 CFR 705.3. PFAS is defined as including at least one of these three structures:

- R-(CF_2)-CF(R′)R″, where both the CF_2 and CF moieties are saturated carbons;
- R-CF_2OCF_2-R′, where R and R′ can either be F, O, or saturated carbons; and
- $CF_3C(CF_3)$R′-R″, where R′ and R″ can either be F or saturated carbons.

For a more thorough discussion of the chemical substances included in this rule, please see Unit III.A of the final rule (88 FR 70516, October 11, 2023) (FRL–7902–02–OCSPP).

This rule does not require reporting on substances that are excluded from the definition of ''chemical substance'' in TSCA section 3(2)(B). Those exclusions include, but are not limited to: any pesticide (as defined by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)) when manufactured, processed, or distributed in commerce for use as a pesticide; any food, food additive, drug, cosmetic, or device, as defined by the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA), when manufactured, processed, or distributed in commerce for use as a food, food additive, drug, cosmetic or device; tobacco or any tobacco product; any source material, special nuclear material, or byproduct material as such terms are defined in the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (AEA); or, any article the sale of which is subject to the tax imposed by section 4181 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. A PFAS may be considered a ''chemical substance'' as defined under TSCA for some, but not all, uses of the PFAS. Some uses may be excluded from the definition of ''chemical substance,'' as outlined under TSCA section 3(2)(B). PFAS

considered to be a ''chemical substance'' pursuant to the TSCA definition may require reporting for such uses.

B. What is the Agency's authority for taking this action?

As with the final rule published in the **Federal Register** on October 11, 2023 (88 FR 70516) (FRL–7902–02–OCSPP), and direct final amendment published on September 5, 2024 (89 FR 72336) (FRL–7902.1–02–OCSPP), EPA is proposing this rule pursuant to its authority in TSCA section 8(a)(7) (15 U.S.C. 2607(a)(7)). The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (NDAA) (Pub. L. 116–92, section 7351) amended TSCA section 8(a) in December 2019, adding TSCA section 8(a)(7), titled ''PFAS Data.'' TSCA section 8(a)(7) requires EPA to promulgate a rule ''requiring each person who has manufactured a chemical substance that is a [PFAS] in any year since January 1, 2011'' to report information described in TSCA section 8(a)(2)(A) through (G). TSCA section 8(a)(2)(A) through (G) includes a broad range of information, such as information related to chemical identity and structure, production, use, byproducts, exposure, disposal, and health and environmental effects.

EPA has authority to reconsider and revise previous decisions and to revise, replace, or repeal a decision to the extent permitted by law and supported by reasoned explanation. *See FCC* v. *Fox Television Stations, Inc.,* 556 U.S. 502, 515 (2009); *see also Motor Vehicle Mfrs. Ass'n* v. *State Farm Mutual Auto. Ins. Co.,* 463 U.S. 29, 42 (1983); *see also FDA* v. *Wages and White Lion Investments, LLC,* 145 S. Ct. 898 (2025). In other words, unless provided otherwise by statute, an agency may revise or rescind prior actions so long as it acknowledges the change in position, provides a reasonable explanation for the new position, and considers legitimate reliance interests in the prior position.

C. What action is the Agency taking?

EPA is proposing to amend the one-time PFAS reporting and recordkeeping regulation finalized on October 11, 2023 (88 FR 70516) (FRL–7902–02–OCSPP) to incorporate the following exemptions to the scope of reportable manufacturing activities: a *de minimis* exemption of 0.1%; imported articles; byproducts; impurities; research and development (R&D); and non-isolated intermediates. The Agency is further proposing technical corrections to the reporting requirements for the purpose of clarifying what must be reported in certain data fields and to adjust the data submission period of the reporting regulation. While EPA is proposing no other amendments to the scope of the regulation, including to the period for which reporting is required, the Agency is also seeking comment on certain other aspects of the regulation.

D. Why is the Agency taking this action?

In a series of Executive Orders, President Trump has directed agency heads to review regulations under their jurisdiction for consistency with law and Administration policy and to identify inconsistent regulations for potential recission or modification. For example, Executive Order 14219, ''Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President's 'Department of Government Efficiency' Deregulatory Initiative,'' directs agencies to initiate a process to review existing rules for consistency with the best reading of the governing statute, Administration policy, cost-benefit balancing principles, and to rescind or revise regulations as appropriate (90 FR 10583, February 19, 2025). Among the categories of regulations to be identified are those that significantly and unjustifiably impede technological innovation, infrastructure development, disaster response, inflation reduction, R&D, economic development, energy production, land use, and foreign policy objectives and those that impose undue burdens on small business and impede private enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Consistent with Executive Order 14219 and the Administration's priorities, EPA identified the TSCA section 8(a)(7) PFAS reporting regulation for reconsideration. The Agency is reconsidering exempting certain reportable activities. The Agency has identified several aspects of the TSCA section 8(a)(7) PFAS reporting regulation for potential revision in light of TSCA section 8(a)(5):

- TSCA section 8(a)(5)(A) directs the Agency, to the extent feasible, to not require unnecessary or duplicative reporting. After reconsidering its earlier position in the 2023 final rule, EPA believes reporting on certain activities may be unnecessary for the reasons articulated in this preamble. In addition, EPA believes some byproduct reporting may be duplicative. See the relevant discussions in Unit III for more detail.
- TSCA section 8(a)(5)(B) directs the Agency, to the extent feasible, to minimize cost of compliance on small manufacturers. Under TSCA section 8(a), a ''small manufacturer'' is a manufacturer that either has revenues less than $120 million and manufactures less than 100,000 pounds in production volume for a chemical substance or has revenues less than $12 million regardless of production volume annually.
- TSCA section 8(a)(5)(C) directs the Agency, to the extent feasible, to apply reporting obligations to only those persons likely to have information relevant to the effective implementation of TSCA.

EPA has also reconsidered the scope of the reporting requirements in light of TSCA section 2(c), which directs the Agency to carry out TSCA ''in a reasonable and prudent manner'' and to ''consider the environmental, economic, and social impact of any action.'' *See Chem. Mfrs. Ass'n* v. *EPA,* 899 F.2d 344, 347–48 (5th Cir. 1990) (''Congress [ ] plainly intended the EPA to consider the economic impact of *any* actions taken by it under the TSCA'') (citing 15 U.S.C. 2601(c); emphasis in original); *see also Nat'l Ass'n of Home Builders* v. *EPA,* 682 F.3d 1032, 1039 (D.C. Cir. 2012); *Ausimont U.S.A. Inc.* v. *EPA,* 838 F.2d 93, 95 (3d Cir. 1988). Unlike certain other TSCA provisions, section 8(a)(7) does not direct EPA how to use the information collected under the PFAS reporting rule. In contrast, for example, TSCA section 8(b)(10) directs EPA to promulgate a rule ''to assist in the preparation of'' an inventory of mercury supply, use, and trade in the United States.'' The stated purpose of TSCA section 8(b)(10) data collection is to create a mercury inventory and to recommend actions to achieve mercury use reduction. *See NRDC, Inc.* v. *EPA,* 961 F.3d 160, 175 (2d Cir. 2020) (''Congress's instruction to EPA to create and publish 'an inventory of mercury supply, use, and trade, in the United States,' evinces its affirmative interest in cataloguing both the nature and extent of mercury use in the United States economy. Congress made clear that it intends EPA to collect and publish information on mercury use.''). TSCA section 8(a)(7) does not specify any such use for the data collection. EPA also notes that commenters on the TSCA section 8(a)(7) proposed rule stated that its associated burden was disproportionate to the benefits that would be derived from the data collected under the rule. EPA has reconsidered its position and, consistent with TSCA sections 2(c) and 8(a)(5), proposes to exempt certain activities from the rule given the lack of express statutory directive to create a full inventory of all PFAS manufacturing activities.

Although EPA now believes information on certain reportable activities is not necessary at this time, the Agency may in the future determine that such information is necessary to support particular regulatory actions.

Courts have supported such a sequenced process to addressing an Agency's statutory obligations. See *S. Coast Air Qual. Mgmt. Dist.* v. *EPA,* 554 F.3d 1076, 1080 (D.C. Cir. 2009); *Bluewater Network* v. *EPA,* 372 F.3d 404, 411 (D.C. Cir. 2004). Here, it is reasonable to defer the collection of certain information until there is a clear role that such information could play to support a program mission of the Agency. TSCA grants EPA adequate authority to secure such information as needed, including under TSCA section 8, should the information collected sunder TSCA section 8(a)(7) prove insufficient or outdated for a particular action.

E. What are the estimated incremental impacts of this action?

EPA has prepared an Economic Analysis of the potential impacts associated with this proposed rule (Ref. 1). The primary purpose of this proposed rule is to incorporate certain exemptions to the scope of reportable manufacturing activities for PFAS manufactured from 2011 to 2022, as required under TSCA section 8(a)(7).

This proposed action would reduce the burden on entities least likely to know and report relevant information without sacrificing the known and reasonably ascertainable data related to historically manufactured PFAS. Through the proposed exemptions and other clarifications to the regulation, this action is expected to provide both regulatory relief and greater regulatory certainty to regulated parties, resulting in a net reduction in cost while retaining the majority of PFAS manufacture reporting requirements.

The reporting community is expected to receive burden reductions from the proposed amendments to the PFAS reporting rule associated with rule familiarization, compliance determination, form completion, and recordkeeping activities. EPA is also accounting for the sunk costs of companies that have undertaken some level of rule familiarization and compliance determination when estimating the expected reduction in costs. EPA estimates that approximately 6–12 percent of the expected costs of the October 11, 2023, TSCA section 8(a)(7) final rule (88 FR 70516) (FRL–7902–02–OCSPP) have already accrued. This estimate is based on best professional judgment; see Unit IV.B for additional discussion and requests for public comments on this estimate. Under the proposed rule, EPA estimates a total industry burden reduction of 10–11. million fewer total hours, or a cost savings of $786–$843 million compared to the October 11, 2023, TSCA section 8(a)(7) final rule (88 FR 70516) (FRL–7902–02–OCSPP) requirements. Affected small businesses are expected to be relieved of 9.3–9.9 million total hours, or $703–$761 million in costs. The Agency is not expected to incur incremental costs. The total incremental social cost savings of the proposed rule compared to the October 11, 2023, TSCA section 8(a)(7) final rule (88 FR 70516) (FRL–7902–02–OCSPP) is therefore estimated to be approximately $786–$843 million.

F. Severability

EPA intends that the provisions of this proposed rulemaking would, if finalized, be severable from one another. In the event that any individual provision or part of this rulemaking is invalidated, EPA intends that this would not render the entire rulemaking invalid, and that any individual provisions that are finalized would continue to be followed.

II. Background

A. TSCA Section 8(a)(7)

President Trump signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (NDAA) on December 20, 2019 (Pub. L. 116–92). Among other provisions, section 7321 of the NDAA created TSCA section 8(a)(7). TSCA section 8(a)(7) states that the Administrator ''shall promulgate a rule in accordance with this subsection requiring each person who has manufactured a chemical substance that is a [PFAS] in any year since January 1, 2011, to submit to the Administrator a report that includes, for each year since January 1, 2011, the information described in subparagraphs (A) through (G) of paragraph (2).'' The categories of information described in sections 8(a)(2)(A) through (G) are:

- The common or trade name, chemical identity and molecular structure of each chemical substance or mixture for which a report is required;
- Categories or proposed categories of use for each substance or mixture;
- Total amount of each substance or mixture manufactured or processed, the amounts manufactured or processed for each category of use, and reasonable estimates of the respective proposed amounts;
- Descriptions of byproducts resulting from the manufacture, processing, use, or disposal of each substance or mixture;
- All existing information concerning the environmental and health effects of each substance or mixture;
- The number of individuals exposed, and reasonable estimates on the number of individuals who will be exposed, to each substance or mixture in their places of work and the duration of their exposure; and
- The manner or method of disposal of each substance or mixture, and any change in such manner or method.

B. The PFAS Data Reporting Rule Under TSCA Section 8(a)(7)

On June 28, 2021, EPA proposed the TSCA section 8(a)(7) PFAS reporting rule (86 FR 33926) (FRL–10017–78). This rule proposed to require any person who had manufactured (including imported) a PFAS (including as a mixture or an article containing a PFAS) as defined by a structural definition to report the required information for each year from 2011 to 2022 (86 FR 33926, June 28, 2021) (FRL–10017–78), to the extent such information is known to or reasonably ascertainable by the manufacturer. EPA did not propose any reporting exemptions or thresholds that other TSCA reporting rules have used, such as for chemical substances in imported articles, R&D chemicals, impurities, and certain byproducts. Additionally, EPA proposed no flexibilities for small manufacturers.

After a 90-day public comment period and additional information gathering on the proposed rule's burden and cost estimates, EPA could not support a certification under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) that the rule would impose no significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. EPA thus convened a Small Business Advocacy Review (SBAR) Panel in April 2022. The Panel used feedback from small entity representatives to develop a Panel Report (Ref. 2) and Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) (Ref. 3). EPA opened a second public comment period (87 FR 72439) (FRL–7902–04–OCSPP) on November 25, 2022, to solicit comment on the proposed rule's IRFA, SBAR Panel Report, and other aspects of the proposed rule that may have been impacted by EPA actions or proposed actions after the proposed rule's publication in June 2021.

EPA considered comments and other stakeholder input, including from the SBAR Panel, in developing the final rule, which was published on October 11, 2023 (88 FR 70516) (FRL–7902–02–OCSPP). Public input informed changes from the 2021 proposed rule, including the scope of the PFAS structural definition, the duration of the data submission period, and the inclusion of shorter reporting forms for certain PFAS manufacturing scenarios. However, EPA did not add any exemptions as

requested by commenters and as recommended by the SBAR Panel.

The final rule established a 12-month data collection period for manufacturers following the effective date of the rule, followed by a six-month data submission period, with information from most PFAS manufacturers due to EPA by May 8, 2025. Small manufacturers reporting exclusively as article importers had a 12-month submission period, with a reporting deadline of November 10, 2025.

C. Implementation Status of the PFAS Data Reporting Rule

Data have not yet been submitted under the PFAS reporting rule. Since promulgating the final rule on October 11, 2023, the Agency has moved the reporting deadline twice. EPA needed to move the submission period due to the delay in the development of the reporting application on EPA's Central Data Exchange (CDX, the Agency's electronic reporting site), related information technology (IT) infrastructure challenges, and the ability to conduct user testing data needed for IT reporting application development. On September 5, 2024, EPA promulgated a direct final rule (89 FR 72336) (FRL–7902.1–02–OCSPP) to move the start of the data submission period from November 12, 2024, to July 11, 2025. EPA subsequently published an interim final rule on May 13, 2025 (90 FR 20236) (FRL–7902.2–01–OCSPP) to move the start of the data submission period from July 11, 2025, to April 13, 2026. EPA noted the need for such amendments due to further delays in developing the CDX infrastructure and conducting industry beta testing to ensure the reporting application collects and stores data as intended.

III. Proposed Amendments

A. Proposed Exemptions

EPA is proposing to add certain exemptions to the scope of reportable PFAS manufacturing activities under 40 CFR 705. EPA intends these exemptions to be similar to the TSCA Chemical Data Reporting (CDR) rule (40 CFR 711) and, in addition, proposes to include the *de minimis* exemption described in Unit III.A.1. In some scenarios, more than one of these proposed exemptions may provide the same regulatory relief from reporting. For example, an importer of articles which contain low levels of PFAS may be exempt from reporting by virtue of both the imported articles and *de minimis* exemptions. EPA is interested in public comments on potential means to consolidate the proposed exemptions, while providing the same regulatory relief and in public comments on the potential benefits and drawbacks of finalizing all proposed exemptions or a subset of proposed exemptions when viewed in combination.

The purpose of this rule is to better understand the PFAS manufactured (including imported) in the United States for commercial purposes, to the extent the information is known to or reasonably ascertainable by regulated entities. EPA recognizes that the number of entities that will need to search their records to identify the information is greater than the number of entities that will ultimately report. In EPA's 2023 Economic Analysis (Ref. 4) and FRFA (Ref. 5), the Agency assumed that, of all small article importers conducting due diligence to identify any reportable PFAS, only 10% would ultimately determine that they had known or reasonably ascertainable information to report on PFAS imported in articles. That is, 90% of the small article importers would be burdened by compliance determination activities only to then determine that they do not need to report because the information is not known or reasonably ascertainable.

After further consideration of the Agency's obligations under TSCA sections 8(a)(7), 8(a)(5), and 2(c), EPA is reassessing whether the volume of potential data collected justifies the total burden of implementing that collection and what result Congress intended when it added TSCA section 8(a)(7) within the broader structure of section 8. Therefore, EPA is proposing these exemptions to maintain meaningful reporting on PFAS while exempting regulated entities that are least likely to have relevant information, alleviating some compliance burden (*e.g.,* rule familiarization, recordkeeping), and eliminating some reporting where EPA has now determined that the reportable information is unnecessary to fulfill statutory obligations. These proposed exemptions also aim to minimize, to the extent feasible, the burden of regulatory compliance on small manufacturers, pursuant to TSCA section 8(a)(5)(B). These proposed exemptions are responsive to the agency's obligations under the Regulatory Flexibility Act and are consistent with several of the recommendations that were made in the 2022 SBAR Panel Report (Ref. 2). EPA estimates that with these proposed exemptions, small businesses subject to the October 11, 2023, final rule (88 FR 70516) (FRL–7902–02–OCSPP) would be relieved of over $703–$761 million in net regulatory compliance burden.

1. De Minimis

EPA is proposing a *de minimis* concentration exemption for reportable PFAS in mixtures or articles under which PFAS concentrations below 0.1% would be exempt from reporting. This low-concentration exemption would apply regardless of total production volume of the mixture or article. Implicit in most statutes is the authority for an implementing agency to exempt *de minimis* concentrations from the scope of general rules. ''[T]he venerable maxim *de minimis non curat lex* (''the law cares not for trifles'') as part of the established background of legal principles against which all enactments are adopted, and which all enactments (absent contrary indication) are deemed to accept.'' *Wis. Dep't of Revenue* v. *William Wrigley, Jr., Co.,* 505 U.S. 214, 231 (1992); *Citadel Sec.* v. *SEC,* 45 F.4th 27, 36 (D.C. Cir. 2022) (explaining that an agency decision was reasonable and supported by the maxim); *Shays* v. *Federal Election Commission,* 414 F.3d 76, 113–14 (D.C. Cir. 2005) (''Predicated on the notion that the Congress is always presumed to intend that pointless expenditures of effort be avoided, such authority is inherent in most statutory schemes, by implication.'') (internal quotation marks omitted); *Ober* v. *Whitman,* 243 F.3d 1190, 1194 (9th Cir. 2001); *EDF, Inc.* v. *EPA,* 82 F.3d 451, 466–467 (D.C. Cir. 1996). This principle only covers situations where ''the burdens of regulation yield a gain of trivial or no value.'' *EDF,* 82 F.3d at 466.

EPA proposes to apply the *de minimis* principle here because nothing in TSCA section 8 suggests an intent to depart from this background rule of construction. Nor is the statutory language in TSCA section 8(a)(7) so uncompromisingly rigid as to preclude a *de minimis* exemption. Under TSCA section 8(a)(7), EPA must gather information from manufacturers of PFAS, but TSCA section 8(a)(5) grants EPA broad authority to reduce the burdens of such reporting to the extent feasible by placing the ''PFAS Data'' paragraph within TSCA section 8, Congress intended this authority to apply. Also, as noted above in Unit I.D., Congress indicated a practical intent for implementation of TSCA—the statute shall be carried out ''in a reasonable and prudent manner.'' 15 U.S.C. 2601(c). A *de minimis* exemption is a reasonable and familiar means to achieve such ends.

The proposed *de minimis* level of 0.1% is appropriate because of the retrospective nature of the reporting and contemporary recordkeeping practices.

During the lookback period for reporting, reporters are unlikely to have records of PFAS amounts below 0.1% due to U.S. and international requirements at the time, *e.g.,* for labeling and recordkeeping. During the development of the 2023 final rule, several commenters and small entity representatives described the challenges of determining the presence of a PFAS in past imports when the concentration would have been below the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or the European Union's Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) notification levels (*see* docket comments EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0549–0054, 0105, 0107, 0139, 0163, and 0165). Suppliers covered under SDS and REACH notification requirements need not provide notification of PFAS levels below 0.1% under the most stringent chemical hazard classifications. Without REACH notifications having required notice for PFAS below 0.1% of a mixture or an article during the retroactive reporting time frame, companies would not have known that they have manufactured (including imported) PFAS below that *de minimis* concentration. *See* 15 U.S.C. 2607(a)(5)(C). Additionally, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200) sets cut-offs for the minimum concentration of a chemical that triggers requirements for an SDS. The cut-off level of 0.1% is generally applied to chemicals classified as ''health hazards'' and a chemical is classified as a health hazard if it poses certain hazardous effects. Health hazards include, among others, chemicals that are carcinogens, reproductive toxins, irritants, and sensitizers (29 CFR 1910.1200(c) and Appendix A). Some evidence suggests that exposure to certain PFAS may lead to adverse health effects, including an increased risk of some cancers, as identified in the EPA's National PFAS Testing Strategy (Ref. 6). Identifying whether a mixture or article contains PFAS below 0.1% would be time consuming and complicated because PFAS were not required to be reported on an SDS during the relevant lookback period.

EPA also considered potential impacts of other statutory or regulatory requirements pertaining to *de minimis* levels of PFAS that were in effect during the 2011–2022 reporting period, to the extent those requirements may impact manufacturers' knowledge of and ability to report on manufacturing of *de minimis* concentrations in mixtures and articles. During most of the lookback period, there were few international labeling or notification requirements for small concentrations of PFAS. As public commenters previously noted, the REACH regulation in the European Union only placed certain groups of PFAS on their Substances of Very High Concern (SVHC) Candidate List beginning in 2019, with HFPO–DA and its salts (Ref. 7). These listings triggered additional legal obligations, including safety communication to customers, when articles contain an SVHC at concentrations above 0.1% (Ref. 8). Thus, it is unlikely that manufacturers would have been able to identify such small concentrations of PFAS in mixtures and articles during this rule's reporting period. As suppliers were not obligated to disclose *de minimis* levels of PFAS, those manufacturers likely would not know of the existence of such PFAS and render those mixtures and articles not known or reasonably ascertainable under TSCA Section 8(a)(5).

Moreover, a uniform 0.1% *de minimis* threshold would relieve manufacturers of burden related to investigating the relevant exemption level and applying different concentrations to different PFAS. The OSHA Hazard Communication Standard for chemicals not classified as a ''health hazard'' uses a cut-off concentration of 1.0% by weight, and the extent to which many PFAS present health concerns similar to those relatively few PFAS known to be ''health hazards'' is unclear. Although most PFAS are not classified as health hazards under 29 CFR 1910.1200, EPA is proposing a universal *de minimis* concentration exemption of 0.1% for all PFAS to reduce the burden of determining which concentration is applicable to each reportable PFAS. Further, PFAS are typically present at low concentrations in mixtures, so a 1% *de minimis* threshold may remove otherwise reportable information from the scope of the rule. In part, this rulemaking is designed to identify and address available information gaps involving PFAS, so EPA believes that applying a lower, uniform 0.1% *de minimis* concentration threshold for all reportable PFAS helps address information gaps where information exists and still alleviates burden by providing a *de minimis* threshold.

EPA also considered establishing *de minimis* levels based on detection limits in validated analytical methods developed by EPA. As of August 2025, EPA has developed analytical methods for the detection of dozens of PFAS in various environmental media (see *https://www.epa.gov/water-research/pfas-analytical-methods-development-and-sampling-research*). However, EPA identified several limitations to this potential approach to such an exemption. First, the number of PFAS that have at least one analytical method is a small portion of the broader universe of known PFAS. The detection limits associated with those PFAS with analytical methods are also at different levels, varying by orders of magnitude. Further, some of the lowest detection limits (in parts per trillion) would render any exemption based on concentrations below such limits ineffectual. EPA ultimately determined that basing a proposed *de minimis* exemption level on these analytical methods would be inappropriate. As noted in Unit IV, EPA seeks comment on the proposed 0.1% *de minimis* level, including information on what concentration level other than 0.1% might be appropriate for an exemption.

EPA also proposes to exempt these *de minimis* concentrations of PFAS in mixtures and articles (see Unit III.A.2.) from the scope of the rule based on the Agency's information needs under TSCA section 8(a)(5)(A). The Agency has determined that information about such PFAS in mixtures is unnecessary, in part because EPA does not anticipate publishing an ''inventory'' of all PFAS manufactured since 2011 such that EPA would need a complete reporting of all PFAS in U.S. markets. Compare 15 U.S.C. 2607(a)(7) with 15 U.S.C. 2607(b)(10). Additionally, EPA does not anticipate evaluating PFAS that may only be manufactured in *de minimis* levels in the near future under TSCA (see 2024 TSCA section 8(d) rule ((89 FR 100756, 100758, December 13, 2024) (FRL–11164–02–OCSPP). Manufacturers that report pursuant to this rule are required to provide downstream processing and use information about the use of PFAS in consumer and commercial products, including articles. Thus, despite the provision of *de minimis* and imported article exemptions (discussed below), EPA anticipates it will receive information on low concentrations and articles from original manufacturers of PFAS who are most likely to have such information and who are likely to report pursuant to this rule should the proposed exemptions be finalized. Such information from these manufacturers will help the Agency identify situations in which more information about PFAS in articles may be necessary, and EPA will address such needs when they are identified.

2. Imported Articles

EPA is proposing to exempt PFAS imported as part of an article from the scope of reportable activities (see proposed 40 CFR 705.5, 705.12, 705.18, and 705.30). An ''article'' is defined in 40 CFR 704.3 as ''a manufactured item (1) which is formed to a specific shape or design during manufacture, (2) which has end-use function(s) dependent in whole or in part upon its shape or design during end use, and (3) which has either no change of chemical composition during its end use or only those changes of composition which have no commercial purpose separate from that of the article, and that result from a chemical reaction that occurs upon end use of other chemical substances, mixtures, or articles; except that fluids and particles are not considered articles regardless of shape or design.''

EPA recognizes that *importing* PFAS in articles between 2011–2022 is an activity about which manufacturers are unlikely to have known or reasonably ascertainable information. As discussed above, SDS and REACH notification requirements are not likely to have revealed the content of PFAS in imported articles during the time span covered by this retroactive reporting rule, which is a perspective shared widely by commenters and the small entity representatives to the SBAR Panel (87 FR 72439, November 25, 2022) (FRL–7902–04–OCSPP). Thus, importers of articles across many industries have the burden of reviewing any past SDSs or other records, such as REACH notifications, for confirmation that PFAS has been imported in those articles. EPA has now reconsidered the weight of that input and now proposes to exempt importing articles in an effort to apply reporting obligations, to the extent feasible, to those persons likely to have information (TSCA section 8(a)(5)(C)).

Should EPA finalize this proposal by exempting the reporting on PFAS in imported articles, the Agency will nevertheless receive information on the incorporation of PFAS in articles. The rule requires manufacturers to report on processing and use (both industrial and consumer/commercial) for their manufactured PFAS, such as any incorporation in articles (40 CFR 705.15(c)). The processing and use reporting requirements will inform the Agency's understanding of which PFAS are used in various types of industrial processes or consumer and commercial products, which will be instructive to future TSCA actions.

EPA is also proposing this imported articles exemption under TSCA section 8(a)(5)(A), as the Agency finds that requiring retroactive reporting on importing articles with PFAS is unnecessary (in addition to EPA finding that requiring reporting from importers of articles containing PFAS exceeds EPA's authority under TSCA Section 8(a)(7), see the below paragraph). On balance, EPA finds it unnecessary to require reporting for this activity and impose related non-reporting burden activities such as rule compliance determination and due diligence record searches when such importers are unlikely to have relevant information.

In addition, EPA proposes that requiring reporting from importers of articles containing PFAS exceeded EPA's authority under TSCA section 8(a)(7). In the NDAA, Congress directed the EPA to require reporting from ''each person who has manufactured a chemical substance that *is a [PFAS].*'' 15 U.S.C. 2607(a)(7) (emphasis added). As a general matter, TSCA section 3(2)(A) defines ''chemical substance'' as ''any organic or inorganic substance of a particular molecular identity,'' including natural combinations, elements, and uncombined radicals. TSCA section 3(9) defines ''manufacture'' to include production, manufacture, and imports. By specifying ''a chemical substance *that is a* [PFAS],'' in TSCA section 8(a)(7), however, Congress provided that the reporting requirement would apply to a narrower universe than TSCA would generally cover.

Specifically, EPA proposes to conclude that the NDAA is best read as excluding articles and targeting the reporting requirement to manufacturers of the PFAS themselves. Had Congress intended the legislation to include articles that contain a PFAS substance, it could have said so. Here, Congress chose to target manufacturers (including importers) of the PFAS themselves, as indicated by the specific phrase ''that is a'' (instead of a more inclusive term such as ''contains''). Where Congress omits expansive modifiers, they should not be inferred. EPA is soliciting feedback on this argument, which was raised by commenters on the June 2021 proposed rule (86 FR 33926) (FRL–10017–78). Since EPA is proposing to exempt article importers under TSCA section 8(a)(5) as discussed above, this rationale would lead to the same outcome in terms of regulatory requirements.

3. Byproducts, Impurities, and Non-Isolated Intermediates

EPA is proposing to exempt the manufacture of PFAS as byproducts, impurities, non-isolated intermediates, or upon incidental exposure, or end use of another substance or mixture from the scope of reportable activities when such substances are manufactured under conditions described in 40 CFR 720.30(h). These proposed exemptions align with existing exemptions under TSCA for substances not manufactured and used for a separate commercial purpose and is consistent with the approach taken in EPA's CDR rule (see 40 CFR 711.10(c)).

EPA describes the byproduct, impurity, and non-isolated intermediate activity exemptions below. Overall, the exemptions reflect a practical application of TSCA section 8(a)(5)(C), under which EPA shall, to the extent feasible, apply reporting obligations only to those persons likely to have relevant information. EPA has historically exempted such manufacturing activities (*i.e.,* impurities, non-isolated intermediates, and certain byproducts; manufacturing low quantities solely for R&D purposes) from the scope of reporting obligations under TSCA sections 5 and 8. EPA is not proposing to exempt other types of manufacturing activities, including for byproducts subsequently used for a commercial purpose listed in 40 CFR 720.30(g), as the Agency believes PFAS manufacturers are more likely to have relevant information on those manufacturing activities. As proposed, these exemptions would ensure that manufacturers remain focused on reporting PFAS with greater commercial relevance and potential exposure pathways while relieving industry of disproportionately burdensome reporting. By eliminating the need to search for and report on data related to these manufacturing activities that have been traditionally exempt from other TSCA reporting requirements, manufacturers would avoid resource-intensive record reviews and unnecessary administrative burden for reporting activities unlikely to provide relevant information.

Byproducts. The regulation currently requires a manufacturer of PFAS to report in separate chemical reports each PFAS that is manufactured, without exception. EPA is proposing to exempt from the requirement to report PFAS that are solely manufactured as a byproduct in a manner described in 40 CFR 720.30(h) (see proposed 40 CFR 705.12). Specifically, EPA is proposing to exempt any byproduct not used for

commercial purposes. ''Byproduct'' is defined in 40 CFR 704.3 to mean ''a chemical substance produced without a separate commercial intent during the manufacture, processing, use, or disposal of another chemical substance(s) or mixture(s).''

EPA is proposing this exemption because it now believes this information is unnecessary to implement its statutory obligations and potentially duplicative. Consistent with TSCA section 8(a)(5)(A), EPA believes it is appropriate to exempt manufacturers of PFAS as a byproduct when they are not used for a commercial purpose. EPA does not find that the reportable information on PFAS manufactured as byproducts and without subsequent commercial use is necessary, considering the Agency's ongoing obligations under TSCA are limited to specific PFAS, not the entire class, and because of the expected low exposure potential to such non-commercial PFAS. However, EPA is interested in learning about the intended commercial uses of PFAS, including PFAS when manufactured as a byproduct, and thus is not proposing to exempt manufacture of PFAS as a byproduct if it is used for a commercial purpose. Further, this proposed byproduct exemption would apply only to the byproduct. The exemption does not apply to component substances extracted from a byproduct, when the extracted substances are reportable PFAS.

For certain reporting requirements (*e.g.,* CDR), EPA has exempted manufacture of byproducts for specific types of commercial purposes (see proposed 40 CFR 720.30(g)). For this rule, EPA is not proposing to exempt PFAS manufactured as byproducts that are used for a commercial purpose as listed at 40 CFR 720.30(g). These types of commercial purposes may provide relevant information on exposure pathways of interest to EPA, such as applying PFAS-containing wastes to land for soil enrichment or when burned as a fuel (Ref. 9).

This proposed exemption does not impact the need to report information about any byproducts resulting from the manufacture, processing, use, or disposal of each reportable PFAS under 40 CFR 705.15(e), consistent with the requirement under TSCA section 8(a)(2)(D). If you are reporting the manufacture of a PFAS with byproducts produced during the manufacture, processing, use, or disposal of that PFAS, you must report basic information (*e.g.,* chemical identity, related PFAS activity, volume, and environmental releases) about the byproducts. That is, a manufacturer of a non-byproduct PFAS will provide information on all byproducts produced while manufacturing, processing, using, or disposing of the given PFAS (*e.g.,* polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) is a reportable PFAS and reporting on PTFE where ''GenX chemicals'' were created as a byproduct in the production of PTFE would result in reporting on PTFE including information on the manufacture of GenX chemicals as PTFE's byproduct (see Ref. 10 for more information on GenX chemicals)).

EPA notes that pursuant to this proposed exemption, the Agency will not receive reporting on PFAS manufactured as byproducts of a non-PFAS. In addition, under the 2023 final rule, a processor would need to report as a manufacturer for any PFAS-containing byproducts; with this proposed exemption, such reporting would not occur unless the byproducts have a separate commercial use.

EPA further believes reporting on PFAS manufactured as byproducts in the manner described at 40 CFR 720.30(h) may be duplicative of the requirements to report on any byproduct produced during the manufacture, processing, use, or disposal of a reportable PFAS. As described above, if a PFAS is manufactured as a byproduct during the manufacture, processing, use, or disposal of a reportable PFAS, EPA would receive information that is known or reasonably ascertainable on that byproduct, including the chemical identity and the amounts released to different environmental media. Given the scope of the definition of PFAS under 40 CFR 705.3, many fluorinated substances (including their potential byproducts) are captured such that reporting on those fluorinated byproducts would be identified and reported on in the precursor PFAS's report.

EPA has determined that information related to PFAS manufactured as byproducts without separate commercial uses, under the same conditions that are exempt from CDR, is unnecessary and potentially duplicative. Accordingly, EPA is proposing this activity exemption under section 8(a)(5)(A).

Impurities. EPA is proposing to exempt the manufacture of PFAS as impurities from the scope of reportable activities, as described in 40 CFR 720.30(h)(1) (see proposed 40 CFR 705.12). This exemption is also incorporated in the CDR regulation (see 40 CFR 711.10(c)). As defined at 40 CFR 704.3, an impurity is a chemical substance unintentionally present with another chemical substance. Impurities are not manufactured for distribution in commerce as chemical substances per se, and they have no distinct commercial purpose apart from the substance, mixture, or article in which they are contained.

EPA proposes that, consistent with TSCA section 8(a)(5)(A), requiring this information is unnecessary. As explained in CDR guidance (*see* Ref. 11), in evaluating whether a PFAS is an impurity, EPA considers the source of the substance in the manufacturing process. A substance that arises unintentionally in a final product because it was introduced unintentionally as a component of a raw material, it may be considered an impurity. This is distinguishable from a byproduct, which is a substance formed as part of the intended chemical reaction or byproduct stream and intentionally retained would not meet the definition of an impurity and may be subject to reporting. EPA understands there are likely no PFAS manufactured as impurities domestically, as PFAS are not likely to be unintentionally present in raw materials introduced into a process. Thus, the manufacturing of PFAS as impurities would only derive from the import of materials with PFAS as impurities. Such importers are not likely to know about the presence of PFAS, let alone any reportable information under section 8(a)(7). Therefore, exempting manufacturers (including importers) of impurities would not meaningfully impact the scope of the universe of manufacturers of PFAS impurities who would have relevant information to report under this rule. Such an exemption would therefore be consistent with TSCA section 8(a)(5)(C), which requires EPA to, to the extent feasible, extend reporting obligations to those likely to have relevant information. Without relevant information to report under this rule, EPA has determined that exempting the manufacture of PFAS as impurities is appropriate. EPA is seeking public comment on this proposed exemption to ensure that the definitions and exemption conditions of byproducts and impurities are consistently and appropriately applied to PFAS manufacturing activities.

Non-isolated intermediates. Consistent with the proposed exemptions to align with 40 CFR 720.30(h), EPA is proposing to exempt otherwise-reportable PFAS that are non-isolated intermediates (see proposed 40 CFR 705.12). Non-isolated intermediates, as defined at 40 CFR 704.3, are substances manufactured and consumed within a closed system during the production of another

chemical substance. These intermediates are not intentionally removed from process equipment, such as reaction vessels or continuous flow systems, and are not stored, packaged, or transported. Because these substances remain confined within closed systems and are not expected to be released in the environment or handled by workers, EPA has determined that reporting on non-isolated intermediates is unnecessary because these intermediates do not result in meaningful human or environmental exposure. EPA is proposing this exemption consistent with TSCA section 8(a)(5)(A). Additionally, as described earlier in Unit III.A.3., manufacturers have generally not been required to submit reports related to the manufacture of non-isolated intermediates under TSCA. The Agency has exempted non-isolated intermediates in the past, in part, because such substances often are extremely difficult to identify. *See* 15 U.S.C. 2607(a)(5)(C).

4. Research and Development (R&D) Chemicals

EPA is proposing to exempt PFAS manufactured (including imported) in small quantities for R&D purposes (see proposed 40 CFR 705.12). The proposed exemption, while limited to PFAS manufactured solely for R&D purposes, has no threshold limit. EPA notes that such quantities manufactured solely for R&D purposes are quantities no greater than reasonably necessary for those R&D activities (see 40 CFR 704.3, which defines small quantities for research and development as ''quantities of a chemical substance manufactured, imported, or processed or proposed to be manufactured, imported, or processed solely for research and development that are not greater than reasonably necessary for such purposes'').

Based on stakeholder input, EPA understands that information on PFAS manufactured solely for R&D purposes would be limited and would provide minimal information regarding PFAS exposures and quantities in commerce, which were the focuses of TSCA section 8(a)(7). EPA does not see such information as improving the Agency's understanding of the exposures and potential risks of such PFAS under TSCA. Pursuant to TSCA section 8(a)(5)(A), EPA has determined information about such chemicals is unnecessary. EPA may consider future data calls for R&D chemicals if the Agency determines a need to do so.

Further, other TSCA reporting requirements have incorporated exemptions of small quantities of R&D chemicals consistent with the definition at 40 CFR 704.3 (for example, TSCA section 5 new chemicals reporting (see 40 CFR 720.30(c)), inventory reporting (see TSCA section 8(b)(1)), and CDR reporting (see 40 CFR 711.10(a)). Without a historical need to provide reporting on PFAS manufactured in small quantities solely for R&D purposes under both TSCA section 5 and other section 8 actions, EPA believes manufacturers of such R&D PFAS will be unlikely to have information responsive to the data request under TSCA section 8(a)(7). Therefore, exempting such manufacturers is consistent with EPA's obligations under TSCA section 8(a)(5)(C) to apply reporting requirements to only those persons likely to have such relevant information.

Exempting PFAS manufactured solely for R&D purposes is also consistent with EPA's obligations under TSCA section 8(a)(5)(B), to minimize, to the extent feasible, the cost of compliance with TSCA section 8 rules on small manufacturers. In the SBAR Panel conducted for this rule in 2022 (see Unit II.B.), EPA learned from a small entity representative that their small business manufactured PFAS for laboratory and analytical purposes and is not generally subject to TSCA reporting requirements. Under this proposed exemption, EPA will minimize compliance costs on such small manufacturers pursuant to TSCA section 8(a)(5)(B).

This exemption is also being proposed pursuant to the Administration's priorities as outlined in Executive Order 14219, which seeks to reduce regulations that impose costs that ''impede'' R&D and economic development activities. Based on input from manufacturers (for example, comments EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0549–0069, 0084, and 0143), the requirement to report on typically exempt R&D substances, even in a streamlined reporting form with fewer required data fields, would impose significant burden on manufacturers who may have up to thousands of small quantity R&D substances, whose R&D staff would need to assist with the efforts to respond to this rule, including by searching through ''potentially hundreds of lab notebooks'' (comment EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0549–0143). Exempting PFAS manufactured in small quantities solely for R&D activities alleviates the compliance burden on those stakeholders conducting commercial R&D and other economic development activities and provides more resources to carry out such activities.

B. Submission Period

EPA is proposing to amend the data submission period to accommodate the changes to the reporting scope in this proposal. EPA believes a shift to the data submission period is appropriate when the reporting regulation has changed. This allows reporters to familiarize themselves with the amended rule and ensure their data are responsive to the amended rule and EPA to modify the reporting application as needed, such as removing the option of streamlined reporting forms for article importers and R&D manufacturers.

EPA proposes to alter the submission period as follows: the submission period will begin 60 days after the effective date of the final rule and will last for three months (see proposed 40 CFR 705.20). The time EPA took to develop the 2023 final rule and engage with stakeholders on the content of the rule, as well as the time that has passed since promulgation of the 2023 final rule, suggests to the Agency that reporters have had adequate time to consider how they intend to comply with the rule. Because no reporting will be required from article importers due to the proposed exemption (see Unit III.A.2.), EPA proposes to remove the reporting deadline for small manufacturers who would report under this rule exclusively as article importers.

C. Clarifications and Technical Corrections

1. Scope of Environmental and Health Effects Information

The current rule requires the submission of exposure-related information and ''all existing information concerning the environmental and health effects'' of the chemical substances covered by this rule. ''All existing information concerning environmental and health effects'' is defined as ''any information of any effect of a chemical substance or mixture on health or the environment or both'' (40 CFR 705.3) and is intended to be interpreted broadly. In addition, certain information is required to be reported using the OECD-harmonized template (OHT) format. EPA proposes to clarify the requirements related to reporting using the OHT format, including to propose a regulatory change to confirm that OHTs are required for unpublished study reports on the environmental and health effects of the reportable PFAS, except for exposure information provided in the fielded data elements throughout the reporting application.

In Unit III.E of the 2023 final rule, EPA described the need to submit all existing information concerning health and environmental effects in the OHT format, where such templates exist for the type of data reported (40 CFR 705.15(f)). To avoid duplicative reporting, EPA proposes to clarify that the use of OHTs is not required for exposure-related information otherwise reported in the fielded data elements (40 CFR 705.15(b)–(e) and (g)–(h)). See proposed amendments to 40 CFR 705.15(f)(1). EPA did not quantify the burden associated with this proposed regulatory text change. EPA is seeking public comment on the OHT requirement for environmental and health effect information and associated burden.

2. Consumer and Commercial Product Categories

EPA is proposing to update the names used for specific consumer and commercial product categories as required under 40 CFR 705.15(c)(4). Like the clarification above, this proposed change would not alter any reporting requirements or introduce new burden but rather aims to clarify existing requirements. EPA has received requests for clarification from data submitters under the CDR regulation, which uses the same product category names, so EPA proposes to clarify the names and descriptions for the same consumer and commercial article-related codes in the PFAS Data Reporting Rule (see Table 5 at 40 CFR 705.15(c)(4)). For example, under CC303, EPA proposes to add ''Articles without routine direct contact, such as'' to the associated name to better define the difference between CC303 and CC304, which has been confusing for some CDR data submitters. In addition, EPA is proposing to revise the product category code names associated with CC217 through CC221 and CC305 to more clearly identify the types of articles and materials covered within those categories. See Table 1 below for a comparison between the proposed and existing impacted product category codes and names. Table 1. also includes descriptions for each code, which EPA provides in reporting guidance. The proposed changes eliminate the overlap between the categories and reduce reporter uncertainty regarding the correct category to report.

TABLE 1—UPDATED PRODUCT CATEGORY NAMES

Code	Column A: current product codes		Column B: proposed product codes	
	Name	Description	Name	Description
CC217	Construction and building materials covering large surface areas, including wood articles.	Floor decking, claddings, toys outdoor equipment, walls, flooring.	Wood and engineered wood articles: Construction and building materials covering large surface areas.	Floor decking, flooring, lumber, plywood, walls, claddings, outdoor playground equipment, indoor toy structures/play-gyms.
CC218	Construction and building materials covering large surface areas, including paper articles; metal articles; stone, plaster, cement, glass and ceramic articles.	Construction and building materials; *e.g.,* insulation panels, wall papers, roof sheets, drinking water pipes, sewer pipes, cement flooring, mirrors.	Non-metal and non-wood articles not covered elsewhere: Construction and building materials covering large surface areas, including but not limited to paper articles; plastic, rubber, fiberglass, and other composite articles; stone, asphalt, plaster, cement, glass, and ceramic articles.	Insulation panels, wall papers, roof shingles/tiles, siding, synthetic flooring/composite floor decking (non-wood), climbing walls, drinking water pipes (non-metal), sewer pipes (non-metal), cement flooring, windows, mirrors, boat hulls (non-metal, such as fiberglass), automobile panels (non-metal).
CC219	Machinery, mechanical appliances, electrical/electronic articles.	Refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, computers, telephones, drills, saws, smoke detectors, thermostats, radiators.	Small-scale complex (*i.e.,* mixed material) machinery, mechanical appliances, and electrical/electronic articles.	Refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, computers, telephones, drills, saws, smoke detectors, thermostats, radiators, motorcycles, motor scooters, e-bikes/electric bicycles, remote-control cars/drones, portable solar panels.
CC220	Other machinery, mechanical appliances, electronic/electronic articles.	Large-scale stationary industrial tools.	Large-scale complex (*i.e.,* mixed material) machinery, motor vehicles, mechanical appliances, and electrical/electronic articles.	Large-scale stationary industrial tools, heavy machinery/vehicles, trucks, tractors, ships, planes, solar panels/arrays, wind turbines, electrical infrastructure, large computer servers/network systems, heating/cooling/AC systems.
CC221	Construction and building materials covering large surface areas, including metal articles.	Roof sheets, drinking water pipes, sewer pipes.	Metal products, including construction/building materials, parts, or other metal articles not covered elsewhere.	Shipping containers, steel framing, rebar, roof sheets, heating/cooling/air-exchange ductwork, drinking water pipes (metal), sewer pipes (metal), wheels, aircraft wings, boat hulls, automobile frames/panels.
CC303	Packaging (excluding food packaging), including rubber articles; plastic articles (hard); plastic articles (soft).	Phone covers, personal tablet covers, styrofoam packaging, bubble wrap.	Articles without routine direct contact, such as packaging (excluding food packaging), including rubber articles; plastic articles (hard); plastic articles (soft).	Phone covers, personal tablet covers, styrofoam packaging, bubble wrap.
CC304	Other articles with routine direct contact during normal use including rubber articles; plastic articles (hard).	Gloves, boots, clothing, rubber handles, gear lever, steering wheels, handles, pencils, handheld device casing.	Other articles with routine direct contact during normal use, including rubber articles; plastic articles (hard).	Gloves, boots, clothing, rubber handles, gear lever, steering wheels, handles, pencils, handheld device casing.

TABLE 1—UPDATED PRODUCT CATEGORY NAMES—Continued

Code	Column A: current product codes		Column B: proposed product codes	
	Name	Description	Name	Description
CC305	Toys intended for children's use (and child dedicated articles), including fabrics, textiles, and apparel; or plastic articles (hard).	Stuffed toys, blankets, comfort objects, dolls, car, animals, teething rings.	Toys intended for children's use (and child-dedicated articles), including but not limited to fabrics, textiles, and apparel; metal articles; wood articles; paper articles; plaster, glass, and ceramic articles; and/or plastic, rubber, fiberglass, and other composite articles (hard).	Outdoor playground equipment/parts, swing sets, slides, play forts/tree houses, indoor toy structures/play gyms, skates, baseball gloves, stuffed toys/animals, blankets, comfort objects, dolls, action figures, balls, toy cars/trucks, wagons, teething rings.

IV. Requests for Comment

EPA requests comment on the content of this proposed rule and the Economic Analysis prepared in support of this proposed rule (Ref. 1). In addition, EPA is providing a list of issues on which the Agency is specifically requesting public comment. EPA encourages all interested persons to submit comments on the topics raised in this proposal. This input will assist the Agency in developing a final rule that successfully addresses information needs while minimizing potential reporting burdens associated with the regulation. EPA requests that commenters include materials supporting their rationale to the extent possible.

1. As described in Unit III.A.1., EPA is soliciting comment on the proposed 0.1% *de minimis* exemption for PFAS in mixtures and articles. EPA is also interested in comments on a 1.0% *de minimis* exemption for PFAS in mixtures and articles instead of the proposed 0.1% *de minimis* exemption, or another appropriate *de minimis* level.

2. As described in Unit III.A.2, EPA is soliciting comment on an imported articles exemption. EPA is also interested in comments on the Agency's reconsidered interpretation of the statutory language of the NDAA and whether the NDAA is best read as excluding articles from the scope of reporting.

3. As described in Unit III.A.3, EPA is soliciting comment on exempting certain byproducts, impurities, and non-isolated intermediates by incorporating the exemptions at 40 CFR 720.30(h). This exemption would extend to PFAS that are manufactured upon incidental exposure or end use of another substance or mixture based on conditions described in 40 CFR 720.30(h)(3)–(7).

4. As described in Unit III.A.4, EPA is soliciting comment on an exemption for manufacturing PFAS in small quantities for R&D activities.

5. As described in Unit III.B, EPA is soliciting comment on whether the Agency's proposed amendment to the data submission period is appropriate to accommodate the proposed changes to the PFAS Data Reporting Rule.

6. As described in Unit III.C.1, EPA is soliciting comment on the requirements related to reporting using the OHT format, including to propose a regulatory change to confirm that OHTs are required for unpublished study reports on the environmental and health effects of the reportable PFAS, except for exposure information provided in the fielded data elements throughout the reporting application. EPA has not quantified and is also soliciting comment on the potential burden with the OHT requirement for unpublished study reports under 40 CFR 705.15(f). Additionally, in response to stakeholder requests that EPA has received, EPA is soliciting comment on whether to maintain the requirement for full study reports under 40 CFR 705.15(f) or to provide an option for a submitter to provide a robust study summary in lieu of the full study report, with the submitter to provide the full study report upon reasonable EPA request, such as when technical concerns about the data or methodology as described in the summary are identified or the Agency deems that the summary is not robust. EPA continues to maintain its position that full study reports are necessary; however, the Agency is amenable to receiving further perspectives on this topic to further inform its understanding of stakeholder concerns.

7. EPA is soliciting comment on the nature and extent of any reliance interests that may have arisen from the October 11, 2023, TSCA section 8(a)(7) final rule.

In addition to the topics listed above and proposed in this action, EPA is also soliciting comment on specific questions discussed below in this Unit.

A. Should EPA amend the scope of reportable chemicals?

EPA is not proposing changes to the scope of reportable chemical substances but is soliciting comment on this topic. EPA is receptive to feedback on a possible means to lower burden by modifying the scope of reportable substances, such as by limiting reporting to those PFAS with a Chemical Abstracts Service Registry Number (CASRN), or, in the case of a PFAS listed as confidential on the TSCA Inventory, a TSCA Accession Number or Low-Volume Exemption Number. EPA received comments on the 2021 proposed rule and input during the SBAR Panel related to the scope of reportable PFAS, including some requests to codify a discrete list of covered PFAS rather than a structural definition; see, for example, docket comments EPA–HQ–OPPT–2020–0549–0063, 0122, 0165, and 0168, and SBAR Panel Report (Ref. 2). In the final rule published on October 11, 2023 (88 FR 70516) (FRL–7902–02–OCSPP), EPA determined that a structural definition of PFAS was appropriate for this rule. Further, EPA was unable to publicly identify all PFAS on the TSCA Inventory, as some identities have confidentiality claims and currently lack a generic name to indicate that chemical substance is a PFAS. The inclusion of those chemicals on a discrete list for reporting under this rule would not be permitted because that would divulge CBI. Additionally, as chemical innovation has led to new PFAS compounds, limiting the scope of the regulation to certain existing compounds on the TSCA Inventory would create aa gap in the regulation regarding any chemical substances not already on the Inventory. In light of the proposed exemptions outlined in Unit III.A, however, EPA is interested in comments on the scope of reportable substances in this regulation.

Further, EPA has received stakeholder comment recommending a production-volume threshold below which reporting on a given PFAS would not be required. EPA has received feedback from certain stakeholders that a 2,500 lbs. threshold would be appropriate for this rule, as the Chemical Data Reporting Rule provides a 2,500 lbs.

threshold for chemical substances subject to specific TSCA activities (see 40 CFR 711.8). However, EPA is not proposing to provide a production-volume threshold. Because this rule aims to provide an understanding of which PFAS have been commercially manufactured in the United States since 2011, and for which uses, EPA does not believe that incorporating a minimum threshold would enable the Agency to meet its information needs. EPA understands that some PFAS that were manufactured in lower quantities may still persist in the environment, and the Agency is interested in understanding the extent of environmental exposure. EPA also notes that there is precedent for promulgating a TSCA rule without a minimum threshold where the regulated chemical(s) are of significant interest to EPA, including due to potential health or environmental concerns.

EPA is amenable to comments regarding the benefits and/or drawbacks of providing such a threshold and what would be an appropriate threshold. EPA would also be interested in comments on whether such a threshold would either make other proposed exemptions unnecessary or impact their scope, *e.g.,* the *de minimis* threshold.

B. Should EPA modify any assumptions or cost savings calculations in its Economic Analysis?

EPA is specifically seeking comments and data to consider in developing an Economic Analysis for a final rule. In this proposed rule's Economic Analysis (Ref. 1), EPA assumes that 255 manufacturing firms have undergone all compliance determination and rule familiarization activities, and 20,985 article importers have undergone some level of compliance determination and rule familiarization since the promulgation of the final rule on October 11, 2023 (88 FR 70516) (FRL–7902–02–OCSPP). Therefore, EPA estimates that approximately 5% of the estimated total industry cost for the 2023 final rule has already occurred. These assumptions of sunk costs for article importers are based on inquiries EPA has received specifically related to this rule's imported article scope, EPA's expectation that small article importers would be less likely to have completed rule familiarization and compliance determination activities due to their delayed reporting deadline under the 2023 final rule, and EPA's best professional judgement.

In considering the burden reduction this proposed rule would provide, EPA is seeking comment on its assumptions, including on the sunk costs estimates described above and on the assumption that the exemption for article importers and the 26 percent reduction in reporting from manufacturers would not result in a large reduction in benefits. EPA requests any information that can be provided to refine its estimates related to cost savings of this proposed action.

V. References

The following is a listing of the documents specifically referenced in this document. The docket includes these documents and other information EPA considered, including documents that are referenced within the documents that are included in the docket, even if the referenced document is not physically located in the docket. For assistance in locating these other documents, please consult the technical person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

1. EPA. Economic Analysis for the Proposed Rule entitled: ''Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Data Reporting and Recordkeeping under the Toxics Substances Control Act (TSCA); Revision to Regulation.'' May 2025.
2. EPA. Final Report of the Small Business Advocacy Review Panel on EPA's Proposed Rule: Toxic Substances Control Act Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances. August 2, 2022. *https://www.regulations.gov/document/EPA-HQ-OPPT-2020-0549-0123.*
3. EPA. Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) and Updated Economic Analysis for TSCA Section 8(a)(7) Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances. November 2022.
4. EPA. Economic Analysis for the Final TSCA Section 8(a)(7) Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances. September 2023.
5. EPA. Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis and Updated Economic Analysis for TSCA Section 8(a)(7) Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances. September 2023.
6. EPA. ''National PFAS Testing Strategy: Identification of Candidate Per- and Poly-fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) for Testing.'' October 2021. Available at *https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-10/pfas-natl-test-strategy.pdf.*
7. European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). ''Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).'' August 2025. Available at *https://echa.europa.eu/hot-topics/perfluoroalkyl-chemicals-pfas.*
8. Lexxion. ''Global Regulations Around PFAS: The Past, the present and the Future.'' January 2025. Available at *https://icrl.lexxion.eu/article/icrl/2023/1/4/display/html.*
9. EPA. ''Fact Sheet: Draft Sewage Sludge Risk Assessment for PFOA and PFOS.'' January 2025. Available at *https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2025-01/fact-sheet-draft-sewage-sludge-risk-assessment-pfoa-pfos.pdf.*
10. EPA. ''Human Health Toxicity Values for Hexafluoropropylene Oxide (HFPO) Dimer Acid and Its Ammonium Salt (CASRN 13252–13–6 and CASRN 62037–80–3).'' Available at *https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-10/genx-chemicals-toxicity-assessment_tech-edited_oct-21-508.pdf.*
11. EPA. ''Chemical Data Reporting Byproducts, Impurities, and Recycling Scenarios.'' December 2022. Available at *https://tscaguideme.epa.gov/ords/tsca-gme/r/tsca/cdr-guideme/gd?gd=byproductrecycling.*
12. EPA. ''Supporting Statement for an Information Collection Request (ICR) Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA).'' May 2025.

VI. Statutory and Executive Orders Reviews

Additional information about these statutes and Executive Orders can be found at *https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/laws-and-executive-orders.*

A. Executive Order 12866: Regulatory Planning and Review and Executive Order 13563: Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review

This action is a significant regulatory action as defined under section 3(f)(1) of Executive Order 12866. Accordingly, it was submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review under Executive Order 12866 (58 FR 51735, October 4, 1993). Any changes made in response to Executive Order 12866 review have been documented in the docket. The EPA prepared an analysis of the potential costs and benefits associated with this action. This analysis (Ref. 1) is available in the docket and is briefly summarize in Unit I.E.

B. Executive Order 14192: Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation

This action is expected to be an Executive Order 14192 deregulatory action. Details on the estimated cost savings of this proposed rule can be found in EPA's analysis of the potential costs and benefits associated with this action (Ref. 1).

C. Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)

The information collection activities in this proposed rule have been submitted for approval to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the PRA. The Information Collection Request (ICR) document that the EPA prepared has been assigned EPA ICR number 2682.03, to replace an existing approved ICR. You can find a copy of the ICR in the docket for this rule (Ref. 12), and it is briefly summarized here.

The reporting requirements identified in the proposed rule would enable EPA to meet the statutory obligations required by TSCA section 8(a)(7) and collect data related to the identities, manufacture, use, exposure, and disposal of PFAS manufactured in the United States since 2011. These proposed reporting requirements would also help the Agency to collect existing information on the health and environmental effects of PFAS. EPA intends to use information collected under the rule to assist in chemical assessments under TSCA, and to inform any additional work necessary under environmental protection mandates beyond TSCA. Respondents may claim some of the information reported to EPA under the proposed rule as CBI under TSCA section 14. TSCA section 14(c) requires a supporting statement and certification for confidentiality claims asserted after June 22, 2016.

Respondents/affected entities: Non-exempt manufacturers (including importers) of PFAS in any year between January 1, 2011, and December 31, 2022.

Respondent's obligation to respond: Mandatory (15 U.S.C. 2607(a)(7)).

Estimated number of respondents: 255.

Frequency of response: Once.

Total estimated burden: 134,004 hours (per year). Burden is defined at 5 CFR 1320.3(b).

Total estimated cost: $11.4 million (per year), includes no annualized capital or operation & maintenance costs.

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 the EPA's regulations in 40 CFR are listed in 40 CFR part 9.

Submit your comments on the Agency's need for this information, the accuracy of the provided burden estimates and any suggested methods for minimizing respondent burden to the EPA using the docket identified at the beginning of this rule. The EPA will respond to any ICR-related comments in the final rule. You may also send your ICR-related comments to OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs using the interface at *www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain.* Find this particular information collection by selecting ''Currently under Review—Open for Public Comments'' or by using the search function. OMB must receive comments no later than [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**].

D. Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA)

I certify that this action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the RFA. In making this determination, the EPA concludes that the impact of concern for this rule is any significant adverse economic impact on small entities and that the agency is certifying that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities because the rule relieves regulatory burden on the small entities subject to the rule. This proposed action would alleviate reporting requirements on small entities subject to an existing rule by exempting certain activities from the scope of reporting. As a result of the proposed exemptions, an estimated 127,469 small article importers would no longer be subject to the regulation. Additionally, as a result of the proposed revisions, an estimated 241 small manufacturing firms would see lower reporting costs. Affected small businesses are expected to be relieved of $703–$761 million in costs. This proposed action would not impose incremental costs on any small entities. We have therefore concluded that this action will relieve regulatory burden for all directly regulated small entities.

E. Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA)

This action does not contain an unfunded mandate of $100 million (in 1995 dollars and adjusted annually for inflation) or more as described in UMRA, 2. U.S.C. 1531–1538, and does not significantly or uniquely affect small governments. The action imposes no enforceable duty on any state, local or tribal governments or the private sector.

F. Executive Order 13132: Federalism

This action does not have federalism implications as specified in Executive Order 13132 (64 FR 43255, August 10, 1999), because it will not have substantial direct effects on the states, on the relationship between the national government and the states, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

G. Executive Order 13175: Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments

This action does not have tribal implications as specified in Executive Order 13175 (65 FR 67249, November 9, 2000), because it will not have substantial direct effects on tribal governments, on the relationship between the Federal government and the Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal government and Indian tribes. This action does not impose substantial direct compliance costs on federally recognized Indian tribal governments. Thus, Executive Order 13175 does not apply to this action.

H. Executive Order 13045: Protection of Children From Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks

EPA interprets Executive Order 13045 (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997) as applying only to those regulatory actions that concern environmental health or safety risks that EPA has reason to believe may disproportionately affect children, per the definition of ''covered regulatory action'' in section 2–202 of the Executive Order. Therefore, this action is not subject to Executive Order 13045 because it does not concern an environmental human health risk or safety risk. Since this action does not concern human health, EPA's Policy on Children's Health also does not apply. Although this action would not establish an environmental standard intended to mitigate health or safety risks, the information that would be submitted to EPA in accordance with this proposed rule would be used to inform the Agency's decision-making process regarding chemical substances to which children may be disproportionately exposed. This information may also assist the Agency and others in determining whether the chemical substances covered in this proposed rule present potential risks, which would allow the Agency and others to take appropriate action to investigate and mitigate those risks.

I. Executive Order 13211: Actions Concerning Regulations That Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution or Use

This action is not a ''significant energy action'' because it is not likely to have any adverse effect on the supply, distribution or use of energy.

J. National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA)

This action does not involve technical standards under the NTTAA section 12(d), 15 U.S.C. 272.

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 705

Environmental protection, Chemicals, Recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

Lee Zeldin,

Administrator.

Therefore, for the reasons set forth in the preamble, EPA proposes to amend 40 CFR part 705 as follows:

PART 705—REPORTING AND RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES

■ 1. The authority for part 705 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 2607(a)(7).

■ 2. Amend § 705.3 by revising the introductory paragraph to read as follows:

§ 705.3 Definitions.

The definitions in this section and the definitions in TSCA section 3 apply to this part. In addition, the definitions in 40 CFR 704.3 also apply to this part.

* * * * *

■ 3. Amend § 705.5 to read as follows:

§ 705.5 Substances for which reports must be submitted.

The requirements of this part apply to all chemical substances and mixtures containing a chemical substance that are a PFAS, consistent with the definition of PFAS at § 705.3, except as described in § 705.12.

* * * * *

■ 4. Amend § 705.12 by revising the introductory paragraph and adding paragraphs a, b, c, d, e, and f in alphabetical order to read as follows:

§ 705.12 Activities for which reporting is not required.

A person described in § 705.10 is not subject to the requirements of this part with respect to any chemical substance described in § 705.5, when:

(a) The person imported municipal solid waste streams for the purpose of disposal or destruction of the waste.

(b) The person is a Federal agency which imports PFAS when it is not for any immediate or eventual commercial advantage.

(c) The person manufactured (including imported) the chemical substance solely in small quantities for research and development.

(d) The person imported the chemical substance as part of an article.

(e) The person manufactured the chemical substance in a manner described in 40 CFR 720.30(h).

(f) The person manufactured (including imported) the chemical substance in a mixture or article, below a 0.1% *de minimis* concentration.

* * * * *

■ 5. Amend § 705.15 by:

■ a. Revising the introductory paragraph;

■ b. Revising the introductory text paragraph in (b);

■ c. Revising and replacing Table 5; and

■ d. Revising paragraph (f)(1).

The revisions to read as follows:

§ 705.15 What information to report.

For the one-time submission, persons identified in § 705.10 must report to EPA, for each site of each of the chemical substances identified in § 705.5, the following information to the extent known to or reasonably ascertainable by them. In the event that actual data is not known to or reasonably ascertainable by the submitter, then reasonable estimates may be submitted.

TABLE 5 TO PARAGRAPH (c)(4)—CODES FOR REPORTING CONSUMER AND COMMERCIAL PRODUCT CATEGORIES

Code	Category
Chemical Substances in Furnishing, Cleaning, Treatment Care Products	
CC101	Construction and building materials covering large surface areas including stone, plaster, cement, glass and ceramic articles; fabrics, textiles, and apparel.
CC102	Furniture & furnishings including plastic articles (soft); leather articles.
CC103	Furniture & furnishings including stone, plaster, cement, glass and ceramic articles; metal articles; or rubber articles.
CC104	Leather conditioner.
CC105	Leather tanning, dye, finishing, impregnation and care products.
CC106	Textile (fabric) dyes.
CC107	Textile finishing and impregnating/surface treatment products.
CC108	All-purpose foam spray cleaner.
CC109	All-purpose liquid cleaner/polish.
CC110	All-purpose liquid spray cleaner.
CC111	All-purpose waxes and polishes.
CC112	Appliance cleaners.
CC113	Drain and toilet cleaners (liquid).
CC114	Powder cleaners (floors).
CC115	Powder cleaners (porcelain).
CC116	Dishwashing detergent (liquid/gel).
CC117	Dishwashing detergent (unit dose/granule).
CC118	Dishwashing detergent liquid (hand-wash).
CC119	Dry cleaning and associated products.
CC120	Fabric enhancers.
CC121	Laundry detergent (unit-dose/granule).
CC122	Laundry detergent (liquid).
CC123	Stain removers.
CC124	Ion exchangers.
CC125	Liquid water treatment products.
CC126	Solid/Powder water treatment products.
CC127	Liquid body soap.
CC128	Liquid hand soap.
CC129	Solid bar soap.
CC130	Air fresheners for motor vehicles.
CC131	Continuous action air fresheners.
CC132	Instant action air fresheners.
CC133	Anti-static spray.
CC134	Apparel finishing, and impregnating/surface treatment products.

TABLE 5 TO PARAGRAPH (c)(4)—CODES FOR REPORTING CONSUMER AND COMMERCIAL PRODUCT CATEGORIES—Continued

Code	Category
CC135	Insect repellent treatment.
CC136	Pre-market waxes, stains, and polishes applied to footwear.
CC137	Post-market waxes, and polishes applied to footwear (shoe polish).
CC138	Waterproofing and water-resistant sprays.
	Chemical Substances in Construction, Paint, Electrical, and Metal Products
CC201	Fillers and putties.
CC202	Hot-melt adhesives.
CC203	One-component caulks.
CC204	Solder.
CC205	Single-component glues and adhesives.
CC206	Two-component caulks.
CC207	Two-component glues and adhesives.
CC208	Adhesive/Caulk removers.
CC209	Aerosol spray paints.
CC210	Lacquers, stains, varnishes and floor finishes.
CC211	Paint strippers/removers.
CC212	Powder coatings.
CC213	Radiation curable coatings.
CC214	Solvent-based paint.
CC215	Thinners.
CC216	Water-based paint.
CC217	Wood and engineered wood articles: Construction and building materials covering large surface areas.
CC218	Non-metal and non-wood articles not covered elsewhere: Construction and building materials covering large surface areas, including but not limited to paper articles; plastic, rubber, fiberglass, and other composite articles; stone, asphalt, plaster, cement, glass, and ceramic articles.
CC219	Small-scale complex (*i.e.,* mixed material) machinery, mechanical appliances, and electrical/electronic articles.
CC220	Large-scale complex (*i.e.,* mixed material) machinery, motor vehicles, mechanical appliances, and electrical/electronic articles.
CC221	Metal products, including construction/building materials, parts, or other metal articles not covered elsewhere.
CC222	Electrical batteries and accumulators.
	Chemical Substances in Packaging, Paper, Plastic, Toys, Hobby Products
CC990	Non-TSCA use.
CC301	Packaging (excluding food packaging), including paper articles.
CC302	Other articles with routine direct contact during normal use, including paper articles.
CC303	Articles without routine direct contact, such as packaging (excluding food packaging), including rubber articles; plastic articles (hard); plastic articles (soft).
CC304	Articles without routine direct contact, such as packaging (excluding food packaging), including rubber articles; plastic articles (hard); plastic articles (soft).
CC305	Toys intended for children's use (and child-dedicated articles), including but not limited to fabrics, textiles, and apparel; metal articles; wood articles; paper articles; plaster, glass, and ceramic articles; and/or plastic, rubber, fiberglass, and other composite articles (hard).
CC306	Adhesives applied at elevated temperatures.
CC307	Cement/concrete.
CC308	Crafting glue.
CC309	Crafting paint (applied to body).
CC310	Crafting paint (applied to craft).
CC311	Fixatives and finishing spray coatings.
CC312	Modelling clay.
CC313	Correction fluid/tape.
CC314	Inks in writing equipment (liquid).
CC315	Inks used for stamps.
CC316	Toner/Printer cartridge.
CC317	Liquid photographic processing solutions.
	Chemical Substances in Automotive, Fuel, Agriculture, Outdoor Use Products
CC401	Exterior car washes and soaps.
CC402	Exterior car waxes, polishes, and coatings.
CC403	Interior car care.
CC404	Touch up auto paint.
CC405	Degreasers.
CC406	Liquid lubricants and greases.
CC407	Paste lubricants and greases.
CC408	Spray lubricants and greases.
CC409	Anti-freeze liquids.
CC410	De-icing liquids.
CC411	De-icing solids.
CC412	Lock de-icers/releasers.

TABLE 5 TO PARAGRAPH (c)(4)—CODES FOR REPORTING CONSUMER AND COMMERCIAL PRODUCT CATEGORIES—Continued

Code	Category
CC413	Cooking and heating fuels.
CC414	Fuel additives.
CC415	Vehicular or appliance fuels.
CC416	Explosive materials.
CC417	Agricultural non-pesticidal products.
CC418	Lawn and garden care products.
Chemical Substances in Products Not Described by Other Codes	
CC980	Other (specify).
CC990	Non-TSCA use.

* * * * *

(b) *Chemical-specific information.* The following chemical-specific information must be reported for each chemical substance that is a PFAS manufactured for each year since January 1, 2011. This includes each chemical substance that is a PFAS and incorporated into mixtures:

* * * * *

Table 5 to Paragraph (c)(4)—Codes for Reporting Consumer and Commercial Product Categories

* * * * *

(f) * * *

(1) *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Harmonized Templates.* For each unpublished study report, the submitter shall complete an OECD Harmonized Templates for Reporting Chemical Test Summaries and submit the accompanying study reports and supporting information. This can be accomplished by using the freely available IUCLID software. Templates need not be prepared for exposure-related information the manufacturer is otherwise submitting through the reporting application described in § 705.35.

* * * * *

■ 5. Remove and reserve § 705.18.

§ 705.18 [Reserved]

* * * * *

■ 6. Revise § 705.20 to read as follows:

§ 705.20 When to report.

All information reported to EPA in response to the requirements of this part must be submitted during the applicable submission period. For all reporters submitting information pursuant to § 705.15, the submission period shall begin on [DATE 2 MONTHS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE FINAL RULE], and last for three months: [DATE 2 MONTHS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE FINAL RULE], through [DATE 5 MONTHS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE FINAL RULE].

* * * * *

■ 7. Amend § 705.30 by:
■ a. Revising paragraph (a)(2) in numerical order;
■ b. Revising paragraph (a)(2)(ii);
■ c. Reserve paragraph (a)(2)(iv)
■ d. Revise paragraph (b)(2)(i)
■ e. Revising paragraph (f);
■ f. Revising paragraph (g); and
■ g. Revise paragraph (h).

The revisions to read as follows:

§ 705.30 Confidentiality claims.

(a) * * *

(1) * * *

(2) * * *

(i) * * *

(ii) For processing and use data elements required by §§ 705.15(c)(1) through (7);

(iii) * * *

(iv) [Reserved]

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(1) * * *

(2) * * *

(i) *Volume.* Production volume information required pursuant to §§ 705.15(d)(1), (5), and (6).

* * * * *

(f) *Additional requirements for specific chemical identity.* A person may assert a claim of confidentiality for the specific chemical identity of a chemical substance as described in § 705.15(b)(1)(i) only if the identity of that chemical substance is treated as confidential in the Master Inventory File (or as a confidential LVE) as of the time the report is submitted for that chemical substance, if that substance is currently on the Inventory or is an LVE. Any person who asserts a claim of confidentiality for the specific chemical identity under this paragraph must provide a generic chemical name. To assert a claim of confidentiality for the identity of a reportable chemical substance, you must submit with the report detailed written answers to the questions from paragraph (b) of this section and to the following questions.

* * * * *

(g) *Joint submissions.* If a primary submitter asks a secondary submitter to provide information directly to EPA in a joint submission under § 705.15(b)(1)(i), only the primary submitter may assert a confidentiality claim for the data elements that it directly submits to EPA. The primary submitter must substantiate those claims that are not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section. The secondary submitter is responsible for asserting all confidentiality claims for the data elements that it submits directly to EPA and for substantiating those claims that are not exempt under paragraph (b)(3) of this section.

(h) *No claim of confidentiality.* Information not claimed as confidential business information in accordance with the requirements of this section may be made public (*e.g.,* by publication of specific chemical name and CASRN on the public portion of the TSCA Inventory). EPA will provide advance public notice of specific chemical identities to be added to the public portion of the TSCA Inventory.

* * * * *

[FR Doc. 2025–19882 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 90, No. 217

Thursday, November 13, 2025

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

ARCTIC RESEARCH COMMISSION

Notice of Vacancy

ACTION: Notice of vacancy.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given, pursuant to Section 103(c)(3) of Public Law 101–609, which states that any vacancy occurring in the membership of the Commission shall be filled, after notice of the vacancy is published in the **Federal Register**, in the manner in which the original appointment was made, for the remainder of the unexpired term. This notice is published to comply with the aforesaid requirement. The Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 (Title I Pub. L. 98–373) and the Presidential Executive Order on Arctic Research (Executive Order 12501) dated January 28, 1985, established the United States Arctic Research Commission and provides the authority for this notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Debra Dickson, Administrative Officer, Arctic Research Commission, 703–235–1040.

Debra L. Dickson,

Administrative Officer.

[FR Doc. 2025–19871 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8050–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of Industry and Security

Order Renewing Temporary Denial of Export Privileges: Rossiya Airlines, Pilotov St 18–4, St. Petersburg, Russia, 196210

Pursuant to Section 766.24 of the Export Administration Regulations, 15 CFR parts 730–774 (''EAR'' or ''the Regulations''),[1] I hereby grant the request of the Office of Export Enforcement (''OEE'') to renew the temporary denial order (''TDO'') issued in this matter on November 5, 2024. I find that renewal of this order is necessary in the public interest to prevent an imminent violation of the Regulations and that renewal for an extended period is appropriate because Rossiya Airlines (''Rossiya'') has engaged in a pattern of repeated, ongoing and/or continuous apparent violations of the EAR.

I. Procedural History

On May 20, 2022, the then-Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Export Enforcement signed an order denying Rossiya's export privileges for a period of 180 days on the ground that issuance of the order was necessary in the public interest to prevent an imminent violation of the Regulations. The order was issued *ex parte* pursuant to Section 766.24(a) of the Regulations and was effective upon issuance.[2] The TDO was subsequently renewed in accordance with Section 766.24(d) of the Regulations on November 15, 2022.[3] Subsequent renewal orders were issued on May 12, 2023, November 8, 2023, and November 5, 2024, respectively, and were also effective upon issuance.[4]

On October 6, 2025, BIS, through OEE, submitted a written request for a renewal of the TDO. The written request was made more than 20 days before the TDO's scheduled expiration and, given the temporary suspension of international mail service to Russia, OEE has attempted to deliver a copy of the renewal request to Rossiya by alternative means in accordance with Sections 766.5 and 766.24(d) of the Regulations. No opposition to the renewal of the TDO has been received.

II. Renewal of the TDO

A. Legal Standard

Pursuant to Section 766.24, BIS may issue an order temporarily denying a respondent's export privileges upon a showing that the order is necessary in the public interest to prevent an ''imminent violation'' of the Regulations, or any order, license or authorization issued thereunder. 15 CFR 766.24(b)(1) and 766.24(d). ''A violation may be 'imminent' either in time or degree of likelihood.'' 15 CFR 766.24(b)(3). BIS may show ''either that a violation is about to occur, or that the general circumstances of the matter under investigation or case under criminal or administrative charges demonstrate a likelihood of future violations.'' *Id.* As to the likelihood of future violations, BIS may show that the violation under investigation or charge ''is significant, deliberate, covert and/or likely to occur again, rather than technical or negligent[.]'' *Id.* A ''lack of information establishing the precise time a violation may occur does not preclude a finding that a violation is imminent, so long as there is sufficient reason to believe the likelihood of a violation.'' *Id.*

If BIS believes that renewal of a denial order is necessary in the public interest to prevent an imminent violation, it may file a written request for renewal, with any modifications if appropriate. 15 CFR 766.24(d)(1). The written request, which must be filed no later than 20 days prior to the TDO's expiration, should set forth the basis for BIS's belief that renewal is necessary, including any additional or changed circumstances. *Id.* ''In cases demonstrating a pattern of repeated, ongoing and/or continuous apparent violations, BIS may request the renewal of a temporary denial order for

[1] On August 13, 2018, the President signed into law the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (''NDAA''), which includes the Export Control Reform Act of 2018, 50 U.S.C. 4801–4852 (''ECRA''). While Section 1766 of the NDAA repeals the provisions of the Export Administration Act, 50 U.S.C. 4601 *et seq.* (''EAA''), (except for three sections which are inapplicable here), Section 1768 of the NDAA provides, in pertinent part, that all orders, rules, regulations, and other forms of administrative action that were made or issued under the EAA, including as continued in effect pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.* (''IEEPA''), and were in effect as of ECRA's date of enactment (August 13, 2018), shall continue in effect according to their terms until modified, superseded, set aside, or revoked through action undertaken pursuant to the authority provided under ECRA. Moreover, Section 4820(a)(5) of ECRA authorizes the issuance of temporary denial orders.

[2] The TDO was published in the **Federal Register** on May 25, 2022 (87 FR 31856).

[3] The November 15, 2022 renewal order was published in the **Federal Register** on November 21, 2022 (87 FR 70780). At the time of the renewal, Section 766.24(d) provided that BIS may seek renewal of a temporary denial order for additional 180-day renewal periods, if it believes that renewal is necessary in the public interest to prevent an imminent violation.

[4] The May 12, 2023 renewal order was published in the **Federal Register** on May 17, 2023 (88 FR 31483). The November 8, 2023 renewal order was published in the **Federal Register** on November 14, 2023 (88 FR 77952). The November 5, 2024 renewal order was published in the **Federal Register** on November 8, 2024 (89 FR 88721).

an additional period not exceeding one year.'' [5] *Id.*

B. The TDO and BIS's Request for Renewal

The U.S. Commerce Department, through BIS, responded to the Russian Federation's (''Russia's'') further invasion of Ukraine by implementing a sweeping series of stringent export controls that severely restrict Russia's access to technologies and other items that it needs to sustain its aggressive military capabilities. These controls primarily target Russia's defense, aerospace, and maritime sectors and are intended to cut off Russia's access to vital technological inputs, atrophy key sectors of its industrial base, and undercut Russia's strategic ambitions to exert influence on the world stage. Effective February 24, 2022, BIS imposed expansive controls on aviation-related (*e.g.,* Commerce Control List Categories 7 and 9) items to Russia, including by imposing a license requirement for the export, reexport or transfer (in-country) to Russia of any aircraft or aircraft parts specified in Export Control Classification Number (''ECCN'') 9A991 (Section 746.8(a)(1) of the EAR).[6] BIS will review any export or reexport license applications for such items under a policy of denial. *See* Section 746.8(b). Effective March 2, 2022, BIS excluded any aircraft registered in, owned, or controlled by, or under charter or lease by Russia or a national of Russia from being eligible for license exception Aircraft, Vessels, and Spacecraft (''AVS'') (Section 740.15 of the EAR).[7] Accordingly, any U.S.-origin aircraft or foreign aircraft that includes more than 25% controlled U.S.-origin content, and that is registered in, owned, or controlled by, or under charter or lease by Russia or a national of Russia, is subject to a license requirement before it can travel to Russia.

OEE's request for renewal for a period of one year is based upon the facts underlying the issuance of the initial TDO and the renewal orders subsequently issued in this matter on November 15, 2022, May 12, 2023, November 8, 2023, and November 5, 2024, as well as other evidence developed during this investigation. This evidence demonstrates that Rossiya has continued, and continues, to act in blatant disregard for U.S. export controls and the terms of previously issued TDOs. Specifically, the initial TDO, issued on May 20, 2022, was based on evidence that Rossiya engaged in conduct prohibited by the Regulations by operating multiple aircraft subject to the EAR and classified under ECCN 9A991.b on flights into Russia after March 2, 2022, from destinations including, but not limited to, Hurghada, Egypt; Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; and Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, without the required BIS authorization.[8] Further evidence indicated that Rossiya also operated aircraft subject to the EAR domestically on flights within Russia, potentially in violation of Section 736.2(b)(10) of the Regulations.

As discussed in the prior renewal orders, BIS presented evidence indicating that, after the initial TDO issued, Rossiya continued to operate aircraft subject to the EAR and classified under ECCN 9A991.b on flights both into and within Russia, in violation of the Regulations and the TDO itself.[9] The November 15, 2022 renewal order detailed flights into and out of Russia from/to Antalya and Istanbul, Turkey, as well as within Russia.[10] The May 12, 2023 renewal order detailed flights into and out of Russia from/to Hurghada and Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt and Istanbul, Turkey.[11] Similarly, the November 8, 2023 renewal order detailed flights into and out of Russia from/to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Samarkand, Uzbekistan, and Hurghada and Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.[12] Additionally, the November 5, 2024 renewal order detailed flights into and out of Russia from/to Sanya, China and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, as well as domestically within Russia.[13]

Since that time, Rossiya has continued to engage in conduct prohibited by the applicable TDO and Regulations. In its October 6, 2025 request for renewal of the TDO, BIS submitted evidence that Rossiya continues to operate aircraft subject to the EAR and classified under ECCN 9A991.b, both on flights into and within Russia, in violation of the November 5, 2024 renewal order and/or the Regulations. Specifically, BIS's evidence and related investigation demonstrates that Rossiya continued to operate aircraft subject to the EAR, including, but not limited to, on flights into and out of Russia from/to Samarkand, Uzbekistan, Sharm el-Sheikh and Hur Ghada, Egypt, as well as domestically within Russia. Information about those flights includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Tail No.	Serial No.	Aircraft type	Departure/arrival cities	Dates
RA–73188	34900	737–8GJ	Perm, RU/Sochi, RU.	September 22, 2025.
RA–73188	34900	737–8GJ	Tomsk, RU/Sochi, RU	September 20, 2025.
RA–73188	34900	737–8GJ	Samarkand, UZ/St. Petersburg, RU	March 28, 2025.
RA–73192	34897	737–8GJ	Sochi, RU/Novosibirsk, RU	September 21, 2025.
RA–73192	34897	737–8GJ	Ufa, RU/Sochi, RU	September 20, 2025.
RA–73192	34897	737–8GJ	Samarkand, UZ/St. Petersburg, RU	February 28, 2025.
RA–73211	41232	737–8LJ	Sharm el-Sheikh, EG/Ufa, RU	October 5, 2025.
RA–73211	41232	737–8LJ	Kazan, RU/Sharm el-Sheikh, EG	October 3, 2025.
RA–73211	41232	737–8LJ	Hurghada, EG/Moscow, RU	September 30, 2025.

[5] 88 FR 59791 (Aug. 30, 2023).

[6] 87 FR 12226 (Mar. 3, 2022).

[7] 87 FR 13048 (Mar. 8, 2022).

[8] Publicly available flight tracking information shows that on March 8, 2022, serial number (SN) 27650 flew from Hurghada, Egypt to Moscow, Russia. On March 6, 2022, SN 41212 flew from Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt to St. Petersburg, Russia. In addition, on March 6, 2022, SN 44435 flew from Dubai, United Arab Emirates to St. Petersburg, Russia. Similarly, on March 7, 2022, SN 41202 flew from Sharjah, United Arab Emirates to Moscow, Russia.

[9] Engaging in conduct prohibited by a denial order violates the Regulations. 15 CFR 764.2(a) and (k).

[10] Publicly available flight tracking information shows that SN 35278 flew from Antalya, Turkey to Moscow, Russia on November 12, 2022 and from Kaliningrad, Russia to Moscow, Russia on September 29, 2022. In addition, SN 33622 flew from Istanbul, Turkey to St. Petersburg, Russia on November 2, 2022 and from Krasnoyarsk, Russia to Irkutsk, Russia on November 5, 2022.

[11] Publicly available flight tracking information shows that SN 34900 flew from Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt to Moscow, Russia on March 20, 2023. Additionally, SN 34897 flew from Istanbul, Turkey to Moscow, Russia on March 16, 2023 and SN 28515 flew from Magadan, Russia to Anadyr, Russia on April 25, 2023.

[12] Publicly available flight tracking information shows that SN 34900 flew from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan to Krasnoyarsk, Russia on November 3, 2023 and from Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt to Moscow, Russia on September 21, 2023. In addition, SN 35278 flew from Samarkand, Uzbekistan to St. Petersburg, Russia on August 4, 2023. On November 1 to November 2, 2023, SN 34897 flew from Hurghada, Egypt to Samara, Russia.

[13] Publicly available flight tracking information shows that SN 34900 flew from Sanya, China to Krasnoyarsk, Russia on October 18, 2024. Additionally, SN 34897 flew from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan to Krasnoyarsk, Russia on August 28, 2024. Also on August 28, 2024, SN 28531 flew from Magadan, Russia to Moscow, Russia.

III. Findings

Under the applicable standard set forth in Section 766.24 of the Regulations and my review of the entire record, I find that the evidence presented by BIS demonstrates that Rossiya has acted in violation of the Regulations and the TDO; that such violations have been significant, deliberate; and that given the foregoing and the nature of the matters under investigation, there is a likelihood of imminent violations. Moreover, I find that renewal for an extended period is appropriate because Rossiya has engaged in a pattern of repeated, ongoing and/or continuous apparent violations of the EAR. Therefore, renewal of the TDO for one year is necessary in the public interest to prevent imminent violation of the Regulations and to give notice to companies and individuals in the United States and abroad that they should avoid dealing with Rossiya, in connection with export and reexport transactions involving items subject to the Regulations and in connection with any other activity subject to the Regulations.

IV. Order

It is therefore ordered:

First, Rossiya Airlines, Pilotov St 18–4, St. Petersburg, Russia, 196210, when acting for or on their behalf, any successors or assigns, agents, or employees may not, directly or indirectly, participate in any way in any transaction involving any commodity, software or technology (hereinafter collectively referred to as ''item'') exported or to be exported from the United States that is subject to the EAR, or in any other activity subject to the EAR including, but not limited to:

A. Applying for, obtaining, or using any license (except directly related to safety of flight), license exception, or export control document;

B. Carrying on negotiations concerning, or ordering, buying, receiving, using, selling, delivering, storing, disposing of, forwarding, transporting, financing, or otherwise servicing in any way, any transaction involving any item exported or to be exported from the United States that is subject to the EAR except directly related to safety of flight and authorized by BIS pursuant to Section 764.3(a)(2) of the Regulations, or engaging in any other activity subject to the EAR except directly related to safety of flight and authorized by BIS pursuant to Section 764.3(a)(2) of the Regulations; or

C. Benefitting in any way from any transaction involving any item exported or to be exported from the United States that is subject to the EAR, or from any other activity subject to the EAR except directly related to safety of flight and authorized by BIS pursuant to Section 764.3(a)(2) of the Regulations.

Second, that no person may, directly or indirectly, do any of the following:

A. Export, reexport, or transfer (in-country) to or on behalf of Rossiya any item subject to the EAR except directly related to safety of flight and authorized by BIS pursuant to Section 764.3(a)(2) of the Regulations;

B. Take any action that facilitates the acquisition or attempted acquisition by Rossiya of the ownership, possession, or control of any item subject to the EAR that has been or will be exported from the United States, including financing or other support activities related to a transaction whereby Rossiya acquires or attempts to acquire such ownership, possession or control except directly related to safety of flight and authorized by BIS pursuant to Section 764.3(a)(2) of the Regulations;

C. Take any action to acquire from or to facilitate the acquisition or attempted acquisition from Rossiya of any item subject to the EAR that has been exported from the United States except directly related to safety of flight and authorized by BIS pursuant to Section 764.3(a)(2) of the Regulations;

D. Obtain from Rossiya in the United States any item subject to the EAR with knowledge or reason to know that the item will be, or is intended to be, exported from the United States except directly related to safety of flight and authorized by BIS pursuant to Section 764.3(a)(2) of the Regulations; or

E. Engage in any transaction to service any item subject to the EAR that has been or will be exported from the United States and which is owned, possessed or controlled by Rossiya, or service any item, of whatever origin, that is owned, possessed or controlled by Rossiya if such service involves the use of any item subject to the EAR that has been or will be exported from the United States except directly related to safety of flight and authorized by BIS pursuant to Section 764.3(a)(2) of the Regulations. For purposes of this paragraph, servicing means installation, maintenance, repair, modification, or testing.

Third, that, after notice and opportunity for comment as provided in section 766.23 of the EAR, any other person, firm, corporation, or business organization related to Rossiya by ownership, control, position of responsibility, affiliation, or other connection in the conduct of trade or business may also be made subject to the provisions of this Order.

In accordance with the provisions of Sections 766.24(e) of the EAR, Rossiya may, at any time, appeal this Order by filing a full written statement in support of the appeal with the Office of the Administrative Law Judge, U.S. Coast Guard ALJ Docketing Center, 40 South Gay Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202–4022.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 766.24(d) of the EAR, BIS may seek renewal of this Order by filing a written request not later than 20 days before the expiration date. A renewal request may be opposed by Rossiya as provided in Section 766.24(d), by filing a written submission with the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Export Enforcement, which must be received not later than seven days before the expiration date of the Order.

A copy of this Order shall be provided to Rossiya and shall be published in the **Federal Register**.

This Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect for one year.

Dated: November 4, 2025.

David Peters,

Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Export Enforcement.

[FR Doc. 2025–19863 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–DT–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[Docket No.: ED–2025–SCC–0382]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) 2025–26 Through 2026–27

AGENCY: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Department of Education (ED).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, the Department is proposing a revision of a currently approved information collection request (ICR).

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before December 15, 2025.

ADDRESSES: To access and review all the documents related to the information collection listed in this notice, please use *https://www.regulations.gov* by searching the Docket ID number ED–2025–SCC–0382. Comments submitted in response to this notice should be

submitted electronically through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at *http://www.regulations.gov* by selecting the Docket ID number or via postal mail, commercial delivery, or hand delivery. If the *regulations.gov* site is not available to the public for any reason, the Department will temporarily accept comments at *ICDocketMgr@ed.gov*. Please include the docket ID number and the title of the information collection request when requesting documents or submitting comments. Please note that comments submitted after the comment period will not be accepted. Written requests for information or comments submitted by postal mail or delivery should be addressed to the National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, LBJ, Room 5C133, Washington, DC 20202–1200.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For specific questions related to collection activities, please contact Matt Soldner, 202–453–7441.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Department is especially interested in public comment addressing the following issues: (1) is this collection necessary to the proper functions of the Department; (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) is the estimate of burden accurate; (4) how might the Department enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (5) how might the Department minimize the burden of this collection on the respondents, including through the use of information technology. Please note that written comments received in response to this notice will be considered public records.

Title of Collection: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) 2025–26 through 2026–27.

OMB Control Number: 1850–0582.

Type of Review: A revision of a currently approved ICR.

Respondents/Affected Public: Private Sector; State, Local, and Tribal Governments.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Responses: 70,152.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Burden Hours: 750,793.

Abstract: The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) seeks authorization from OMB to make a change to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data collection. IPEDS is a web-based data collection system designed to collect basic data from all postsecondary institutions in the United States and the other jurisdictions. The IPEDS data collection enables NCES to report on key dimensions of postsecondary education such as enrollments, degrees and other awards earned, tuition and fees, average net price, student financial aid, graduation rates, student outcomes, revenues and expenditures, faculty salaries, and staff employed. A subset of these elements are disaggregated by race and sex.

In this change, we are requesting to add the new IPEDS ''Admissions and Consumer Transparency Supplement'' (ACTS) survey component. On August 7, 2025, President Donald J. Trump issued a Presidential Memorandum entitled ''Ensuring Transparency in Higher Education Admissions,'' available at *https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/08/ensuring-transparency-in-higher-education-admissions/*. In that memorandum, President Trump directed the Secretary of Education to, within 120 days of that date, ''expand the scope of required [IPEDS] reporting to provide adequate transparency into admissions.'' On that same day, Secretary McMahon issued a directive to NCES to initiate a series of changes to IPEDS during the 2025–26 school year. That directive is available at *https://www.ed.gov/media/document/secretary-directive-ensuring-transparency-higher-education-admissions-august-7-2025-110497.pdf*.

The data to be collected from ACTS are intended to capture information that could indicate whether institutions of higher education are using race-based preferencing in their admissions processes. To access and review the proposed data elements for the ACTS collection and all other documents related to the information collection listed in this notice, please use *https://www.regulations.gov* by searching the Docket ID number ED–2025–SCC–0382.

As previously stated in the 60-day notice associated with this proposed change, the ACTS component was expected to be applicable to, at a minimum, all four-year institutions. We posed a Directed Question to the public to seek their feedback on the appropriateness of that determination. Based both upon our initial thinking and public comment, we propose limit eligibilty of ACTS to the four-year sector. We further propose that otherwise eligible institutions that admit 100 percent of their applicants and do not award non-need-based aid be exempted from a given collection year. Responses to our second Directed Question, related to burden, as well as our responses to other comments received in response to the 60-day notice associated with this proposed change, are available. Both can be found at *https://www.regulations.gov* by searching the Docket ID number ED–2025–SCC–0382.

Ross Santy,

Data Officer, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development.

[FR Doc. 2025–19874 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[Docket No.: ED–2025–SCC–0910]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Comment Request; Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS 2027) Main Study International Questionnaire

AGENCY: Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Department of Education (ED).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, the Department is proposing a revision of a currently approved information collection request (ICR).

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before January 12, 2026.

ADDRESSES: To access and review all the documents related to the information collection listed in this notice, please use *http://www.regulations.gov* by searching the Docket ID number ED–2025–SCC–0910. Comments submitted in response to this notice should be submitted electronically through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at *http://www.regulations.gov* by selecting the Docket ID number or via postal mail, commercial delivery, or hand delivery. If the *regulations.gov* site is not available to the public for any reason, the Department will temporarily accept comments at *ICDocketMgr@ed.gov.* Please include the docket ID number and the title of the information collection request when requesting documents or submitting comments. Please note that comments submitted after the comment period will not be accepted. Written requests for information or comments submitted by postal mail or delivery should be addressed to the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, LBJ, Room 5C125, Washington, DC 20202–1200.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For specific questions related to collection activities, please contact Matt Soldner, 202–453–7441.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Department, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)), provides the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed, revised, and continuing collections of information. This helps the Department assess the impact of its information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. It also helps the public understand the Department's information collection requirements and provide the requested data in the desired format. The Department is soliciting comments on the proposed information collection request (ICR) that is described below. The Department is especially interested in public comment addressing the following issues: (1) is this collection necessary to the proper functions of the Department; (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) is the estimate of burden accurate; (4) how might the Department enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (5) how might the Department minimize the burden of this collection on the respondents, including through the use of information technology. Please note that written comments received in response to this notice will be considered public records.

Title of Collection: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS 2027) Main Study International Questionnaire.

OMB Control Number: 1850–0695.

Type of Review: A revision of a currently approved ICR.

Respondents/Affected Public: Individuals and Households.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Responses: 19,236.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Burden Hours: 8,047.

Abstract: The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education (ED), is an international assessment of fourth and eighth grade students' achievement in mathematics and science. Since its inception in 1995, TIMSS has continued to assess students every 4 years (1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2023), with the next TIMSS assessment, TIMSS 2027, being the ninth iteration of the study. In TIMSS 2023, 70 countries or education systems participated, and TIMSS 2027 is expected to have a similar scope. The United States will participate in TIMSS 2027 to continue to monitor the progress of its students compared to that of other nations and to provide data on factors that may influence student achievement.

TIMSS is led by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), an international collective of research organizations and government agencies that create the frameworks used to develop the assessment, the survey instruments, and the study timeline. IEA decides and agrees upon a common set of standards, procedures, and timelines for collecting and reporting data, all of which must be followed by all participating countries. As a result, TIMSS is able to provide a reliable and comparable measure of student skills in participating countries. In the U.S., NCES conducts this study in collaboration with the IEA and a number of contractors (RTI International, Measurement Incorportated, and Ideal Systems Solutions Inc.) to ensure proper implementation of the study and adoption of practices in adherence to the IEA's standards. Participation in TIMSS is consistent with NCES's mandate of acquiring and disseminating data on educational activities and student achievement in the United States compared with foreign nations [The Educational Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. 9543)].

TIMSS 2027 will be a computer-based assessment (referred to as ''eTIMSS''), administered electronically using the eTIMSS player. TIMSS 2027 will be the third eTIMSS assessment cycle in the United States.

In preparation for the TIMSS 2027 main study, all countries are asked to implement a 2026 field test. The purpose of the TIMSS field test is to evaluate newly developed assessment items and background questions, to test operational procedures of electronic administration of the assessment, to ensure practices that promote low exclusion rates, and to ensure that classroom sampling procedures proposed for the main study are successful. However, since the U.S. has participated successfully in all prior cycles and to contain costs, the U.S. will not participate in the field test of TIMSS 2027 and will only participate in the main study.

Because TIMSS is a collaborative effort among many parties, the United States must adhere to the international schedule set forth by the IEA, including the availability of final main study plans as well as draft and final questionnaires. In order to meet the international data collection schedule and to align with recruitment for other NCES studies (*e.g.,* the National Assessment of Education Progress, NAEP), the current package requests approval to conduct the TIMSS 2027 main study sampling, recruitment and data collections. Recruitment for the main study will begin in Spring 2026 with data collection occurring in March through June 2027. The final internationally approved questionnaires for the main study are expected to be submitted via a change memo in January 2027.

Ross Santy,

Chief Data Officer, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development.

[FR Doc. 2025–19876 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

International Energy Agency Meetings

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of meetings.

SUMMARY: The Industry Advisory Board (IAB) to the International Energy Agency (IEA) will meet on November 19, 2025, and November 20, 2025, as a hybrid meeting via webinar and in person, in connection with a joint meeting of the IEA's Standing Group on Emergency Questions (SEQ) and the IEA's Standing Group on the Oil Market (SOM) which is scheduled at the same time via webinar and in person.

DATES: November 19, 2025, and November 20, 2025.

ADDRESSES: The location details of the SEQ and SOM webinar meeting are under the control of the IEA Secretariat, located at 9 rue de la Fédération, 75015 Paris, France. The in-person meeting will take place at IEA Headquarters, 9 rue de la Fédération, 75015 Paris, France.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Matthew Zogby, Attorney Advisor in the Office of the Assistant General Counsel for International and National Security Programs, Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20585, (202) 586–5000, *matthew.zogby@hq.doe.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with section 252(c)(1)(A)(i) of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6272(c)(1)(A)(i)) (EPCA), the following notice of meetings is provided:

A meeting of the Industry Advisory Board (IAB) to the International Energy Agency (IEA) will be held in person and via webinar at the IEA Headquarters, 9 rue de la Fédération, 75015 Paris, commencing at 9:30 a.m., Paris time, on November 19, 2025. The purpose of this notice is to permit attendance by

representatives of U.S. company members of the IAB at a joint meeting of the IEA's Standing Group on Emergency Questions (SEQ) and the IEA's Standing Group on the Oil Market (SOM), which is scheduled to be held at the same location in person and via webinar at the same time.

The agenda of the meeting is under the control of the SEQ and the SOM. It is expected that the SEQ and the SOM will adopt the following agenda.

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Approval of Summary Record of meeting of 25 June 2025
3. Update on the Current Oil Market Situation
4. Reports on Recent Oil Market and Policy Developments in IEA and Association member countries
5. Russian Oil Market Developments
6. Update on Recent Oil Trade Developments
7. Chinese Strategic and Commercial Oil Stocks Trends
8. Global Oil Storage Developments
9. The Implications of Oil and Gas Field Decline Rates
10. World Energy Outlook
11. IOC Outlooks
12. Impact of Changes to MENA Power Structure on Oil Demand
13. Sustainable Fuels
14. Any other business:

Date of next SOM/SEQ meetings:
—25–26 March 2026
—17–18 June 2026
—18–19 November 2026 (ERE2026 17–18 November)

A meeting of the Industry Advisory Board (IAB) to the International Energy Agency (IEA) will be held in person and via webinar at the IEA Headquarters, 9 rue de la Fédération, 75015 Paris, commencing at 9:30 a.m., Paris time, on November 20, 2025. The purpose of this notice is to permit attendance by representatives of U.S. company members of the IAB at a meeting of the IEA's Standing Group on Emergency Questions (SEQ), which is scheduled to be held at the same location in person and via webinar at the same time. The IAB will also hold an online preparatory meeting among company representatives at 2 p.m. Paris time on November 13, 2025. The agenda for this preparatory meeting is to review the agenda for the SEQ meeting.

The agenda of the SEQ meeting is under the control of the SEQ. It is expected that the SEQ will adopt the following agenda:

Closed SEQ Session—IEA Member Countries Only

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Approval of the Summary Record of 26 June 2025 SEQ meeting
3. Stockholding Levels of IEA Member Countries
4. SEQ and SOM—initial considerations of 3-year strategy paper

Open SEQ Session—Open to Association Countries

5. Emergency and Security Review (ESR) of Türkiye
6. Mid-Term Review update from Finland
7. Emergency and Security Review (ESR) of Czechia
8. Update on Emergency and Security Work with Non-Member Countries
9. Update on Ongoing Work on Thailand
10. Update on Ongoing Work on Electricity Security
11. ERE2026 Planning

Closed SEQ Session—IEA Member Countries Only

12. Colombia Accession Review
13. Update on Ongoing Work on Natural Gas Security
14. Industry Advisory Board Update
15. Proposal for updating survey on maximum drawdown rates of public stocks and storage capacities
16. Any Other Business

Schedule of ESRs for 2025/26

Schedule of SEQ & SOM Meetings:
—25–26 March 2026
—17–18 June 2026
—17–19 November 2026 (including ERE2026)

As provided in section 252(c)(1)(A)(ii) of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6272(c)(1)(A)(ii)), the meetings of the IAB are open to representatives of members of the IAB and their counsel; representatives of members of the IEA's Standing Group on Emergency Questions and the IEA's Standing Group on the Oil Markets; representatives of the Departments of Energy, Justice, and State, the Federal Trade Commission, the General Accounting Office, Committees of Congress, the IEA, and the European Commission; and invitees of the IAB, the SEQ, the SOM, or the IEA.

Signing Authority: This document of the Department of Energy was signed on November 8, 2025, by William T. Joyce, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of International Affairs, pursuant to delegated authority from the Secretary of Energy. That document with the original signature and date is maintained by DOE. For administrative purposes only, and in compliance with requirements of the Office of the Federal Register, the undersigned DOE Federal Register Liaison Officer has been authorized to sign and submit the document in electronic format for publication, as an official document of the Department of Energy. This administrative process in no way alters the legal effect of this document upon publication in the **Federal Register**.

Signed in Washington, DC, on November 10, 2025.

Jennifer Hartzell,

Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, U.S. Department of Energy.

[FR Doc. 2025–19877 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450–01–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[EPA–HQ–OPPT–2025–1610; FRL–12975–03–OCSPP]

Science Advisory Committee on Chemicals (SACC); Notice of Postponement of Public Meeting

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency has postponed the virtual preparatory meeting for the Science Advisory Committee on Chemicals (SACC) to consider the scope and clarity of the draft charge questions for the peer review of the draft risk evaluation of octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane (D4). The meeting was scheduled for November 18, 2025, and will now be held December 1, 2025. The meeting was announced in the **Federal Register** on September 19, 2025.

DATES:

Meeting date: December 1, 2025, 1:00 p.m. to approximately 5:00 p.m. (EST).

Registration: To request time to present oral comments during the preparatory meeting, you must register by noon (12:00 p.m. EST) on November 24, 2025, and submit a written version of your oral comments by noon (12:00 p.m. EST) on November 28, 2025. For those not making oral comments, registration will remain open through the end of this meeting on December 1, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Designated Federal Official (DFO): Dr. Alaa Kamel, Regulatory and Information Services Division (7602M), Office of Mission Critical Operations, Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, Environmental Protection Agency; telephone number: (202) 564–5336 or call the SACC main office: (202) 564–8450; email address: *kamel.alaa@epa.gov.*

ADDRESSES:

Meeting registration: Online registration for the preparatory meeting

is available through the SACC website at *https://www.epa.gov/tsca-peer-review.* After registering, you will receive the webcast and streaming service meeting links and audio teleconference information.

Special accommodation requests: To request an accommodation for a disability, please contact the Designated Federal Official (DFO) listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The meeting was announced in the **Federal Register** on September 19, 2025 (90 FR 45204) (FRL–12975–01–OCSPP). The meeting is being rescheduled due to the lapse in government appropriations and its impact on potential and existing committee members. The December 2–5, 2025, SACC peer review meeting to discuss the D4 draft risk evaluation and technical support documents has not been rescheduled at this time. Online registration for the December 2–5, 2025 peer review meeting is available through the SACC website at *https://www.epa.gov/tsca-peer-review.* If these meetings must be further postponed due to a continuing lapse in government appropriations, EPA will announce the additional postponement in the **Federal Register** and will announce the rescheduled meeting dates in the **Federal Register** at least 15 days prior to the rescheduled meetings being held.

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 10; 15 U.S.C. 2625o *et seq.*

Dated: November 7, 2025.

Nancy B. Beck,

Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention.

[FR Doc. 2025–19875 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[EPA–HQ–OPPT–2018–0443; FRL–12964–02–OCSPP]

Octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane (Cyclotetrasiloxane, 2,2,4,4,6,6,8,8-octamethyl-)(D4); Draft Risk Evaluation Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA); Extension of the Comment Period

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice; extension of comment period.

SUMMARY: In the **Federal Register** of September 17, 2025, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the availability of and sought public comment on a draft risk evaluation under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) for Octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane (Cyclotetrasiloxane, 2,2,4,4,6,6,8,8-octamethyl-) (D4) (CASRN 556–67–2). The purpose of risk evaluations under TSCA is to determine whether a chemical substance presents an unreasonable risk of injury to health or the environment under the conditions of use (COUs), including unreasonable risk to potentially exposed or susceptible subpopulations identified as relevant to the risk evaluation by EPA, and without consideration of costs or non-risk factors. EPA used the best available science to prepare this draft risk evaluation and to preliminarily determine, based on the weight of scientific evidence, that D4 poses unreasonable risk to health and the environment driven primarily by COUs analyzed in the draft risk evaluation. This document extends the comment period, which was scheduled to end on November 17, 2025, for 15 days.

DATES: The comment period for the document published on September 17, 2025, at 90 FR 44821 (FRL–12964–01–OCSPP) is extended. Comments must be received on or before December 2, 2025; 15 days after November 17, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Submit your comments, identified by docket identification (ID) number EPA–HQ–OPPT–2018–0443, online at *https://www.regulations.gov*. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments. Do not submit electronically any information you consider to be Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Additional instructions on commenting and visiting the docket, along with more information about dockets generally, is available at *https://www.epa.gov/dockets*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

For technical information: Scott Drewes, Existing Chemical Risk Management Division (7404M), Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20460–0001; telephone number: (202) 564–8833; email address: *drewes.scott@epa.gov*.

For general information on TSCA: The TSCA Assistance Information Service Hotline, Goodwill Vision Enterprises, 422 South Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY 14620; telephone number: (800) 471–7127 or (202) 554–1404; email address: *TSCA-Hotline@epa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: To give stakeholders additional time to review materials and prepare comments, EPA is hereby extending the comment period established in the **Federal Register** document of September 17, 2025, at 90 FR 44821 (FRL–12964–01–OCSPP) for 15 days, from November 17, 2025, to December 2, 2025. More information on the action can be found in the **Federal Register** of September 17, 2025.

EPA provided a concurrent public comment period soliciting public comment on the draft documents and charge questions to be provided to the Octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane (D4); Draft Risk Evaluation; Science Advisory Committee on Chemicals (SACC) Peer Review; Notice of SACC Meeting; Availability of Draft Documents and Request for Comment (90 FR 45204, September 19, 2025) (FRL–12975–01–OCSPP), docket identification number EPA–HQ–OPPT–2025–1610. EPA is not reopening the peer review public comment period with this notice or delaying the SACC peer review meeting for D4. The opportunity to provide information to EPA via the Octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane (D4); TSCA Review docket (EPA–HQ–OPPT–2018–0443) on requested information will now continue through December 2, 2025.

To submit comments or access the docket, please follow the detailed instructions provided under **ADDRESSES**. If you have questions, consult the technical person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Authority: 15 U.S.C. 2601 *et seq.*

Dated: November 10, 2025.

Mary Elissa Reaves,

Director, Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics.

[FR Doc. 2025–19878 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Docket No. CDC–2025–0783]

Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices

AGENCY: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

ACTION: Notice of meeting and request for comment.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announces the following meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Time will be available for public comment.

DATES: The meeting will be held on December 4, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., EST and December 5, 2025, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., EST (times subject to change; see the ACIP website for updates: *https://www.cdc.gov/acip/meetings/index.html*). The meeting is expected to be held at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with a virtual option. Written comments must be received between November 13–24, 2025.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by Docket No. CDC–2025–0783, by either of the methods listed below. CDC does not accept comments by email.

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal: https://www.regulations.gov.* Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *Mail:* ACIP Secretariat, ACIP Meeting, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1600 Clifton Road NE, Mailstop H21–12, Atlanta, Georgia 30329–4027. Attn: Docket No. CDC–2025–0783.
- *Instructions:* All submissions received must include the Agency name and docket number. For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to *https://www.regulations.gov.*

The meeting will be webcast live via the World Wide Web. The webcast link can be found on the ACIP website at *https://www.cdc.gov/acip/index.html.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: ACIP Secretariat, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1600 Clifton Road NE, Mailstop H21–12, Atlanta, Georgia, 30329–4027. Email: *ACIP@cdc.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose: The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is charged with advising the Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), on the use of immunizing agents. In addition, under 42 U.S.C. 1396s, the Committee is mandated to establish and periodically review and, as appropriate, revise the list of vaccines for administration to vaccine-eligible children through the Vaccines for Children program, along with schedules regarding dosing interval, dosage, and contraindications to administration of vaccines. Further, under applicable provisions of the Affordable Care Act and section 2713 of the Public Health Service Act, immunization recommendations of ACIP that have been adopted by the Director, CDC, and appear on CDC immunization schedules generally must be covered by applicable health plans.

Matters to be Considered: The agenda will include discussions on vaccine safety, the childhood and adolescent immunization schedule, and hepatitis B vaccines. The agenda will include updates on ACIP workgroups. Recommendation votes may be scheduled for hepatitis B vaccines. Vaccines for Children (VFC) votes may be scheduled for hepatitis B vaccines. Agenda items are subject to change as priorities dictate. For more information on the meeting agenda, visit *https://www.cdc.gov/acip/index.html.*

Meeting Information: The meeting will be webcast live via the World Wide Web. For more information on ACIP, please visit the ACIP website *https://www.cdc.gov/acip.*

Public Participation

Interested persons or organizations are invited to participate by submitting written views, recommendations, and data. Please note that comments received, including attachments and other supporting materials, are part of the public record and are subject to public disclosure. Comments will be posted on *https://www.regulations.gov*. Therefore, do not include any information in your comment or supporting materials that you consider confidential or inappropriate for public disclosure. If you include your name, contact information, or other information that identifies you in the body of your comments, that information will be on public display. CDC will review all submissions and may choose to redact, or withhold, submissions containing private or proprietary information such as Social Security numbers, medical information, inappropriate language, or duplicate/near-duplicate examples of mass-mail campaigns. CDC will carefully consider all comments submitted into docket.

Written Public Comment: The docket will be opened to receive written comments November 13–24, 2025. Written comments must be received no later than November 24, 2025.

Oral Public Comment: This meeting will include time for members of the public to make an oral comment. Oral public comment will occur before any scheduled votes, including all votes relevant to the ACIP's Affordable Care Act and Vaccines for Children Program roles. Priority will be given to individuals who submit a request to make an oral comment before the meeting according to the procedures below.

Procedure for Oral Public Comment: All persons interested in making an oral public comment at the December 4–5, 2025 ACIP meeting must submit a request at *https://www.cdc.gov/acip/meetings/index.html* between November 13–24, 2025, and no later than 11:59 p.m. EST, November 24, 2025, according to the instructions provided.

If the number of persons requesting to speak is greater than can be reasonably accommodated during the scheduled time, CDC will conduct a random draw to determine the speakers for the scheduled public comment session. CDC staff will notify individuals regarding their request to speak by email by December 1, 2025. To accommodate the significant interest in participation in the oral public comment session of ACIP meetings, each speaker will be limited to three minutes, and each speaker may speak only once per meeting.

The Director, Office of Strategic Business Initiatives, Office of the Chief Operating Officer, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has been delegated the authority to sign **Federal Register** notices pertaining to announcements of meetings and other committee management activities, for both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

Kalwant Smagh,

Director, Office of Strategic Business Initiatives, Office of the Chief Operating Officer, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[FR Doc. 2025–19872 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4163–18–P

POSTAL SERVICE

International Product Change—Priority Mail Express International, Priority Mail International & First-Class Package International Service Agreement

AGENCY: Postal Service.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Postal Service gives notice of filing a request with the Postal Regulatory Commission to add a Priority Mail Express International, Priority Mail International & First-Class Package International Service contract to the list of Negotiated Service Agreements in the Competitive Product List in the Mail Classification Schedule.

DATES: Date of notice: November 13, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christopher C. Meyerson, (202) 268–7820.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The United States Postal Service hereby gives notice that, pursuant to 39 U.S.C. 3642 and 3632(b)(3), on November 4,

2025, it filed with the Postal Regulatory Commission a *USPS Request to Add Priority Mail Express International, Priority Mail International & First-Class Package International Service Contract 100 to Competitive Product List.* Documents are available at *www.prc.gov,* Docket Nos. MC2026–77 and K2026–77.

Colleen Hibbert-Kapler,

Attorney, Ethics and Legal Compliance.

[FR Doc. 2025–19866 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7710–12–P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice: 12863]

Notice of Determinations; Culturally Significant Objects Being Imported for Exhibition—Determinations: ''The Declaration's Journey'' Exhibition

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: I hereby determine that certain objects being imported from abroad pursuant to an agreement with their foreign owner or custodian for temporary display in the exhibition ''The Declaration's Journey'' at the Museum of the American Revolution, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and at possible additional exhibitions or venues yet to be determined, are of cultural significance, and, further, that their temporary exhibition or display within the United States as aforementioned is in the national interest. I have ordered that Public Notice of these determinations be published in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Reed Liriano, Program Coordinator, Office of the Legal Adviser, U.S. Department of State (telephone: 202–632–6471; email: *section2459@state.gov*). The mailing address is U.S. Department of State, L/PD, 2200 C Street NW (SA–5), Suite 5H03, Washington, DC 20522–0505.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The foregoing determinations were made pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985; 22 U.S.C. 2459), Executive Order 12047 of March 27, 1978, the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2681, *et seq.;* 22 U.S.C. 6501 note, *et seq.*), Delegation of Authority No. 234 of October 1, 1999, Delegation of Authority No. 236–3 of August 28, 2000, and Delegation of Authority No. 523 of December 22, 2021.

Stefanie E. Williams,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Professional and Cultural Exchanges, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2025–19861 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–05–P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice: 12862]

Notice of Determinations; Culturally Significant Objects Being Imported for Exhibition—Determinations: ''Frida: The Making of an Icon'' Exhibition

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: I hereby determine that certain objects being imported from abroad pursuant to agreements with their foreign owners or custodians for temporary display in the exhibition ''Frida: The Making of an Icon'' at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in Houston, Texas, and at possible additional exhibitions or venues yet to be determined, are of cultural significance, and, further, that their temporary exhibition or display within the United States as aforementioned is in the national interest. I have ordered that Public Notice of these determinations be published in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Reed Liriano, Program Coordinator, Office of the Legal Adviser, U.S. Department of State (telephone: 202–632–6471; email: *section2459@state.gov*). The mailing address is U.S. Department of State, L/PD, 2200 C Street NW (SA–5), Suite 5H03, Washington, DC 20522–0505.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The foregoing determinations were made pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985; 22 U.S.C. 2459), Executive Order 12047 of March 27, 1978, the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2681, *et seq.;* 22 U.S.C. 6501 note, *et seq.*), Delegation of Authority No. 234 of October 1, 1999, Delegation of Authority No. 236–3 of August 28, 2000, and Delegation of Authority No. 523 of December 22, 2021.

Stefanie E. Williams,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Professional and Cultural Exchanges, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2025–19860 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–05–P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice: 12861]

Notice of Determinations; Culturally Significant Objects Being Imported for Exhibition—Determinations: ''Shadow Visionaries: French Artists Against the Current, 1840–70'' Exhibition

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: I hereby determine that certain objects being imported from abroad pursuant to agreements with their foreign owners or custodians for temporary display in the exhibition ''Shadow Visionaries: French Artists Against the Current, 1840–70'' at The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, and at possible additional exhibitions or venues yet to be determined, are of cultural significance, and, further, that their temporary exhibition or display within the United States as aforementioned is in the national interest. I have ordered that Public Notice of these determinations be published in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Reed Liriano, Program Coordinator, Office of the Legal Adviser, U.S. Department of State (telephone: 202–632–6471; email: *section2459@state.gov*). The mailing address is U.S. Department of State, L/PD, 2200 C Street NW (SA–5), Suite 5H03, Washington, DC 20522–0505.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The foregoing determinations were made pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985; 22 U.S.C. 2459), Executive Order 12047 of March 27, 1978, the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2681, *et seq.;* 22 U.S.C. 6501 note, *et seq.*), Delegation of Authority No. 234 of October 1, 1999, Delegation of Authority No. 236–3 of August 28, 2000, and Delegation of Authority No. 523 of December 22, 2021.

Stefanie E. Williams,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Professional and Cultural Exchanges, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2025–19859 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–05–P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice: 12864]

Notice of Determinations; Culturally Significant Object Being Imported for Exhibition—Determinations: ''From the Aga Khan Museum Vault: the Blue Qur'an'' Exhibition

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: I hereby determine that a certain object being imported from abroad pursuant to an agreement with its foreign owner or custodian for temporary display in the exhibition ''From the Aga Khan Museum Vault: the Blue Qur'an'' at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in Houston, Texas, and at possible additional exhibitions or venues yet to be determined, is of cultural significance, and, further, that its temporary exhibition or display within the United States as aforementioned is in the national interest. I have ordered that Public Notice of these determinations be published in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Reed Liriano, Program Coordinator, Office of the Legal Adviser, U.S. Department of State (telephone: 202–632–6471; email: *section2459@state.gov*). The mailing address is U.S. Department of State, L/PD, 2200 C Street NW (SA–5), Suite 5H03, Washington, DC 20522–0505.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The foregoing determinations were made pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985; 22 U.S.C. 2459), Executive Order 12047 of March 27, 1978, the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2681, *et seq.;* 22 U.S.C. 6501 note, *et seq.*), Delegation of Authority No. 234 of October 1, 1999, Delegation of Authority No. 236–3 of August 28, 2000, and Delegation of Authority No. 523 of December 22, 2021.

Stefanie E. Williams,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Professional and Cultural Exchanges, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2025–19862 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–05–P

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Notice of Modification of Section 301 Action: China's Targeting of the Maritime, Logistics, and Shipbuilding Sectors for Dominance

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: On November 1, 2025, the White House announced a historic trade and economic deal reached between President Trump and President Xi Jinping of China. The United States Trade Representative, at the direction of the President, is suspending for one year, beginning on November 10, 2025, the responsive actions taken in this investigation.

DATES: *November 10, 2025:* The actions taken in this investigation are suspended, as of 12:01 a.m. Eastern Standard Time on November 10, 2025, through 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on November 9, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Philip Butler, Chair of the Section 301 Committee; Thomas Au, Associate General Counsel; or David Salkeld, Assistant General Counsel at (202) 395–5725.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

For background on the proceedings in this investigation, please see the prior notices issued in this investigation, including 89 FR 29424 (April 22, 2024), 90 FR 8089 (January 23, 2025), 90 FR 10843 (February 27, 2025), 90 FR 17114 (April 23, 2025) (April 23 notice), 90 FR 24856 (June 12, 2025) (June 12 notice), and 90 FR 48320 (October 16, 2025) (October 16 notice).

On April 17, 2025, pursuant to sections 301(b), 301(c), and 304(a) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2411(b), 2411(c), and 2414(a)), and following consideration of public comments, as well as consultations with advisory committees and the Section 301 Committee, the U.S. Trade Representative determined to take action in this investigation. *See* April 23 notice.

On October 10, pursuant to section 307(a), and following consideration of public comments, as well as consultations with advisory committees and the Section 301 Committee, the U.S. Trade Representative determined to modify the action. The modifications included changes to certain aspects of Annexes III and IV of the April 23 notice, as well as imposition of duties on ship-to-shore cranes and on certain cargo handling equipment of China as described in Annex V.A of the October 16 notice. *See* October 16 notice.

On November 1, 2025, the White House announced a historic trade and economic deal reached between President Trump and President Xi Jinping of China.[1] Pursuant to this deal, the United States would suspend for one year, beginning on November 10, 2025, the responsive actions taken in this investigation. The United States would negotiate with China pursuant to Section 301 regarding the issues raised in this investigation. While taking these actions, the United States would continue its domestic efforts and its discussions with key allies and partners on revitalizing American shipbuilding.

In accordance with Section 307(a)(2) of the Trade Act, on November 6, 2025, the U.S. Trade Representative, at the direction of the President, proposed to suspend for one year, beginning on November 10, 2025, the responsive actions taken in this investigation. The U.S. Trade Representative requested comments from any interested person regarding the proposal to suspend the responsive actions. *See* Office of the United States Trade Representative, *Request for Comments on Suspending Section 301 Action for One Year: China's Targeting of the Maritime, Logistics, and Shipbuilding Sectors for Dominance* (Nov. 6, 2025), *https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Press/Releases/2025/301%20Ships%20FRN%20Req%20Cmts%20on%20Suspension%20FINAL.pdf* (November 6 notice).

II. Determination To Modify the Action

Section 307(a)(1) of the Trade Act authorizes the Trade Representative to modify any action being taken under Section 301, subject to the specific direction of the President, including if such action being taken under Section 301(b) is no longer appropriate.

In light of the trade and economic deal reached between President Trump and President Xi Jinping of China, and at the direction of the President, the U.S. Trade Representative has determined that the action taken on April 17, 2025, as modified, is no longer appropriate and will be suspended for one year. The U.S. Trade Representative's determination to modify the actions that have been taken in this investigation is premised upon China's commitment to negotiate

[1] Fact Sheet, The White House, President Donald J. Trump Strikes Deal on Economic and Trade Relations with China (Nov. 1, 2025), *https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/11/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-strikes-deal-on-economic-and-trade-relations-with-china/.*

pursuant to Section 301 regarding the issues raised in this investigation, the public comments received in response to the November 6 notice, the extensive public comments previously provided, advice from the Section 301 Committee, and consultations with petitioners and advisory committees.

Therefore, the U.S. Trade Representative is suspending the responsive actions in this investigation from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Standard Time on November 10, 2025, through 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on November 9, 2026.

During the suspension period, no party will accrue liability for or be required to pay the fees on maritime transport services under Annexes I, II, or III of the April 23 notice, as modified by the October 16 notice. Further, during the suspension period, no party will accrue liability for or be required to pay the duties provided in Annex V.A of the October 16 notice.

Accordingly, at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Standard Time on November 10, 2025, headings 9903.91.12, 9903.91.13, 9903.91.14, 9903.91.15, and 9903.91.16 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States are each amended by deleting ''November 9, 2025,'' and by inserting ''November 10, 2026,'' in lieu thereof.

III. Responses to Significant Comments

In response to the November 6 notice, USTR received approximately 70 unique comments. Most of these comments supported the proposal to suspend the action. Many noted that suspension of the action would lower shipping costs and avoid commercial disruption, provide an opportunity for the United States to negotiate with China on the issues raised in this investigation, and permit additional time to find solutions to increase investment in U.S. shipbuilding. Comments specifically addressing the suspension of restrictions of Annex IV of the April 23 notice, as modified by the October 16 notice, generally supported the suspension. Some comments suggested a permanent suspension of fees on LNG ships. Comments specifically addressing the suspension of the additional tariffs on ship-to-shore cranes and other cargo handling equipment proposed in the October 16 notice, generally supported suspension of all the tariffs and expressed concerns with higher prices and harm to domestic industries.

Comments opposing the suspension asserted that the responsive action is needed to address China's acts, policies, and practices creating incentives to invest in U.S. shipbuilding, and that, without the action, China's dominance in shipbuilding will only increase. USTR also considered comments received in response to the February 23 notice, the April 23 notice, and the June 12 notice, including comments that supported suspension of the responsive action for a period of time and further negotiation with China regarding the subject acts, policies, and practices.

With respect to comments suggesting a permanent suspension of fees under Annex IV, the restrictions in Annex IV are not yet in effect, and therefore would not be affected by the proposed suspension of Annex IV.

Considering the comments, and consistent with the President's direction, the U.S. Trade Representative has determined to suspend this action for one year. During the suspension, the United States will negotiate with China pursuant to Section 301 to address the acts, policies, and practices at issue in this investigation, as well as continue to partner with key allies to increase U.S. shipbuilding capacity.

Since the U.S. Trade Representative has taken action in this investigation, the United States has entered into historic deals with Japan and the Republic of Korea to modernize and expand the capacity of American shipbuilding industries, including through investments in U.S. shipyards and America's workforce. Pursuant to the terms of those deals, Japan has committed to invest $500 billion in the United States, and, among other things, has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the United States to expand shipbuilding capacity in both nations by aligning investment, procurement, workforce, and technology initiatives.[2] Similarly, the Republic of Korea has committed to invest $150 billion in shipbuilding in the United States,[3] and several Korean companies will partner with U.S. companies to modernize American shipyards and support new construction of U.S.-flagged vessels.

IV. Proposed Modifications in the October 16 Notice

For additional clarification, USTR will continue to accept comments regarding the modifications proposed in the October 16 notice, docket number USTR–2025–0017, through November 12, 2025.

[2] Fact Sheet, The White House: President Donald J. Trump Drives Forward Billions in Investments from Japan (Oct. 28, 2025), *https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/10/28195/*.

[3] Fact Sheet, The White House: President Donald J. Trump Brings Home More Billion Dollar Deals During State Visit to the Republic of Korea (Oct. 29, 2025), *https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/10/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-brings-home-more-billion-dollar-deals-during-state-visit-to-the-republic-of-korea/*.

V. Ongoing Monitoring

The U.S. Trade Representative will continue to monitor the issues raised in this investigation pursuant to Section 301 of the Trade Act and will consider whether it is appropriate to continue the suspension period or whether further action is appropriate in advance of the November 10, 2026 suspension deadline. If modification to the action may be appropriate pursuant to Section 307 of the Trade Act, the U.S. Trade Representative may consider the comments received in response to previously proposed responsive actions.

Jennifer Thornton,

General Counsel, Office of the United States Trade Representative.

[FR Doc. 2025–19873 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3390–F4–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

[Docket No. PHMSA–2017–0161]

Pipeline Safety: Request for Special Permit; Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, LLC (TGP)

AGENCY: Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA); U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: PHMSA is publishing this notice to solicit public comments on a request for an extension to a special permit segment to be incorporated into special permit PHMSA–2017–0161 submitted by Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, LLC (TGP), a subsidiary of Kinder Morgan, Inc. TGP is seeking relief from compliance with certain requirements in the Federal pipeline safety regulations. PHMSA has proposed conditions to ensure that the special permit is not inconsistent with pipeline safety. At the conclusion of the 30-day comment period, PHMSA will review the comments received from this notice as part of its evaluation to grant or deny the special permit request.

DATES: Submit any comments regarding this special permit request by December 15, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Comments should reference the docket number for this special permit request and may be submitted in the following ways:

- *E-Gov Website: http://www.regulations.gov*. This site allows

the public to enter comments on any **Federal Register** notice issued by any agency.

- *Fax:* 1–202–493–2251.
- *Mail:* Docket Management System: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M–30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12–140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.
- *Hand Delivery:* Docket Management System: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M–30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12–140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Instructions: You should identify the docket number for the special permit request you are commenting on at the beginning of your comments. If you submit your comments by mail, please submit two copies. To receive confirmation that PHMSA has received your comments, please include a self-addressed stamped postcard. Internet users may submit comments at *http://www.regulations.gov*.

Note: There is a privacy statement published on *http://www.regulations.gov.* Comments, including any personal information provided, are posted without changes or edits to *http://www.regulations.gov*.

Confidential Business Information: Confidential Business Information (CBI) is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this notice contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this notice, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Pursuant to 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 190.343, you may ask PHMSA to give confidential treatment to information you give to the agency by taking the following steps: (1) mark each page of the original document submission containing CBI as ''Confidential''; (2) send PHMSA, along with the original document, a second copy of the original document with the CBI deleted; and (3) explain why the information you are submitting is CBI. Unless you are notified otherwise, PHMSA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this notice. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Lee Cooper, DOT, PHMSA–PHP–80, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590–0001. Any commentary PHMSA receives that is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this matter.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

General: Lee Cooper by telephone at 202–913–3171, or by email at *lee.cooper@dot.gov*.

Technical: Gabrielle St. Pierre by telephone at 907–202–0029, or by email at *gabrielle.st.pierre@dot.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 20, 2025, PHMSA received a special permit request from Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, LLC (TGP), a subsidiary of Kinder Morgan, Inc., seeking an extension to a special permit segment to be incorporated into special permit PHMSA–2017–0161. The segment extension request is a part of the active permit's Special Permit Inspection Area 1. Special permit PHMSA–2017–0161 allows TGP to deviate from the Federal pipeline safety regulations in 49 CFR 192.611(a) and 192.619(a), where a gas transmission pipeline segment has undergone a change from a Class 1 to a Class 3 location.

Special permit PHMSA–2017–0161 is active and was granted on August 11, 2022 and is effective until August 11, 2032 for three special permit segments, which include 5,545 feet (approximately 1.05 miles) of the TGP natural gas transmission pipeline system located in Kanawha County, West Virginia. The segment extension has been requested for 673 feet (approximately 0.13 miles). If granted, the special permit segments would total 6,218 feet (approximately 1.18 miles).

The special permit segments, including the requested modifications, are detailed in updated Attachment A—Segment Integrity Information. Proposed modifications due to this request are as follows:

SPS No.	Status	County, State	Outside diameter (inches)	Line name	Length (feet)	Year installed	Maximum allowable operating pressure (pounds per square inch gauge)
452	Active Segment ..	Kanawha, WV	20	100–1	1,177	1984	936
	Extension	Kanawha, WV	20	100–1	1,850	1984	936

Upon receipt of this request, PHMSA reviewed the final environmental assessment (FEA) and finds that the expansion of the proposed special permit would not result in significant impacts to the human environment. Furthermore, the existing FEA and finding of no significant impact remain adequate pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*). No further environmental assessment is required for this proposed extension.

TGP's request for an extension to a special permit segment, active special permit with conditions, and associated environmental document are available for review and public comment in Docket No. PHMSA–2017–0161. PHMSA invites interested persons to review and submit comments in the docket on this request for modification of the special permit. Please submit comments on any potential safety, environmental, and other relevant considerations implicated by the special permit request. Comments may include relevant data.

Before issuing a decision on the special permit request, PHMSA will evaluate all comments received on or before the comment closing date. PHMSA will consider each relevant comment it receives in making its decision to grant or deny this special permit request.

Issued in Washington, DC, on November 7, 2025, under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.97.

Linda Daugherty,

Acting Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

[FR Doc. 2025–19870 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–60–P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Rescission of Order Suspending the Application of Section 1–402 or 1–404 of Executive Order 12171

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: On April 17, 2025, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), published a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing the suspension of the application of section 1–402 or 1–404 of Executive Order (E.O.) 12171 for certain employees, thereby bringing those employees under the coverage of the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute. VA is rescinding the aforementioned order of suspension of the application of section 1–402 or 1–404 of E.O. 12171.

DATES: This rescission of the April 17, 2025 order of suspension is effective upon publication.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tracey Therit, Chief Human Capital Officer, Office of Human Resources and Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave. NW, Room 265, Washington, DC 20420, Office: (202) 461–0235.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the authority provided to the Secretary of VA in section 4 of E.O. 14251, *Exclusions from Federal Labor-Management Relations Programs,* on April 17, 2025, VA published a notice suspending the application of section 1–402 or 1–404 of E.O. 12171, as amended, for employees represented by Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA); Western Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (WFNHP), Veterans Affairs Staff Nurse Council (VASNC) Local 5032 at the VA Medical Center Milwaukee, WI; International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF–99) at the VA Medical Center, Little Rock, AR; United Nurses Association of California/Union of Healthcare Professionals (UNAC/UHCP) at the VA Medical Center, Loma Linda, CA; Teamsters Union Local 115 at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Coatesville, PA; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 2168 at the Cheyenne WY VA Medical Center; and, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, (IAMAW) Local 1998 at the VA National Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, HI, thereby bringing such employees under the coverage of the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute. 90 FR 16427.

Having further considered the delegation of authority provision under Section 4 of E.O. 14251 and the statutory authority under 5 U.S.C. 7103(b)(1), VA's order of suspension of the application of section 1–402 or 1–404 of E.O. 12171 published at 90 FR 16427 is hereby rescinded.

Signing Authority

Douglas A. Collins, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, approved this document on November 7, 2025 and authorized the undersigned to sign and submit the document to the Office of the Federal Register for publication electronically as an official document of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Nicole Cherry,

Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs.

[FR Doc. 2025–19867 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320–01–P

FEDERAL REGISTER

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Part II

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

12 CFR Part 1002
Small Business Lending Under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (Regulation B); Proposed Rule

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

12 CFR Part 1002

[Docket No. CFPB–2025–0040]

RIN 3170–AB40

Small Business Lending Under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (Regulation B)

AGENCY: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

ACTION: Proposed rule; request for public comment.

SUMMARY: The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB or Bureau) proposes revisions to certain provisions of Regulation B, subpart B, implementing changes to the Equal Credit Opportunity Act made by section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. The Bureau is reconsidering coverage of certain credit transactions and financial institutions; the small business definition; inclusion of certain data points and how others are collected; and the compliance date. The CFPB believes these proposed changes would streamline the rule, reduce complexity for lenders, and improve data quality, advancing the purposes of section 1071 and complying with recent executive directives.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before December 15, 2025.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by Docket No. CFPB–2025–0040 or RIN 3170–AB40, by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal: https://www.regulations.gov.* Follow the instructions for submitting comments. A brief summary of this document will be available at *https://www.regulations.gov/docket/CFPB-2025-0040.*
- *Email: 2025-NPRM-1071 Reconsideration@cfpb.gov.* Include Docket No. CFPB–2025–0040 or RIN 3170–AB40 in the subject line of the message.
- *Mail/Hand Delivery/Courier:* Comment Intake—1071 Reconsideration NPRM, c/o Legal Division Docket Manager, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 1700 G Street NW, Washington, DC 20552.

Instructions: The CFPB encourages the early submission of comments. All submissions should include the agency name and docket number or Regulatory Information Number (RIN) for this rulemaking. Because paper mail is subject to delay, commenters are encouraged to submit comments electronically. In general, all comments received will be posted without change to *https://www.regulations.gov.*

All submissions, including attachments and other supporting materials, will become part of the public record and subject to public disclosure. Proprietary information or sensitive personal information, such as account numbers or Social Security numbers, or names of other individuals, should not be included. Submissions will not be edited to remove any identifying or contact information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dave Gettler, Paralegal Specialist, Office of Regulations, at 202–435–7700 or *https://reginquiries.consumerfinance.gov/.* If you require this document in an alternative electronic format, please contact *CFPB_Accessibility@cfpb.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

In 2010, Congress passed the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank Act). Section 1071 of that Act [1] amended the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) [2] to require that financial institutions collect and report to the CFPB certain data regarding applications for credit for women-owned, minority-owned, and small businesses. Section 1071's statutory purposes are to (1) facilitate enforcement of fair lending laws, and (2) enable communities, governmental entities, and creditors to identify business and community development needs and opportunities of women-owned, minority-owned, and small businesses. Section 1071 directs the CFPB to prescribe such rules and issue such guidance as may be necessary to carry out, enforce, and compile data pursuant to section 1071.

The CFPB worked toward a section 1071 rulemaking for a number of years and has sought public comment from stakeholders numerous times. The CFPB held a field hearing on May 10, 2017, and published a request for information regarding the small business lending market.[3] On July 22, 2020, the CFPB issued a survey to collect information about potential one-time costs to financial institutions to prepare to collect and report data on small business lending.

On September 15, 2020, the CFPB released an Outline of Proposals Under Consideration and Alternatives Considered pursuant to the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (SBREFA). On October 15, 2020, the CFPB convened a Small Business Review Panel for the section 1071 rulemaking, and the Panel met with small entity representatives (SERs). The Panel Report, publicly released on December 15, 2020, was the culmination of the SBREFA process for the section 1071 rulemaking and included feedback from SERs and written feedback from other stakeholders as well.

On October 8, 2021, the CFPB published in the **Federal Register** a proposed rule (2021 proposed rule) amending Regulation B to implement changes to ECOA made by section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act.[4] The comment period for the proposed rule closed on January 6, 2022.

The CFPB received approximately 2,100 comments on the proposal during the comment period. Approximately 650 of these comments were unique, detailed comment letters representing diverse interests. These commenters included lenders such as banks and credit unions, community development financial institutions (CDFIs), community development companies, Farm Credit System (FCS) lenders, online lenders, and others; national and regional industry trade associations; software vendors; business advocacy groups; community groups; research, academic, and other advocacy organizations; Members of Congress; Federal and State government offices/agencies; small businesses; and individuals.

On May 31, 2023, the CFPB published a final rule in the **Federal Register** to implement section 1071 by adding subpart B to Regulation B (2023 final rule).[5] Further details about section 1071, small business lending market dynamics, and the CFPB's rulemaking process leading up to the 2023 final rule can be found in the preamble to the 2023 final rule.

On July 3, 2024, the CFPB published in the **Federal Register** an interim final rule (2024 interim final rule)[6] to extend

[1] Public Law 111–203, tit. X, section 1071, 124 Stat. 1376, 2056 (2010), codified at ECOA section 704B, 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2.

[2] 15 U.S.C. 1691 *et seq.*

[3] The CFPB received 17 comments in response to the request for information. *See* CFPB, *Requests for Information: Small Business Lending Market,* Docket ID CFPB 2017–0011, *https://www.regulations.gov/document/CFPB-2017-0011-0001/comment.*

[4] 86 FR 56356 (Oct. 8, 2021).

[5] 88 FR 35150 (May 31, 2023).

[6] 89 FR 55024 (July 3, 2024). *See also* Order Granting-in-Part & Denying-in-Part Pls.' Mot. for Prelim. Inj., *Texas Bankers Ass'n* v. *CFPB,* No. 7:23–CV–00144 (S.D. Tex. July 31, 2023), *https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_pi_order_texas_bankers.pdf;* Order Granting Intervenors' Mots. For Prelim. Inj., *Texas Bankers Ass'n* v. *CFPB,*

the rule's compliance dates in accordance with orders issued by the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas.[7]

Challenges to the 2023 final rule filed by various plaintiffs remain ongoing in three jurisdictions; each of those courts stayed the rule's compliance deadlines for some market participants.[8] However, the courts did not stay the compliance dates for those who are not plaintiffs or intervenors in those cases.

On June 18, 2025, the CFPB published in the **Federal Register** an interim final rule (2025 interim final rule) to extend compliance deadlines by approximately one year[9] to facilitate consistent compliance across all covered financial institutions. The CFPB sought comment on the 2025 interim final rule.

On October 2, 2025, the CFPB published in the **Federal Register** a final rule (2025 compliance date final rule) that confirmed its findings in the 2025 interim final rule and determined upon a review of comments received that no further substantive changes were necessary.[10] The CFPB received 20 comments in response to the 2025 interim final rule. Most commenters addressed the 2025 interim final rule itself. Other comments addressed provisions of the 2023 final rule not addressed by the 2025 interim final rule, some of which are discussed below.

Based on reactions to the 2023 final rule, including continued feedback from stakeholders and the ongoing litigation, the CFPB now believes that at the onset of a potentially long-term data collection regime, it should start with more modest requirements, focusing on core lending products, lenders, and data. The CFPB preliminarily believes that that reaction to the 2023 final rule, practically speaking, was in part based on its expansive approach, appearing to seek broad coverage of lenders, products, and information collected.[11] The CFPB does not believe that alignment with the statutory purposes of section 1071 requires the use of its discretionary authority to collect data with such a breadth of scope.

The CFPB now believes that the 2023 final rule should have given more weight to qualitative differences among certain types of lenders and the likelihood that smaller lenders would face difficulties addressing the complexity of a rule of broad scope, both of which could potentially diminish the quality of the data they collect.

The CFPB believes, based on this experience, that a longer-term approach to advance the statutory purposes of section 1071 would be to commence the collection of data with a narrower scope to ensure its quality and to limit, as much as possible, any disturbance of the provision of credit to small businesses. The statutory purposes of the rule are not well served by an expansive rule that could create disruptions in small business lending markets.

Rather, the CFPB now believes that an incremental approach may better serve the statutory purposes of section 1071 in the long term. Such an approach would start with core lending products, core providers, and core data points. This approach would comply with section 1071 and further its statutory purposes but reduce the rule's initial impact on small businesses and lenders. Over time, as the CFPB and financial institutions learn from early iterations of data collections, the CFPB could consider amending the rule.

The gradual development of data collection under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA)[12] and its implementing Regulation C[13] over the past 50 years provides precedent for an incremental approach. Congress passed HMDA in 1975,[14] and the Board Governors of the Federal Reserve System (Board) promulgated implementing regulations in 1976, requiring the collection of relatively few data points from relatively few lenders. At various points, HMDA amendments passed by Congress, among other things, expanded the breadth of financial institutions covered, as well as the number of data points collected from those reporting institutions.[15] Over time, rulemakings by the Board and the CFPB implemented these amendments, added and removed data points, and expanded and contracted the scope of Regulation C.[16]

The CFPB believes that it should approach the section 1071 data collection regime as a longer-term project akin to HMDA. The CFPB believes that it is a proper use of its authority under 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2 to reconsider several portions of the 2023 final rule to commence data collection with a focus on core lending products, core lenders, and mostly statutory data points. The CFPB believes that this incrementalist approach—starting with a more modest rule with a limited set of products, lenders, or data points—will serve the long-term interests of section 1071.

In addition, on January 20, 2025, the President issued Executive Order (E.O.) 14168, ''Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government'' (Defending Women E.O.).[17] That order, among other things, directs Federal agencies to remove references and questions discussing gender identity. The order also identifies a binary of male/female sex, directing agencies to use those terms when seeking information about an individual's sex.

The CFPB has consulted with the appropriate prudential regulators and other Federal agencies regarding consistency with any prudential, market, or systemic objectives administered by these agencies as

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No. 7:23–CV–00144 (S.D. Tex. Oct. 26, 2023), *https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_pi_second_order_texas_bankers.pdf;* Op. & Order, *Monticello Banking Co. et al.* v. *CFPB et al.,* No. 6:23–CV–00148–KKC (E.D. Ky. Mar. 11, 2025); Op. & Order, *Revenue Based Finance Coalition* v. *CFPB et al.,* No. 1:23–CV–24882–DSL (S.D. Fla. May 6, 2025).

[7] *Texas Bankers Ass'n* v. *CFPB,* No. 7:23–CV–00144 (S.D. Tex. July 31, 2023) *https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_pi_order_texas_bankers.pdf.*

[8] *See* Unpublished Order, *Texas Bankers Ass'n* v. *CFPB,* No. 24–40705 (5th Cir. Feb. 7, 2025) (tolling the compliance deadlines for plaintiffs and intervenors in that case, until further order of the court); Op. & Order, *Monticello Banking Co. et al.* v. *CFPB et al.,* No. 6:23–CV–00148–KKC (E.D. Ky. Mar. 11, 2025) (same).

[9] 90 FR 25874 (June 18, 2025).

[10] 90 FR 47514 (Oct. 2, 2025).

[11] The CFPB had considered, in its SBREFA Outline of Proposals Under Consideration, a rule that was more limited in scope. *See generally* CFPB, *Final Report of the Small Business Review Panel on the CFPB's Proposals Under Consideration for the Small Business Lending Data Collection Rulemaking* (Dec. 14, 2020), *https://www.consumerfinance.gov/documents/9413/cfpb_1071-sbrefa-report.pdf.*

[12] 12 U.S.C. 2801 *et seq.*

[13] 12 CFR part 1003.

[14] Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975, Public Law 94–200, section 303(2), 89 Stat. 1124, 1125 (1975).

[15] Congress amended HMDA in 1980, 1988, 1989, 1992, 1996, 2010, and 2018. *See, e.g.,* Housing and Community Development Act of 1980, Public Law 96–399, section 340(c), 94 Stat. 1614 (1980) (codified as amended at 12 U.S.C. 2809(a)); Housing and Community Development Act of 1987, Public Law 100–242, section 565(a)(l), 101 Stat. 1815 (1988) (codified as amended at 12 U.S.C. 2802); Financial Institution Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act, Public Law 101–73, section 1211(d)–(e), 103 Stat. 183 (1989) (codified as amended at 12 U.S.C. 2802(2)); Housing and Community Development Act of 1992, H. 5334, Public Law No 102–550, section 932(a)–(b) (1992) (codified as amended at 12 U.S.C. 2803 (a)–(b)); Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act, 1997, HR 3610, Public Law 104–208, section 2225, 110 Stat 3009 (1996) (codified as amended at 12 U.S.C. 2808(b)(2)); Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, Public Law 111–203, section 1094, 124 Stat. 1376 (2010); Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act, Public Law 115–174, section 104, 132 Stat. 1296 (2018).

[16] *See, e.g.,* 46 FR 40679 (Aug. 11, 1981); 53 FR 31683 (Aug. 19, 1988); 54 FR 51356 (Dec. 15, 1989); 57 FR 56963 (Dec. 2, 1992); 60 FR 22223 (May 4, 1995); 67 FR 7222 (Feb. 15, 2002); 67 FR 43217 (June 27, 2002); 80 FR 66128 (Oct. 28, 2015); 84 FR 57946 (Oct. 29, 2019); 85 FR 28364, 28367 (May 12, 2020).

[17] 90 FR 8615 (Jan. 30, 2025).

required by section 1022(b)(2)(B) of the Dodd-Frank Act.

II. Legal Authority

The Bureau is issuing this proposed rule pursuant to its authority under section 1071. As discussed above, in the Dodd-Frank Act, Congress amended ECOA by adding section 1071, which directs the CFPB to adopt regulations governing the collection and reporting of small business lending data. Specifically, section 1071 requires financial institutions to collect and report to the CFPB certain data on applications for credit for women-owned, minority-owned, and small businesses. Congress enacted section 1071 for the purpose of (1) facilitating enforcement of fair lending laws and (2) enabling communities, governmental entities, and creditors to identify business and community development needs and opportunities of women-owned, minority-owned, and small businesses.[18]

To advance these statutory purposes, section 1071 grants the Bureau general rulemaking authority for section 1071, providing that the Bureau shall prescribe such rules and issue such guidance as may be necessary to carry out, enforce, and compile data pursuant to section 1071.[19] Section 1071, in 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(g)(2), also permits the Bureau to adopt exceptions to any requirement of section 1071 and to conditionally or unconditionally exempt any financial institution or class of financial institutions from the requirements of section 1071, as the Bureau deems necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 1071. The Bureau relies on its general rulemaking authority under 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(g)(1) in this proposed rule and relies on 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(g)(2) when proposing specific exceptions or exemptions to section 1071's requirements.

See the 2023 final rule for a more detailed discussion of the CFPB's legal authorities.[20]

III. Discussion of the Proposed Rule

A. Summary of Proposed Rule

As set out above, the CFPB now proposes to reconsider certain provisions of the 2023 final rule. The CFPB believes that a potentially long-term data collection regime should start with a focus on core lending products, lenders, small businesses, and data points. The CFPB believes in retrospect that the approach it took in the 2023 final rule—a broad initial coverage of lenders, products, small businesses and data points—was not conducive to the long-term success of the data collection regime under section 1071. The CFPB now believes that a better, longer-term approach to advance the statutory purposes of section 1071 would be to commence the collection of data with a narrower scope to ensure its quality, and to limit, as much as possible, any disturbance of the provision of credit to small businesses. The CFPB believes that such an incremental approach would also comply with section 1071 and minimize any negative initial impact on small business lending markets and on data quality. In the future, based on CFPB and industry experience during the early years of data collection, the CFPB could consider amending the rule as appropriate to further the purposes of section 1071.

The CFPB also believes that the 2023 final rule has not created significant reliance interests that would dissuade the Bureau from reconsidering its position as to certain portions of the rule. Litigation challenging provisions of the 2023 final rule and delays in the compliance dates for this rule suggest that reconsideration of the specific issues below would not meaningfully change compliance obligations.

Covered credit transactions. The CFPB believes that the initial iterations of data collection under the rule should focus on the core, widely used lending products most likely to be foundational to small businesses' formation and operation. The CFPB therefore proposes to exclude merchant cash advances (MCAs), agricultural lending, and small dollar loans from the definition of covered credit transaction.

Covered financial institutions. The CFPB believes that the initial iterations of data collection under the rule should focus on larger core lenders. The CFPB therefore proposes two changes to the covered financial institution definition: first, to exclude FCS lenders from coverage; and second, to raise the origination threshold from 100 to 1,000 covered credit transactions for each of two consecutive years. The CFPB is also proposing conforming changes to the bona fide error portions of the enforcement provisions in the rule.

Small business. The CFPB believes that the focus of the rule, at least initially, should be truly small businesses. The CFPB therefore proposes to change the gross annual revenue threshold in the rule's definition of small business from $5 million or less to $1 million or less.

Data points. The CFPB believes that the initial iterations of data collection under the rule should focus on core data points and be consistent with other executive agency directives concerning the collection of demographic data.

The CFPB therefore intends to focus data collection on data points specifically identified in section 1071 and a limited number of other data points needed to facilitate the collection of these statutory data points. The CFPB proposes to remove the discretionary data points for application method, application recipient, denial reasons, pricing information, and number of workers. The CFPB also proposes changes to comply with an executive branch mandate, which would result in a modification of the collection of data concerning business ownership status of small business applicants and the format of demographic data collected concerning the principal owners of a small business.

Time and manner of data collection. The CFPB proposes changes to the provisions on the time and manner of data collection, to remove certain requirements that are not statutorily required and appear to anticipate or presume non-compliance with the rule. The CFPB also proposes to add a provision that would emphasize for applicants their statutory rights under the rule.

Compliance dates. Finally, in light of these other proposed changes to the rule, the CFPB proposes to extend the rule's compliance date provisions to January 1, 2028 for all financial institutions that remain covered by the rule, and to make other simplifying and streamlining changes.

The CFPB also addresses in this summary two other issues.

Privacy and data publication. The CFPB does not address in this proposal the privacy discussions in the 2023 final rule or its statements about the eventual publication of data. The 2023 final rule did not purport to make any final or binding decisions concerning its privacy analysis, instead announcing only its ''preliminary assessment of how it might appropriately assess and advance privacy interests by means of selective deletion or modification'' of data. The 2023 final rule also did not reach conclusions regarding the procedural vehicle it would use to convey its decisions with respect to privacy.[21] Nor

[18] 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(a).

[19] 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(g)(1).

[20] *See, e.g.,* 88 FR 35150, 35173–74.

[21] *Id.* at 35460 (''The CFPB is not determining its final approach to protecting such interests via pre-publication deletion and modification because it lacks the reported data it needs to finalize its approach and it does not see comparable datasets to use for this purpose. In light of comments received on the NPRM's privacy analysis, this part VIII offers a preliminary assessment of how it might appropriately assess and advance privacy interests

has CFPB conclusively announced a timeline for the publication of application-level data, except for observing that it would need a full year's worth of data to conduct the necessary privacy analysis. The CFPB also suggested that it intended to publish aggregate data in the first year of receiving data, and before publishing any application-level data. The CFPB is currently reconsidering all of these issues and preliminary findings, will continue to engage with stakeholders, and will address these issues and findings going forward in a timely fashion.

As part of eventual data publication, as with HMDA data, the CFPB intends to note to data users that data alone are generally not used to determine whether a lender is complying with fair lending laws. The data do not include all the legitimate credit risk considerations for loan approval and loan pricing decisions. Therefore, when regulators conduct fair lending examinations, they analyze additional information before reaching a determination about an institution's compliance with fair lending laws.

Grace period. The CFPB does not address the grace period policy statement in this proposal. The CFPB does, however, announce its intention to maintain the grace period for the same reasons articulated in the 2023 final rule, as amended by the 2025 interim final rule, and to alter the grace period to coincide with the new proposed compliance date, if it is finalized.

The Bureau seeks comments on the general approach taken in this proposal. The Bureau also seeks comment on its proposed exclusion or reconsideration of the products, lenders, small business definition, and data points identified below. Further, the Bureau requests comment on the likely change in cost and complexity of data associated with each of the specific proposed regulatory revisions identified below and whether changes to the quality of data (*e.g.,* better or worse data quality), advances or is contrary to the purposes of section 1071. Finally, the Bureau requests comment on whether the 2023 final rule has created any reliance interests not otherwise identified in this proposal.

by means of selective deletion or modification. The CFPB is not at this point identifying the specific procedural vehicle for effecting its privacy assessment. With respect to both substance and process, it will continue to engage with external stakeholders; and it intends to invite further input on how it plans to appropriately protect privacy in connection with publishing application-level data.'').

B. Section 1002.104—Covered Credit Transactions and Excluded Transactions

The CFPB believes that at the onset of data collection under section 1071 the rule should focus on core, generally applicable, lending products that are most likely to be foundational to small businesses' formation and operation—loans, lines of credit, and credit cards—before determining whether to expand the scope of the rule to include more niche or specialty lending products. The CFPB therefore proposes to exclude MCAs, agricultural lending, and small dollar loans from the definition of covered credit transaction to better ensure the smooth operation of the initial period of data collection, while minimizing disruptions and regulatory complexity in the credit markets subject to section 1071.

1002.104(b)(7)—Merchant Cash Advance

Current § 1002.104(a) defines a ''covered credit transaction'' as ''an extension of business credit that is not an excluded transaction under paragraph (b) of this section.'' Section 1002.104(b)(1)–(6) enumerates six types of transactions that are excluded from covered credit extensions. The Bureau proposes adding MCAs to the list of excluded transactions in § 1002.104(b). Proposed § 1002.104(b)(7) would exclude MCAs, which it would define as an agreement under which a small business receives a lump-sum payment in exchange for the right to receive a percentage of the small business's future sales or income up to a ceiling amount.[22] Consistent with this proposed new exclusion, the CFPB proposes deleting several references to MCAs, and the related term sales-based financing, in commentary.

In the 2023 final rule, the CFPB explained its belief that the statutory term ''credit'' in ECOA is intentionally broad so as to include a wide variety of products without specifically identifying any particular product by name, such that all credit products should be included in the rule unless the CFPB specifically excluded them and concluded that ''credit'' encompasses MCAs. It further explained that MCAs should not be understood to constitute factoring within the meaning of the existing commentary to Regulation B subpart A or the definition in existing comment 104(b)–1, because factoring involves entities selling an existing legal right to payment from a third party, while no such contemporaneous right exists in an MCA. The CFPB also noted its understanding that, as a practical matter, MCAs are underwritten and function like a typical loan (*i.e.,* underwriting of the recipient of the funds; repayment that functionally comes from the recipient's own accounts rather than from a third party; repayment of the advance itself plus additional amounts akin to interest; and, at least for some subset of MCAs, repayment in regular intervals over a predictable period of time), although it also implicitly acknowledged practical differences between MCAs and conventional loans by including numerous provisions intended to capture MCA-specific data.

This proposal reconsiders the CFPB's previous conclusions, as illustrated in existing comment 104(a)(1)–1, which does not exclude MCAs from the definition of ''covered credit transactions'' under § 1002.104(a), for several independent reasons.

First, the CFPB believes that at the onset of the data collection under section 1071 the focus should be on core lenders and products before the CFPB considers expanding the scope of the rule. MCAs are structured differently from traditional lending products; traditional lending concepts like ''interest rate'' do not fit the way that MCAs are priced.[23] As a result, it is not clear that data collection on MCA transactions under section 1071 would yield information that advances section 1071's statutory purposes to the extent that some or many such transactions do not constitute credit. The CFPB believes it would advance the purposes of section 1071 at this time to exclude MCAs from the definition of covered credit transaction, and to focus on ensuring the smooth operation of data collection as to core lending products and providers most likely to be foundational to small businesses' formation and operation.

Second, the CFPB believes it erred in prematurely determining that collection of data on MCA transactions would serve section 1071's statutory purposes by concluding that all MCAs constitute credit. The 2023 final rule's one-size-fits-all approach also does not take into account the varied terms and features of MCAs across the market that may be relevant to whether the products meet the definition of ''credit'' under ECOA, nor did it account for the fact that MCAs

[22] R. & R. on Cross Mots. for Summ. J. at 4, *Revenue Based Finance Coalition* v. *CFPB et al.,* No. 1:23–CV–24882–DSL (S.D. Fla. Feb. 17, 2025).

[23] *See* current § 1002.107(a)(12)(v) (providing for the collection of data only applicable to merchant cash advance and other sales-based financings subject to the rule).

are relatively new products whose features and practices may be evolving, including in response to State regulation. Moreover, while some State courts have analyzed whether some MCAs meet State law definitions of ''debt'' or ''credit,'' there is a dearth of case law analyzing whether MCAs meet ECOA's definition of ''credit.''

Excluding MCAs from the definition of ''covered credit transaction'' would be consistent with the way the CFPB has already treated leases, which also present close questions as to whether they meet the definition of ''credit'' under ECOA. In the 2023 final rule's analysis of leases,[24] the CFPB acknowledged that some lease transactions could constitute ''credit.'' But rather than include all lease transactions in the 2023 final rule to ensure coverage of those leases that did actually constitute credit and credit disguised as leases, the CFPB determined that it would be able to monitor the market for such products without including them in the 2023 final rule. The CFPB proposes taking a similar approach to MCA transactions as it did to leases.

Further, the CFPB believes that the 2023 final rule's coverage of MCAs does not take into account State law developments addressing sales-based financing. Several States have legislation and/or regulations in place addressing the MCA market and requiring providers to disclose terms such as the total cost of capital and the financing rate. Such laws provide key protections for users of MCAs and may shape MCA terms and practices in ways that bear on the question of whether they meet ECOA's definition of ''credit.'' [25] While the 2023 final rule referenced these pieces of State legislation, it did not consider the extent to which the evolving landscape under State law rendered premature a determination that including MCAs in the definition of ''covered credit transaction'' for purposes of mandating data collection furthered section 1071's statutory purposes. The CFPB believes that it would be advantageous to observe how State laws address MCAs before the CFPB decides how, and whether, to collect data regarding MCAs pursuant to section 1071.

Finally, while the final rule cited concerns about high costs and predatory practices in the MCA market,[26] those concerns may be addressed by Federal and State law enforcement agencies through their respective enforcement authorities.

The CFPB believes that taking into account the factors listed above, the relative novelty and evolving landscape of the MCA industry and the ongoing changes at the State level concerning the regulation of MCAs, that excluding MCA transactions from coverage under the rule at this time is necessary and appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 1071. As explained above, MCAs differ in kind from traditional lending products, such that collecting data on MCA transactions under Section 1071 may not produce information that is comparable to data collected on other types of transactions. And because MCAs have not generally been regulated as credit, many smaller MCA providers may lack the infrastructure needed to manage compliance with regulatory requirements associated with making extensions of credit. Taken together, requiring MCAs to be reported could lead to data quality issues, which would not advance the purposes of section 1071.

The CFPB will continue to monitor developments in the markets for MCAs and other sales-based financing to determine whether over time a subset might be appropriately included in the definition of ''covered credit transaction'' for purposes of data collection.

The CFPB seeks comment on this proposed revision to the rule. It also seeks comment on topics including, but not limited to, the extent to which MCAs differ from or resemble traditional lending products; the diversity of MCA terms and practices and how they impact whether MCAs, or a subset of MCAs, meet the definition of ''credit'' under ECOA; whether certain types of MCAs are more or less appropriate for exclusion; and suggestions for how the 2023 final rule could be modified with respect to MCAs if the CFPB ultimately does not exclude them.

The CFPB further seeks comment on alternative definitions to the one proposed in § 1002.104(b)(7).

1002.104(b)(8)—Agricultural Lending

The CFPB proposes adding agricultural lending to the list of excluded transactions under § 1002.104(b). The CFPB proposes adding new § 1002.104(b)(8), which would define agricultural lending as a transaction to fund the production of crops, fruits, vegetables, and livestock, or to fund the purchase or refinance of capital assets such as farmland, machinery and equipment, breeder livestock, and farm real estate improvements. Consistent with this proposed addition, the Bureau proposes deleting references to agricultural credit in current commentary. This would simplify the rule by narrowing its scope to core, generally applicable, small business lending products and avoid covering a distinct and specialized lending sector that is already subject to a different regulatory reporting scheme.[27]

In the 2023 final rule, the CFPB declined to exclude agricultural credit from its definition of a ''covered credit transaction.'' It noted that ECOA itself has no exceptions for agricultural credit, that agricultural businesses are included in section 1071's statutory definition of small business (defined by cross-reference to the Small Business Act), and that there have been instances of discrimination in agricultural lending. It rejected comments asserting that agricultural credit is unique and not comparable to other types of small business lending, instead observing that ''every small business industry has its own unique characteristics.'' [28] In response to commenters expressing concern about the impact on local community financial institutions and an outsized effect on the cost of credit for farmers, the CFPB emphasized that it was increasing its institutional coverage threshold to 100 annual originations, from the 25 originations it had originally proposed. The CFPB mentioned that many agricultural lenders have already been required to

[24] *See, e.g.,* 88 FR 35150, 35240 (''The Bureau is not covering leases under this final rule, as requested by some commenters. The Bureau agrees that some business leases are structured like loans and other credit but notes that a commenter's example of a small business being able to retain leased equipment is an example of the creation of a security interest, not a lease under final comment 104(b)–2.''); *id.* (''The Bureau appreciates commenters' concerns that not covering leases could open a door to potential evasion and lead to data gaps or fair lending problems. The Bureau believes that it can observe the small business financing market for such abuses and prevent them without including all leases in the rule. For example, in considering financial institutions' compliance with the rule, the Bureau intends to closely scrutinize transactions to ensure that companies are appropriately categorizing and reporting products as required by section 1071.'').

[25] *See, e.g.,* Conn. Pub. Act 23–201, Conn. Gen. Stat. sec. 36a–861 *et seq.* (2024) (creating a disclosure regime specific to MCA and other sales-based financing transactions); Va. Code Ann. sec. 6.2–2230 *et seq.* (imposing licensing and disclosure requirements); Utah Commercial Fin. Registration and Disclosure Act, Utah Code Ann. sec. 7–27–102 and 7–27–202 (imposing licensing and disclosure requirements).

[26] At the same time the Bureau acknowledged that ''information on merchant cash advance lending volume and practices is limited.'' 88 FR 35150, 35220.

[27] *See* proposed revisions to § 1002.105(b) discussed below that would also exclude FCS lenders from the definition of ''covered financial institution.''

[28] 88 FR 35150, 35227.

collect and report some form of data by HMDA, the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), and/or the Farm Credit Administration (FCA), but did so only to note that lenders accordingly should be able to adapt to the CFPB's new data collection requirements.

The CFPB now believes that excluding agricultural lending from the definition of ''covered credit transaction'' would advance the statutory purposes of section 1071 at this early phase as the CFPB begins the collection of small business lending data. Most notably, typical agricultural lending differs markedly from other types of commercial lending. Agricultural loans are often secured by biological-based assets such as crops or livestock, which are subject to variables and risk from weather and disease. These characteristics create unique underwriting challenges that make such loans difficult to compare to those in other industries. The 2023 rule did not adequately consider these distinctions and the quality of data stemming from such transactions. Indeed, other data collection regimes, such as CRA regulations, appear to acknowledge categorical differences between loans to small businesses generally and loans to small farms.[29]

Second, agricultural lending is already subject to an existing Federal data collection framework, one that is tailored to this particular sector. The FCA conducts a substantial amount of agricultural lending through a nationwide network of Congressionally chartered, borrower-owned cooperatives. This system is subject to extensive oversight by the FCA. Among other things, the FCA collects demographic data including race, ethnicity, and gender from applicants as part of its program oversight, in contrast to other forms of small business lending where such data collection was not permissible under § 1002.5 of Regulation B until the promulgation of the 2023 final rule.[30] Further, under CRA regulations, institutions must report data on lending to small farms alongside reporting their lending to small businesses. The 2023 final rule did not adequately consider these distinctions.[31]

The CFPB believes upon reconsideration that the fact that agricultural lenders are already reporting information to other agencies supports its conclusion that excluding agricultural lending is necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 1071 to avoid imposing new, overlapping reporting requirements on agricultural lenders at this point when the CFPB is commencing the collection of data under this rule. The Bureau believes that excluding agricultural lending would further the purposes of section 1071 because such an exclusion would limit potential issues with data quality. Compliance may pose greater difficulties for small agricultural lenders, which are often rural entities with less compliance infrastructure than other lenders, potentially impacting the quality of their data, and they may need to divert their limited resources from lending activities. Further, for lenders that provide both agricultural and non-agricultural loans that would still be subject to coverage, the CFPB believes that such lenders would be better situated to focusing their section 1071 reporting efforts on improving the quality of data for more core lending products.

Given these factors, the CFPB believes it would be appropriate to reconsider the rule's application to agricultural lending to focus on conventional, generally applicable small business lending at this time, and to use its exemption authority under 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(g)(2) to exclude agricultural lending from coverage under the rule.

The CFPB seeks comment on this proposed revision to the rule. It seeks comment on topics including, but not limited to, the definition of agricultural lending; the extent to which agricultural lending differs from or resembles other types of lending; and whether specific types of agricultural lending are more or less appropriate for exclusion.

1002.104(b)(9)—Small Dollar Business Credit

The CFPB proposes adding small dollar business credit to the list of excluded transactions under § 1002.104(b). Proposed § 1002.104(b)(9) would exclude from the definition of covered credit transaction a transaction in an amount of $1,000 or less, to be adjusted for inflation over time.

In the 2023 final rule, the CFPB declined commenters' suggestions that it exempt credit transactions below a certain threshold; commenters had suggested exemption thresholds ranging from $25,000 to $10 million, on the grounds that it would help smaller institutions continue to make credit available. The CFPB explained that it was not adopting an exemption because of the significant volume of small business lending involving credit amounts below the threshold levels proposed by commenters.

The CFPB now believes that an exclusion for the smallest loans—well under the thresholds suggested by commenters in the 2023 final rule—is necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 1071. Indeed, in considering comments regarding larger exemption thresholds, the 2023 final rule did not explicitly address an exemption for loans under $1,000.

The CFPB believes that the collection of data on such loans, to the extent that they exist, are more likely to result in poor data quality for purposes of any analyses in furtherance of the statutory purposes of section 1071, given that small businesses will generally require much larger loans to begin or operate their businesses. Typically, very small loans below $1,000 would be satisfied by consumer credit options and small non-profit lenders who lack infrastructure to support regulatory compliance. Consequently, data collected from smaller transactions may not provide meaningful insight into the practices of most core lenders to small businesses.

Further, requiring data reporting on loans of $1,000 or less may make offering such small credit products uneconomical for lenders. Detailed data collection and reporting requirements are likely to impose operational complexity, which would make producing quality data difficult for smaller financial institutions. The CFPB is concerned that this could impact data quality.

Moreover, the CFPB believes, based on its experience and understanding of the markets, that many lenders treat transactions under $1,000 as consumer credit, rather than business credit. Further, $1,000 is substantially lower than loan amounts already characterized as ''microloans'' to businesses. The CFPB understands that loans in such amounts are not material for the small business lending markets. For example, the Small Business Administration (SBA) offers business credit that it characterizes as ''microloans,'' which are generally for loan amounts under $50,000 and an average loan amount of $13,000.[32] Further, several commenters in the 2023 final rule requested that the CFPB carve out loans under $50,000 to

[29] *Compare, e.g.,* 12 CFR 25.12(v) (OCC CRA regulations defining small business loans) with § 25.12(w) (OCC CRA regulations defining small farm loans).

[30] *See* FSA Customer Data Worksheet (Form AD–2047).

[31] As the CFPB acknowledged in the 2023 final rule, ''many agricultural lenders have already been collecting and reporting some form of data by HMDA, the CRA, and/or the Farm Credit Administration.'' 88 FR 35150, 35227.

[32] *See* Small Bus. Admin., *Microloans, https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/microloans* (last visited Oct. 1, 2025).

$100,000 as microloans.[33] Some State-run programs offer business credit that start at a minimum loan amount of $1,000.[34] The CFPB believes that it seems unlikely that many such small dollar loans under $1,000 to small businesses are made, and if so the collection of such data would not advance the statutory purposes of the rule.

The CFPB seeks comment on this proposed revision to the rule. It seeks comment on topics including, but not limited to, the loan amount at which the exclusion for small dollar business credit should be set; whether the exclusion should be limited to certain types of loan products, financial institutions, or small businesses; the extent to which financial institutions lend to small businesses in amounts less than $1,000 and why they do so; and whether the exclusion should account for a lender extending multiple small dollar loans to a single small business.

C. Section 1002.105—Covered Financial Institutions and Exempt Institutions

The CFPB believes that at the onset of data collection under section 1071 the focus should be on larger core lenders before the CFPB considers whether it would be appropriate to expand the scope of the rule to specialty lenders and smaller lenders. The CFPB therefore proposes to exclude FCS lenders from the definition of covered financial institution and proposes to raise the origination threshold from 100 to 1,000 covered credit transactions to better ensure the smooth operation of the initial period of data collection.

105(b) Covered Financial Institution—FCS Lenders

The CFPB proposes excluding FCS lenders from the ''covered financial institution'' definition in § 1002.105(b). Consistent with this proposed exemption, the CFPB proposes deleting several references to FCS lenders in commentary.

As with the Bureau's proposal to reconsider the treatment of agricultural transactions as covered transaction under § 1002.104(a), this proposal would simplify the rule by narrowing its scope to core small business lending practices and lenders. The proposal would also avoid imposing reporting requirements on a category of specialized lenders that are already subject to a separate regulatory reporting scheme.

The CFPB believes that an exemption for FCS lenders would advance the statutory purposes of section 1071. FCS lenders have a unique mission-driven structure, and they operate in a specific regulatory environment.

FCS lenders differ from traditional financial institutions in several significant respects. The FCS is comprised of a nationwide network of borrower-owned, cooperative institutions with a statutory mandate to provide the agricultural sector with reliable credit. FCS borrowers include agricultural and related businesses as well as rural homeowners. As owners of the FCS lending associations, these borrowers can receive patronage dividends that can reduce borrowing costs and make FCS loans difficult to compare to loans issued by non-FCS lenders. Commercial banks, by contrast, are owned by shareholders, and credit unions, while member-owned, serve a wide range of customers, provide a wide range of products and services, and lack a specific charter that is exclusively focused on agriculture. These differences between FCS lenders and other types of lenders, which the CFPB did not meaningfully address in the 2023 final rule, make it difficult to easily compare loans made by FCS lenders with those of other non-cooperative lenders.

In addition to their unique nature and mission, as described above, FCS lenders are also already subject to an existing regulatory reporting framework through the FCA, including the collection of demographic data as part of its program oversight.[35]

In issuing the 2023 final rule, the Bureau explained the decision not to categorically exempt any specific type of financial institution from the rule's coverage, stating that such exemptions ''would create significant gaps in the data and would create an uneven playing field between different types of institutions.'' [36] The CFPB did not appear to meaningfully consider the extent to which FCS lending differs in kind from general-purpose lending.

However, in light of the CFPB's reconsideration of the 2023 final rule and new focus on ensuring the consistent and smooth initial collection of data from core lenders and products, the CFPB believes it would further the purposes of section 1071 to commence the data collection without including FCS lenders.

The existing reporting requirements of FCS lenders further supports excluding FCS lenders.[37] Moreover, requiring compliance with a second set of potentially redundant reporting obligations may put FCA lenders at a competitive disadvantage relative to other lenders.

The CFPB believes that the rule's current application to FCS lenders risks imposing disproportionate regulatory complexity on them, many of which are small, rural cooperatives lacking the compliance infrastructure of large commercial lenders, which in turn risks diminishing the quality of the data they report to CFPB. Adding potentially redundant reporting requirements would do little to advance the goals of section 1071. Such a result would be counter to the Congressional goals behind the establishment of the FCS.

Based on the factors discussed above, the CFPB believes it would be appropriate to reconsider the rule's application to FCS lenders and to focus the rule's scope on conventional, general-purpose small business lending. Accordingly, the Bureau proposes to use its exemption authority under 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(g)(2) to exclude FCS lenders.

The CFPB seeks comment on this proposed revision to the rule.

105(b) Covered Financial Institution—Threshold Change

Current § 1002.105(b) defines a covered financial institution as one that has made at least 100 covered credit transactions to small businesses in each of the two preceding calendar years. The CFPB is proposing to change this definition by increasing this threshold from 100 covered credit transactions to 1,000 covered credit transactions because it believes that it would advance the statutory purposes of section 1071 to commence the data collection without including smaller lenders under a 1,000 originations threshold.

In the 2023 final rule, the CFPB explained its belief that a 100-loan origination threshold would best address widespread industry concerns regarding compliance burdens for the smallest financial institutions while also

[33] 88 FR 35150, 35245.

[34] *See, e.g.,* Md. Dep't. of Com., *Military Personnel and Veteran-owned Small Business Loan Program (MPVOLP), https://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-businesses/mpvolp* (last visited Sept. 10, 2025) (providing no interest loans, ranging from $1,000 to $100,000, for businesses owned by military reservists, veterans, National Guard personnel and for small businesses that employ or are owned by such person).

[35] *See also* 88 FR 35150, 35227 (noting that many agricultural lenders currently required to collect and report data to FCA).

[36] *Id.* at 35258.

[37] For instance, the FCA already tracks data on the credit needs of young, beginning, and small (YBS) farmers and ranchers. Farm Credit Admin., Young, beginning, and small farmer lending, *https://www.fca.gov/bank-oversight/young-beginning-and-small-farmer-lending* (last visited Sept. 28, 2025) (''[E]ach [FCS] institution is required to report to FCA yearly on operations and achievements under its YBS program and to disclose YBS data in its own annual report.'').

capturing the overwhelming majority of the small business lending market. It noted that while its original proposal of a 25-loan threshold would have yielded more data than a 100-loan threshold, the 100-loan origination threshold ''massively expands data availability relative to the status quo.'' [38] The CFPB noted that a number of commenters on the 2021 proposed rule requested a higher threshold, such as 1,000 covered credit transactions. At that time, the CFPB was concerned that a threshold higher than 100 covered credit transactions would dramatically reduce the number of covered financial institutions that must report data under the rule. However, as the CFPB noted in the 2023 final rule, a large decrease in the number of covered financial institutions does not equate to a proportionately large reduction in the estimated number of small business credit applications reported.

As a result, the CFPB believes that the proposed 1,000 originations threshold is justified for several independent reasons. First, the CFPB believes that at the onset of the data collection under section 1071 the focus should be on core lenders and products before the CFPB considers whether it would be appropriate to expand the scope of the rule. The CFPB believes that larger volume lenders are core to small business lending. Current § 1002.114(b), by way of comparison, prioritized the collection of data from the largest volume lenders first because they have more resources, and because they account for the bulk of small business lending volume.[39]

Second, the proposed change better aligns with E.O. 14192,[40] which directs Federal agencies to review regulations for regulatory burden, and is responsive to feedback received from stakeholders following publication of the 2023 final rule. The CFPB has heard repeatedly from industry stakeholders that its estimates in the 2023 final rule were wrong, and that a 100-loan origination threshold is too low and captures too many smaller institutions, which they say originate fewer small business loans and also are less able to shoulder the costs and complexity of complying with the rule due to fewer resources and staff.

The Bureau preliminarily determines that changing the originations threshold to 1,000 strikes a better balance by minimizing complexity for smaller entities while still collecting data on a large proportion of small business credit applications; indeed, as the Bureau observed with respect to the 100-loan threshold in the 2023 final rule, a 1,000-loan threshold would substantially increase data availability as compared to the status quo.

The CFPB believes a threshold of 1,000 originations, instead of 100, would be congruent with the statutory purposes of section 1071. The CFPB believes that the onset of data collection should commence with core products and lenders, as larger lenders are better resourced and can better sustain the complexities and cost of compliance with the rule. The CFPB believes that it should work with larger lenders to better understand potential difficulties associated with collecting data before considering whether to expand the rule to require that smaller lenders comply with the rule.

Further, the CFPB also notes from its research that the proposed change in the threshold for originations would result in a reduction in the number of smaller institutions covered by the rule without a proportionately large reduction in the number of loan application-level data collected by the rule.[41] While the proposed 1,000 originations threshold would carve out a large number of mostly smaller depository institutions, the rule would still cover the vast majority of small business loan originations (well over 90 percent).

Given this the CFPB believes increasing the threshold would remove regulatory burden from small entities, and therefore the proposed change would be responsive to E.O. 14192.

The CFPB believes that increasing the threshold is necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 1071 because the complexity of compliance may pose difficulties for smaller lenders, many of which have no previous experience at all with data collection rules such as HMDA or CRA. The new compliance complexity may result in decreased data quality for those institutions, which would not advance the statutory purposes of section 1071.

The proposed change to § 1002.105(b) would, in turn, require other changes. Current § 1002.112(b) provides that a bona fide error is not a violation of ECOA or Regulation B, subpart B. The provision cross-references numerical error thresholds in current appendix F. Under appendix F, a financial institution is presumed to maintain procedures reasonably adapted to avoid errors with respect to a given data field if the number of errors found in a random sample of a financial institution's data submission for a given data field do not equal or exceed the threshold in column C of table 1 of appendix F.

The CFPB proposes revising appendix F to conform to the proposed changes to § 1002.105(b), defining ''covered financial institution,'' based on a revised origination threshold of 1,000 covered credit transactions. Specifically, column A of existing appendix F lists ranges of small business lending application register counts. The CFPB proposes eliminating the rows in table 1 associated with application counts under 1,000, and revising the count in what is currently the 4th row to be ''1,000–100,000'' rather than the current ''500–100,000.'' The CFPB requests comment on these proposed changes.

The CFPB seeks comment on this proposed revision to the rule, in particular whether an originations threshold at 200, 500, 2,000, or some other number would be appropriate, and whether the associated changes to appendix F are appropriate.

D. Section 1002.106—Business and Small Business

106(b) Small Business

Current § 1002.106(b)(1) defines ''small business'' and provides, among other criteria, that a business is small if its gross annual revenue for its preceding fiscal year is $5 million or less. Section 1002.106(b)(2) provides procedures for inflation adjustments to that threshold. For the reasons discussed below, the CFPB is proposing to reduce the gross annual revenue threshold from $5 million or less to $1 million or less.

In the 2023 final rule, the CFPB explained that its definition reflected the need for financial institutions to apply a simple, broad definition of a small business across industries. It also explained its belief that a $5 million gross annual revenue threshold strikes the right balance in terms of broadly covering the small business financing market while meeting the SBA's criteria for an alternative size standard. It noted that it did not propose a $1 million gross annual revenue threshold out of concern that such a threshold likely would not satisfy the SBA's requirements for an alternative size standard across industries, while also observing that a $1 million threshold would better align with existing Regulation B adverse action notification requirements. It also concluded that a $1 million threshold would exclude many businesses that should be characterized as small.

The CFPB will retain the use of a simple, broad definition of a small business across industries but is

[38] 88 FR 35150, 35257.

[39] *See id.* at 35438–40.

[40] 90 FR 9065 (Feb. 6, 2025).

[41] *See* part IV.D, tables 1 and 2 below.

proposing to change the gross annual revenue threshold from $5 million or less to $1 million or less, and to make conforming changes throughout the regulatory text and commentary. The CFPB is seeking SBA approval for this alternate small business size standard pursuant to the Small Business Act.[42]

Since the 2023 final rule was published, the President issued E.O. 14192.[43] As part of the CFPB's review of the 2023 final rule under this order, the CFPB identified that a $1 million threshold would help reduce regulatory burden on financial institutions because it would better align with other existing financial regulatory requirements and standard financial industry practices related to small businesses.

Specifically, the CFPB believes several independent reasons justify a change of the gross annual revenue threshold to $1 million. First, as noted by commenters on the CFPB's 2021 proposed rule, a $1 million threshold would align with certain metrics in CRA regulations. Several CRA tests analyze lending to ''smaller businesses'' with $1 million or less in revenues.[44] The CFPB finalized the $5 million threshold in the 2023 final rule, and the Federal agencies responsible for implementing the CRA proposed and subsequently finalized amendments to their small business revenue threshold to $5 million, to conform with the CFPB's rule implementing section 1071, and to use data collected pursuant to that rule. Since then, however, the CRA agencies have proposed withdrawing those revisions, which never entered into force. The CRA agencies proposed reverting back to a $1 million or less definition, and no longer using section 1071 data in certain CRA tests concerning small businesses.[45] The CFPB believes that it should follow suit to reduce avoidable regulatory complexity for regulated entities by sharing where possible a uniform size standard with other Federal agencies.

Second, the CFPB also believes that the revised threshold in proposed § 1002.106(b) would be more consistent with Regulation B, subpart A, further helping to reduce regulatory burden pursuant to E.O. 14192.[46] As noted in the 2023 final rule, Regulation B, subpart A uses a $1 million revenue threshold to determine what kind of adverse action notice a business credit applicant receives; those under the threshold receive a notification similar to one a consumer would receive.[47] As a result, many covered financial institutions likely already apply a $1 million threshold to determine which businesses are small. Here, the CFPB believes that using an existing size standard would reduce regulatory complexity for covered financial institutions.

Third, as many financial institutions have worked on implementing the 2023 final rule, the Bureau has received more feedback, including from a number of community banks and trade groups representing larger institutions, that a $1 million revenue threshold would more closely align with their internal thresholds that separate small and medium-sized businesses within their own institutions.

The CFPB notes that the 2023 final rule adopted a $5 million threshold in significant part because it believed that a $1 million threshold, discussed as an alternative to the $5 million threshold, would not satisfy the SBA's requirements for an alternative size standard and would exclude too many businesses designated as small under the SBA's size standards. Whether an alternative size standard satisfies the requirements for an alternative size standard is within the SBA's purview to determine, and as noted above the CFPB is seeking SBA approval for its proposed $1 million threshold.

Further, as commenters initially stated, a $1 million threshold would cover most (over 95 percent) of small businesses as defined by the SBA size standards in effect at the time of the 2021 proposed rule. The CFPB estimated in the 2023 final rule that among non-agricultural industries over 1.5 million small businesses (27 percent) would not be covered by an alternative $1 million gross annual revenue threshold.[48] The CFPB is now reconsidering the data provided by commenters and its final rule estimate. In any case, the CFPB believes that a change to $1 million is consistent with the alignment goals noted above given the E.O.s discussed throughout, even if a 27 percent decline in small business coverage would result. At a $1 million threshold, the proposed rule would still cover a supermajority of small businesses that the 2023 final rule covers.

The CFPB is proposing conforming changes also to the inflation adjustment provision in § 1002.106(b)(2), to require adjustment in $100,000 increments (rather than $500,000) every five years after 2030 (rather than 2025). The CFPB is concerned that, given the proposed change to a $1 million revenue threshold, inflation adjustments in $500,000 increments would not be granular enough for this provision to meaningfully track inflation.

The Bureau seeks comment on the proposed changes to § 1002.106(b)(1) and (b)(2), including whether revenue thresholds of $500,000, $2 million, $3 million, or some other amount would be appropriate.

E. Section 1002.107—Compilation of Reportable Data

107(a) Data Format and Itemization

107(a) Discretionary Data Points

Section 1071 provides for two types of data points, those statutorily required under ECOA section 704B(e) and those promulgated based on Bureau discretion provided for in ECOA section 704B(e)(2)(H), which are sometimes referred to as discretionary data points, and which the Bureau has authority to add if the ''Bureau determines [they] would aid in fulfilling the purposes of this section.'' In the 2023 final rule, the Bureau finalized several discretionary data points, determining the additional data would aid in fulfilling the purposes of section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act, as required by ECOA section 704B(e)(2)(H). The discretionary data points were for pricing information, time in business, North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code, number of workers, application method, application recipient, denial reasons, and number of principal owners. The Bureau considered the additional operational complexity and

[42] 15 U.S.C. 632(a)(2)(C).

[43] 90 FR 9065.

[44] ''Smaller business'' loans are a subset of ''small business'' loans as defined by CRA regulations before the 2024 amendments. ''Small business'' loans are those with a loan amount of $1 million or less to a business of any size under CRA regulations. 12 CFR 25.12(v) (''small business loan means a loan included in 'loans to small businesses' as defined in the instructions for preparation of the Consolidated Report of Condition and Income''); Fed. Fin. Insts. Examination Council, *Schedule RC–C, Part II. Loans to Small Businesses and Small Farms General Instructions* (defining ''loans to small businesses'' as loans with original amounts of $1 million or less), *https://www.fdic.gov/resources/bankers/call-reports/crinst-051/2017/2017-03-051-rc-c2.pdf* (last visited Sept. 30, 2025). ''Smaller business'' loans are ''small business'' loans made to business with $1 million or less in revenues under the 1995 amendments to CRA regulations. *See* 12 CFR 25.22(b)(3)(ii) (assessing the lending activity of an institutions of ''small business and small farm loans to businesses and farms with gross annual revenues of $1 million or less'').

[45] The Federal agencies responsible for implementing the CRA amended the regulations in 2024 to change the relevant threshold from $1 million to $5 million to conform with the CFPB's rule implementing section 1071. 89 FR 6574 (Feb. 1, 2024). These agencies have subsequently issued a joint notice of proposed rulemaking that would rescind the 2024 amendments to the CRA regulations, reverting back to the 1995/2001 version of the CRA regulations. 90 FR 34086 (July 18, 2025).

[46] 90 FR 9065 (Feb. 6, 2025).

[47] *See* 88 FR 35150, 35186.

[48] *Id.* at 35266.

potential reputational harm described by commenters that collecting and reporting these data points could impose on financial institutions, but determined that the costs were only incremental and that the data points were designed to minimize additional compliance burden.[49]

Notably, in the 2023 final rule the Bureau declined to add other discretionary data points sought by commenters, because the decision whether to include a discretionary data point necessarily also involves considering the relative utility of a data point and the operational complexity of adding it. For that reason, in 2023 the Bureau stated that it was adopting a ''limited number of data points . . . that it believes will offer the highest value in light of section 1071's statutory purposes,'' and it rejected additional data points on the grounds that they would pose ''operational complexities.'' [50] For example, the Bureau declined to include a data point on credit scores, even though the data would be useful for fair lending analyses, due to the complexity and operational difficulty of doing so.[51]

In other words, to be included as a discretionary data point, a data point implicitly must satisfy two independent tests: (1) whether the data point would aid in fulfilling the purposes of section 1071, *and* (2) whether the CFPB believes based on the record before it that it is appropriate to adopt as a discretionary data point given factors such as operational cost and regulatory complexity. Accordingly, if the Bureau now believes that the relative utility of the data is not strong enough to justify the additional operational complexity for financial institutions, that is sufficient reason to propose removing the discretionary data point, even if the discretionary data point would otherwise advance the purposes of the statute.

After the publication of the 2023 final rule, two factors prompted reconsideration of the discretionary data points by the Bureau. First, as discussed above, pursuant to E.O.s. 14192 and 14219 (''Ensuring Lawful Regulation and Implementing the President's 'Department of Government Efficiency' Deregulatory Agenda''), the Bureau is reviewing the 2023 final rule as part of its effort to streamline and simplify regulations.[52] The Bureau believes that removing some of the discretionary data points would meet the goals of these E.O.s. Second, subsequent to the publication of the 2023 final rule and through the implementation process, the Bureau received additional feedback about the number of data points total, and the logistical challenges associated with implementing some or all of the discretionary data points. The implementation feedback provided by stakeholders further supports reconsideration of certain discretionary data points, and the Bureau now believes that the 2023 final rule did not adequately consider the extent to which the value of the data point justifies the additional operational complexity in obtaining it.

Given this new information, the Bureau proposes to remove the discretionary data points for application method, application recipient, denial reasons, pricing, and number of workers in § 1002.107(a)(3), (4), (11), (12), (16), as well as the relevant commentary, and to make conforming changes throughout.

The data points identified for removal are not statutorily required and are not otherwise relied upon by or intertwined with the statutorily required data points.[53] In any case, because the identified data points were finalized pursuant to the Bureau's discretionary authority under 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(e)(2)(H), it is also within the bounds of that discretion to remove these data points. The CFPB believes that their removal at this time, at the start of a potentially long-term data collection regime, would advance the longer-term statutory purposes of the rule. Stakeholders attempting to implement the rule have suggested the addition of data points beyond those statutorily required had led to unnecessary complexity in implementing the 2023 final rule, and that such complexity might reduce data quality and lead to additional errors. The CFPB preliminarily concludes that initiating the data collection with an expansive rule that covered more data points would tend to make the initial collections more complicated and result in lesser data quality and integrity.

The CFPB believes it prudent to focus on the collection of a more limited number of core data points (the statutory data points and a limited number of other data points needed to facilitate the collection of these statutory data points) to avoid complexity in the initial implementation of a rule to implement section 1071. This in turn would make it more likely that covered financial institutions face a smoother transition in the initial years of the rule in ramping up to the accurate, recurring collection of data.[54]

Application method. The 2023 final rule required financial institutions to collect data on whether applications were submitted in person, by phone, online, or by mail. It explained its belief that this data will improve the market's understanding of how different types of applicants apply for credit and provide additional context for the business and community development needs of particular geographic regions. The Bureau now believes that this information is of relatively low value in furthering the purposes of section 1071 while adding to the overall complexity of a lengthy data collection, and thus should not be included. Upon reconsideration, the Bureau believes that in the 2023 final rule, it had underestimated the potential complexity of this data point. The Bureau acknowledged that many lenders do not already collect this data point as such, and that many small business applicants have multiple interactions across the different methods listed (in-person, telephone, online) during the application process. However, current § 1002.107(a)(3) does not seem to address this but rather appears to reduce the potentially complex set of interactions to identifying only one means of collecting a covered application. The logic of the 2023 final rule justifying this provision suggests the futility of collecting this data point without capturing the full scope of interaction between applicant and lender for purposes of this rule. The Bureau believes, as a result, that at this time, this data point should be removed because its utility does not outweigh the cost and complexity of collecting it.

Application recipient. In the 2023 rule, the Bureau required financial institutions to collect data on application method—whether the applicant submitted the covered application directly to the financial institution or its affiliate, or whether the applicant submitted the covered application indirectly to the financial institution via a third party. It explained

[49] *Id.* at 35278.

[50] *Id.* at 35281.

[51] *Id.* at 35282.

[52] 90 FR 9065; 90 FR 10583 (Feb. 25, 2025).

[53] The Bureau is not proposing to remove NAICS code, time in business, and number of principal owners because those discretionary data points are generally integral to collection and understanding of statutorily required data points and the Bureau did not receive evidence during the implementation period of logistical challenges not previously considered.

[54] The Bureau notes that in its experience with new regulatory regimes, especially new data collections such as the revisions to HMDA in 2015, covered institutions face initial difficulties with collecting and reporting data accurately, especially given the expansive changes required by the 2015 HMDA rulemaking.

that this discretionary data point will improve the market's understanding of how small businesses interact with financial institutions when applying for credit, such as whether financial institutions making credit decisions are directly interacting with the applicant and/or generally operating in the same community as the applicant. The Bureau now believes that this information is of relatively low value in furthering the purposes of section 1071 while adding to the overall complexity of a lengthy data collection. Upon reconsideration, the Bureau believes that in the 2023 final rule, it overestimated the utility and underestimated the cost and complexity of this data point. The justification for this data point in the 2023 final rule suggested that it would help determine whether lenders were operating in the communities with applicants but did not offer details on why a data point on third-party submissions would advance such an understanding, above and beyond the other data points more apparently targeted to identify community development needs, such as census tract. Further, in response to a comment that lenders do not track data on application submissions by third parties because such data played no role in underwriting decisions, the Bureau summarily replied that it did not believe it would be difficult for lenders to track this information. The Bureau believes that submissions through third parties may not always be identified as such, and that its statement in the 2023 final rule justifying the inclusion of this data point did not account for this. The Bureau as a result believes that at the start of a potentially long-term data collection regime that this data point should be removed.

Denial reasons. The Bureau explained in the 2023 rule that data on denial reasons will allow data users to better understand the rationale behind denial decisions, help identify potential fair lending concerns, and provide financial institutions with data to evaluate their business underwriting criteria and address potential gaps as needed. As the Bureau acknowledged in the 2023 rule, reasons for denial data could be harmful or sensitive for applicants or related natural persons. The Bureau now believes that the sensitivity of this information, combined with its addition to the overall complexity of a lengthy data collection, justifies proposing to remove it from the discretionary data points. The 2023 final rule did not explain how the marginal or added usefulness of denial reasons would justify the added cost and complexity above and beyond the collection of data on denials, already captured by the mandatory ''type of action taken'' data point. Further, to the extent that this data point was intended to assist lenders to analyze their own fair lending concerns, as the 2023 final rule stated, the data point is redundant as lenders already possess this information. To the extent that this data point was intended to assist applicants, under subpart A of Regulation B they are already able to access a statement of denial reasons. Section 1002.9(a)(3) in subpart A already requires lenders to inform applicants for business credit with $1 million or less in gross annual revenue of their right to receive a statement of denial reasons upon request. Upon reconsideration, the Bureau believes that it is sufficient at this time to collect data on denials via the action taken data point, as required under 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(e)(2)(D), and that this data point should not be included at the start of a potentially long-term data collection regime.

Pricing. In the 2023 rule, the Bureau required reporting of an array of different pricing data: interest rate; total origination charges; broker fees; the total amount of all non-interest charges that are scheduled to be imposed over the first annual period; for a merchant cash advance or other sales-based financing transaction, the difference between the amount advanced and the amount to be repaid; and information about any applicable prepayment penalties. It explained its belief that because price-setting is integral to the functioning of any market, any analysis of the small business lending market—including to enforce fair lending laws or identify community and business development opportunities—would be less meaningful without this information. The 2023 rule acknowledge the potential complexity of collecting this data, and commenters noted the risk that it could reveal confidential business information or lead to incorrect inferences about discrimination. The Bureau now believes that the potential risk of harm to applicants and the substantial complexity of the data collection justify removing it from the discretionary data points. While the Bureau acknowledged comments ''about the harmful consequences of potentially misleading data,'' the Bureau addressed this concern in the 2023 final rule by stating that it would note ''when disclosing the 1071 data that the data alone generally do not offer proof of compliance with fair lending laws.'' [55] The Bureau upon reconsideration believes that such a statement may not be sufficient to address concerns about the misuse of pricing data. In adopting the pricing data point, the Bureau assumed that community groups would use data responsibly but did not address how other members of the public with access to the data might use it.[56] Further, the 2023 final rule stated that ''the 1071 data need not reflect every determinant of credit pricing to provide value to users'' but also acknowledged the relevant and importance of credit score of principal owners to ''explain[] pricing differences between transactions.'' [57] That is, the Bureau believes that the publication of pricing information absent certain other information may be incomplete and give rise to incorrect inferences concerning discrimination; however, the collection of sufficient data points to correct potentially erroneous inferences may make the data collection unduly complex. This combination of difficulties leads the Bureau to believe that this data point should not be included at the start of a potentially long-term data collection regime.

Number of workers. The 2023 rule required financial institutions to report the number of workers in ranges, and stated that data on the number of persons working for a small business applicant will provide data users and relevant stakeholders with a better understanding of the job maintenance and creation that small business credit provides. The Bureau now believes that this information is of relatively low value in furthering the purposes of section 1071 while adding to the overall complexity of a lengthy data collection. First, in the 2023 final rule, the Bureau acknowledged that ''[t]he majority of small businesses are run by a single owner.'' Given the proposed change to § 1002.106(b), revising the definition of small business to those businesses with $1 million or less in gross annual revenue, fewer small businesses with employees would be covered under the rule. Second, as acknowledged in the 2023 final rule, small businesses may encounter difficulties in providing this information to financial institutions, especially small businesses that use contractors, temporary or gig workers, or seasonal workers, or those that cycle through employees frequently. While the Bureau simplified a covered financial institution's reporting requirements for this data point, the Bureau believes that even as simplified this data point's complexity outweighs its potential utility. That is, the Bureau

[55] 88 FR 35150, 35310.

[56] *Id.* at 35310.

[57] *Id.*

now believes that it would be difficult to ensure consistency in reporting this data point across a variety of different small business applicants, making it likely that the data collected would be of poor quality or otherwise difficult to interpret. Further, the 2023 final rule justified this data point solely on community development grounds. It did not justify this data point on fair lending grounds because nothing in Regulation B, including subpart A, offers differential protection based on a business credit applicant's number of workers. Based on the Bureau's intention to commence this rulemaking regime focused on truly small businesses, the Bureau believes that this data point should not be included at the start of a potentially long-term data collection regime as it is not likely to result in the collection of useful data at this time.

LGBTQI+-owned business status. The 2023 rule required financial institutions to inquire whether a small business applicant for credit is a minority-owned, women-owned, and/or LGBTQI+-owned business. This discretionary data point is addressed in more detail below in the section on the Defending Women E.O.

The Bureau solicits comment on these proposed changes, including whether any of the identified discretionary data points should be modified or retained, in part or in full.

Collection of Disaggregated Ethnicity and Race Categories

Current § 1002.107(a)(19) requires the collection of both aggregate and disaggregated race and ethnicity information on principal owners of small business applicants. However, 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(e)(2)(G) only requires covered lenders to collect and report the ''race, sex, and ethnicity of the principal owners of the business.'' This statutory provision does not explicitly call for the collection of disaggregated data on the race and ethnicity of principal owners. Given its concern about commencing a long-term data collection regime by asking for potentially complex and costly data points, the Bureau seeks comment on whether it should revise the rule's data collection requirements to require collection only of aggregate ethnicity and race categories.

As a result, and consistent with its reconsideration of discretionary data points, the Bureau also seeks specific comment on what utility there might be for carrying out the purposes of section 1071 in requiring the collection of disaggregated categories of ethnicity and race, in addition to the aggregate categories. The Bureau also seeks comment on the costs and burdens for financial institutions in requiring the collection of these disaggregated categories of ethnicity and race.

Defending Women E.O.

LGBTQI+-ownership. Current § 1002.107(a)(18) requires financial institutions to inquire whether a small business applicant for credit is a minority-owned, women-owned, and/or LGBTQI+-owned business. The Bureau explained that, based on limited information available, it believed that LGBTQI+-owned businesses may experience particular challenges accessing small business credit, and used its discretionary authority under 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(e)(2)(H) to require financial institutions to request information about whether an applicant is a LGBTQI+-owned business. In the time since the 2023 rule, the Bureau has heard repeated concerns from stakeholders, as well as members of Congress and the general public, that this question in particular is an invasion of privacy and risks damaging the relationship between small businesses and their lenders, particularly in smaller lending markets. The Bureau now believes that the sensitivities involved in this inquiry, which the 2023 rule did not address, exceed any utility this data point might provide, and that it adds to the overall complexity of a lengthy data collection.[58]

In addition, the President issued the Defending Women E.O. (E.O. 14168) on January 30, 2025, which directs Federal agencies seeking information not to discuss gender identity and to refer to sex using a binary of male/female. Consistent with this E.O. and the feedback the Bureau received from stakeholders and members of Congress and the general public described above, the Bureau is proposing to make certain conforming changes to the rule and remove or rescind provisions in the current rule that do not comply with the order. These changes generally would include (1) removing references to and questions about ''LGBTQI+''-owned business status, (2) requiring financial institutions to inquire about a principal owner's sex, rather than sex/gender, and (3) providing that the sex of the principal owners be selected from a static binary response option of male/female, rather than a free-form text field.

Specifically, the proposed changes would include removing the definition related to LGBTQI+-owned business status in § 1002.102(k) and (l) and removing references to LGBTQI+-owned business status in § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) and associated commentary, and revising how principal owners' sex is to be collected in commentary accompanying § 1002.107(a)(19). The proposed changes would also include removing references to LGBTQI+-owned business status in Regulation B, subpart A, § 1002.5(a)(4) and revising commentary accompanying § 1002.5(a)(2). The Bureau is also proposing to make conforming changes elsewhere throughout the regulatory text and associated commentary, as well as the sample form in appendix E.

The Bureau seeks comment on these proposed changes.

Sex/gender. Current § 1002.107(a)(19) requires financial institutions to ask a small business applicant to provide its principal owners' ethnicity, race and sex. Associated commentary further explains how financial institutions are to make these requests. Commentary to current § 1002.107(a)(19) requires financial institutions, when requesting principal owners' sex, to use the term ''sex/gender'' and to give applicants a free-form text field to provide a response.

Commentary accompanying current § 1002.107(a)(19) requires financial institutions, when requesting principal owners' sex, to use the term ''sex/gender'' and to give applicants a free-form text field to provide a response. In the 2023 rule, the Bureau explained its belief that this approach would allow applicants to self-identify as they see fit. Commenters had contended, however, that the free-form text approach would inhibit data analysis.

The Bureau now agrees with commenters who had asserted that, particularly in the context of a data collection rule, a free-form text field would inhibit robust data analysis, contrary to the purposes of the rule. The Bureau also now believes, based on feedback from stakeholders of all kinds, that a free-form text field would likely result in poor data quality, given the variety of possible responses to the sex question even for a single type of answer.[59] The potential for confusion is

[58] The Bureau also notes that it has withdrawn its 2023 interpretive rule concerning LGBTQI+ discrimination under ECOA. 86 FR 14363 (Mar. 16, 2021) (clarifying that the prohibition against sex discrimination in ECOA and Regulation B encompasses sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination); 90 FR 20084 (May 12, 2025) (withdrawing the 2021 interpretive rule). That rule sought to extend to ECOA the Court's holding in *Bostock,* which found title VII's prohibition against sex discrimination includes discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. *Bostock* v. *Clayton Cnty.,* 590 U.S. 644 (2020). The Court has since declined to expressly extend the holding of Bostock beyond the title VII context. *United States* v. *Skrmetti,* 605 U.S. __(2025).

[59] Responses intended to indicate ''female'' sex could include ''female,'' ''woman,'' ''feminine,''

Continued

exacerbated by the lack of clarifying instructions. The Bureau now believes that the most appropriate way to collect data on the sex of a principal owner is to ask the straightforward question of whether the owner is male or female.

Additionally, this proposed change comports with the Defending Women order described above. Specifically, the changes consistent with E.O. 14168 would include revising how principal owners' sex is to be collected in commentary accompanying § 1002.107(a)(19). The Bureau is also proposing to make conforming changes elsewhere throughout the regulatory text and associated commentary, as well as the sample form in appendix E.

The Bureau solicits comment on these proposed changes.

Applicant's Right To Refuse To Provide Demographic Data

Current § 1002.107(a)(18) requires covered financial institutions to seek information from applicants about their women-owned, minority-owned, and LGBTQI+-owned business status and § 1002.107(a)(19) requires covered financial institutions to seek information from applicants about the ethnicity, race, and sex of the principal owners of the applicant business. Those provisions and associated commentary also include discussions of the statutorily provided right of an applicant to refuse to provide this information.[60]

The Bureau is proposing to revise the applicant right to refuse discussions in § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19), as well as the related commentary. In addition, the Bureau is proposing corresponding changes to the sample demographic data collection form in appendix E. Currently, the regulatory text of § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) provides that covered financial institutions must inform applicants that the financial institution cannot discriminate against the applicant based on the demographic information provided pursuant to the rule or on whether the applicant invokes the right to refuse to provide the information. Existing comments 107(a)(18)–1 and 107(a)(19)–1 state that a financial institution must permit an applicant to refuse (*i.e.,* decline) to answer the financial institution's inquiries regarding business status and ethnicity, race, and sex, and must inform the applicant that it is not required to provide the information. The Bureau is proposing to add the requirement to inform applicants of their right to refuse to the regulatory text of § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19), for clarity.

The Bureau is also proposing changes to the sample form in appendix E to further emphasize the right to refuse.

The Bureau seeks comment on these proposed changes.

107(c) Time and Manner of Collection

Anti-Discouragement and Related Provisions

In the 2023 rule, the Bureau explained that it was adopting the provisions in § 1002.107(c) in an attempt to provide a balance between allowing institutions flexibility in how they collect data and ensuring that institutions do not discourage or otherwise interfere with applicants' providing their data. Existing § 1002.107(c) requires a covered financial institution to (1) not discourage an applicant from responding to requests for applicant-provided data under final § 1002.107(a) and to otherwise maintain procedures to collect such data at a time and in a manner that are reasonably designed to obtain a response; (2) identify certain minimum components when collecting data directly from the applicant that must be included within a financial institution's procedures to ensure they are reasonably designed to obtain a response; (3) maintain procedures to identify and respond to indicia that it may be discouraging applicants from responding to requests for applicant-provided data, including low response rates for applicant-provided data; as well as (4) provide that low response rates for applicant-provided data may indicate that a financial institution is discouraging applicants from responding to requests for applicant-provided data or otherwise failing to maintain procedures to collect applicant-provided data that are reasonably designed to obtain a response.

The CFPB proposes to remove certain references to the discouragement prohibition in § 1002.107(c)(1) and (c)(2)(iii), as well as related commentary that the Bureau believes are redundant and add unnecessary regulatory complexity. It also proposes to remove § 1002.107(c)(3) and (c)(4) and related commentary; these provisions detail requirements to monitor for indicia of discouragement, such as low response rates from applicants, and explicitly provide that low response rates may be indicia of discouragement. Further, the CFPB proposes to revise commentary to § 1002.107(c)(2) which established specific restrictions on the time and manner of data collection that are similar to the anti-discouragement provisions.

Section 1071, as implemented by Regulation B, subpart B, creates binding obligations for covered financial institutions to ask small business applicants for credit for their demographic information, but it includes no requirements regarding how institutions must ask for the information.[61] By contrast, the 2023 final rule imposed numerous obligations in § 1002.107(c) on the basis of theoretical concerns that institutions would seek to evade compliance by discouraging applicants from providing their information or otherwise interfering with applicants providing their data. It did not provide any evidence in support of its concerns, such as evidence from past experience with HMDA or other similar situations. In addition, the Bureau now believes that comment 107(c)(2)-2.iii.A, which discusses financial institution statements that would violate the anti-discouragement provision, raises serious First Amendment concerns.

The 2023 final rule also describes in commentary several obligations related to anti-discouragement, such as the requirements that financial institutions maximize the collection of data, request applicant-provided data before a final credit decision is made, and ensure that applicants do not overlook requests for data.

The Bureau's belief that the anti-discouragement and other related provisions are unnecessary is also bolstered by feedback it has received from a number of stakeholders regarding difficulties with implementing these provisions, particularly with respect to the discussion in comment 107(c)(4)–1 as to comparison of response rates for demographic questions across similar financial institutions. Further, the provisions in § 1002.107(c) that would remain after these proposed revisions still impose affirmative obligations to maintain procedures reasonably designed to obtain a response from credit applicants.

Given the existence of these provisions, and in light of E.O.s 14192 and 14219 that require the CFPB to seek ways to increase efficiency in regulations, the CFPB now reconsiders existing § 1002.107(c) and preliminarily finds that its various prohibitions on discouragement are redundant and unnecessary. They are redundant in that

''*mujer,*'' ''F,'' ''W,'' and even ''M.'' Responses intended to indicate ''male'' could include ''man,'' ''male,'' ''*hombre,*'' ''guy,'' ''M,'' ''m,'' ''H,'' etc. Free-form text responses may also result in non-serious responses.

[60] 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(c).

[61] 90 FR 20084, 20086 (May 12, 2025) (withdrawing the Statement on Enforcement and Supervisory Practices Relating to the Small Business Lending Rule Under the ECOA and Regulation B).

they appear to create obligations to comply with other existing obligations. They are unnecessary because the obligations to collect data and to maintain systems reasonably designed to elicit responses are already subject to the enforcement provisions of § 1002.112 in the event of non-compliance. Further, comments received in response to the 2025 interim final rule from a trade association suggested that these provisions were vague and did not make clear what would and would not constitute discouragement. All of this would add unnecessary regulatory complexity for lenders.

The CFPB observes that the other requirements in the current commentary to § 1002.107(c)(2)—concerning maximizing the collection of data, requesting applicant-provided data before a credit decision is made, and ensuring that applicants not overlook requests for data—should not have been framed as binding obligations because they are unnecessary obligations beyond those already established in § 1002.107(c). However, unlike the anti-discouragement provisions, these provisions identify practices likely to help covered financial institutions comply with the 2023 final rule. The CFPB proposes revising these provisions to provide guidance to financial institutions rather than contributing unnecessary regulatory complexity in the form of additional obligations. The CFPB believes that providing this flexibility will advance the statutory purposes of the rule by helping financial institutions collect better quality data without requiring them to follow rigid practices that may in some instances impede rather than encourage data collection. The CFPB further believes that making these practices guiding principles, rather than requirements, better conforms with the existing regulatory text of § 1002.107(c), which requires covered lenders to ''maintain procedures to collect such data at a time and in a manner that are *reasonably* designed to obtain a response'' (emphasis added).

For purposes of streamlining and simplifying the rule by removing unnecessary regulations, as discussed above, the Bureau proposes to remove provisions regarding or discussing a prohibition on the discouragement of applicants from providing data required under the rule, and proposes revising other provisions concerning the time and manner of collection to provide guidance rather than additional obligations.

The Bureau seeks comment on these proposed changes.

F. Section 1002.114—Effective Date, Compliance Date, and Special Transitional Rules

114(b) Compliance Date

The rule's compliance dates, as most recently amended by the 2025 compliance dates final rule, are set forth in current § 1002.114(b). That section looks to a financial institution's volume of covered credit transactions for small businesses to determine which of three compliance dates (currently July 1, 2026, January 1, 2027, and October 1, 2027) are applicable to a financial institution.

The CFPB proposes amending § 1002.114(b) to eliminate the system of tiered compliance dates in favor of creating a single compliance date. Mirroring the change to the rule's origination threshold set forth in proposed § 1002.105(b), proposed § 1002.114(b) would require that all covered financial institutions that originated at least 1,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses in each of calendar years 2026 and 2027 begin to comply with the rule starting on January 1, 2028. The CFPB proposes making corresponding updates throughout the commentary accompanying § 1002.114(b) and (c), which would provide additional guidance and examples regarding the compliance date.

The CFPB preliminarily believes that the extension of the single compliance date to January 1, 2028, is necessary and reasonable for several independent reasons. Those covered financial institutions that would reasonably expect to be above the new 1,000 origination threshold will need additional time to adjust their compliance systems to any changes to the rule the CFPB adopts after considering the comments submitted on this NPRM. The proposed revisions would not only reduce certain reporting requirements, such as the proposed elimination of many of the discretionary data points, but would also change existing requirements concerning statutorily required demographic data points, consistent with the Defending Women E.O. Such changes may require that financial institutions that may have already prepared to comply with the 2023 final rule to change forms, customer interfaces, or other compliance software or regulatory processes.

Further time would also be necessary for other institutions to determine whether they are covered at all under the rule, given the proposed modification of the threshold for covered financial institutions from 100 to 1,000 originations, as well as other proposed changes that would result in fewer transactions being counted toward the 1,000 origination threshold (such as the proposed removal of certain categories of credit transactions from § 1002.104(b), from the definitions of covered credit transaction, and the change to the definition of small business in § 1002.106).

The CFPB likewise believes it would be appropriate to adopt a single compliance date, to begin on January 1, 2028, that is applicable to all covered financial institutions. The need for a tiered compliance structure is diminished by the length of time that has passed since the adoption of the 2023 final rule as well as fewer covered financial institutions as a result of changes proposed to §§ 1002.104(b), 1002.105(b), and 1002.106. The CFPB has also heard feedback from stakeholders regarding difficulties for financial institutions in complying with the rule mid-year, which would be resolved by the proposed revisions to § 1002.114.

Finally, the CFPB believes that its proposed compliance date resolves any lingering concerns arising from previous compliance date extensions. As the CFPB explained in its 2025 interim final rule and 2025 compliance date final rule, those rules were necessary to avoid a subset of covered financial institutions remaining obligated to come into compliance with the 2023 rule, even though many of these institutions would be too small to qualify as covered financial institutions under this proposed rule, if finalized, meaning that they would likely incur significant compliance costs for only a single year's submission of data. Furthermore, this costly single-year submission of data—with costs inequitably imposed only on covered financial institutions that happened not to be plaintiffs or intervenors in litigation—would likely provide little benefit. For example, the data would be submitted in accordance with a different set of data points under § 1002.107(a), which could have caused analytical concerns in comparison with data submitted pursuant to this proposed rule, if finalized. Additionally, prior to releasing any data from the single-year submission, the CFPB would need to conduct an analysis under § 1002.110(a) to determine if deletion or modification of the data would advance a privacy interest, and due to the smaller size of the single-year data set, it is likely that more data would need to be deleted or modified, limiting its utility. Finally, if covered financial institutions were not given additional time to comply with the changes

proposed here, the Bureau is concerned that credit access and data quality might be affected in a manner that would not advance the purposes of the statute.

The CFPB seeks comment on these proposed changes. It also seeks comment on whether it would be appropriate to finalize this compliance date amendment in advance of finalizing the proposal's other changes, so that institutions currently covered by the 2023 rule could have earlier certainty as to the timing of their obligations, if any.

114(c) Special Transition Rules

In the 2023 final rule, financial institutions were instructed to determine their compliance tier based on their originations in 2022 and 2023. Subsequent changes to the rule added the time periods of 2023 and 2024, or 2024 and 2025, that financial institutions could choose to use instead. These alternatives are set out in existing § 1002.114(c)(3) and related commentary.

The CFPB is proposing revising § 1002.114(c)(3) and related commentary to require a financial institution to count its originations of covered credit transactions in each of calendar years 2026 and 2027 to determine whether it must comply with the rule on the proposed compliance date of January 1, 2028. This proposed change would simplify § 1002.114(c) and better align it with the proposed revisions to § 1002.114(b).

The CFPB believes that the range of options provided by current § 1002.114(c), intended to provide flexibility to potentially covered financial institutions, is no longer appropriate for a single compliance date with a single originations threshold. Further, proposed § 1002.114(c) would use calendar years closer to the new compliance date and would be a fairer time period to count originations. The compliance date in proposed § 1002.114(b) of January 1, 2028, would be nearly five years removed from some of the two-year time periods used to determine when a covered financial institution must begin to collect data. Originations in 2026 and 2027 would be controlling in any event; if a financial institution would be covered by the rule based on its originations in 2022 and 2023, but fell below the threshold based on 2026 and 2027, it would not be a covered financial institution for 2028. The CFPB thus believes that referring to the number of originations during calendar years 2026 and 2027 would be more appropriate and relevant to determining whether a financial institution must comply with the rule starting in January 2028.

The CFPB seeks comment on this proposed change.

IV. CFPA Section 1022(b) Analysis

In developing the proposed rule, the CFPB has considered the potential benefits, costs, and impacts as required by section 1022(b)(2) of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 (CFPA). Section 1022(b)(2) calls for the CFPB to consider the potential benefits and costs of a regulation to consumers and covered persons, including the potential reduction of consumer access to consumer financial products or services, the impact on depository institutions and credit unions with $10 billion or less in total assets as described in section 1026 of the CFPA, and the impact on consumers in rural areas.

In the Dodd-Frank Act, which was enacted ''[t]o promote the financial stability of the United States by improving accountability and transparency in the financial system,'' Congress directed the Bureau to adopt regulations governing the collection of small business lending data. Under section 1071 of that Act, covered financial institutions must compile, maintain, and submit certain specified data points regarding applications for credit for small businesses, with particular attention to women-owned and minority-owned small businesses, along with ''any additional data that the Bureau determines would aid in fulfilling the purposes of this section.'' Under the 2023 final rule, covered financial institutions are required to collect and report the following data points: (1) a unique identifier, (2) application date, (3) application method, (4) application recipient, (5) credit type, (6) credit purpose, (7) amount applied for, (8) amount approved or originated, (9) action taken, (10) action taken date, (11) denial reasons, (12) pricing information, (13) census tract, (14) gross annual revenue, (15) NAICS code, (16) number of workers, (17) time in business, (18) minority-owned, women-owned, and LGBTQI+-owned business status, (19) ethnicity, race, and sex of principal owners, and (20) the number of principal owners.

Under the 2023 final rule, financial institutions are required to report data on small business credit applications if they originated at least 100 covered credit transactions in each of the two preceding calendar years. Loans, lines of credit, credit cards, and merchant cash advances (including such credit transactions for agricultural purposes) all fall within the transactional scope of the 2023 final rule, with no limitations on loan amount. The Bureau excluded trade credit, transactions that are reportable under HMDA, insurance premium financing, public utilities credit, securities credit, and incidental credit. Factoring, leases, and consumer-designated credit used for business or agricultural purposes are also not covered credit transactions. For purposes of the 2023 final rule, a business is a small business if its gross annual revenue for its preceding fiscal year is $5 million or less. Finally, the 2023 final rule, as subsequently amended, establishes several compliance dates for financial institutions based on three origination size thresholds.

This proposed rule reconsiders certain provisions of the 2023 final rule. Under this proposed rule, covered financial institutions would no longer be required to collect and report the following data points: application method, application recipient, denial reasons, pricing information, number of workers, and LGBTQI+-owned business status. This proposed rule would make adjustments to some of the other data points (including minority-owned business status and ethnicity, race, and sex of principal owners) as well as the timing and methods to be used in the collection of data.

In addition, under this proposed rule, a financial institution would be required to report data if the financial institution originated at least 1,000 covered credit transactions in each of the two preceding calendar years, and one category of financial institutions (FCS lenders) would be excluded from coverage. The CFPB is also proposing to exclude merchant cash advances, credit transactions for agricultural purposes, and small dollar loans of $1,000 or less from the transactional scope of the rule. For the purposes of the proposed rule, a business would be a small business under this proposed rule if its gross annual revenue for its preceding fiscal year is $1 million or less. Finally, the proposed rule would change the compliance date provision to require a single compliance date for covered financial institutions.

A. Statement of Need

Congress directed the Bureau to adopt regulations governing the collection of small business lending data. Specifically, section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act amended ECOA to require financial institutions to compile, maintain, and submit to the Bureau certain data on applications for credit for small businesses, particularly

women-owned and minority-owned small businesses. Congress enacted section 1071 for the purpose of facilitating enforcement of fair lending laws and enabling communities, governmental entities, and creditors to identify business and community development needs and opportunities of women-owned, minority-owned, and small businesses. The Bureau is issuing this proposed rule to reconsider portions of the 2023 final rule in order to more effectively fulfill its statutory purposes.

As discussed in parts I and III, the Bureau believes, in retrospect, that its approach in the 2023 final rule was not conducive to fulfilling the long-term statutory purposes of section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act. The Bureau now believes that a more incremental approach would limit, as much as possible, any disturbance to the provision of credit to small entities. The Bureau expects that a more gradual approach to adding data points or expanding coverage, if needed, would more effectively serve both the fair lending and community development purposes of the rule in the long run.

In particular, the Bureau believes it should focus on core lending products, core lending providers, and core data points, rather than take the more expansive approach of its 2023 final rule. To accomplish this, the Bureau proposes multiple changes from the 2023 final rule. Among the most consequential changes, the Bureau proposes to exempt several categories of credit from the definition of covered transactions, including sales-based financing, loans for agricultural purposes, and small dollar loans. The Bureau now believes that application data collected on these types of transactions would be of lower quality while imposing collection requirements on institutions that issue them. The Bureau also proposes to raise the number of loans that trigger reporting requirement to 1,000 and exempt FCS lenders from coverage of the rule to focus on core providers in the small business lending space. The Bureau proposes to change the definition of ''small business'' in current § 1002.106(b) from $5 million or less to $1 million or less in annual gross revenue to ensure that data is collected on truly small businesses, rather than collect additional data on businesses that could be considered large in some contexts. Lastly the rule removes several data points from the collection, relative to the 2023 final rule, including pricing data, application method, application recipient, denial reasons, pricing and number of workers to limit the initial compliance costs for collecting and reporting data in compliance with section 1071.

The Bureau believes these changes help further the statutory purposes, for facilitating fair lending enforcement and community development, in several ways. By reducing the initial burden of the data collection on some institutions and removing the collection requirement from others, the Bureau believes that it will reduce disruption in the small business lending market compared to the more expansive 2023 final rule requirements. Disruption in the small business lending market could run counter to the community development purposes of the final rule. By focusing the data collection on core providers, transactions, and data points the Bureau expects the data collected under this proposed rule will be of higher quality and will be more useful for fair lending enforcement and community development.

B. Baseline for the Consideration of Costs and Benefits

In evaluating the potential benefits, costs, and impacts of this proposed rule, the Bureau takes as a baseline that all financial institutions covered under the 2023 final rule are in appropriate compliance with that rule, as codified in subpart B of Regulation B and amended by the 2024 interim final rule, the 2025 interim final rule, and the 2025 compliance date final rule.[62] Under this baseline, the Bureau also assumes that institutions are complying with other regulations that they are currently subject to, including reporting data under HMDA, CRA, and any State commercial financing disclosure laws.[63] The Bureau believes that this baseline provides the public with the most reasonable basis for analyzing the benefits and costs of this proposed rule. The Bureau seeks comment on the advantages and disadvantages of considering this baseline.

[62] For example, many financial institutions would not be required to comply with the 2023 final rule as amended until 2027. The Bureau does not assume that such institutions would already be in compliance with the 2023 final rule. Instead, the Bureau assumes that some institutions have already spent some resources to implement the rule, as discussed more in part IV.E.1.

[63] *See, e.g.,* N.Y.S. 898 (signed Jan. 6, 2021) (amending S. 5470–B), *https://legislation.nysenate.gov/pdf/bills/2021/s898;* Cal. S.B. 1235 (approved Sept. 30, 2018), *https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB1235;* Va. H. 1027 (approved Apr. 11, 2022), *https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?221+ful+CHAP0516;* Utah S.B. 183 (signed Mar. 24, 2022), *https://le.utah.gov/~2022/bills/static/SB0183.html.*

C. Basic Approach of the Bureau's Consideration of Benefits and Costs and Data Limitations

Pursuant to section 1022(b)(2)(A) of the Dodd-Frank Act,[64] in prescribing a rule under the Federal consumer financial laws (which include ECOA and title X of the Dodd-Frank Act), the Bureau is required to consider the potential benefits and costs to ''consumers'' and ''covered persons,'' including the potential reduction of access by consumers to consumer financial products or services resulting from such rule, and the impact of final rules on covered persons as described under section 1026 of the Dodd-Frank Act[65] (*i.e.,* depository institutions and credit unions with $10 billion or less in total assets), and the impact on consumers in rural areas.

The Dodd-Frank Act defines the term ''consumer'' as an individual or someone acting on behalf of an individual. It defines a ''covered person'' as one who engages in offering or providing a ''consumer financial product or service,'' which means a financial product or service that is provided to consumers primarily for ''personal, family, or household purposes.''[66] In rulemakings implementing section 1071, however, the only parties directly affected by the rule are small businesses (rather than individual consumers) and the financial institutions from which they seek credit (which may or may not be covered persons). Accordingly, a section 1022(b)(2)(A) analysis that considers only the costs and benefits to individual consumers and to covered persons would not meaningfully capture the costs and benefits of the rule.

Below, the Bureau conducts the statutorily required analysis with respect to the proposed rule's effects on consumers and covered persons. Additionally, consistent with the approach in the 2023 final rule, the Bureau is electing to conduct this same analysis with respect to small businesses and the financial institutions that would be required to compile, maintain, and submit data under the proposed rule. This analysis relies on data that the Bureau has obtained from industry, other regulatory agencies, and publicly available sources. However, as discussed further below, the available data limit the Bureau's ability to quantify the potential costs, benefits, and impacts of the proposed rule.

The Bureau seeks comments on the basic approach discussed below and any

[64] 12 U.S.C. 5512(b)(2)(A).

[65] 12 U.S.C. 5516.

[66] 12 U.S.C. 5481(4) through (6).

additional data sources that may be used to improve this approach.

1. Analysis With Respect to Consumers and Covered Persons

The 2023 final rule implemented a data collection regime in which certain covered financial institutions must compile, maintain, and submit data with respect to applications for credit for small businesses. This proposed rule amends that implementation. The proposed rule would not directly impact consumers, including consumers in rural areas, as those terms are defined by the Dodd-Frank Act. However, some consumers may be impacted in their separate capacity as sole owners of small businesses covered by the proposed rule. Some covered persons, including some depository institutions or credit unions with $10 billion or less in total assets, would be affected under the proposed rule not in their capacity as covered persons (*i.e.,* as offerors or providers of consumer financial products or services) but in their separate capacity as financial institutions that offer small business credit covered by the proposed rule. The costs, benefits, and impact of the proposed rule on those entities are discussed below.

2. Benefits to Impacted Financial Institutions

The proposed rule would modify the 2023 final rule with respect to which financial institutions and transactions are covered, and which data points are required to be collected and reported. Many financial institutions that would not be covered by the proposed rule will still be impacted by the proposed rule because they would have been covered under the 2023 final rule (as amended). The Bureau analyzes the impacts of the proposed rule relative to the baseline (1) on covered institutions and (2) on institutions that would no longer be covered and calls the combined group of institutions ''impacted financial institutions.'' The main expected benefit of the proposed rule to impacted financial institutions comes in the form of cost savings. The Bureau calculates these cost savings by estimating the change in compliance costs between the proposed rule and the baseline.

In order to precisely quantify the cost savings for impacted financial institutions, the Bureau would need representative data and information on the operational costs that financial institutions would incur to gather and report 1071 data, on one-time costs for financial institutions to update or create reporting infrastructure to implement requirements of the proposed rule, and on the level of complexity of financial institutions' business models and compliance systems. Furthermore, the Bureau would need this information under both the baseline and the proposed rule. Currently, the Bureau does not believe that data on section 1071 reporting costs with this level of granularity are systematically available from any source. The Bureau has made reasonable efforts to gather data on section 1071 reporting costs and primarily uses the same methodology that it used to analyze the 2023 final rule, unless otherwise noted. The Bureau continues to believe that its analysis here and in the 2023 final rule constitutes the most comprehensive assessment to date of the compliance costs associated with implementing section 1071 reporting by financial institutions and provides the most accurate estimates of costs given available information. However, the Bureau recognizes that these estimates may not fully quantify the costs to each covered financial institution, especially given the wide variation of section 1071 reporting costs among financial institutions.

The Bureau categorizes costs required to comply with the baseline and the proposed rule into ''one-time'' and ''ongoing'' costs. Similarly, the Bureau reports cost savings in these terms. ''One-time'' costs refer to expenses that the financial institution incur initially and only once to implement changes required in order to comply with the requirements of this rule. ''Ongoing'' costs are expenses incurred as a result of the ongoing reporting requirements of the rule, which the Bureau considers on an annualized basis. In considering the costs and impacts of the 2023 final rule, the Bureau has engaged in a series of efforts to estimate the cost of compliance by covered entities. The Bureau conducted a One-Time Cost Survey, discussed in more detail in part IX.E.1 of the 2023 final rule,[67] to learn about the one-time implementation costs associated with implementing section 1071 and adapted ongoing cost calculations from previous rulemaking efforts. The Bureau evaluated the one-time costs of implementing the procedures necessary and the ongoing costs of annually reporting under the proposed rule in part IV.F.1 below. The Bureau recognizes that costs vary by institution due to many factors, such as size, operational structure, and product complexity, and that this variance exists on a continuum that is impossible to fully represent. In order to conduct a consideration of impacts that is both practical and meaningful in light of these challenges, the Bureau has chosen an approach that focuses on three representative types of financial institutions. For each type, the Bureau has produced reasonable estimates of the costs of compliance given the limitations of the available data. Part IV.E.1 below provides additional details on this approach.

The Bureau understands that some financial institutions that are covered under the baseline have started implementing the 2023 final rule. Institutions that would be no longer covered as a result of the proposed rule may have already incurred some one-time costs to implement the baseline that would not have been necessary under this proposed rule. The Bureau does not count these expenditures as costs of the proposed rule because those costs have already been incurred and are discussed in more detail in part IV.E.1. Instead, the Bureau accounts for these expenditures through reductions in cost savings. If an institution becomes no longer covered as a result of the proposed rule, it will no longer be able to recoup all one-time implementation costs, as discussed in part IV.E.1.

3. Benefits to Small Businesses

Consistent with the 2023 final rule, the Bureau elects to estimate the benefits and cost savings to small businesses in addition to cost and benefit savings to impacted financial institutions. As with financial institutions, the Bureau expects that the main benefits of the proposed rule to small businesses would arise as a result of cost savings. The Bureau expects the direct cost savings of the proposed rule to small businesses would be negligible. However, the Bureau expects that there could be indirect cost savings of the proposed rule to small businesses if financial institutions pass on their cost savings. Therefore, the Bureau focuses its analysis on whether and how the Bureau expects impacted financial institutions to pass on the cost savings from the proposed rule to small businesses and any possible effects on the availability or terms of small business credit. The Bureau relies on economic theory to understand the potential for cost savings of financial institutions to be passed on to small businesses.

4. Costs to Small Businesses and Impacted Financial Institutions

The costs to small businesses and to impacted financial institutions associated with the proposed rule will primarily come from a decrease in the benefits associated with the 2023 final

[67] *See* 88 FR 35150, 35497 (May 31, 2023).

rule. Quantifying benefits to small businesses presents substantial challenges. As discussed above, Congress enacted section 1071 for the purpose of facilitating enforcement of fair lending laws and enabling communities, governmental entities, and creditors to identify business and community development needs and opportunities of women-owned, minority-owned, and small businesses. The Bureau is unable to quantify any of these benefits, both because the Bureau does not have the data to do so and because the Bureau is not able to assess how effective the 2023 final rule would be in achieving those benefits. The same difficultly holds for the change in benefits associated with the proposed rule. As discussed further below, as a data reporting rule, most provisions of the baseline and the proposed rule will benefit small businesses in indirect ways, rather than directly.

Similar issues arise in attempting to quantify the decrease in benefits to impacted financial institutions. Certain benefits to impacted financial institutions are difficult to quantify. For example, the Bureau believes that the data collected under both the baseline and this proposed rule will reduce the compliance burden of fair lending reviews for lower risk financial institutions that are likely to be in compliance with ECOA by reducing the ''false positive'' rates during fair lending prioritization by regulators. However, the Bureau does not have the information to quantify such benefits.

In light of these data limitations, the discussion below generally provides a qualitative consideration of the reduction of benefits under the proposed rule relative to the baseline. General economic principles, together with the limited data available, provide insight into the loss of benefits. Where possible, the Bureau makes quantitative estimates based on these principles and the data that are available. Quantifying these benefits is difficult because the size of each effect cannot be known in advance. Given the number of small business credit transactions and the size of the small business credit market, however, small changes in behavior can have substantial aggregate effects.

In addition, financial institutions that remain covered under the proposed rule may incur adjustment costs. This would occur when institutions have already made efforts to implement the provisions of the 2023 final rule and would incur additional costs to modify their existing implementation to comply with this proposed rule. If a financial institution has not begun to implement the 2023 final rule, then it would not incur adjustment costs.

D. Coverage of the Proposed Rule

The proposed rule provides that financial institutions (both depository and nondepository) that meet all the other criteria for a ''financial institution'' in proposed § 1002.105(a) would only be required to collect and report section 1071 data if they originated at least 1,000 covered credit transactions in each of the two preceding calendar years. In addition, under the proposed rule, FCS lenders would not be required to collect and report section 1071 data, even if they meet this proposed new threshold.

As discussed above, market-wide data on small business lending are currently limited. The Bureau is unaware of any comprehensive data available on small business originations for all financial institutions, which are needed to precisely identify all institutions to be covered by the proposed rule or the 2023 final rule. To estimate the change in coverage as a result of the proposed rule, the Bureau uses publicly available data for financial institutions divided into two groups: depository (*i.e.,* banks, savings associations, and credit unions) and nondepository institutions. The Bureau employs the methodology used in the 2023 final rule to estimate the change in coverage as a result of the proposed rule and relies on updated data.

With respect to depository institutions, the Bureau relies on National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) Call Reports to estimate coverage for credit unions, including for those that are not federally insured, and Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) Call Reports and the CRA data to estimate coverage for banks and savings associations. For the purposes of the analysis in this part IV.D, the Bureau estimates the number of depository institutions that would have been required to report small business lending data in 2023, based on the estimated number of originations of covered products for each institution in 2022 and 2023.[68] The Bureau accounts for mergers and acquisitions in 2022 and 2023 by assuming that any depository institutions that merged in those years report as one institution.

The NCUA Call Report captures the number and dollar value of originations on all loans over $50,000 to members for commercial purposes, regardless of any indicator about the borrowing business's size. For the purposes of estimating the impacts of the proposed rule, the Bureau uses the annual number of originated commercial loans to members reported by credit unions as a proxy for the annual number of originated covered credit transactions under the rule.[69] These are the best data available to the Bureau for estimating the number of credit unions that may be covered by the proposed rule. However, the Bureau acknowledges that the true number of covered credit unions may be different than what is presented here. For example, this proxy would overestimate the number of credit unions that will be covered if some commercial loans to members are not covered because the member is taking out a loan for a business that is not small under the definition of a small business in the proposed rule. Alternatively, this proxy would underestimate the number of credit unions covered by the proposed rule if credit unions originate a substantial number of covered credit transactions with origination values under $50,000 that are not counted in the data.

[68] In the proposed rule, an institution would be required to report for a given year if it originated at least 1,000 covered originations in each of the preceding two years. For the purposes of estimating the impacts of the proposed rule, the Bureau assumes that a financial institution would be required to report information from the year 2023 if the institution made at least 1,000 loans in 2022 and 2023. The Bureau makes this simplifying assumption for two reasons. First, the Bureau does not rely on data from 2020 or 2021 to avoid the years where small business lending would have been most affected by the COVID–19 pandemic. Second, the Bureau requires CRA data to estimate coverage and those data are only available through 2023.

[69] For this analysis, the Bureau includes all types of commercial loans to members except construction and development loans, loans secured by multifamily residential property, loans secured by farmland, and loans to finance agricultural production and other loans to farmers. This includes loans secured by owner-occupied, non-farm, non-residential property; loans secured by non-owner occupied, non-farm, non-residential property; commercial and industrial loans; unsecured commercial loans; and unsecured revolving lines of credit for commercial purposes.

The FFIEC Call Report captures banks' and savings associations' outstanding number and dollar amount of small loans to businesses (*i.e.,* loans originated under $1 million to businesses of any size; small loans to farms are those originated under $500,000). The CRA requires banks and savings associations with assets over a specified threshold ($1.609 billion as of 2025) [70] to report loans to businesses in original amounts of $1 million or less. For the purposes of estimating the impacts of the proposed rule, the Bureau follows the convention of using small loans to businesses as a proxy for loans to small businesses and small loans to farms as a proxy for loans to small farms.[71] These are the best data available for estimating the number of banks and savings associations that may be covered by the proposed rule. However, the Bureau acknowledges that the true number of covered banks and savings associations may be different than what is presented here. The Bureau acknowledges that it does not have sufficient information to meaningfully account for how the proposed change to the small business definition and the proposed minimum loan size threshold might affect the impacts of the rule.

Although banks and savings associations reporting under the CRA are required to report the number of originations of small loans to businesses and farms, the Bureau is not aware of any comprehensive dataset that contains originations made by banks and savings associations with assets below the CRA reporting threshold. To fill this gap, the Bureau simulated plausible values for the annual number and dollar value of originations for each bank and savings association that falls below the CRA reporting threshold for 2022 and 2023.[72] The Bureau generated simulated originations in order to account for the uncertainty around the exact number and value of originations for these banks and savings associations. To simulate these values, the Bureau assumes that these banks have the same relationship between outstanding and originated small loans to businesses and farms as banks and savings associations above the CRA reporting threshold. First, the Bureau estimated the relationship between originated number and balances and outstanding numbers and balances of small loans to businesses and farms for CRA reporters. Then the Bureau used this estimate, together with the outstanding numbers and balances of small loans to businesses and farms of non-CRA reporters, to simulate these plausible values of originations. The Bureau has documented this methodology in more detail in its *Supplemental estimation methodology for institutional coverage and market-level cost estimates in the small business lending rule* released with the 2023 final rule.[73]

Based on 2023 data from FFIEC and NCUA Call Reports and the CRA data, using the methodology described above, the Bureau estimates that the number of depository institutions that would be required to report under the proposed rule is between approximately 172 to 181, as shown in Table 1 below. This comprises between 167 and 176 banks and savings associations and 5 credit unions that would be required to report under the proposed rule. These ranges represent 95 percent confidence intervals over the number of credit unions, banks and savings associations that would be covered under the proposed rule. The Bureau presents this range to reflect the uncertainty associated with the estimates and notes that the uncertainty is driven by the lack of data on originations by banks and savings associations below the CRA reporting threshold.[74]

TABLE 1—ESTIMATED DEPOSITORY INSTITUTION COVERAGE OF THE PROPOSED RULE

[In 2023, based on 2022–2023 data]

Coverage category	Estimated coverage
Institutions Subject to 1071 Reporting	172–181 depository institutions (1.85%–1.95% of all depository institutions).
Banks and Savings Associations (SAs) Subject to Reporting	167–176 banks and SAs (3.64%–3.84% of all banks and SAs).
Credit Unions Subject to Reporting	5 credit unions (0.11% of all credit unions).
Share of Total Small Business Credit by Depository Institutions (Number of Loans Originated) Captured.	91.9%–92.8%.
Share of Total Small Business Credit by Depository Institutions (Dollar Value of Loans Originated) Captured.	60.3%–62.0%.

The Bureau also estimates the number of institutions that would have been covered under the baseline but are no longer covered by the proposed rule, using the same methodology discussed above. A depository institution would have been covered at the end of 2023 by the 2023 final rule if that institution had over 100 small business and small farm loan originations in 2022 and 2023, accounting for mergers. The Bureau estimates that the number of depository institutions required to report under the 2023 final rule but that would not be required to report under the proposed rule is between approximately 1,421 to 1,570 institutions as shown in Table 2 below.

[70] *See* Fed. Fin. Insts. Examination Council, *Community Reinvestment Act Reporting Criteria, https://www.ffiec.gov/data/cra/reporting-criteria* (last visited Oct. 4, 2025).

[71] For a discussion of the small business lending proxy, *see* Jacob Goldston & Yan Y. Lee, *Measurement of Small Business Lending Using Call Reports: Further Insights From the Small Business Lending Survey* (Fed. Deposit Ins. Corp. Staff Rept. No. 2020–04, July 2020), *https://www.fdic.gov/analysis/cfr/staff-studies/2020-04.pdf.*

[72] Based on FFIEC Call Report data as of December 2023, of the 4,587 banks and savings associations that existed in 2023, only about 14 percent were required to report under CRA. That is, only about 14 percent of banks and savings associations had assets below $1.503 billion, the CRA reporting threshold in 2023. *See* Fed. Fin. Insts. Examination Council, *CRA Reporting Criteria, https://www.ffiec.gov/data/cra/reporting-criteria* (last visited Sept. 23, 2025).

[73] CFPB, *Supplemental estimation methodology for institutional coverage and market-level cost estimates in the small business lending rulemaking* (Mar. 30, 2023*), https://www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/research-reports/supplemental-estimation-methodology-institutional-coverage-market-level-cost-estimates-small-business-lending-rulemaking/.*

[74] The Bureau acknowledges that these confidence intervals do not account for all uncertainty in the estimates. For example, the confidence interval does not account for how well number of small loans to businesses proxies for number of originations of covered products. The Bureau is unaware of information that could be used to quantify these additional sources of uncertainty.

TABLE 2—ESTIMATED DEPOSITORY INSTITUTIONS COVERED UNDER BASELINE BUT NO LONGER COVERED BY PROPOSED RULE

[In 2023, based on 2022–2023 data]

Coverage category	Estimated coverage
Institutions No Longer Covered	1,421–1,570 depository institutions (15.3%–16.9% of all depository institutions).
Banks and Savings Associations (SAs) No Longer Covered	1,301–1,450 banks and SAs (28.4%–31.6% of all banks and SAs).
Credit Unions No Longer Covered	120 credit unions (2.6% of all credit unions).
Share of Total Small Business Credit by Depository Institutions (Number of Loans Originated) by DIs No Longer Covered.	5.0%–5.7%.
Share of Total Small Business Credit by Depository Institutions (Dollar Value of Loans Originated) by DIs No Longer Covered.	24.1%–26.1%.

The Bureau does not have sufficient information to meaningfully estimate the change in the number of nondepositories relative to the analysis conducted for the 2023 final rule. For the purposes of the analysis of the impacts of this proposed rule, the Bureau assumes that the number of nondepository institutions that are active in the small business lending market has not changed since the 2023 final rule, except for Farm Credit System members, for which the Bureau relies on data from the Farm Credit Administration. See part II.D of the 2023 final rule for more detail on how the Bureau arrived at these estimates.[75] Consistent with the assumptions in the 2023 final rule, the Bureau also assumes that only online lenders and merchant cash advance providers originate more than 1,000 loans each year and the remaining nondepositories originate between 150 and 999 loans each year. Since merchant cash advances would not be covered credit transactions under the proposed rule, no merchant cash advance providers would be required to report. Based on these assumptions, the Bureau concludes that only online lenders would still be required to report under the proposed rule.

The Bureau estimates that the 2023 final rule would have covered about 610 nondepository institution, consisting of: about 30 online lenders; about 140 nondepository Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs); about 70 merchant cash advance providers; about 240 commercial finance companies; about 70 governmental lending entities; and 60 Farm Credit System members.[76] The Bureau estimates that, of these nondepositories, only the 30 online lenders will continue to be covered under the proposed rule and the remaining will be impacted by the proposed rule because they are no longer covered.

The Bureau seeks comments on these estimates of coverage and changes in coverage. In particular, the Bureau seeks additional data and information that it could use to improve its estimates of nondepository institution coverage.

E. Methodology for Generating Costs and Benefits Estimates

In part IX.E of the 2023 final rule, the Bureau explained its methodology for generating estimates of one-time and ongoing costs associated with complying with the 2023 final rule. As discussed in the previous section, many financial institutions that were covered by the 2023 final rule would no longer be covered by this proposed rule. Thus, the proposed rule would confer a benefit in the form of cost savings for most impacted institutions. The Bureau also expects that institutions that continue to be covered will face a reduction in compliance costs from the proposed rule relative to the baseline. Generally, the Bureau estimates the benefits of the proposed rule by comparing the compliance costs under the baseline to those under the proposed rule. To generate cost estimates under the baseline and this proposed rule, the Bureau uses the same methodology as the 2023 final rule, unless otherwise noted. Throughout this section, the Bureau reproduces crucial parts of the methodology discussion where necessary but references the 2023 final rule for additional detail and background.

The Bureau expects that compliance costs vary with the complexity of a financial institution's compliance operations. Consistent with the 2023 final rule and for the purposes of this proposed rule, the Bureau categorizes impacted financial institutions (FIs) into Types A, B, and C in increasing order of compliance operations complexity. Based on its prior methodology, the Bureau assumes that this complexity is correlated with the number of small business loan applications received, and therefore categorizes institutions based on application volume. The Bureau assumes that Type A FIs receive fewer than 300 applications per year, Type B FIs receive between 300 and 2,000 applications per year, and Type C FIs receive more than 2,000 applications per year. The Bureau assumes that, for Type A and B FIs, one out of two small business applications will result in an origination. Thus, the Bureau assumes that Type A FIs originate fewer than 150 covered credit transactions per year and Type B FIs originate between 150 and 999 covered credit transactions per year. The Bureau assumes that Type C FIs originate one out of three small business applications and at least 1,000 covered credit transactions per year.[77]

The Bureau recognizes that the proposed changes, as discussed in subsequent sections, will remove most Types A and B financial institutions from coverage. However, the Bureau maintains both these categorizations and assumptions in order to estimate compliance at baseline and compare it to coverage under the proposals.

The Bureau understands that compliance costs vary across financial institutions due to many factors, such as size, operational structure, and product complexity, and that this variance exists on a continuum that is very difficult or impossible to fully represent. Due to data limitations, the Bureau is unable to capture many of the ways in which compliance costs vary by institution,

[75] *See* 88 FR 35153.

[76] Farm Credit Admin., *Number of FCS banks and associations by type and district as of January 1, 2024, https://www.fca.gov/template-fca/bank/20240101NumberAssocs.pdf* (last visited Oct. 1, 2025).

[77] The Bureau chose the 1:2 and 1:3 application to origination ratios based on two sources of information. First see Biz2Credit, *Small Business Loan Approval Rates Rebounded in May 2020: Biz2Credit Small Business Lending Index* (May 2020), *https://cdn.biz2credit.com/appfiles/biz2credit/pdf/report-may-2020.pdf,* which shows that, in December of 2019, large banks approved small business loans at a rate of 27.5 percent, while small banks and credit unions had approval rates of 49.9 percent and 40.1 percent. Additionally, the Bureau's supervisory data supports a 33 percent approval rate as a conservative measure among these estimates for complex financial institutions (Type C FIs).

and therefore uses these representative financial institution types with the above assumptions for its analysis. In order to aggregate costs to a market level, the Bureau must map financial institutions onto its types using discrete volume categories.

For the hiring costs discussion in part IV.F.1.i and ongoing costs discussion in part IV.F.1.ii below, the Bureau discusses costs in the context of *representative* institutions for ease of exposition. The Bureau assumes that a representative Type A FI receives 100 small business credit applications per year, a representative Type B FI receives 400 small business credit applications per year, and a representative Type C FI receives 6,000 small business credit applications per year. The Bureau further assumes that a representative Type A FI originates 50 covered credit transactions per year, a representative Type B FI originates 200 covered credit transactions per year, and a representative Type C FI originates 2,000 covered credit transactions per year.

1. Methodology for Estimating One-Time Compliance Costs

The one-time compliance cost estimation methodology for the proposed rule described in this section is the same methodology that the Bureau used in the 2023 final rule, unless otherwise noted.

The Bureau has identified the following nine categories of one-time costs that will likely be incurred by financial institutions to develop the infrastructure to collect and report data under the baseline and the proposed rule:

1. Preparation/planning.
2. Updating computer systems.
3. Testing/validating systems.
4. Developing forms/applications.
5. Training staff and third parties (such as brokers).
6. Developing policies/procedures.
7. Legal/compliance review.
8. Post-implementation review of compliance policies and procedures.
9. Hiring costs.[78]

The Bureau also conducted a survey in 2020 regarding one-time implementation costs for section 1071 compliance targeted at financial institutions who extend small business credit.[79] The survey collected information on the number of employee hours and non-salary expenses required to implement a section 1071 rule. The Bureau developed the survey instrument based on guidance from industry on the potential types of one-time costs institutions might incur if required to report under a rule implementing section 1071 and tested the survey instrument on a small set of financial institutions, incorporating their feedback prior to implementation. The Bureau worked with several major industry trade associations to recruit their members to respond to the survey. A total of 105 financial institutions responded to the survey.

Estimates from the 2020 survey respondents continue to form the basis of the Bureau's estimates for one-time compliance costs in assessing the impact of this proposed rule. The survey was broadly designed to ask about the one-time costs of reporting data under a regime that only included mandatory data points, used a reporting structure similar to HMDA, used the Regulation B definition of an ''application,'' and used the respondent's own internal small business definition.[80] Therefore, the Bureau assumes that the tasks listed above are associated with implementing both the 2023 final rule and the proposed rule for institutions covered by each rule.

The Bureau assumes that the number of employee hours required to implement each task has not changed but that the wages have changed to reflect labor market developments. The Bureau assumes that each task may require junior, mid-level, and senior staff hours to implement. For junior staff, the Bureau uses $18.51, the 10th percentile hourly wage estimate for ''loan officers'' according to the 2024 Occupational Employment Statistics compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.[81] For mid-level staff, the Bureau uses $41.35, the estimated mean hourly wage estimate for ''loan officers.'' For senior staff, the Bureau uses $70.09, the 90th percentile hourly wage estimate for ''loan officers.'' To account for non-monetary compensation, the Bureau also scaled these hourly wages up by 43 percent.[82]

Finally, the Bureau assumes that the non-salary expenses necessary to implement each one-time task have only changed according to inflation, as measure the by the Consumer Price Index.[83]

For hiring costs, the Bureau also assumes that a covered financial institution would need to hire enough full-time equivalent workers (FTEs) to cover the estimated number of staff hours necessary to comply with the either 2023 final rule or the proposed rule on an annual, ongoing basis. In part IV.E.2 below, the Bureau describes how it estimates the ongoing costs to comply with the 2023 final rule and the proposed rule, including the number of hours of staff time an institution needs per application. The Bureau assumes for the baseline and the proposed rule that an FTE will work about 2,080 hours each year (40 hours per week $\times$ 52 weeks = 2,080). The Bureau calculates that the total number of FTEs that a covered financial institution will need to hire as the number of hours per application multiplied by the estimated number of applications received per year divided by 2,080, rounded up to the next full FTE. For example, if an institution receives 500 applications per year and an employee spends one hour on each application, it will need to hire one FTE ((1 * 500)/2080 = 0.24, which is rounded up to the next full FTE, *i.e.,* 1). In part IV.F.1.i, the Bureau also confirms that the estimated additional staff can cover the estimated staff hours required for implementing other one-time changes.

The Bureau calculates the hiring costs using the estimated cost-per-hire of $4,683, estimated by the Society for Human Resource Management.[84] This estimated cost includes advertising fees, recruiter pay and benefits, and employee referrals, among other categories. For each covered financial institution, the estimated hiring cost is

[78] The Bureau added this category in response to comments on the 2021 proposed rule; it was not part of the 2020 survey discussed below.

[79] The One-Time Cost Survey was released on July 22, 2020; the response period closed on October 16, 2020. The OMB control number for this collection is 3170–0032. CFPB, *Survey: Small Business Compliance Cost Survey* (July 22, 2020), *https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_1071-survey_2020-10.pdf.*

[80] For more information about the 2020 survey and its respondents, *see* part IX.E.1 of the 2023 final rule.

[81] *See* U.S. Bureau of Labor Stat., U.S. Dep't of Labor, *Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics* (May 2024), *https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes132072.htm.*

[82] The June 2025 Employer Costs for Employee Compensation from the Bureau of Labor Statistics documents that wages and salaries are, on average, about 70 percent of employee compensation for private industry workers. The Bureau inflates the hourly wage to account for 100 percent of employee compensation ((100/70) − 1) * 100 = 43 percent). Press Release, U.S. Bureau of Labor Stat., U.S. Dep't of Labor, USDL–25–1358, *Employer Costs for Employee Compensation—June 2025* (Sept. 12, 2025), *https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecec.pdf.*

[83] The Bureau uses the CPI–U from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and adjusts non-salary expenses to account for inflation between December 2019 and June 2025. That is, the Bureau inflates non-salary expenses by 26 percent. *See* U.S. Bureau of Labor Stat., U.S. Dep't of Labor, *Databases, Tables & Calculators by Subject, Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI–U)* (Oct. 4, 2025), *https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/CUUR0000SA0.*

[84] *See* Soc'y for Hum. Res. Mgmt., *SHRM Benchmarking: Talent Access Report,* at 8 (2022), *https://www.shrm.org/content/dam/en/shrm/research/benchmarking/Talent%20Access%20Report-TOTAL.pdf.*

$4,683 multiplied by the estimated new FTEs required to comply with the requirements of the 2023 final rule or the proposed rule. The estimated total one-time costs are the sum of the estimated hiring costs and the other one-time costs for that institution discussed above.

The Bureau assumes that some financial institutions covered by the 2023 final rule have already incurred some one-time costs in order to comply with the rule. For institutions that would no longer be covered under the proposed rule, those costs are sunk and cannot be recouped. The Bureau believes that, while some one-time cost activities already underway could be used for complying with this proposed rule, some of those activities will need to be redone in order to comply. The Bureau makes this rough assumption to capture this possibility and potential sunk cost. As discussed above, the Bureau believes, to the extent this has occurred, this reduces the institution's potential benefits under this proposed rule. The Bureau does not have sufficient information upon which to base its estimate of how much these institutions may have already spent upgrading their systems and, instead, makes an assumption that institutions that would no longer be covered under the proposed rule, on average, will have incurred 25 percent of their baseline non-hiring one-time costs. That is, institutions no longer covered by the rule would save 75 percent of the estimated non-hiring one-time costs, under the baseline, because they have not yet spent those resources. The Bureau assumes that these institutions have not yet hired new employees under the baseline. The Bureau believes these are reasonable assumptions as to the extent of one-time costs already incurred by these institutions. Under these assumptions, the total cost savings for institutions that would no longer be covered is estimated to be 75 percent of the one-time costs of implementing tasks 1–8 listed above, plus the expected hiring costs associated with the baseline. The Bureau seeks comment on the validity of these assumptions and the extent to which financial institutions have already incurred one-time costs to comply with the 2023 final rule.

Institutions that were covered under the baseline may have implemented changes to their processes and systems to comply with the 2023 final rule. If an institution would no longer be covered under the proposed rule, some of these costs may be sunk. For example, the institution may have developed a manual of policies and procedures that are no longer required if the institution is no longer covered. To the extent these institutions have already incurred these expenses, the Bureau believes this reduces their one-time cost savings from the proposed rule.

If an institution remains covered under the proposed rule, some of their implementation may continue to be applicable under the proposed rule. Other parts of their implementation may need to be changed to comply the proposed rule, and thus the institution may incur the same one-time cost again. For example, an institution that already started designing data collection forms may have to change the design. The Bureau includes incurring these expenses again as part of its calculation for institutions that remain covered.

The Bureau does not have the requisite information to empirically estimate how much of the one-time costs, under the baseline, any institution is likely to have incurred. Therefore, the Bureau has decided to make a simple assumption. The Bureau assumes that all institutions will have incurred 25 percent of their non-hiring, one-time costs, at baseline, in preparation to comply with the 2023 final rule. For financial institutions that were covered under the 2023 final rule but would not be covered under the proposed rule, the Bureau assumes that the proposed rule will save the remaining 75 percent of the non-hiring, one-time costs, at baseline, plus their hiring costs.

For institutions that are covered under the baseline and would be covered under the proposed rule, the Bureau assumes that 25 percent of one-time, non-hiring costs under the baseline have already been incurred and are, likewise, sunk. Therefore, the one-time cost savings for these institutions are the one-time hiring and non-hiring costs under the proposed rule minus the one-time hiring costs and 75 percent of the non-hiring costs under the baseline.

The Bureau seeks comments on its methodology for estimating one-time costs. In particular, the Bureau seeks comments on whether financial institutions that would have been covered under the 2023 final rule have already spent resources to implement the 2023 final rule and, if so, on what they have spent those resources. Further, the Bureau seeks comments on whether financial institutions that would be covered by the proposed rule and have spent resources to implement the 2023 final rule could use those changes to comply with the proposed rule.

2. Methodology for Estimating Ongoing Compliance Costs

In the 2023 final rule, the Bureau identified 15 specific data collection and reporting activities that would impose ongoing compliance costs for covered institutions and continues to use those activities as an organization principle for its analysis of the impacts of this proposed rule. Table 3 presents the full list of the 15 activities. The Bureau assumes that substantially the same activities would be needed to comply with the proposed rule. Activities 1 through 3 can broadly be described as data collection activities: these tasks are required to intake data and transfer it to the financial institution's small business data entry system. Activities 4 through 10 are related to reporting and resubmission: these tasks are necessary to collect required data, conduct internal checks, and report data consistent with the 2023 final rule or the proposed rule. Activities 11 through 13 are related to compliance and internal audits: employee training, and internal and external auditing procedures required to ensure data consistency and reporting in compliance with the 2023 final rule or the proposed rule. Finally, activities 14 and 15 are related to small business lending examinations by regulators: these tasks would be undertaken to prepare for and assist during regulatory compliance examinations. For the purpose of this analysis and for consistency with the 2023 final rule, the Bureau assumes that all financial institutions covered under the proposed rule or the baseline will be subject to regulatory compliance examinations and thus incur costs related to activities 14 and 15.

Table 3 also provides an example of how the Bureau calculates ongoing compliance costs associated with each compliance task. The table shows the calculation for each activity and notes whether the task would be a ''variable cost,'' which would depend on the number of applications the institution receives, or a ''fixed cost'' that does not depend on the number of applications. Table 3 shows these calculations for a Type A FI, or the institution with the least amount of complexity. Table 4 below summarizes the activities whose calculation differs by institution complexity and shows the calculations for Type B FIs and Type C FIs (where they differ from those for a Type A FI).

TABLE 3—ONGOING COMPLIANCE COST CALCULATIONS FOR A TYPE A FI

No.	Activity	Calculation	Type [85]
1	Transcribing data	Hourly compensation × hours per app. × applications	Variable.
2	Resolving reportability questions	Hourly compensation × hours per app. with question × applications with questions.	Variable.
3	Transfer to Data Entry System, Loan Origination System, or other data storage system.	Hourly compensation × hours per app. × applications	Variable.
4	Complete geocoding data	Hourly compensation × hours per app. × applications	Variable.
5	Standard annual edit and internal checks	Hourly compensation × hours spent on edits and checks	Fixed.
6	Researching questions	Hourly compensation × hours per app. with question × applications with questions.	Variable.
7	Resolving question responses	Hourly compensation × hours per app. with question × applications with questions.	Variable.
8	Checking post-submission edits	Hourly compensation × hours checking post-submission edits per application.	Variable.
9	Filing post-submission documents	Hourly compensation × hours filing post-submission docs	Fixed.
10	Small business data reporting/geocoding software	Uses free geocoding software	Fixed.
11	Training	Hourly compensation × hours of training per year × number of loan officers.	Fixed.
12	Internal audit	No internal audit conducted by financial institution staff	Fixed.
13	External audit	One external audit per year	Fixed.
14	Exam preparation	Hourly compensation × hours spent on examination preparation.	Fixed.
15	Exam assistance	Hourly compensation × hours spent on examination assistance.	Fixed.

Many of the activities in Table 3 require time spent by loan officers and other financial institution employees. To account for time costs, the calculation uses the hourly compensation of a loan officer multiplied by the amount of time required for the activity. The Bureau uses a mean hourly wage of $41.35 for loan officers, based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.[86] To account for non-monetary compensation, the Bureau scales this hourly wage by 43 percent to arrive at a total hourly compensation of $59.07 for use in these calculations.[87] As an example of a time calculation, the Bureau assumes that transcribing the data points that would be required under the baseline would require approximately 11 minutes per application for a Type A FI. The calculation multiplied the number of minutes by the number of applications and the hourly compensation to arrive at the total cost, on an annual basis, of transcribing data. As another example, the Bureau assumes that ongoing training for loan officers to comply with a financial institution's 1071 policies and procedures would take about two hours per loan officer per year. The cost calculation multiplies the number of hours by the number of loan officers and by the hourly compensation.

In the 2023 final rule, the Bureau explained how it arrived at its assumed number of hours required per task and makes the same assumptions in this proposed rule.

Some activity costs in Table 3 depend on the number of applications. It is important to differentiate between these variable costs and fixed costs that do not depend on number of applications because the type of cost impacts whether and to what extent covered institutions might be expected to pass on their costs to small business loan applicants in the form of higher interest rates or fees (discussed in more detail in part IV.F.2 below). Data collection, reporting, and submission activities such as geocoding data, standard annual edits and internal checks, researching questions, and resolving question responses are variable costs. All other activities are fixed costs because they do not depend on the overall number of applications being processed. An example of a fixed cost calculation is exam preparation, where the hourly compensation is multiplied by the number of total hours required by loan officers to prepare for 1071-related compliance examinations.

Table 4 shows where and how the Bureau assumes Type B FIs and Type C FIs differ from Type A FIs for the purposes of evaluating ongoing cost. Table 4 shows the activities where the assumptions differ from those in Table 3. Type B FIs and Type C FIs use more automated procedures, which result in different cost calculations. For example, for Type B FIs and Type C FIs, transferring data to the data entry system and geocoding applications are done automatically by business application data management software licensed annually by the financial institution. The relevant address is submitted for geocoding via batch processing, rather than done manually for each application. The additional ongoing geocoding costs reflect the time spent by loan officers on ''problem'' applications—that is, a percentage of overall applications that the geocoding software misses—rather than time spent on all applications. However, Type B FIs and Type C FIs have the additional ongoing cost of a subscription to a geocoding software or service as well as a data management software that represents an annual fixed cost of reporting 1071 data. This is an additional ongoing cost that the less complex Type A FIs would not have incurred. The Bureau expects that Type A FIs will use free geocoding software available from the FFIEC or the Bureau, which may include a new batch

[85] In this table, the term ''variable'' means the compliance cost depends on the number of applications. The term ''fixed'' means the compliance cost does not depend on the number of applications (even if there are other factors upon which it may vary).

[86] These data reflect the mean hourly wage for ''loan officers'' according to the 2024 Occupational Employment Statistics compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. *See* U.S. Bureau of Labor Stat., U.S. Dep't of Labor, *Occupational Employment and Wages Statistics* (May 2024), *https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes132072.htm.*

[87] The June 2025 Employer Costs for Employee Compensation from the Bureau of Labor Statistics documents that wages and salaries are, on average, about 70 percent of employee compensation for private industry workers. The Bureau inflates the hourly wage to account for 100 percent of employee compensation ((100/70) − 1) * 100 = 43 percent). Press Release, U.S. Bureau of Labor Stat., U.S. Dep't of Labor, USDL–25–1358, *Employer Costs for Employee Compensation—June 2025* (Sept. 12, 2025), *https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecec.pdf.*

function that could be developed by either the FFIEC or the Bureau.

Additionally, audit procedures differ between the three representative institution types. The Bureau expects a Type A FI would not conduct an internal audit but would pay for an annual external audit. A Type B FI would be expected to conduct a simple internal audit for data checks and also pay for an external audit on an annual basis. Type C FIs would have a sophisticated internal audit process in lieu of an external audit.

TABLE 4—DIFFERENCES IN ONGOING COST CALCULATIONS FOR TYPE B FIS AND TYPE C FIS VERSUS TYPE A FIS

No.	Activity	Difference for a Type B FI	Difference for a Type C FI
3	Transfer to Data Entry System	No employee time cost. Automatically transferred by data management software purchased/licensed.	No employee time cost. Automatically transferred by data management software purchased/licensed.
4	Complete geocoding data	Cost of time per application unable to be geocoded by software.	Few applications that require manual attention. Completed by third-party software vendor.
10	Small business data reporting/geocoding software.	Uses geocoding software and/or data management software that requires annual subscription.	Uses geocoding software and/or data management software that requires annual subscription.
12	Internal Audit	Hourly compensation × hours spent on internal audit.	Hourly compensation × hours spent on internal audit.
13	External Audit	Yearly fixed expense on external audit	Only an extensive internal audit and no expenses on external audits.

Table 5 below shows major assumptions that the Bureau makes for each activity for each type of financial institution. Based on the proposed rule and inflation, the Bureau has made changes to corresponding assumptions from the 2023 final rule where appropriate. In particular, the proposed changes eliminating several data points are the biggest source of changes to the assumptions relative to the 2023 final rule. Because fewer data point would be collected under the proposed rule than under the 2023 final rule, the Bureau assumes that tasks which depend on the number of data points would see a reduction in required employee hours. The Bureau has also updated the assumed fixed cost of software and audits to account for inflation. Table 5 also shows the number of hours assumed in the baseline scenario, for comparison.

Table 5 provides the total number of hours the Bureau assumes are required for each task that requires labor. For example, the Bureau assumes that transcribing data for 100 applications will require 14 hours of labor. The table also shows the assumed fixed cost of software and audits, as well as areas where the Bureau assumes there would be cost savings due to use of technology. In several cases, the activity described in a row does not apply to financial institutions of a certain type and is therefore entered in the table as not applicable (N/A).

TABLE 5—MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE TYPE A FIS, TYPE B FIS, AND TYPE C FIS,[88] UNDER THE PROPOSED RULE AND THE BASELINE[89]

No.	Activity	Type A FI	Type B FI	Type C FI
1	Transcribing data	14 hours total (19 baseline)	26 hours total (38 baseline)	414 hours total (571 baseline).
2	Resolving reportability questions	8 hours total (11 baseline)	17 hours total (23 baseline)	25 hours total (34 baseline).
3	Transfer to 1071 data management software.	14 hours total (19 baseline)	N/A	N/A.
4	Complete geocoding data	7 hours total; reduction in time cost relative to HMDA for software with batch processing.	10 hours total (0.5 hours per "problem" loan × 5% of loans that are "problem").	N/A.
5	Standard annual edit and internal checks.	13 hours total; reduction for online submission platform (18 baseline).	259 hours total; reduction for online submission platform (357 baseline).	537 hours total; reduction for online submission platform (741 baseline).
6	Researching questions	4 hours total (6 baseline)	8 hours total (11 baseline)	12 hours total (17 baseline).
7	Resolving question responses	1 hour total	1 hour total	1 hour total.
8	Checking post-submission edits	1 hour total	3 hours total (5 baseline)	13 hours total (18 baseline).
9	Filing post-submission documents	<1 hour total	<1 hour total	<1 hour total.
10	1071 data management system/ geocoding software.	N/A	$10,080	$17,199.
11	Training	24 hours total	120 hours total	800 hours total.
12	Internal audit	N/A	8 hours total	2,304 hours total.
13	External audit	$4,410	$6,300	N/A.
14	Exam preparation	<1 hour total	80 hours total	480 hours total.
15	Exam assistance	2 hours total	12 hours total	80 hours total.

The Bureau requests comment on the assumptions presented in this section.

[88] As discussed above, the representative Type A, Type B, and Type C FIs are assumed to receive, respectively, 100, 400 and 6,000 applications.

[89] Row numbers correspond to row numbers in previous tables.

3. Methodology for Generating Market-Level Estimates of Costs and Benefits

To generate small business lending market-level impacts estimates, the Bureau relies on the same estimates of small business lending originations described in part IV.D. above, which is the same as the methodology used in the 2023 final rule, unless otherwise noted. As with institutional coverage, the Bureau separates market-level impact estimates into estimates for depository institutions and for nondepository institutions. The Bureau also separates

market-level impact estimates for institutions that would be covered under the proposed rule and those that are covered under the 2023 final rule but would no longer be covered under the proposed rule.

Under the proposed rule, an institution would be required to report data on applications received in 2023 if it originated at least 1,000 covered originations in both 2022 and 2023. Under the 2023 final rule, an institution would have been required to report data on applications received in 2023 if it originated at least 100 covered originations in 2022 and 2023, including loans to small farms.

If two depository institutions merged between the end of 2022 and the end of 2023, the Bureau assumes that those institutions would report as one entity. Under the baseline, the Bureau categorizes each institution as a Type A DI, Type B DI, or Type C DI, as defined at the beginning of this part IV.E, based on its small business and small farm loan originations in 2023. Under the proposed rule, the Bureau categorizes each institution by type according to only its small business loan originations in 2023.[90] Depository institutions with 0 to 149 covered originations in 2023 are categorized as Type A. Depository institutions with 150 to 999 covered originations are categorized as Type B. Depository institutions with 1,000 or more covered originations are categorized as Type C. Thus, all depository institutions that would be covered by the proposed rule are categorized as Type C, given the new reporting threshold of 1,000 loans originated in the proposed rule. Depository institutions of Types A and B are either not covered under either the baseline or the proposed rule or switched from being covered under the baseline to not being covered under the proposed rule.

For each depository institution, the Bureau assigns the appropriate estimated one-time compliance costs (including hiring cost as a function of estimated applications), ongoing fixed compliance cost, ongoing variable compliance cost per application, and applications per origination estimates associated with its institution type for both the baseline and the proposed rule. The estimated number of annual applications for each institution is the estimated number of originations multiplied by the assumed number of applications per origination for that institution type (see part IV.E above). The annual ongoing compliance cost for each institution (under either the baseline or the proposed rule) is the ongoing fixed compliance cost plus the ongoing variable compliance cost per application multiplied by the estimated number of applications. The one-time hiring cost for each institution is the estimated number of applications multiplied by the annual staff hours per application divided by 2,080, rounded up to the next full FTE, multiplied by the cost-per-hire. For each institution, the Bureau calculates the changes in one-time costs and ongoing costs for the proposed rule relative to the baseline.

As shown in part IV.F.1.ii, the Bureau estimates that under the proposed rule every impacted financial institution would experience a decrease in ongoing costs relative to the baseline, thus resulting in a benefit for every institution. For institutions that are covered both at baseline and under the proposed rule, the decrease in ongoing costs stems from reductions in variable compliance costs from, mainly, needing to report fewer data points and, potentially, fewer applications. Institutions that were covered under the 2023 final rule but are not covered under the proposed rule would have had to pay ongoing costs to comply with the baseline. Since those institutions are no longer covered, their ongoing costs decrease to zero.

The Bureau estimates that all institutions that were previously covered at baseline but that would no longer be covered under the proposed rule would incur the benefit of cost savings on one-time costs. As discussed in part IV.E.1, the Bureau believes that, under the proposal, these institutions would receive a benefit that is 75 percent of their non-hiring one-time costs plus their estimated hiring costs at baseline. For institutions that would continue to report under the proposed rule, they would experience a benefit in the form of reduced one-time hiring costs.

To generate market-level estimates, the Bureau sums the changes over institutions. The Bureau reports market-level impacts separately for covered and no longer covered institutions and for whether or not the one-time costs will yield a cost or a benefit. As with coverage estimates, the Bureau presents a range for market-level estimates. The range reflects the uncertainty associated with the estimate of costs for banks and savings associations below the CRA reporting threshold. The Bureau has documented how it calculates these ranges as part of the 2023 final rule rulemaking process in its *Supplemental estimation methodology for institutional coverage and market-level cost estimates in the small business lending rulemaking.*[91]

The Bureau is unaware of institution-level data on originations by nondepository institutions that are comprehensive enough to estimate costs using the same method as that for depository institutions. Therefore, to generate market-level estimates for nondepository institutions, the Bureau relies on the estimates of the number of nondepository institutions discussed in part IV.D and several key assumptions, which it also relied on for estimating the impacts of the 2023 final rule. The Bureau assumes that fintech lenders and merchant cash advance providers are Type C FIs because they generally have more automated systems and originate more loans.[92] The Bureau assumes that the remaining nondepository institutions are Type B FIs. The Bureau assumes that each nondepository receives the same number of applications as the representative institution for each type, as described above. Hence, the Bureau assumes that fintech lenders and merchant cash advance providers each receive 6,000 applications per year and all other nondepository institutions receive 400 applications per year. As in the 2023 final rule and above, the Bureau also assumes that all nondepository institutions have the same one-time costs as each other. The Bureau calculates changes in one-time and ongoing costs in a similar manner to the methods described above and presents market-level estimates for nondepository institutions that remain covered and that are no longer covered by the proposed rule.

[90] For example, a financial institution could be considered Type B under the baseline and Type A under the proposed rule due to its volume of small farm loans.

[91] *See* CFPB, *Supplemental estimation methodology for institutional coverage and market-level cost estimates in the small business lending rulemaking* (Mar. 30, 2023), *https://www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/research-reports/supplemental-estimation-methodology-institutional-coverage-market-level-cost-estimates-small-business-lending-rulemaking/.*

[92] The Bureau includes merchant cash advance providers in the estimates of the baseline but not in the estimates of the proposed rule. The Bureau assumes that merchant cash advance providers are Type C for the purposes of estimating their impacts from not being covered by the proposed rule.

The Bureau seeks comments on its methodology for estimating impacts of the proposed rule.

F. Potential Benefits and Costs to Impacted Financial Institutions and Small Businesses

1. Benefits to Impacted Financial Institutions

i. One-Time Cost Savings of Impacted Financial Institutions

Using the methodology described in part IV.E.1 above, Table 6 shows the estimated total expected one-time costs of the proposed rule for the first eight cost categories for financial institutions covered by the proposed rule or under the baseline, as well as a breakdown by the eight component categories that comprise the one-time costs for Type A DIs, Type B DIs, Type C DIs, and Non-DIs.[93] The final cost category, hiring costs, is discussed later in this section. The Bureau notes that the estimated costs presented in Table 6 differ slightly from the estimated costs presented in the 2023 final rule. This difference is due to inflation adjustments for non-salary expenses and updated wage rates.

TABLE 6—ESTIMATED ONE-TIME COSTS BY COST CATEGORY AND FI TYPE

No.	Category	Type A DI	Type B DI	Type C DI	Non-DI
1	Preparation/planning	$6,900	$7,900	$22,000	$16,300
2	Updating computer systems	20,200	21,100	8,000	70,000
3	Testing/validating systems	13,000	3,400	12,500	8,700
4	Developing forms/applications	4,800	3,400	5,000	4,800
5	Training staff and third parties	3,800	5,000	5,800	3,400
6	Developing policies/procedures	4,500	2,700	3,900	4,700
7	Legal/compliance review	8,900	3,400	8,300	4,200
8	Post-implementation review	5,400	4,900	19,800	1,900
	Total	67,300	51,700	85,400	114,000

In addition to these one-time costs, the Bureau estimates the one-time hiring costs for the additional FTEs a financial institution expects to hire based on the number of applications the institution expects to receive each year. For financial institutions that would no longer be covered under the proposed rule, the Bureau calculates the benefit resulting from the cost savings of no longer needing to hire more employees. The Bureau anticipates that financial institutions that continue to be covered under the proposal may also experience moderate cost savings because they may report fewer loans under the proposed rule relative to the baseline and, as a result, may have to hire fewer employees.

The Bureau estimates that there are financial institutions covered under the baseline that would no longer be covered under this proposed rule. These institutions will see a benefit in the form of savings on one-time compliance costs, since the Bureau assumes they would not incur additional one-time costs as a result of the proposed rule. Also, as discussed in part IV.E.1, the Bureau expects that these financial institutions will have already incurred 25 percent of the baseline non-hiring costs preparing to comply with the 2023 final rule. The full amount of savings by institutions that would no longer be covered are 75 percent of the non-hiring costs and the full amount of the hiring costs. The Bureau assumes that financial institutions that are covered under both the baseline and the proposed rule would still incur one-time costs to implement changes to comply with the proposed rule but may see a reduction in one-time hiring costs due to, potentially, needing fewer new employees to comply with the proposed rule relative to the baseline.

In the discussion about ongoing cost in part IV.F.3.ii below, the Bureau explains how it estimates the number of staff hours per application required to comply with the proposed rule or under the baseline. Under the proposed rule, the Bureau estimates a Type C FI, the only type that will be covered, requires 0.78 hours per application. Under the baseline, the Bureau estimates that a Type A FI requires 1.1 hours per application, a Type B FI requires 1.66 hours per application, and a Type C FI requires 0.84 hours per application.

For the purposes of exposition, the Bureau presents the estimated number of FTEs for representative financial institutions. For the market-level estimates, the Bureau estimates the number of staff hours required based on the estimated number of applications each depository institution receives.

As assumed in part IV.E, the representative Type A DI receives 100 applications annually, requiring 110 hours to comply with the 2023 final rule. Under the assumptions described in part IV.E.1, the representative Type A DI would have needed to hire one additional FTE at a one-time cost of $4,683 to cover the expected annual staff hours required to comply with the 2023 final rule on an ongoing basis. This additional staff would also have to be able to cover the staff hours required to implement one-time changes because, on average, a Type A DI would require 716 staff hours for one-time changes (see Table 12 in the 2023 final rule). Under the baseline, a Type A DI would have incurred about $67,300 in non-hiring one-time costs. As discussed above, the Bureau assumes that a Type A DI, on average, already would have spent 25 percent of its non-hiring one-time costs, or about $16,825, to implement the 2023 final rule, costs which cannot be recouped. Therefore, the Bureau estimates that the representative Type A DI would save $4,683 in one-time hiring costs and about $50,475 in non-hiring one-time costs by no longer being covered under the proposed rule, for a total of about $55,175 in cost savings.

The Bureau assumes that a representative Type B DI receives 400 applications annually, requiring 654

[93] The estimated one-time costs by cost category for each FI type is the sum of the wages multiplied by the estimated staff hours plus the non-salary expenses. For example, the Bureau expects that for preparation and planning for the final rule, on average, a Type A DI will pay senior staff $100.13 × 38 hours (= $3,804.94), mid-level staff $59.07 × 43 hours (= $2,540.01), and junior staff $26.44 × 21 hours (= $555.24). The total estimated cost is $6,900.19 rounded to $6,900, because a Type A DI is not expected to pay non-salary expenses for preparation and planning.

hours to comply with the 2023 final rule. This DI would have needed to hire one additional FTE at a one-time cost of $4,683. This additional staff would also be able to cover the 461 staff hours, on average, required to implement one-time changes for a Type B DI. Under the baseline, a Type B DI would have incurred about $51,700 in non-hiring one-time costs. The Bureau assumes that a Type B DI, on average, would have already spent 25 percent of its non-hiring one-time costs, about $12,925, to implement the 2023 final rule, costs which cannot be recouped. Therefore, the Bureau estimates that the representative Type B DI will save $4,683 in one-time hiring costs and about $38,775 in non-hiring one-time costs by no longer being covered under the proposed rule, for a total of about $43,475 in cost savings.

A representative Type C DI, which the Bureau assumes would remain covered under the proposed rule and receives 6,000 applications, would see no one-time cost savings as a result of the proposed rule. In part IV.F.3 below, the Bureau describes how these institutions may experience a one-time adjustment cost under the proposed rule. The representative Type C DI does not incur any one-time hiring cost savings as a result of the proposed rule because it receives the same number of applications as under the baseline.[94] In general, a covered institution may require fewer additional employees to comply with the proposed rule than it did with the baseline if the institution's number of reportable applications decreases sufficiently. Such an institution would receive one-time cost savings of $4,683 for every fewer employee it requires to comply with the proposed rule relative to the baseline.[95]

The Bureau assumes that most nondepository institutions are primarily Type B and Type C FIs, so the estimated staff hours to cover ongoing tasks discussed above apply here. For one-time tasks, the Bureau estimates that a nondepository institution would require about 664 staff hours, on average, to implement one-time changes necessary to comply with either the baseline or the proposed rule. One additional FTE would be sufficient to cover these hours if the institution reallocates some tasks across staff. The Bureau estimates that all nondepositories would require about $114,000 to comply with the proposed rule or the baseline. Type B nondepositories and Type C merchant cash advance providers would no longer be covered under the proposed rule. Therefore, following similar logic as above, a Type B nondepository would receive cost savings of $90,200 and a Type C merchant cash advance provider would receive cost savings of $99,600.

As mentioned above, the Bureau realizes that one-time costs vary by institution due to many factors, and that this variance exists on a continuum that is very difficult or impossible to fully represent. The Bureau focuses on representative types of financial institutions in order to generate practical and meaningful estimates of costs. As a result, the Bureau expects that individual financial institutions could have slightly different one-time costs or cost savings than the average estimates presented here.

Summing across institutions as described in part IV.E.3, the Bureau estimates that the total one-time hiring and non-hiring cost savings for depository institutions that would no longer be covered under the proposed rule would be between $68,900,000 and $76,700,000. Using a 7 percent discount rate and a 10-year amortization window, the annualized one-time cost savings for depository institutions that are no longer covered under the proposed rule would be between $9,800,000 and $10,900,000.[96] The Bureau estimates that the total hiring and non-hiring one-time cost savings for nondepository institutions that would no longer be covered under the proposed rule would be about $14,900,000. Using a 7 percent discount rate and a 10-year amortization window, the annualized one-time cost savings for nondepository institutions that are no longer covered under the rule would be about $2,100,000. The Bureau estimates that some covered institutions would receive cost savings from needing to hire fewer staff under the proposed rule. The estimated total market value of these one-time hiring cost savings would be between $3,900,000 and $4,300,000. Using a 7 percent discount rate and a 10-year amortization window, the annualized one-time cost savings for such institutions would be between $560,000 and $610,000. Covered institutions would also incur one-time adjustment costs, which are discussed in part IV.F.3. In total, the Bureau estimates the total one-time costs savings of the proposed rule across all impacted financial institutions would be between $87,700,000 and $95,900,000, with an annualized amount between $12,500,000 and $13,700,000.[97]

The Bureau seeks comments on the one-time cost savings estimates presented here. In particular, the Bureau seeks comment on whether 10 years is a reasonable time horizon over which a financial institution might spread its implementation costs.

ii. Ongoing Cost Savings to Impacted Financial Institutions

To estimate ongoing costs at baseline, the Bureau first reproduces Table 16 of the 2023 final rule as Table 7 below, with minor modifications reflecting changes in wage rates and inflation, as discussed in part IV.E. This table shows what the Bureau would expect the annual ongoing costs to be at baseline. This table shows the total estimated annual ongoing costs at baseline as well as a breakdown by the 15 activities that give rise to ongoing costs for Type A FIs, Type B FIs, and Type C FIs. The bottom of the table shows the total estimated annual section 1071 ongoing compliance cost, at baseline, for each type of institution, along with the total cost per application processed by the financial institution. To produce the estimates in this table, the Bureau used the calculations described in Tables 3 and 4 above and the assumptions relating to each activity in Table 5.

[94] This is by assumption, because the representative Type C DI is defined by the number of applications it processes.

[95] For example, if a Type CI DI needed five additional employees to comply with the baseline and only three additional employees to comply with the proposed rule, then that institution would save $2 \times \$4,683 = \$9,366$.

[96] The Bureau annualizes one-time costs using a 7 percent discount rate and a 10-year amortization schedule. OMB recommends using 3 percent and 7 percent discount rates to calculate annualized costs in Memo M–25–24. OMB does not provide guidance on the appropriate length of the amortization schedule. M–25–24, Memo for: Regul. Pol'y Officers at Exec. Dep'ts & Agencies and Managing and Exec. Dir. of Certain Agencies & Comm'n from Jeffrey B. Clark, Off. of Mgmt. & Budget (April 17, 2025), *https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/M-25-24-Interim-Guidance-Implementing-Section-3-of-Executive-Order-14215-Titled-Ensuring-Accountability-for-All-Agencies.pdf*. The Bureau uses a 10-year schedule as a reasonable time horizon over which a financial institution might spread its costs.

[97] Assuming the same 7 percent discount rate and a 10-year amortization window as above.

TABLE 7—ESTIMATED ONGOING COSTS PER COMPLIANCE TASK AND FI TYPE AT BASELINE

No.	Activity	Type A FI	Type B FI	Type C FI
1	Transcribing data	$1,181	$2,250	$33,754
2	Resolving reportability questions	236	473	709
3	Transfer to 1071 Data Management Software	1,181	0	0
4	Complete geocoding data	148	591	300
5	Standard annual edit and internal checks	544	11,863	29,825
6	Researching questions	294	587	881
7	Resolving question responses	0	0	0
8	Checking post-submission edits	7	28	112
9	Filing post-submission documents	15	15	15
10	1071 Data Management software/geocoding software	0	10,080	17,199
11	Training	1,425	7,124	47,492
12	Internal audit	0	473	136,097
13	External audit	4,410	6,300	0
14	Exam preparation	15	4,726	28,354
15	Exam assistance	124	744	4,962
	Total	9,580	45,253	299,700
	Per application	96	113	50

The Bureau estimates that, at baseline, a representative low complexity Type A FI would incur around $9,580 in total annual ongoing costs, or about $96 in total cost per application processed (assuming 100 applications per year). The Bureau estimates that a representative middle complexity Type B FI, which is somewhat automated, would incur approximately $45,253 in total annual ongoing costs, or around $113 per application (assuming a representative 400 applications per year). The Bureau estimates a representative high complexity Type C FI, would incur $299,700 of total annual ongoing costs, or $50 per application (assuming a representative 6,000 applications per year).

To estimate the expected ongoing costs for an institution that would remain covered under the proposal, the Bureau used the assumptions in Table 5 above, which characterize the decrease in the number of employee hours necessary for compliance occurring as a result of the proposed changes. Table 8 below reproduces Table 16 from the 2023 final rule [98] accounting for the expected effects of the proposed rule.

TABLE 8—ESTIMATED ONGOING COSTS PER COMPLIANCE TASK AND FI TYPE, UNDER THE PROPOSED RULE

No.	Activity	Type A FI	Type B FI	Type C FI
1	Transcribing data	$879	$1,631	$24,472
2	Resolving reportability questions	171	343	514
3	Transfer to 1071 Data Management Software	879	0	0
4	Complete geocoding data	148	591	300
5	Standard annual edit and internal checks	520	10,803	25,219
6	Researching questions	231	462	693
7	Resolving question responses	0	0	0
8	Checking post-submission edits	5	21	83
9	Filing post-submission documents	15	15	15
10	1071 Data Management System/geocoding software	0	10,080	17,199
11	Training	1,429	7,143	47,623
12	Internal audit	0	473	136,097
13	External audit	4,410	6,300	0
14	Exam preparation	15	4,726	28,354
15	Exam assistance	127	764	5,092
	Total	8,829	43,351	285,660
	Per application	88	108	48

For institutions that would remain covered under the proposed rule, the Bureau estimates that a representative low complexity Type A FI would incur around $8,829 in total annual ongoing costs, or about $88 in total cost per application processed (assuming 100 applications per year). The Bureau estimates that a representative middle complexity Type B FI, which is somewhat automated, would incur approximately $43,351 in ongoing costs per year, or around $108 per application (assuming a 400 applications per year). The Bureau estimates a representative high complexity Type C FI would incur $285,660 of annual ongoing costs, or $48 per application (assuming 6,000 applications per year).

Under the proposed changes, some FIs would no longer be required to collect and report small business application data because they have more than 100 but fewer than 1,000 covered credit transactions. These FIs would no longer incur annual ongoing compliance costs from the small business data collection rule. Therefore, they will experience a benefit in the form of relief

[98] 88 FR 35150, 35510–11.

from the ongoing costs they incurred under the baseline. This annual total would be $9,580, $45,253, and $299,700 for Type A, Type B, and Type C FIs, respectively.

Also under the proposed changes, FIs that continue to be covered and therefore required to collect and report small business application data would experience a benefit in the form of reduced annual ongoing compliance costs. The amount of the reduction is the difference between the costs expected to be incurred under the proposed changes (those found in Table 8) and those expected at baseline (those found in Table 7). The annual total of this expected benefit would be $751, $1,902, and $14,040 for Type A, Type B, and Type C FIs, respectively.

Summing across institutions as described in part IV.E.3, the Bureau estimates that the total annual ongoing cost savings for depository institutions that would remain covered under the proposed rule will be between about $18,000,000 and $20,000,000 per year. The Bureau estimates that the total annual ongoing cost savings for nondepository institutions that would be covered under the proposed rule would be about $400,000 per year.

Summing across institutions as described in part IV.E.3, the Bureau estimates that the total annual ongoing cost savings for depository institutions that were covered under the baseline but would no longer be covered under the proposed rule would be between about $88,000,000 and $101,000,000 per year. The Bureau estimates that the total annual ongoing cost savings per year for nondepository institutions that would no longer be covered by the proposed rule would be about $44,000,000 per year.

Therefore, the estimated total annual ongoing cost savings for all impacted institutions attributable to the proposed rule is between $151,000,000 and $166,000,000 per year, including both depository and nondepository institutions.

Financial institutions may also experience benefits under the proposal in the form of fewer reputational risks and fewer resources spent on responding to analyses of their small business credit application data alleging credit access disparities. The public nature of any dataset will allow the general public to analyze the data, which can result in accusations of fair lending violations or potential misrepresentations, which, the Bureau has acknowledged, could result in a cost to financial institutions. In the 2023 final rule, the Bureau discussed how small entity representatives during the SBREFA process and commenters on the 2021 proposed rule raised this as an expected form of cost. The Bureau is unable to quantify this cost but does expect that this proposed rule would benefit FIs by reducing such costs. FIs that would no longer be covered under the proposed rule would no longer be expected to incur any reputational risks or costs of responding to analyses as their data would no longer be submitted or published. For entities that remain covered, the reduction in the number of data points, particularly pricing data, reduce expected reputational risks.

2. Benefits to Small Businesses

The Bureau believes that any direct costs to small businesses from completing additional fields on small business credit applications would be minimal (particularly since the only applicant-provided data the Bureau is proposing to remove is the number of workers and LGBTQI+-owned business status; the remaining fields are data generated by the financial institution) and therefore small businesses would not benefit from the proposed rule changes in this way. Instead, the Bureau expects that small businesses will primarily benefit in the form of cost savings from financial institutions passed through to small businesses in the form of lower fees or interest rates.

In the 2023 final rule, the Bureau discussed how, based on economic theory and evidence from the Bureau's own survey, financial institutions would most likely react to compliance costs by raising prices and fees. In particular, the Bureau expected that ongoing variable costs would be passed through in their entirety. The proposed rule would eliminate ongoing variable costs for institutions that would no longer be covered and would reduce ongoing variable costs for institutions that remain covered.

The Bureau estimates that the per application ongoing variable cost, at baseline, is $34 for Type A FIs, $28 for Type B FIs, and $8 for Type C FIs. According to the analysis above, this is the expected benefit that would accrue to applicants at institutions that were covered at baseline but would no longer be covered under the proposed rule. For institutions that would continue to report under the proposed rule, the difference between the ongoing variable cost at baseline and under the proposed rule is $7 for Type A FIs, $2 for Type B FIs, and $1 for Type C FIs. This difference is what the Bureau expects to be passed on to applicants at financial institutions that would continue to be covered under the proposed rule.

The Bureau requests comment on these and other potential benefits to small businesses as a result of the proposed rule.

3. Costs to Impacted Financial Institutions

At baseline, the Bureau expects that data collected under the 2023 final rule would benefit covered financial institutions in two ways. The first is that the Bureau expects that the collected data would reduce some compliance burden by reducing the number of ''false positives'' during fair lending review prioritization by regulators. As discussed above, this proposed rule would reduce the number of covered entities and the types of covered transactions, thereby reducing the total amount of information collected in accordance with the rule. To the extent that institutions experience this benefit at baseline, the Bureau expects that this proposed rule could reduce those benefits, and thus financial institutions may incur a cost.

At baseline, the Bureau also expects that financial institutions could benefit from transparency resulting from the collection of small business application information under the 2023 final rule. Financial institutions might use the public data (such as number of applications, pricing data, denial rates, and information on the types of credit) to better understand the demand for small business credit products and the conditions under which they are being supplied by other financial institutions. Collecting data on fewer applications, from fewer financial institutions, and for fewer types of loans under this proposed rule could impose costs on financial institutions by reducing this benefit. A bank, for example, may lose the opportunity to learn more detailed information about the merchant cash advance market, which they might view as a competitor. Financial institutions of all sizes may lose insight into the lending activities of smaller competitors who fall below the reporting threshold.

Finally, the Bureau estimates that some covered institutions would incur adjustment costs to implement changes to comply with the proposed rule. The Bureau describes these costs for the representative Type C DIs because only Type C institutions, those with 1,000 or more loan originations per year, would be covered under the proposed rule. The Bureau assumes that the representative Type C DI would receive the same number of applications reportable under the baseline and the proposed rule. As discussed in part IV.F.1, a Type C DI would need to spend about $85,400 to implement the non-hiring one-time

costs to implement changes necessary to comply with either the baseline or the proposed rule. As discussed above, the Bureau assumes that an institution that would remain covered under the proposed rule has already spent, on average, about 25 percent of non-hiring one-time costs to implement changes that will not be compliant with the proposed rule. Thus, a Type C DI would incur the full cost of implementing the proposed rule but, effectively, would only receive 75 percent of the cost savings from no longer needing to comply with the baseline. The Bureau estimates that the representative Type C DI would incur total one-time costs of $21,250 to implement changes to comply with the proposed rule. Based on a similar calculation for Type C nondepository institutions, the Bureau also estimates that the representative Type C nondepository that would still be covered under the proposed rule would incur total one-time costs of $28,500 to implement changes to comply with the proposed rule.

Summing across institutions as described in part IV.E.3, the Bureau estimates that the total one-time adjustment costs for covered depository and nondepository institutions will be between $4,700,000 and $5,000,000. Using a 7 percent discount rate and a 10-year amortization window, the annualized one-time costs for covered institutions will be about $700,000.

The Bureau requests comment on these and other potential costs to impacted financial institutions arising as a result of the proposed rule.

4. Costs to Small Businesses

In the 2023 final rule, the Bureau described several benefits that would accrue to small businesses from the small business lending data collection and publication. These benefits relate to the rule's two purposes: fair lending enforcement and community development. Several provisions of this proposed rule would change the amount and types of information that would be collected and disclosed. Therefore, to the extent the Bureau expected small businesses to benefit from the collection as described in the 2023 final rule, changes that reduce or alter the amount or types of information provided would impose a cost on small businesses by reducing these expected benefits.

Several proposed changes reduce the number of financial institutions that would report data or change the composition of institutions reporting. The Bureau is proposing that the threshold number of originations of covered transactions for two consecutive years be raised to 1,000, which, as shown above, would substantially lower the number of depository and non-depository institutions collecting and reporting small business credit application data. The Bureau is also proposing that several types of transactions be exempt from coverage, relative to the baseline, including transactions from FCS lenders, merchant cash advances and agricultural loans. These types of transactions and lenders would thus be removed from the data collection and reporting. The Bureau is also proposing a minimum transaction size of $1,000 for covered transactions, which would remove smaller transactions from the data relative to the baseline. Finally, the Bureau is proposing to reduce the gross annual revenue threshold in the definition of small business to $1 million or less in the preceding fiscal year, which would further reduce the number of some transactions needing to be reported relative to the baseline.

Reducing the data collection in these ways is likely to reduce the fair lending benefits of the data collection. In the 2023 final rule, the Bureau explained that data collected under the rule would lead to more efficient use of government resources in enforcing fair lending laws. Since the above provisions would substantially reduce the number of covered entities and covered transactions, the Bureau expects small businesses would experience a reduction in this efficiency as a cost of the proposed rule. The Bureau also expects that having fewer covered institutions and transactions would reduce the ability of the public to use the data for transparency purposes and to conduct their own analyses of lending by financial institutions.

The Bureau also expects that having fewer covered institutions and transactions would result in a reduction in the community development benefits that the Bureau would expect to accrue to small businesses under the baseline. In the 2023 final rule, the Bureau detailed how governmental entities would likely use these data to develop solutions that achieve policy objectives in their administration of loan guarantee programs or disaster relief. The Bureau also expected that creditors would use the data to more effectively understand small business credit market conditions and that communities would use the data to identify gaps in credit access for small business owners. In each of these cases, the Bureau expects that creditors, communities, and governmental entities would experience costs in the form of a reduction in these benefits relative to the baseline.

The Bureau expects that removing certain transactions from coverage would reduce some of the expected benefit derived from covering certain markets, relative to the baseline. In section II.A of the 2023 final rule, the Bureau explained that nondepositories, some of whom provide merchant cash advances or sales-based financing, were an increasing share of the small business financing market, but that nondepositories typically do not report small business financing activity to regulators, which limits the baseline understanding of the activities of these entities. Thus, the Bureau expects that by removing these types of transactions from coverage, small businesses would experience a cost in the form of a reduction in fair lending and community development benefits related to these types of transactions, compared to the baseline.

However, the Bureau believes such costs might be limited if data on applications from FCS lenders, for agricultural loans, for sales-based financing, or for loans under $1,000 would have been of poor quality or otherwise difficult to interpret correctly. For example, the Bureau now believes that the types of collateral required in agricultural lending results in underwriting processes that would make application data difficult to interpret under the baseline collection. The Bureau also believes that application data from merchant cash advance providers would not produce data comparable to other transactions which would limit their value as part of the dataset. Likewise, data on transactions under $1,000 would be of poor quality as they would come from credit providers ill-suited to comply with a data reporting rule. To the extent this is the case, it would reduce the value of including these data in the small business application dataset and would have limited their contribution to the fair lending and community development benefits described above. The Bureau seeks comment on its analysis on the cost of excluding these transactions from the dataset.

The Bureau is also proposing to eliminate several data points from the small business data collection, including the application method, the application recipient, denial reasons, pricing information, and number of workers, as well as to eliminate LGBTQI+-owned business status from the business status data point. For similar reasons as above, the Bureau expects that small businesses would experience a cost from fewer collected data points in the form of less information and the benefits that they

would have derived from such information in the baseline scenario.

In the 2023 final rule, the Bureau explained that it expected the pricing information to provide both fair lending and community development benefits to small businesses. Pricing is one dimension by which a lender could potentially discriminate against a credit applicant. Removing this information could reduce the efficiency of fair lending examinations or transparency that would have resulted from its inclusion, relative to the baseline. The Bureau also expected, at baseline, that pricing information would benefit community development through communities using pricing information to identify gaps in credit access or creditors better understanding small business lending conditions more effectively. The Bureau expects that eliminating the pricing data would reduce these benefits relative to the baseline.

The removal of two datapoints in particular would likely reduce, to some degree, the community development benefits relative to the baseline. The application method data point would provide additional information about how small businesses apply for credit, while the number of workers data point is one indicator of the business's size and employment. In the 2023 final rule, the Bureau expected that creditors, communities, and governmental entities may have used such information to learn more about the small business credit market and the types of businesses it serves. To the extent this would have resulted in a community development benefit at baseline, the removal of these two data points would represent a cost to small businesses.

At baseline, the Bureau also expected that the inclusion of LGBTQI+-owned business status would have resulted in potential fair lending and community development benefits. The Bureau expected that the data could be used to learn about discrimination risks (to the extent that courts apply discrimination in the context of fair lending laws) against LGBTQI+-owned businesses, help creditors understand the credit needs of such businesses, and help facilitate the development of policies related to LGBTQI+ credit applicants. To the extent small businesses would have experienced such benefits at baseline, the proposed exclusion of LGBTQI+-owned business status represents a cost.

The Bureau requests comment on these and other potential costs to small businesses as a result of the proposed rule. To the extent the Bureau declines to finalize any exclusions proposed, the Bureau requests comment on the potential costs and benefits to financial institutions and small businesses.

5. Alternatives Considered

This section discusses two categories of alternatives considered: other methods for defining a covered financial institution and limiting the data points to those mandated by section 1071. The Bureau uses the methodologies discussed in parts IV.D and IV.E to estimate the impacts of these alternatives.

First, the Bureau considered multiple reporting thresholds for purposes of defining a covered financial institution. In particular, the Bureau considered whether to exempt financial institutions with fewer than 200, 500, or 2,000 originations in each of the two preceding calendar years instead of 1,000 originations, as proposed herein. The Bureau presents estimates for depository institutions because it does not have sufficient information to estimate how these differences in thresholds would impact nondepository institutions. Annualized values are calculated using a 7 percent discount rate and a 10-year amortization window.

Under a 200-origination threshold, the Bureau estimates that about 700 to 800 depository institutions would be covered and between 900 to 1,000 would no longer be covered. That is, the Bureau expects that between 500 to 600 additional depository institutions would be covered under a 200-origination threshold compared to the proposed 1,000-origination threshold. The Bureau estimates that an additional 3.2 to 3.7 percentage points of small business loans originated by depository institutions would be covered under a 200-origination threshold and that an additional 15 to 17 percentage points of the dollar value of such loans would be covered.

Under a 200-origination threshold, the Bureau estimates that the total one-time cost savings across all impacted depository institutions would decrease by between $25,000,000 to $29,000,000 relative to the proposed rule, with an annualized decrease in savings of between $3,600,000 and $4,100,000. The Bureau estimates that total one-time costs incurred by covered depository institutions would increase by between $6,000,000 to $7,000,000, with an annualized increase in costs of between $800,000 to $900,000. The Bureau estimates that the total ongoing costs savings across all impacted depository institutions would decrease by between $35,000,000 to $41,000,000 under this alternative.

Under a 500-origination threshold, the Bureau estimates that between 300 to 400 depository institutions would be covered and between 1,300 to 1,400 would no longer be covered. That is, the Bureau expects that around 200 additional depository institutions would be covered under a 500-origination threshold compared to the proposed 1,000-origination threshold. The Bureau estimates that an additional 1.3 to 1.7 percentage points of small business loans originated by depository institutions would be covered under a 500-origination threshold and that an additional 6.4 to 7.3 percentage points of the dollar value of such loans would be covered.

Under a 500-origination threshold, the Bureau estimates that the total one-time cost savings across all impacted depository institutions would decrease by between $8,000,000 to $10,000,000 under a 500-origination threshold relative to the proposed rule, with an annualized decrease in savings of between $1,200,000 and $1,400,000. The Bureau estimates that total one-time costs incurred by covered depository institutions would increase by between $1,000,000 to $1,400,000, with an annualized increase in costs of about $100,000 to $200,000. The Bureau estimates that the total ongoing costs savings across all impacted depository institutions would decrease by between $12,000,000 to $16,000,000 under this alternative.

Under a 2,000-origination threshold, the Bureau estimates that about 100 depository institutions would be covered and between 1,500 to 1,700 would no longer be covered. That is, the Bureau expects that about 100 fewer depository institutions would be covered under a 2,000-origination threshold compared to the proposed 1,000-origination threshold. The Bureau estimates that 1.4 to 1.9 percentage points of small business loans originated by depository institutions would no longer be covered under a 2,000-origination threshold and that 5.9 to 6.6 percentage points of the dollar value of such loans would no longer be covered.

Under a 2,000-origination threshold, the Bureau estimates that the total one-time cost savings across all impacted depository institutions would increase by between $6,000,000 to $7,000,000 under a 2,000-origination threshold relative to the proposed rule, with an annualized increase in savings of between $900,000 and $1,000,000. The Bureau estimates that total one-time costs incurred by covered depository institutions would decrease by about $1,500,000 to $2,000,000, with an

annualized decrease in costs of between $200,000 and $300,000. The Bureau estimates that the total ongoing costs savings across all impacted depository institutions would increase by between $22,000,000 to $25,000,000 under this alternative.

Second, the Bureau considered the costs and benefits for limiting its data collection to the data points specifically enumerated in 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(e)(2)(A) through (G). In addition to those data points, the statute also requires financial institutions to collect and report any additional data that the Bureau determines would aid in fulfilling the purposes of section 1071. In addition to the data points specifically enumerated in 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(e)(2)(A) through (G), the proposal keeps three data points from the 2023 final rule that relied on the authority in 1691c–2(e)(2)(H). These are the number of principal owners, three-digit NAICS industry code of the business, and the time in business. The Bureau has considered the impact of instead proposing only the collection of those data points enumerated in 1691c–2(e)(2)(A) through (G).

Requiring the collection and reporting of only the data points enumerated in 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(e)(2)(A) through (G) would result in a reduction in the fair lending benefit of the data compared to the 2023 final rule. For example, not collecting time in business or industry information would obscure possible fair lending risk by covered financial institutions. As mentioned in part IV.F.3 above, several of the data points the Bureau maintaining in this proposed rule under the 1691c–2(e)(2)(H) authority are critical to conducting more accurate and complete fair lending analyses. A reduction in the rule's ability to facilitate the enforcement of fair lending laws would negatively impact small businesses and small business owners and thus run counter to that statutory purpose of section 1071.

Limiting the rule's data collection to only the data points required under the statute would also reduce the ability of the rule to support the business and community development needs and opportunities of small businesses, which is the other statutory purpose of section 1071. For example, not including NAICS code or time in business would also reduce the ability of governmental entities to tailor programs that can specifically benefit new businesses or businesses in certain industries.

The Bureau also believes that removing the number of principal owners data point, in addition to the reduced benefits described above, would also make collecting and reporting data on principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex more difficult. Without collecting the number of principal owners, it will be harder to identify and correct erroneous submissions. For example, if an institution submitted data on no principal owners, it would be unclear if that was an error or because the small business had no individuals that met the principal owner criteria. The operational confusion could counteract the cost reduction that stems from the fewer resources require to collect and report this field.

Only requiring the collection and reporting of the data points enumerated in 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(e)(2)(A) through (G) would have reduced the annual ongoing cost of complying with the proposed rule. Under this alternative, the estimated total annual ongoing costs for Type A FIs, Type B FIs, and Type C FIs would be reduced by $148; $503 and $2,778, respectively. Per application, the estimated reduction in ongoing cost would be $1, less than $1, and $1 for Type A FIs, Type B FIs, and Type C FIs, respectively. The estimated total annual market-level ongoing cost savings of impacted depository institutions would increase by about $3,500,000. The Bureau does not expect that one-time costs or cost savings would be meaningfully different as a result of this alternative.

G. Potential Impact on Depository Institutions and Credit Unions With $10 Billion or Less in Total Assets

As discussed above, the proposed rule would exclude financial institutions with fewer than 1,000 originated covered credit transactions in both of the two preceding calendar years. The Bureau believes that the decrease in benefits of the proposed rule to banks, savings associations, and credit unions with $10 billion or less in total assets would be similar to the decrease in benefits to covered financial institutions as a whole, discussed above. Regarding cost savings, other than as noted here, the Bureau also believes that the impact of the proposed rule on banks, savings associations, and credit unions with $10 billion or less in total assets will be similar to the impact for other financial institutions that would be covered by the proposed rule. The primary difference in the impact on these institutions would likely come from differences in the level of complexity of operations, compliance systems, and software, as well as number of product offerings and volume of originations of these institutions, all of which the Bureau has incorporated into the cost estimates using the three representative financial institution types.

Based on FFIEC and NCUA Call Report data for December 2023, 9,109 of 9,288 banks, savings associations, and credit unions had $10 billion or less in total assets. The Bureau estimates that between 75 and 85 of such institutions would be subject to the proposed rule and about 1,375 to 1,525 more were covered under the baseline but would not be covered under the proposed rule. The Bureau estimates that the market-level impact of the proposed rule on annual ongoing cost savings for banks, saving associations, and credit unions with $10 billion or less in assets would be between $88,000,000 and $103,000,000 for impacted institutions. The Bureau estimates that the total one-time cost savings for such institutions would be between $67,000,000 and $75,000,000. The Bureau also estimates that some covered depository institutions with less than $10 billion in assets would experience some one-time costs to comply with the proposed rule relative to the baseline, with such estimated total costs to be between $1,600,000 and $1,800,000.

H. Potential Impact on Small Businesses in Rural Areas

The Bureau expects that small businesses in rural areas will directly experience many of the costs of the rule described above in part IV.F.4. This includes a reduction in benefits derived from more efficient fair lending enforcement and community development generated by data collection under the small business lending rule. The proposed rule would increase the threshold number of loan originations above which institutions have to report data, which would lead to fewer lenders in rural areas reporting data on small business credit application in rural areas. The Bureau's presents estimates of this change in coverage below. The proposed rule also would exempt agricultural credit from the types of covered transactions. Many banks and credit unions in rural areas provide credit for farming and livestock production since they are primary industries and are responsible for much employment in these areas. Small businesses, communities, governmental entities will lose insight into these areas of credit provision as a consequence of the proposed rule. However, as explained in part IV.F.4 above, the Bureau believes that data collected for certain loan types, including agricultural loans, would have been of poor quality and, therefore, the costs from eliminating them would be limited.

The source data from CRA submissions that the Bureau uses to estimate institutional coverage and market estimates provide information on the county in which small business borrowers are located. However, approximately 86 percent of banks did not report CRA data in 2023, and as a result the Bureau does not believe the reported data are robust enough to estimate the locations of the small business borrowers for the banks that do not report CRA data.[99] The NCUA Call Report data do not provide any information on the location of credit union borrowers. Nonetheless, the Bureau is able to provide some geographical estimates of institutional coverage based on depository institution branch locations.

The Bureau used the FDIC's Summary of Deposits to identify the location of all brick and mortar bank and savings association branches and the NCUA Credit Union Branch Information to identify the location of all credit union branch and corporate offices.[100] A bank, savings association, or credit union branch was defined as rural if it is in a rural county, as specified by the USDA's Urban Influence Codes.[101] A branch is considered covered by the proposed rule if it belongs to a bank, savings association, or credit union that the Bureau estimates would be included using the proposed threshold of 1,000 small business loan originations in 2022 and 2023. A branch is considered covered under the baseline if it belongs to a bank, savings association, or credit union that the Bureau estimates would be included under a threshold of 100 small business or small farm loan originations in 2022 and 2023. Using the estimation methodology discussed in part IV.D above, the Bureau estimates that about 25 percent of rural depository institution branches and about 63 percent of non-rural depository institution branches would be covered under the proposed rule. Under the baseline, the Bureau estimates that about 65 to 68 percent of rural depository institution branches and about 84 to 85 percent of non-rural depository institution branches are covered. This estimate includes the reduction in coverage that stems from excluding agricultural lending as a covered credit transaction.

As described in part IV.F.2 above, the Bureau expects that covered financial institutions would pass the cost savings from ongoing variable costs on to small businesses in the form of lower interest rates or fees but would not do so with one-time or fixed costs. The Bureau expects that this pass through from covered financial institutions would also apply to small businesses in rural areas. As described above, the variable cost savings per application is $7 for Type A FIs, $2 for Type B FIs, and $1 for Type C FIs. This is the savings that the Bureau expects would pass on to small business applicants regardless of where they are located.

V. Regulatory Flexibility Act Analysis

The Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) [102] generally requires an agency to conduct an initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA) and a final regulatory flexibility analysis (FRFA) of any rule subject to notice-and-comment rulemaking requirements. These analyses must ''describe the impact of the proposed rule on small entities.'' [103] An IRFA or FRFA is not required if the agency certifies that the rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.[104] The Bureau also is subject to certain additional procedures under the RFA involving the convening of a panel to consult with small business representatives prior to proposing a rule for which an IRFA is required.[105] The Bureau has not certified that the proposed rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the RFA.

The Bureau convened and chaired a Small Business Review Panel under SBREFA to consider the impact of the 2020 proposals under consideration on small entities that would be subject to that rule and to obtain feedback from representatives of such small entities. The Small Business Review Panel for this rulemaking is discussed below in part V.A. The Bureau is also publishing an IRFA.[106] Among other things, the IRFA estimates the number of small entities that will be subject to the proposed rule and describes the impact of that rule on those entities. The IRFA for this rulemaking is set forth below in part V.B.

A. Small Business Review Panel

Having received from CFPB information on the potential impacts of the proposed rule on small entities and the type of small entities that might be affected, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration (SBA) consulted with affected small entities and with the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs within the Office of Management and Budget regarding the extent to which the CFPB reached out to affected small entities with respect to the potential impacts of the rule and took their concerns into consideration. The SBA's Chief Counsel for Advocacy noted that the CFPB had, in 2020, convened a review panel in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 609(b). The Chief Counsel for Advocacy concluded that reconvening a review panel for the present NPRM would not advance the effective participation of small entities in the rulemaking process. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 609(e), a written finding that contains the reasons for his conclusion will be submitted into the rulemaking record by the Chief Counsel for Advocacy.

As part of the initial proposed regulation implementing Section 1071 of the ECOA, the CFPB along with the Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy and the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs convened a SBREFA Panel in 2020,[107] because the agency believed the rule was likely to have a significant impact on a substantial number of small entities. The panel gathered feedback from 20 small entity representatives (SERs) and offered suggestions about how the future rule could minimize the

[99] Calculated by the Bureau using CRA data.

[100] *See* Fed. Deposit Ins. Corp., *Bank Financial Reports, Summary of Deposits (SOD)—Annual Survey of Branch Office Deposits* (last updated 2024), *https://www.fdic.gov/regulations/resources/call/sod.html.* The NCUA provides data on credit union branches in the quarterly Call Report Data files. *See* Nat'l Credit Union Admin., *Call Report Quarterly Data, https://www.ncua.gov/analysis/credit-union-corporate-call-report-data/quarterly-data* (last visited Sept. 30, 2025).

[101] This is the same methodology as used in the Bureau's rural counties list. *See* CFPB, *Rural and underserved counties list, https://www.consumerfinance.gov/compliance/compliance-resources/mortgage-resources/rural-and-underserved-counties-list/* (last visited Sept. 30, 2025).

[102] 5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*

[103] 5 U.S.C. 603(a). For purposes of assessing the impacts of the proposed rule on small entities, ''small entities'' is defined in the RFA to include small businesses, small not-for-profit organizations, and small government jurisdictions. 5 U.S.C. 601(6). A ''small business'' is determined by application of SBA regulations and reference to the NAICS classifications and size standards. 5 U.S.C. 601(3). A ''small organization'' is any ''not-for-profit enterprise which is independently owned and operated and is not dominant in its field.'' 5 U.S.C. 601(4). A ''small governmental jurisdiction'' is the government of a city, county, town, township, village, school district, or special district with a population of less than 50,000. 5 U.S.C. 601(5).

[104] 5 U.S.C. 605(b).

[105] 5 U.S.C. 609.

[106] The CFPB has taken the steps described below in order to inform the rulemaking more fully, whether or not required.

[107] CFPB, *Final Report of the Small Business Review Panel on the CFPB's Proposals Under Consideration for the Small Business Lending Data Collection Rulemaking* (Dec. 14, 2020), *https://www.consumerfinance.gov/documents/9413/cfpb_1071-sbrefa-report.pdf.*

impact on small entities while still achieving their statutory objectives.

The SERs had several suggestions at this early stage on how to minimize the impact of data collection on small entities. The first of these was to exclude small lenders from the requirement to collect data. Several different methods of exemptions were proposed including using a number of small business loans, value of small business loans, and basing the exemption on the size of the lender rather than their small business loan portfolio specifically. The second was to use a single definition for a small business loan applicant based on revenue, rather than the SBA size standards, which vary based on industry. The SERs disagreed on what the revenue cutoff for a small business loan applicant should be with some arguing for a low value of less than $1 million while others preferred a higher value of $8 million. Finally, SERs recommended limiting the number of discretionary data points, noting that some of the required collections would be difficult to produce at the application stage.

Besides its involvement in the SBREFA panel, the Office of Advocacy has provided further feedback on the implementation of Section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act. In January 2022, Advocacy documented concerns that were raised by small entities, including community banks, credit unions, non-depository lenders, and automobile dealerships. They saw the 2021 NPRM as potentially increasing the cost of credit for small businesses and discouraging lending to small, minority-, and women-owned businesses. The Office of Advocacy believed that the CFPB had underestimated compliance costs in 2021, particularly the costs related to new systems, training, and reporting requirements. Advocacy believed that $5 million or less in gross annual revenue was too expansive a definition of small business loan applicant. It recommended minimizing adverse effects by considering alternative thresholds and definitions. SERs also expressed concerns about the burden of collecting extra data, potential privacy breaches (especially in smaller communities), and the risk of misinterpretation or reputational harm if unique loan pricing is disclosed without proper context. In response to Advocacy's comment letter, the CFPB made a substantial change to the filing threshold for data collection, in the 2023 final rule, raising it from 25 small business loans to 100.[108] Since the final rule was published, the CFPB has twice extended the compliance deadline, first in July of 2024,[109] and again in June of 2025.[110] The SBA's Office of Advocacy commented on the latter of these, supporting the extension and encouraging the CFPB to modify the rule by reiterating the concerns it had previously gathered from small entities.

B. Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

Under RFA section 603(a), an initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA) ''shall describe the impact of the proposed rule on small entities.'' [111] Section 603(b) of the RFA sets forth the required elements of the IRFA. Section 603(b)(1) requires the IRFA to contain a description of the reasons why action by the agency is being considered.[112] Section 603(b)(2) requires a succinct statement of the objectives of, and the legal basis for, the proposed rule.[113] The IRFA further must contain a description of and, where feasible, an estimate of the number of small entities to which the proposed rule will apply.[114] Section 603(b)(4) requires a description of the projected reporting, recordkeeping, and other compliance requirements of the proposed rule, including an estimate of the classes of small entities that will be subject to the requirement and the types of professional skills necessary for the preparation of the report or record.[115] In addition, the Bureau must identify, to the extent practicable, all relevant Federal rules which may duplicate, overlap, or conflict with the proposed rule.[116] Furthermore, the Bureau must describe any significant alternatives to the proposed rule which accomplish the stated objectives of applicable statutes and which minimize any significant economic impact of the proposed rule on small entities.[117] Finally, as amended by the Dodd-Frank Act, RFA section 603(d) requires that the IRFA include a description of any projected increase in the cost of credit for small entities, a description of any significant alternatives to the proposed rule which accomplish the stated objectives of applicable statutes and which minimize any increase in the cost of credit for small entities (if such an increase in the cost of credit is projected), and a description of the advice and recommendations of representatives of small entities relating to the cost of credit issues.[118]

The Bureau publishes the following IRFA for public comment.

1. Description of the Reasons Why Agency Action Is Being Considered

Section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act amended ECOA to require that financial institutions collect and report to the Bureau certain data regarding applications for credit for women-owned, minority-owned, and small businesses. Section 1071's statutory purposes are (1) to facilitate enforcement of fair lending laws, and (2) to enable communities, governmental entities, and creditors to identify business and community development needs and opportunities of women-owned, minority-owned, and small businesses. On May 31, 2023, the Bureau published a final rule in the **Federal Register** to implement section 1071, and the Bureau subsequently extended the rule's compliance dates (most recently in October 2025).

In this proposed rule, the Bureau proposes to reconsider certain provisions of the 2023 final rule to focus on core lending products, lenders, small businesses, and data points. Based on reactions to the 2023 final rule, including continued feedback from stakeholders and the ongoing litigation, the Bureau now believes that a better, longer-term approach to advance the statutory purposes of section 1071 would be to commence the collection of data with a narrower scope to ensure its quality, and to limit, as much as possible, any disturbance of the provision of credit to small businesses. Only as the Bureau and financial institutions learn from early iterations of data collections will the CFPB consider amending the rule as appropriate while taking care not to disturb the provision of credit to small businesses. The CFPB believes that such an incremental approach would comply with section 1071 and minimize any negative initial impact on small business lending markets and on data quality.

For a further description of the reasons why agency action is being considered, see the background discussion for the proposed rule in part I above.

2. Succinct Statement of the Objectives of, and Legal Basis for, the Proposed Rule

As stated above, Congress enacted section 1071 for the purpose of (1) facilitating enforcement of fair lending

[108] 88 FR 35150 (May 31, 2023).

[109] 89 FR 55024 (July 3, 2024).

[110] 90 FR 25874 (June 18, 2025).

[111] 5 U.S.C. 603(a).

[112] 5 U.S.C. 603(b)(1).

[113] 5 U.S.C. 603(b)(2).

[114] 5 U.S.C. 603(b)(3).

[115] 5 U.S.C. 603(b)(4).

[116] 5 U.S.C. 603(b)(5).

[117] 5 U.S.C. 603(c).

[118] 5 U.S.C. 603(d)(1); Dodd-Frank Act section 1100G(d)(1), 124 Stat. 2112.

laws and (2) enabling communities, governmental entities, and creditors to identify business and community development needs and opportunities of women-owned, minority-owned, and small businesses.[119] Section 1071, in 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(g)(2), also permits the Bureau to adopt exceptions to any requirement of section 1071 and to conditionally or unconditionally exempt any financial institution or class of financial institutions from the requirements of section 1071, as the Bureau deems necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 1071. The Bureau relies on its general rulemaking authority under 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(g)(1) in this proposed rule and relies on 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(g)(2) when proposing specific exceptions or exemptions to section 1071's requirements.

To accomplish the incremental approach described above, this proposed rule limits the scope of the 2023 final rule's required data collection in several ways. The proposed rule would exclude certain categories of lending products from the definition of covered credit transaction, such as MCAs, agricultural lending, and small dollar loans. The Bureau also proposes to exclude FCS lenders from coverage and raise the origination threshold from 100 to 1,000 covered credit transactions for each of two consecutive years. The Bureau also proposes to change the definition of small business to $1 million in gross annual revenue from the $5 million definition in the 2023 final rule. Lastly, the Bureau proposes to remove certain data points from the required collection, including application method, application recipient, denial reasons, pricing information, the number of workers, and the LGBTQI+ ownership status of the small business.

For a further description of the proposed provisions, see the discussion of the proposed rule in part III above.

3. Description of and, Where Feasible, Provision of an Estimate of the Number of Small Entities to Which the Proposed Rule Will Apply

For the purposes of assessing the impacts of the proposed rule on small entities, ''small entities'' is defined in the RFA to include small businesses, small nonprofit organizations, and small government jurisdictions.[120] A ''small business'' is determined by application of SBA regulations in reference to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) classification and size standards.[121] Under such standards, the Bureau identified several categories of small entities that may be affected by the proposed provisions: depository institutions; fintech lenders and MCA providers; commercial finance companies; nondepository CDFIs; Farm Credit System members; and governmental lending entities. The NAICS codes covered by these categories are described below.

Table 9 provides the Bureau's estimate of the number and types of entities that may be affected by the proposed rule. The first column provides the category of institution type, the second column provides the NAICS codes associated with that category, the third column provides the SBA small entity threshold for that institution category. The second to last column presents the estimated total number of entities in that category that would be affected by the proposed rule and the final column presents the estimate total number of small entities in that category that would be affected by the proposed rule. See part II.D in the 2023 final rule and part IV.D above for additional information on how the Bureau arrived at the estimates presented below.

TABLE 9—ESTIMATED NUMBER OF AFFECTED ENTITIES AND SMALL ENTITIES BY CATEGORY

Category	NAICS	Small entity threshold	Estimated total affected financial institutions	Estimated total of small affected financial institutions
Depository Institutions	522110, 522130, 522180, 522210	$850 million in assets	1,700	800
Online Lenders and MCA providers.	522299, 522291, 522320, 518210	$40 million (NAICS 518210); $47 million (NAICS 522299, 522291, 522320).	100	90
Commercial Finance Companies.	513210, 532411, 532490, 522220, 522291.	$40 million (NAICS 532490); $45.5 million (NAICS 532411); $47 million (NAICS 513210, 522291, and 522220).	240	216
Nondepository CDFIs	522390, 523910, 813410, 522310	$9.5 million (NAICS 813410); $15 million (NAICS 522310); $28.5 million (NAICS 522390); $47 million (NAICS 523910).	140	132
Farm Credit System members.	522299	$47 million	60	31
Governmental Lending Entities.	NA	Population below 50,000	70	0

The following paragraphs describe the categories of entities that the Bureau expects would be affected by the proposed rule.

Depository institutions (banks and credit unions): The Bureau estimates that there are about 1,700 banks, savings associations, and credit unions engaged in small business lending that would be affected by the proposed rule.[122] The Bureau estimates that about 170 banks, savings associations, and credit unions would be required to report under the proposed rule. The Bureau estimates that about 1,530 banks, savings associations, and credit unions would have been required to report under the 2023 final rule but would not be required to report under the proposed rule. These entities potentially fall into four different industry categories, including ''Commercial Banking'' (NAICS 522110), ''Credit Unions'' (NAICS 522130), ''Savings Institutions and Other Depository Credit Intermediation'' (NAICS 522180), and ''Credit Card Issuing'' (NAICS 522210). All these industries have a size standard threshold of $850 million in assets. The Bureau estimates that about 5 of the institutions that would be covered by the proposed rule are small entities according to this threshold. The Bureau

[119] 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(a).

[120] 5 U.S.C. 601(6).

[121] The current SBA size standards are found on SBA's website, Small Bus. Admin., *Table of size standards* (Dec. 26, 2024), *https://www.sba.gov/document/support-table-size-standards.*

[122] The Bureau notes that the category of depository institutions also includes CDFIs that are also depository institutions.

estimates that about 795 of the institutions that would no longer be covered by the proposed rule are small entities.

Online lenders and MCA providers: The Bureau estimates that there are about 30 online lenders and about 70 MCA providers engaged in small business lending that would be affected by the proposed rule. The online lenders would be covered by the proposed rule and the MCA providers would have been covered by the 2023 final rule but would no longer be covered by the proposed rule. These companies span multiple industries, including ''International, Secondary Market, and All Other Nondepository Credit Intermediation'' (NAICS 522299), ''Consumer Lending'' (NAICS 522291), ''Financial Transactions, Processing, Reserve, and Clearinghouse Activities'' (NAICS 522320), and ''Computing Infrastructure Providers, Data Processing, Web Hosting, and Related Services'' (NAICS 518210). All these industries have a size standard threshold of $40 million in sales (NAICS 518210) or $47 million in sales (all other NAICS). The Bureau assumes that about 25 of these online lenders are small entities and about 65 MCA providers are small entities.

Commercial finance companies: The Bureau estimates that about 240 commercial finance companies, including captive and independent financing, engaged in small business lending would be affected by the proposed rule. The Bureau assumes that all these entities would have been covered by the 2023 final rule but would not be covered by the proposed rule. These companies span multiple industries, including ''Software Publishers'' (NAICS 513210), ''Commercial Air, Rail, and Water Transportation Equipment Rental and Leasing'' (NAICS 532411), ''Other Commercial and Industrial Machinery and Equipment Rental and Leasing'' (NAICS 532490), ''Sales financing'' (NAICS 522220) and ''Consumer Lending'' (NAICS 522291). These industries have size standard thresholds that range from $40 million to $47 million. The Bureau assumes that about 90 percent, or 216, of these commercial finance companies are small according to these size standards.

Nondepository CDFIs: The Bureau estimates that there are 140 nondepository CDFIs engaged in small business lending that would be affected by the proposed rule. The Bureau assumes that all these entities would have been covered by the 2023 final rule but would not be covered by the proposed rule. CDFIs generally fall into ''Other Activities Related to Credit Intermediation'' (NAICS 522390), ''Miscellaneous Intermediation'' (NAICS 523910), ''Civic and Social Organizations'' (NAICS 813410), and ''Mortgage and Nonmortgage Loan Brokers'' (NAICS 522310). These industries have size standard thresholds that range from $9.5 million in sales to $47 million in sales. The Bureau assumes that about 95 percent, or 132, nondepository CDFIs are small entities.

Farm Credit System members: The Bureau estimates that there are 60 members of the Farm Credit System (banks and associations) engaged in small business lending that would be affected by the proposed rule.[123] The Bureau assumes that all these entities would have been covered by the 2023 final rule but would not be covered by the proposed rule. These institutions are in the ''All Other Nondepository Credit Intermediation'' (NAICS 522298) industry. The size standard for this industry is $47 million in revenue. The Bureau estimates that 31 members of the Farm Credit System are small entities.

Governmental lending entities: The Bureau estimates that there are about 70 governmental lending entities engaged in small business lending that would be affected by the proposed rule. The Bureau assumes that all these entities would have been covered by the 2023 final rule but would not be covered by the proposed rule. ''Small governmental jurisdictions'' are the governments of cities, counties, towns, townships, villages, school districts, or special districts, with a population of less than fifty thousand. The Bureau assumes that none of the governmental lending entities covered by the proposed rule are considered small.

The Bureau requests comment on the accuracy of these estimates of small entities.

4. Projected Reporting, Recordkeeping, and Other Compliance Requirements of the Proposed Rule, Including an Estimate of the Classes of Small Entities Which Will Be Subject to the Requirement and the Type of Professional Skills Necessary for the Preparation of the Report

Reporting requirements. ECOA section 704B(f)(1) provides that ''[t]he data required to be compiled and maintained under [section 1071] by any financial institution shall be submitted annually to the Bureau.'' The 2023 final rule requires financial institutions to collect and report information regarding any application for ''credit'' made by small businesses. In this proposal, the Bureau is proposing that the following transactions are no longer covered by the rule: MCAs, agricultural credit, and small dollar loans. The Bureau also proposes to amend the definition of ''small business'' to $1 million in gross annual revenue. Under the 2023 final rule, financial institutions would be required to report data on small business credit applications if they originated at least 100 covered transactions in each of the previous two calendar years. The Bureau proposes to raise this threshold to 1,000 covered transactions in each of the previous two calendar years.

The Bureau also proposes to remove several data points from the reporting requirements. This includes the data points for application method, application recipient, denial reasons, pricing information, the number of workers, and the LBGTQI+-owned business status.

Part III above discusses these proposed changes in greater detail.

Recordkeeping requirements. The proposed rule, generally, does not alter the recordkeeping requirement of the 2023 final rule. The proposal leaves in place requirements to retain application data for three years, prohibitions on including certain personally identifiable information about individuals, a limitation on access for certain officers and employees to certain demographic information collected, and a requirement that collected demographic information be maintained separately from the application and accompanying information.

Costs to small entities. The proposed rule may impose costs on small financial institutions in two ways. First, the Bureau believes that small financial institutions that were covered under the 2023 final rule and remain covered under the proposed rule may experience an adjustment cost. Second, in the 2023 final rule, Bureau detailed some ways in which covered small financial institutions may benefit from the information collected under the rule. Changing the information collection could reduce these benefits. As a result, small covered financial institutions may experience a cost under the proposed rule.

The Bureau expects that financial institutions that were covered under the 2023 final rule and remain covered under the proposed rule may experience costs that stem from adjusting to complying with the requirements of the proposed rule instead of the 2023 final

[123] Farm Credit Admin., Number of FCS banks and associations by type and district as of January 1, 2024, *https://www.fca.gov/template-fca/bank/20240101NumberAssocs.pdf* (last visited Oct. 1, 2025).

rule.[124] Using the methodology described in part IV.D above, the Bureau estimates that about five small depository institutions and 25 small online lenders (nondepository institutions) would be covered by the proposed rule. This is the number of small financial institutions that the Bureau expects would incur the adjustment cost.

As described in part IV above, the Bureau assumes that, on average, financial institutions will have already incurred 25 percent of their non-hiring one-time costs in preparation to comply with the 2023 final rule. For financial institutions that continue to be covered under this proposed rule, the Bureau assumes that this percentage of non-hiring costs would have to be incurred again in order to meet the requirements of the proposed rule. The Bureau estimates that covered small depository institutions would spend about $21,000 each in one-time adjustment costs, annualized to about $3,000 per year, and that the covered small non-depository institutions would spend about $114,000 in one-time adjustment costs, annualized to about $4,000 per year.[125] The Bureau estimates that the total market level adjustment costs for small depository institutions would be between $21,000 and $128,000. The Bureau estimates that the total market level adjustment costs for small nondepository institutions would be about $2,850,000.

Financial institutions that remain covered under the proposed rule would continue to require compliance personnel in order to report data under the rule. For some financial institutions, the data intake and transcribing stage could involve loan officers or processors whose primary function is to evaluate or process loan applications. For example, at some financial institutions the loan officers would take in information from the applicant to complete the application and input that information into the reporting system. However, the Bureau believes that such roles generally do not require any additional professional skills related to recordkeeping or other compliance requirements of this proposed rule that are not otherwise required during the ordinary course of business for small financial institutions.

The type of professional skills required for compliance varies depending on the particular task involved.[126] For example, data transcribing requires data entry skills. Transferring data to a data entry system and using vendor data management software requires knowledge of computer systems and the ability to use them. Researching and resolving reportability questions requires a more complex understanding of the regulatory requirements and the details of the relevant line of business. Geocoding requires skills in using the geocoding software, web systems, or, in cases where geocoding is difficult, knowledge of the local area in which the property is located. Standard annual editing, internal checks, and post-submission editing require knowledge of the relevant data systems, data formats, and section 1071 regulatory requirements in addition to skills in quality control and assurance. Filing post-submission documents requires skills in information creation, dissemination, and communication. Training, internal audits, and external audits require communications skills, educational skills, and regulatory knowledge. Section 1071-related exam preparation and exam assistance involve knowledge of regulatory requirements, the relevant line of business, and the relevant data systems.

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code has compliance officers listed under code 13–1041. The Bureau believes that most of the skills required for preparation of the reports or records related to this proposal are the skills required for job functions performed in this occupation. However, the Bureau recognizes that under this general occupational code there is a high level of heterogeneity in the type of skills required as well as the corresponding labor costs incurred by the financial institutions performing these functions. The Bureau seeks comment regarding the skills required for the preparation of the records related to this proposed rule.

Benefits to small entities. The primary benefits to small credit providers in this proposed rule result from compliance cost savings. Small financial institutions that were covered under the 2023 final rule but would not be covered under the proposed rule would save on one-time costs of setting up to comply with the final rule as well as on the ongoing costs that they would otherwise have incurred to collect and report the data every year.

Small financial institutions that were covered under the 2023 final rule and that would remain covered under the proposed rule would save on compliance costs in two ways. First, the Bureau expects that they would be required to report fewer loans and therefore see a reduction in associated hiring costs. This is a one-time costs savings. Second, the reduction in the number of data points to be reported under the proposed rule (relative to the 2023 final rule) would likely result in annual ongoing cost savings.

Using the same coverage estimation described in the 2023 final rule and in part IV above, the Bureau estimates that about 800 small depository institutions and 469 small nondepository institutions would have been covered under the 2023 final rule but not under the proposed rule.

For all estimates discussed below, the Bureau relies on the methodology described in part IV.E, above, but focuses on estimating the impacts of the rule on small entities.

The Bureau estimates that depository institutions with the lowest level of complexity in compliance operations (*i.e.,* Type A DIs) would save about $50,475 in non-hiring one-time costs by no longer being covered by the proposed rule. The Bureau estimates that depository institutions with a middle level of complexity in compliance operations (*i.e.,* Type B DIs) would save about $38,775 in non-hiring one-time costs by no longer being covered under the proposed rule. The Bureau estimates that nondepository institutions that would no longer be covered by the proposed rule would save about $85,500 in non-hiring one-time costs. All institutions that would no longer be covered by the proposed rule would also no longer need to hire additional employees to comply with the 2023 final rule and would save $4,683 per FTE in one-time hiring costs.

The Bureau estimates that the overall market impact of one-time cost savings for small depository institutions would be between $34,000,000 and $41,000,000.[127] The Bureau estimates

[124] As discussed in part IV.F above, small financial institutions, both those that would remain covered under the proposed rule and those that would no longer covered, would experience a cost in the form of reduced benefits from the information collected and publicly disseminated under the small business lending rule's collection. However, these costs are not derived from compliance with the final rule and therefore, the discussion here will limit itself to compliance costs.

[125] The Bureau annualizes one-time costs using a 7 percent discount rate and a 10-year amortization schedule. OMB recommends using 3% and 7% discount rates to calculate annualized costs in Memo M–25–24. OMB does not provide guidance on the appropriate length of the amortization schedule. The Bureau uses a 10-year schedule as a reasonable time horizon over which a financial institution might spread its costs.

[126] A thorough discussion of the required tasks can be found in part IV.E above.

[127] The Bureau notes that the variation in this range comes primarily from the uncertainty in the number of originations made by small banks and savings associations. The range does not fully account for the uncertainty associated with

that the overall market impact of one-time cost savings for small nondepository institutions would be $41,000,000.

Small financial institutions would also experience annual ongoing cost savings under the proposed revisions to the rule. Small institutions that were covered under the 2023 final rule but would no longer be required to report under the proposal would save on compliance costs that they would have otherwise incurred from having to collect and report application data to the Bureau annually. Small financial institutions that would remain covered under this proposed rule would see an ongoing cost savings from the reduction in required data points, which reduces the cost of collecting, checking, and reporting data to the Bureau annually.

The Bureau estimates that the overall annual market impact of ongoing cost savings for small depository institutions would be between $35,000,000 and $45,000,000 per year. The Bureau estimates that the overall annual market impact of ongoing cost savings for small nondepository institutions would be about $35,000,000 per year.

The Bureau estimates that about five small depository institutions and 25 small nondepository institutions (online lenders) would be covered under the proposed rule. The Bureau assumes online lenders would originate the same number of loans under the 2023 final rule and the proposed rule and, thus, would not experience any cost savings. The Bureau expects that some small depository institutions may originate fewer reportable loans under the proposed rule relative to the baseline, primarily because loans for agricultural purposes would not be reported under the proposed rule. These institutions may need to hire fewer additional employees to process reportable loans. The overall market level estimate of one-time hiring cost savings for covered small depositories is between $0 and $47,000.[128] These institutions would also experience annual ongoing cost savings with an overall market level between about $27,000 and $252,000 per year.

The Bureau requests comment on the estimated impacts of the proposed rule on the small financial institutions.

5. Identification, to the Extent Practicable, of All Relevant Federal Rules Which May Duplicate, Overlap, or Conflict With the Proposed Rule

The proposed rule would amend the existing requirements under the 2023 final rule related to the collection and reporting of small business lending information by certain financial institutions and publication by the Bureau. In its SBREFA Outline, the Bureau identified certain other Federal statutes and regulations that relate in some fashion to these areas and has considered the extent to which they may duplicate, overlap, or conflict with this proposal.[129] The SBREFA Panel Report included an updated list of these Federal statutes and regulations, as informed by SER feedback.[130] Each of the statutes and regulations identified in the SBREFA Panel Report is discussed below.

ECOA, implemented by the Bureau's Regulation B, subpart A (12 CFR part 1002), prohibits creditors from discriminating in any aspect of a credit transaction, including a business-purpose transaction, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age (if the applicant is old enough to enter into a contract), receipt of income from any public assistance program, or the exercise in good faith of a right under the Consumer Credit Protection Act. The Bureau has certain oversight, enforcement, and supervisory authority over ECOA requirements and has rulemaking authority under the statute.

Regulation B subpart A generally prohibits creditors from inquiring about an applicant's race, color, religion, national origin, or sex, with limited exceptions, including if it is required by law. Regulation B subpart A requires creditors to request information about the race, ethnicity, sex, marital status, and age of applicants for certain dwelling-secured loans and to retain that information for certain periods. Regulation B requires this data collection for credit primarily for the purchase or refinancing of a dwelling occupied or to be occupied by the applicant as a principal residence, where the extension of credit will be secured by the dwelling, and requires the data to be maintained by the creditor for 25 months for purposes of monitoring and enforcing compliance with ECOA/Regulation B and other laws. Section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act amended ECOA to require financial institutions to compile, maintain, and submit to the Bureau certain data on credit applications by women-owned, minority-owned, and small businesses.

The Small Business Act,[131] administered through the SBA, defines a small business concern as a business that is ''independently owned and operated and which is not dominant in its field of operation'' and empowers the Administrator to prescribe detailed size standards by which a business concern may be categorized as a small business. The SBA has adopted nearly one thousand industry-specific size standards, classified by 6-digit NAICS codes, to determine whether a business concern is ''small.'' In addition, the Small Business Act authorizes loans for qualified small business concerns for purposes of plant acquisition, construction, conversion, or expansion, including the acquisition of land, material, supplies, equipment, and working capital. The SBA sets the guidelines that govern the ''7(a) loan program,'' determining which businesses financial institutions may lend to through the program and the type of loans they can provide. The Bureau's rule includes reporting on SBA lending and guarantee programs.

The CRA—implemented through regulations issued by the OCC, the Board, and the FDIC—requires some institutions to collect, maintain, and report certain data about small business, farm, and consumer lending to ensure they are serving their communities. The purpose of the CRA is to encourage institutions to help meet the credit needs of the local communities in which they do business, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

The Riegle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act of 1994 [132] authorized the Community Development Financial Institution Fund (CDFI Fund). The Department of the Treasury administers the regulations that govern the CDFI Fund. The CDFI program includes an annual mandatory Certification and Data Collection Report. The 2023 final rule requires that financial institutions reporting 1071 data identify if they are CDFIs.

HMDA, implemented by the Bureau's Regulation C (12 CFR part 1003), requires lenders who meet certain coverage tests to collect, report, and disclose detailed information to their Federal supervisory agencies about mortgage applications and loans at the

estimates of the one-time costs for each type of institution.

[128] See parts IV.E and IV.F for a discussion of how the market level one-time costs are calculated and a thorough discussion of the estimates, respectively.

[129] Rules are duplicative or overlapping if they are based on the same or similar reasons for the regulation, the same or similar regulatory goals, and if they regulate the same classes of industry. Rules are conflicting when they impose two conflicting regulatory requirements on the same classes of industry.

[130] *See* SBREFA Panel Report at app. C.

[131] 15 U.S.C. 631 *et seq.*

[132] 12 U.S.C. 4701 *et seq.*

transaction level. The HMDA data are a valuable source for regulators, researchers, economists, industry, and advocates assessing housing needs, public investment, and possible discrimination as well as studying and analyzing trends in the mortgage market for a variety of purposes, including general market and economic monitoring. The 2023 final rule eliminated the overlap between what is required to be reported under HMDA and what is covered by section 1071 for certain credit applications secured by dwellings.

The Currency and Foreign Transactions Reporting Act,[133] as amended by the USA PATRIOT Act,[134] and commonly referred to as the Bank Secrecy Act, authorized the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), a bureau of the Department of the Treasury, to combat money laundering and promote financial security. FinCEN regulations require financial institutions to establish and maintain written procedures that are reasonably designed to identify and verify beneficial owners of legal entity customers, which is sometimes called the customer due diligence (CDD) rule.

The Federal Credit Union Act, implemented by the NCUA (12 CFR part 1756), requires Federal credit unions to make financial reports as specified by the agency. The NCUA requires quarterly reports of the total number of outstanding loans, total outstanding loan balance, total number of loans granted or purchased year-to-date, total amount granted or purchased year-to-date for commercial loans to members, not including loans with original amounts less than $50,000. The NCUA also requires quarterly reports of the total number and total outstanding balance (including the guaranteed portion) of loans originated under an SBA loan program.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Act,[135] implemented by the FDIC (12 CFR part 304), requires insured banks and savings associations to file Call Reports in accordance with applicable instructions. These instructions require quarterly reports of loans to small businesses, defined as loans for commercial and industrial purposes to sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, and other business enterprises and loans secured by non-farm non-residential properties with original amounts of $1 million or less. In accordance with amendments by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Improvement Act of 1991,[136] the instructions require quarterly reports of loans to small farms, defined as loans to finance agricultural production, other loans to farmers, and loans secured by farmland (including farm residential and other improvements) with original amounts of $500,000 or less.

The Bureau requests comment to identify any additional such Federal statutes or regulations that impose duplicative, overlapping, or conflicting requirements on financial institutions and potential changes to the proposed rules in light of duplicative, overlapping, or conflicting requirements.

6. Description of Any Significant Alternatives to the Proposed Rule Which Accomplish the Stated Objectives of Applicable Statutes and Minimize Any Significant Economic Impact of the Proposed Rule on Small Entities

In drafting this proposed rule, the Bureau considered multiple reporting thresholds for purposes of defining a covered financial institution. In particular, the Bureau considered whether to exempt financial institutions with fewer than 200, 500, or 2,000 originations in each of the two preceding calendar years instead of 1,000 originations, as proposed herein. The Bureau presents estimates for depository institutions because it does not have sufficient information to estimate how these differences in thresholds would impact nondepository institutions. The following table shows the estimated impact that different reporting thresholds the Bureau considered would have had on financial institution coverage.

TABLE 10—ESTIMATED IMPACT OF DIFFERENT REPORTING THRESHOLDS ON THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SMALL DEPOSITORY INSTITUTIONS COVERED

Threshold considered	# of small depository institutions covered	% of small depository institutions covered
200 originations	110–160	1.4–2.1
500 originations	8–20	0.10–0.26
2,000 originations	1–3	0.01–0.04

TABLE 11—ESTIMATED IMPACT OF DIFFERENT REPORTING THRESHOLDS ON THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SMALL DEPOSITORY INSTITUTIONS NO LONGER COVERED RELATIVE TO THE 2023 FINAL RULE

Threshold considered	# of small depository institutions covered	% of small depository institutions covered
200 originations	600–710	7.9–9.3
500 originations	700–840	9.2–11.0
2,000 originations	720–860	9.4–11.3

The Bureau also considered limiting its data collection to the data points specifically enumerated in 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(e)(2)(A) through (G). In this proposal, the Bureau would continue to require the collection of the number of principal owners, three-digit NAICS industry code of the business, and the time in business, in addition to the data points required by statute. The Bureau has considered the impact on small entities of proposing only the collection of those data points enumerated in 1691c–2(e)(2)(A) through (G), excluding the additional data points that the Bureau believes help further the purposes of section 1071. Only requiring the collection and reporting of the data points enumerated in 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2(e)(2)(A) through (G) would have reduced the annual ongoing cost of

[133] Public Law 91–508, tit. II, 84 Stat. 1118 (1970).

[134] Public Law 107–56, 115 Stat. 272 (2001).

[135] 12 U.S.C. 1811 *et seq.*

[136] Public Law 102–242, 105 Stat. 2236 (1991).

complying with the proposed rule for small financial institutions. Under this alternative, the estimated total annual ongoing costs for Type A FIs, Type B FIs, and Type C FIs would be reduced by $148, $503 and $2,778, respectively. Per application, the estimated reduction in ongoing cost would be $1, less than $1, and $1 for Type A FIs, Type B FIs, and Type C FIs, respectively. The estimated total annual market-level ongoing cost savings of impacted small depository institutions would increase by about $20,000. The Bureau does not expect that one-time cost savings would be meaningfully different as a result of this alternative.

7. Discussion of Impact on Cost of Credit for Small Entities

The proposed rule would eliminate ongoing variable costs for institutions that would no longer be covered and would reduce ongoing variable costs for institutions that remain covered. In part IV.F.2 above, the Bureau describes how, based on economic theory and evidence from the Bureau's own surveys, financial institutions would most likely pass on these savings to small business borrowers from eliminated or lower ongoing variable costs in the form of lower prices and fees. Therefore, the Bureau expects that the proposed rule would decrease the cost of credit for small entities who are small business applicants for credit under the rule.

In part IV.F.2 above, the Bureau estimates that the per application ongoing variable cost, at baseline, is $34 for Type A FIs, $28 for Type B FIs, and $8 for Type C FIs. According to the analysis above, this is the expected benefit that would accrue to applicants at institutions that were covered at baseline but would no longer be covered under the proposed rule. For institutions that would continue to report under the proposed rule, the difference between the ongoing variable cost at baseline and under the proposed rule is $7 for Type A FIs, $2 for Type B FIs, and $1 for Type C FIs. This difference is what the Bureau expects to be passed on to applicants at financial institutions that would continue to be covered under the proposed rule.

Furthermore, the Bureau expects that small financial institutions covered under the proposed rule (insofar as they are considered ''small entities'' for the purposes of the RFA) are unlikely to experience a meaningful change in the costs of credit. Generally, financial institutions borrow in a manner that is different from other types of small businesses, including from other financial institutions in a separate Federal Funds market or from the Federal Reserve. The changes in compliance costs due to the proposed rule are unlikely to significantly change the cost of borrowing for these small financial institutions.

VI. Paperwork Reduction Act

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA),[137] Federal agencies are generally required to seek approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for information collection requirements prior to implementation. Under the PRA, the Bureau may not conduct nor sponsor, and, notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person is not required to respond to, an information collection unless the information collection displays a valid control number assigned by OMB.

As part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, the Bureau conducts a preclearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on the information collection requirements in accordance with the PRA. This helps ensure that the public understands the Bureau's requirements or instructions, respondents can provide the requested data in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, information collection instruments are clearly understood, and the Bureau can properly assess the impact of information collection requirements on respondents.

The proposed rule would amend 12 CFR part 1002 (Regulation B), which implements ECOA. The Bureau's OMB control number for Regulation B is 3170–0013. This proposed rule would revise the information collection requirements contained in Regulation B that OMB has approved under that OMB control number.

Under the proposal, the Bureau would amend one information collection requirement in Regulation B: Compilation of reportable data (proposed § 1002.107), including a notice requirement (in proposed § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19)).

The information collection requirements in Regulation B, as amended by this proposed rule, would be mandatory. Certain data fields would be modified or deleted by the Bureau, in its discretion, to advance a privacy interest before the data are made available to the public (as permitted by section 1071 and the Bureau's rule). The data that are not modified or deleted would be made available to the public and are not considered confidential. The rest of the data would be considered confidential if the information:

- Identifies any natural persons who might not be applicants (*e.g.,* owners of a business where a legal entity is the applicant); or
- Implicates the privacy interests of financial institutions.

The collections of information contained in this proposed rule, and identified as such, have been submitted to OMB for review under section 3507(d) of the PRA. A complete description of the information collection requirements (including the burden estimate methods) is provided in the information collection request (ICR) that the Bureau has submitted to OMB under the requirements of the PRA. Please send your comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB, Attention: Desk Officer for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Send these comments by email to *oira_submission@omb.eop.gov* or by fax to 202–395–6974. If you wish to share your comments with the Bureau, please send a copy of these comments as described in the **ADDRESSES** section above. The ICR submitted to OMB requesting approval under the PRA for the information collection requirements contained herein is available at *www.regulations.gov* as well as on OMB's public-facing docket at *www.reginfo.gov.*

Title of Collection: Regulation B: Equal Credit Opportunity Act.

OMB Control Number: 3170–0013.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Affected Public: Private Sector; Federal and State Governments.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 188,800.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 5,921,9579.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Bureau, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Bureau's estimate of the burden of the collection of information, including the validity of the methods and the assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments submitted in response to this proposal will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

[137] 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*

If applicable, the notice of final rule will display the control number assigned by OMB to any information collection requirements proposed herein and adopted in the final rule.

VII. Regulatory Review

Executive Orders 12866 and 13563 direct agencies to assess all costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, if regulation is necessary, to select those regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety, and other advantages; and distributive impacts). Section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866 defines a ''significant regulatory action'' as any regulatory action that is likely to result in a rule that may: (1) have an annual effect on the economy of $100 million or more or adversely affect in a material way the economy, a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local, or tribal governments or communities; (2) create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency; (3) materially alter the budgetary impact of entitlements, grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or (4) raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, or the President's priorities. The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), has determined that this action is a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866. Accordingly, OMB has reviewed this action.

List of Subjects in 12 CFR Part 1002

Banks, Banking, Civil rights, Consumer protection, Credit, Credit unions, Marital status discrimination, National banks, Penalties.

Authority and Issuance

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, the Bureau proposes to amend Regulation B, 12 CFR part 1002, as set forth below:

PART 1002—EQUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITY ACT (REGULATION B)

■ 1. The authority citation for part 1002 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 12 U.S.C. 5512, 5581; 15 U.S.C. 1691b. Subpart B is also issued under 15 U.S.C. 1691c–2.

Subpart A—General

■ 2. Amend § 1002.5 by revising paragraphs (a)(4)(vii) through (x) as follows:

§ 1002.5 Rules concerning requests for information.

(a) * * *

(4) * * *

(vii) A creditor that was required to report small business lending data pursuant to § 1002.109 for any of the preceding five calendar years but is not currently a covered financial institution under § 1002.105(b) may collect information pursuant to subpart B of this part for covered applications from small businesses as defined in §§ 1002.103 and 1002.106(b) regarding whether an applicant is a minority-owned business or a women-owned business, and the ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners if it complies with the requirements for covered financial institutions pursuant to §§ 1002.107(a)(18) and (19), 1002.108, 1002.111, and 1002.112 for that application. Such a creditor is permitted, but not required, to report data to the Bureau collected pursuant to subpart B of this part if it complies with the requirements of subpart B as otherwise required for covered financial institutions pursuant to §§ 1002.109 and 1002.110.

(viii) A creditor that exceeded the loan-volume threshold in the first year of the two-year threshold period provided in § 1002.105(b) may, in the second year, collect information pursuant to subpart B of this part for covered applications from small businesses as defined in §§ 1002.103 and 1002.106(b) regarding whether an applicant is a minority-owned business or a women-owned business, and the ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners if it complies with the requirements for covered financial institutions pursuant to §§ 1002.107(a)(18) and (19), 1002.108, 1002.111, and 1002.112 for that application. Such a creditor is permitted, but not required, to report data to the Bureau collected pursuant to subpart B of this part if it complies with the requirements of subpart B as otherwise required for covered financial institutions pursuant to §§ 1002.109 and 1002.110.

(ix) A creditor that is not currently a covered financial institution under § 1002.105(b), and is not otherwise a creditor to which § 1002.5(a)(4)(vii) or (viii) applies, may collect information pursuant to subpart B of this part for covered applications from small businesses as defined in §§ 1002.103 and 1002.106(b) regarding whether an applicant for a covered credit transaction is a minority-owned business or a women-owned business, and the ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners for a transaction if it complies with the requirements for covered financial institutions pursuant to §§ 1002.107 through 1002.112 for that application.

(x) A creditor that is collecting information pursuant to subpart B of this part or as described in paragraphs (a)(4)(vii) through (ix) of this section for covered applications from small businesses as defined in §§ 1002.103 and 1002.106(b) regarding whether an applicant for a covered credit transaction is a minority-owned business or a women-owned business, and the ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners may also collect that same information for any co-applicants provided that it also complies with the relevant requirements of subpart B of this part or as described in paragraphs (a)(4)(vii) through (ix) of this section with respect to those co-applicants.

* * * * *

Subpart B—Small Business Lending Data Collection

■ 3. Amend § 1002.101 by removing and reserving paragraphs (k) and (l).

■ 4. Amend § 1002.104 by adding paragraphs (b)(7) through (9) as follows:

§ 1002.104 Covered credit transactions and excluded transactions.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(7) *Merchant cash advance.* An agreement under which a small business receives a lump-sum payment in exchange for the right to receive a percentage of the small business's future sales or income up to a ceiling amount.

(8) *Agricultural lending.* A transaction to fund the production of crops, fruits, vegetables, and livestock, or to fund the purchase or refinance of capital assets such as farmland, machinery and equipment, breeder livestock, and farm real estate improvements.

(9) *Small dollar business credit*—(i) A transaction in an amount of $1,000 or less.

(ii) *Inflation adjustment.* Every 5 years after January 1, 2030, the transaction amount set forth in paragraph (b)(9) of this section shall adjust based on changes to the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (U.S. city average series for all items, not seasonally adjusted), as published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Any adjustment that takes effect under this

paragraph shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of $100. If an adjustment is to take effect, it will do so on January 1 of the following calendar year.

■ 5. Amend § 1002.105 by revising paragraph (b) as follows:

§ 1002.105 Covered financial institutions and exempt institutions.

* * * * *

(b) *Covered financial institution* means a financial institution, other than a Farm Credit System lender, that originated at least 1,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses in each of the two preceding calendar years.

■ 6. Amend § 1002.106 by revising paragraph (b) as follows:

§ 1002.106 Business and small business.

* * * * *

(b) *Small business definition*—(1) *Small business* has the same meaning as the term ''small business concern'' in 15 U.S.C. 632(a), as implemented in 13 CFR 121.101 through 121.107. Notwithstanding the size standards set forth in 13 CFR 121.201, for purposes of this subpart, a business is a small business if its gross annual revenue, as defined in § 1002.107(a)(14), for its preceding fiscal year is $1 million or less.

(2) *Inflation adjustment.* Every 5 years after January 1, 2030, the gross annual revenue threshold set forth in paragraph (b)(1) of this section shall adjust based on changes to the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (U.S. city average series for all items, not seasonally adjusted), as published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Any adjustment that takes effect under this paragraph shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of $100,000. If an adjustment is to take effect, it will do so on January 1 of the following calendar year.

■ 7. Amend § 1002.107 by removing and reserving paragraphs (a)(3), (4), (11), (12), and (16), (c)(2)(i) and (iii), and (c)(3) and (4), and by revising paragraphs (a)(18), (19), (c)(1), (d) introductory text, and (d)(1) as follows:

§ 1002.107 Compilation of reportable data.

(a) * * *

(18) *Minority-owned and women-owned business statuses.* Whether the applicant is a minority-owned and/or women-owned business. When requesting minority-owned and women-owned business statuses from an applicant, the financial institution shall inform the applicant that the financial institution cannot discriminate on the basis of minority-owned or women-owned business statuses, or on whether the applicant provides this information. The financial institution must also inform the applicant of its right to refuse to provide this information.

(19) *Ethnicity, race, and sex of principal owners.* The ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners. When requesting ethnicity, race, and sex information from an applicant, the financial institution shall inform the applicant that the financial institution cannot discriminate on the basis of a principal owner's ethnicity, race, or sex, or on whether the applicant provides this information. The financial institution must also inform the applicant of its right to refuse to provide this information.

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(1) *In general.* A covered financial institution shall maintain procedures to collect applicant-provided data under paragraph (a) of this section and shall otherwise maintain procedures to collect such data at a time and in a manner that are reasonably designed to obtain a response.

* * * * *

(d) *Previously collected data.* A covered financial institution is permitted, but not required, to reuse previously collected data to satisfy paragraphs (a)(13) through (15) and (16) through (20) of this section if:

(1) To satisfy paragraphs (a)(13), (15), and (17) through (20) of this section, the data were collected within the 36 months preceding the current covered application, or to satisfy paragraph (a)(14) of this section, the data were collected within the same calendar year as the current covered application; and

* * * * *

■ 8. Amend § 1002.108 by revising paragraphs (b) and (d) as follows:

§ 1002.108 Firewall.

* * * * *

(b) *Prohibition on access to certain information.* Unless the exception under paragraph (c) of this section applies, an employee or officer of a covered financial institution or a covered financial institution's affiliate shall not have access to an applicant's responses to inquiries that the financial institution makes pursuant to this subpart regarding whether the applicant is a minority-owned business or a women-owned business under § 1002.107(a)(18), and regarding the ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners under § 1002.107(a)(19), if that employee or officer is involved in making any determination concerning that applicant's covered application.

* * * * *

(d) *Notice.* In order to satisfy the exception set forth in paragraph (c) of this section, a financial institution shall provide a notice to each applicant whose responses will be accessed, informing the applicant that one or more employees or officers involved in making determinations concerning the covered application may have access to the applicant's responses to the financial institution's inquiries regarding whether the applicant is a minority-owned business or a women-owned business, and regarding the ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners. The financial institution shall provide the notice required by this paragraph (d) when making the inquiries required under § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) and together with the notices required pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19).

■ 9. Amend § 1002.111 by revising paragraph (b) as follows:

§ 1002.111 Recordkeeping.

* * * * *

(b) *Certain information kept separate from the rest of the application.* A financial institution shall maintain, separately from the rest of the application and accompanying information, an applicant's responses to the financial institution's inquiries pursuant to this subpart regarding whether an applicant for a covered credit transaction is a minority-owned business and/or a women-owned business under § 1002.107(a)(18), and regarding the ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners under § 1002.107(a)(19).

* * * * *

■ 10. Amend § 1002.112 by revising paragraph (c)(4) as follows:

§ 1002.112 Enforcement.

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(4) *Incorrect determination of small business status, covered credit transaction, or covered application.* A financial institution that initially collects data regarding whether an applicant for a covered credit transaction is a minority-owned business or a women-owned business and the ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) but later concludes that it should not have collected such data does not violate the Act or this regulation if the financial institution, at the time it collected this data, had a reasonable basis for believing that the application was a

covered application for a covered credit transaction from a small business pursuant to §§ 1002.103, 1002.104, and 1002.106, respectively. A financial institution seeking to avail itself of this safe harbor shall comply with the requirements of this subpart as otherwise required pursuant to §§ 1002.107, 1002.108, and 1002.111 with respect to the collected data.

* * * * *

■ 11. Amend § 1002.114 by removing and reserving paragraphs (b)(2) and (3), and (c)(3), and by revising paragraphs (b)(1) and (4), and (c)(1) and (2).

§ 1002.114 Effective date, compliance date, and special transitional rules.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(1) A covered financial institution that originated at least 1,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses in each of calendar years 2026 and 2027 shall comply with the requirements of this subpart beginning January 1, 2028.

* * * * *

(4) A financial institution that did not originate at least 1,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses in each of calendar years 2026 and 2027, but subsequently originates at least 1,000 such transactions in two consecutive calendar years shall comply with the requirements of this subpart in accordance with § 1002.105(b), but in any case no earlier than January 1, 2029.

(c) *Special transitional rules*—(1) *Collection of certain information prior to the compliance date.* A financial institution that reasonably anticipates being a covered financial institution as described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section is permitted, but not required, to collect information regarding whether an applicant for a covered credit transaction is a minority-owned business and/or a women-owned business under § 1002.107(a)(18), and the ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners under § 1002.107(a)(19) beginning 12 months prior to the compliance date as set forth in paragraph (b)(1) of this section. A financial institution collecting such information pursuant to this paragraph (c)(1) must do so in accordance with the requirements set out in §§ 1002.107(a)(18) and (19), 1002.108, and 1002.111(b) and (c).

(2) *Determining which compliance date applies to a financial institution that does not collect information sufficient to determine small business status.* A financial institution that is unable to determine the number of covered credit transactions it originated for small businesses in each of calendar years 2026 and 2027 for purposes of determining its compliance date pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section, because for some or all of this period it does not have readily accessible the information needed to determine whether its covered credit transactions were originated for small businesses as defined in § 1002.106(b), is permitted to use any reasonable method to estimate its originations to small businesses for either or both of the calendar years 2026 and 2027.

* * * * *

■ 12. Amend Appendices E and F by revising them as follows:

Appendix E to Part 1002—Sample Form for Collecting Certain Applicant-Provided Data Under Subpart B

BILLING CODE 4810–AM–P

Sample data collection form

Federal law requires that we request the following information to help ensure that all small businesses applying for loans and other kinds of credit are treated fairly and that communities' small business credit needs are met.

One or more employees or officers involved in making a determination concerning your application may have access to the information provided on this form. However, **FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION** on the basis of your answers on this form. Additionally, we cannot discriminate on the basis of whether you provide this information.

Information about your application (without your name or other directly identifying information) may eventually be available to the public. Though filling out this form will help to ensure that all small business owners are treated fairly, **YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION.**

Business ownership status

Please indicate the business ownership status of your small business. For the purposes of this form, your business is a minority-owned or women-owned business if one or more minorities* or women (i) directly or indirectly own or control more than 50 percent of the business AND (ii) receive more than 50 percent of the net profits/losses of the business.

What is your business ownership status? *(Check one or more)*

- ☐ **I do not wish to provide this information**
- ☐ **Minority-owned business**
- ☐ **Women-owned business**
- ☐ **None of these apply**

**Minority means Hispanic or Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. A multi-racial or muti-ethnic individual is a minority for this purpose.*

Number of principal owners

For purposes of this form, a principal owner is any individual who owns 25 percent or more of the equity interest of a business. A business might not have any principal owners if, for example, it is not directly owned by any individuals (i.e., if it is owned by another entity or entities) or if no individual directly owns at least 25 percent of the business.

How many principal owners does your business have? *(Check one)*

- ☐ **0**
- ☐ **1**
- ☐ **2**
- ☐ **3**
- ☐ **4**

Demographic information about principal owners

As a reminder, **APPLICANTS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION**. We cannot discriminate on the basis of any person's ethnicity, race, or sex. Further, we cannot discriminate on the basis of whether you provide this information. **PLEASE FILL OUT ONE SHEET FOR EACH PRINCIPAL OWNER.**

1. What is your ethnicity?

(Check one or more)

☐ **I do not wish to provide my ethnicity**

☐ **Hispanic or Latino**

- ☐ Cuban
- ☐ Mexican
- ☐ Puerto Rican
- ☐ Other Hispanic or Latino *(Please specify your origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on):*

☐ **Not Hispanic or Latino**

2. What is your race?

(Check one or more)

☐ **I do not wish to provide my race**

☐ **American Indian or Alaska Native** *(Please specify the name of your enrolled or principal tribe):*

☐ **Asian**

- ☐ Asian Indian
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Filipino
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Vietnamese
- ☐ Other Asian *(Please specify your race, for example, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Pakistani, Thai, and so on):*

☐ **Black or African American**

- ☐ African American
- ☐ Ethiopian
- ☐ Haitian
- ☐ Jamaican
- ☐ Nigerian
- ☐ Somali
- ☐ Other Black or African American *(Please specify your race, for example, Barbadian, Ghanaian, South African, and so on):*

☐ **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander**

- ☐ Guamanian or Chamorro
- ☐ Native Hawaiian
- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Other Pacific Islander *(Please specify your race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on):*

☐ **White**

3. What is your sex?

(Check only one)

☐ **I do not wish to provide my sex**

☐ **Male**

☐ **Female**

BILLING CODE 4810–AM–C

Appendix F to Part 1002—Tolerances for Bona Fide Errors in Data Reported Under Subpart B

As set out in § 1002.112(b) and in comment 112(b)–1, a financial institution is presumed to maintain procedures reasonably adapted to avoid errors with respect to a given data field if the number of errors found in a random sample of a financial institution's data submission for a given data field do not equal or exceed the threshold in column C of the following table (Table 1, Tolerance Thresholds for Bona Fide Errors):

TABLE 1 TO APPENDIX F—TOLERANCE THRESHOLDS FOR BONA FIDE ERRORS

Small business lending application register count (A)	Random sample size (B)	Threshold (#) (C)	Threshold (%) (D)
1,000–100,000	79	4	5.1
100,001+	159	4	2.5

The size of the random sample, under column B, shall depend on the size of the financial institution's small business lending application register, as shown in column A of the Threshold Table.

The thresholds in column C of the Threshold Table reflect the number of unintentional errors a financial institution may make within a particular data field (*e.g.,* the credit product data field within the credit type data point or the sex data field for a particular principal owner within the ethnicity, race, and sex of principal owners data point) in a small business lending application register that would be deemed bona fide errors for purposes of § 1002.112(b).

For instance, a financial institution that submitted a small business lending application register containing 11,000 applications would be subject to a threshold of four errors per data field. If the financial institution had made two errors in reporting loan amount and two errors reporting gross annual income, all of these errors would be covered by the bona fide error provision of § 1002.112(b) and would not constitute a violation of the Act or this part. If the same financial institution had made five errors in reporting loan amount and two errors reporting gross annual revenue, the bona fide error provision of § 1002.112(b) would not apply to the five loan amount errors but would still apply to the two gross annual revenue errors.

Even when the number of errors in a particular data field do not equal or exceed the threshold in column C, if either there is a reasonable basis to believe that errors in that field were intentional or there is evidence that the financial institution did not maintain procedures reasonably adapted to avoid such errors, then the errors are not bona fide errors under § 1002.112(b).

For purposes of determining bona fide errors under § 1002.112(b), the term ''data field'' generally refers to individual fields. Some data fields may allow for more than one response. For example, with respect to information on the ethnicity or race of an applicant's principal owners, a data field may identify more than one race or more than one ethnicity for a given person. If one or more of the ethnicities or races identified in a data field are erroneous, they count as one (and only one) error for that data field.

* * * * *

■ 13. In Supplement I to part 1002:

■ a. Under *Section 1002.5—Rules Concerning Requests for Information,* revise *5(a)(2) Required Collection of Information.*

■ b. Under *Section 1002.102—Definitions,* remove *102(l) LGBTQI+-Owned Business* and revise *102(o) Principal Owner.*

■ c. Under *Section 1002.104—Covered Credit Transactions and Excluded Transactions,* revise *104(a) Covered Credit Transaction* and *104(b) Excluded Transactions,* and add *104(b)(9) Small dollar business credit transactions.*

■ d. Under *Section 1002.105—Covered Financial Institutions and Exempt Institutions,* revise *105(a) Financial Institution* and *105(b) Covered Financial Institution.*

■ e. Under *Section 1002.106—Business and Small Business, revise 106(b)(1) Small Business* and *106(b)(2) Inflation Adjustment.*

■ f. Under *Section 1002.107—Compilation of Reportable Data,* remove *107(a)(3) Application Method, 107(a)(4) Application Recipient, 107(a)(11) Denial Reasons, 107(a)(12) Pricing Information, 107(a)(12)(i) Interest Rate, 107(a)(12)(ii) Total Origination Charges, 107(a)(12)(iii) Broker Fees, 107(a)(12)(iv) Initial Annual Charges, 107(a)(12)(v) Additional Cost for Merchant Cash Advances or Other Sales-Based Financing, 107(a)(12)(vi) Prepayment Penalties, 107(a)(16) Number of Workers, 107(c)(3) Procedures To Monitor Compliance, 107(c)(4) Low Response Rates,* and revise *107(a)(2) Application Date, 107(a)(5) Credit Type, 107(a)(18) Minority-Owned, Women-Owned, and LGBTQI+-Owned Business Statuses* including the heading, *107(a)(19) Ethnicity, Race, and Sex of Principal Owners, 107(b) Reliance on and Verification of Applicant-Provided Data, 107(c)(1) In General, 107(c)(2) Applicant-Provided Data Collected Directly From the Applicant,* and *107(d) Previously Collected Data.*

■ g. Under *Section 1002.108—Firewall,* revise *108(b) Prohibition on Access to Certain Information* and *108(d) Notice.*

■ h. Under *Section 1002.109—Reporting of Data to the Bureau,* revise *109(a)(3) Reporting Obligations Where Multiple Financial Institutions Are Involved in a Covered Credit Transaction, 109(b) Financial Institution Identifying Information,* and *Paragraph 109(b)(9).*

■ i. Under *Section 1002.112—Enforcement,* revise *112(c) Safe Harbors.*

■ j. Under *Section 1002.114—Effective Date, Compliance Date, and Special Transition Rules,* revise *114(b) Compliance Date* and *114(c) Special Transition Rules.*

The revisions read as follows:

Supplement I to Part 1002—Official Interpretations

Section 1002.5—Rules Concerning Requests for Information

* * * * *

5(a)(2) Required Collection of Information

1. *Local laws.* Information that a creditor is allowed to collect pursuant to a ''state'' statute or regulation includes information required by a local statute, regulation, or ordinance.

2. *Information required by Regulation C.* Regulation C, 12 CFR part 1003, generally requires creditors covered by the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) to collect and report information about the race, ethnicity, and sex of applicants for certain dwelling-secured loans, including some types of loans not covered by § 1002.13.

3. *Collecting information on behalf of creditors.* Persons such as loan brokers and correspondents do not violate the ECOA or Regulation B if they collect information that they are otherwise prohibited from collecting, where the purpose of collecting the information is to provide it to a creditor that is subject to subpart B of this part, the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, or another Federal or State statute or regulation requiring data collection.

4. *Information required by subpart B.* Subpart B of this part generally requires creditors that are covered financial institutions as defined in § 1002.105(b) to collect and report information about the ethnicity, race, and sex of the principal owners of applicants for certain small business credit, as well as whether the applicant is a minority-owned business or a women-owned business, as defined in § 1002.102(m) and (s), respectively.

* * * * *

Section 1002.102—Definitions

* * * * *

102(o) Principal Owner

1. *Individual.* Only an individual can be a principal owner of a business for purposes of subpart B of this part. Entities, such as trusts, partnerships, limited liability companies, and corporations, are not principal owners for this purpose. Additionally, an individual must directly own an equity share of 25 percent or more in the business in order to be a principal owner. Unlike the determination of ownership for purposes of collecting and reporting minority-owned business status and women-owned business

status, indirect ownership is not considered when determining if someone is a principal owner for purposes of collecting and reporting principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex or the number of principal owners. Thus, when determining who is a principal owner, ownership is not traced through multiple corporate structures to determine if an individual owns 25 percent or more of the equity interests. For example, if individual A directly owns 20 percent of a business, individual B directly owns 20 percent, and partnership C owns 60 percent, the business does not have any owners who satisfy the definition of principal owner set forth in § 1002.102(o), even if individual A and individual B are the only partners in the partnership C. Similarly, if individual A directly owns 30 percent of a business, individual B directly owns 20 percent, and trust D owns 50 percent, individual A is the only principal owner as defined in § 1002.102(o), even if individual B is the sole trustee of trust D.

2. *Trustee.* Although a trust is not considered a principal owner of a business for the purposes of subpart B, if the applicant for a covered credit transaction is a trust, a trustee is considered the owner of the trust. Thus, if a trust is an applicant for a covered credit transaction and the trust has two co-trustees, each co-trustee is considered to own 50 percent of the business and would each be a principal owner as defined in § 1002.102(o). In contrast, if the trust has five co-trustees, each co-trustee is considered to own 20 percent of the business and would not meet the definition of principal owner under § 1002.102(o).

3. *Purpose of definition.* A financial institution shall provide an applicant with the definition of principal owner when asking the applicant to provide the number of its principal owners pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(20) and the ethnicity, race, and sex of its principal owners pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(19). See comments 107(a)(19)–2 and 107(a)(20)–1.

* * * * *

Section 1002.104—Covered Credit Transactions and Excluded Transactions

104(a) Covered Credit Transaction

1. *General.* The term ''covered credit transaction'' includes all business credit (including loans, lines of credit, and credit cards) unless otherwise excluded under § 1002.104(b).

104(b) Excluded Transactions

1. *Factoring.* The term ''covered credit transaction'' does not cover factoring as described herein. For the purpose of this subpart, factoring is an accounts receivable purchase transaction between businesses that includes an agreement to purchase, transfer, or sell a legally enforceable claim for payment for goods that the recipient has supplied or services that the recipient has rendered but for which payment in full has not yet been made. The name used by the financial institution for a product is not determinative of whether or not it is a ''covered credit transaction.'' This description of factoring is not intended to repeal, abrogate, annul, impair, or interfere with any existing interpretations, orders, agreements, ordinances, rules, or regulations adopted or issued pursuant to comment 9(a)(3)–3. A financial institution shall report an extension of business credit incident to a factoring arrangement that is otherwise a covered credit transaction as ''Other sales-based financing transaction'' under § 1002.107(a)(5).

2. *Leases.* The term ''covered credit transaction'' does not cover leases as described herein. A lease, for the purpose of this subpart, is a transfer from one business to another of the right to possession and use of goods for a term, and for primarily business or commercial (including agricultural) purposes, in return for consideration. A lease does not include a sale, including a sale on approval or a sale or return, or a transaction resulting in the retention or creation of a security interest. The name used by the financial institution for a product is not determinative of whether or not it is a ''covered credit transaction.''

3. *Consumer-designated credit.* The term ''covered credit transaction'' does not include consumer-designated credit that is used for business purposes. A transaction qualifies as consumer-designated credit if the financial institution offers or extends the credit primarily for personal, family, or household purposes. For example, an open-end credit account used for both personal and business purposes is not business credit for the purpose of subpart B of this part unless the financial institution designated or intended for the primary purpose of the account to be business-related.

4. *Credit transaction purchases, purchases of an interest in a pool of credit transactions, and purchases of a partial interest in a credit transaction.* The term ''covered credit transaction'' does not cover the purchase of an originated credit transaction, the purchase of an interest in a pool of credit transactions, or the purchase of a partial interest in a credit transaction such as through a loan participation agreement. Such purchases do not, in themselves, constitute an application for credit. See also comment 109(a)(3)–2.i.

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104(b)(9) Small Dollar Business Credit Transactions

1. *General.* Small dollar business credit transactions, as defined in § 1002.104(b)(9), are excluded from the definition of a covered credit transaction. Applications that are originated or approved but not accepted satisfy this exclusion if the amount originated or approved is $1,000 or less. Applications that are denied, withdrawn, or incomplete satisfy this exclusion if the amount applied for is $1,000 or less. If the particular type of credit product applied for does not involve a specific amount requested, and the financial institution as matter of general practice does not originate that particular type of credit product in amounts of $1,000 or less, the application cannot be treated as a small dollar business credit transaction. See comment 107(a)(7)–2.

2. *Inflation adjustment methodology.* The small dollar business credit transaction amount set forth in § 1002.104(b)(9)(ii) will be adjusted upward or downward to reflect changes, if any, in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (U.S. city average series for all items, not seasonally adjusted), as published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (''CPI–U''). The base for computing each adjustment is the January 2030 CPI–U; this base value shall be compared to the CPI–U value in January 2035 and every five years thereafter. For example, after the January 2035 CPI–U is made available, the adjustment is calculated by determining the percentage change in the CPI–U between January 2030 and January 2035, applying this change to the $1,000 small dollar business transaction amount, and rounding to the nearest $100. If, as a result of this rounding, there is no change in the transaction amount, there will be no adjustment. For example, if in January 2035 the adjusted value were $950 (reflecting a $50 decrease from January 2030 CPI–U), then the transaction amount would not adjust because $950 would be rounded up to $1,000. If on the other hand, the adjusted value were $1,120, then the transaction amount would adjust to $1,100. Where the adjusted value is a multiple of $50 (*e.g.,* $1,050), then the transaction amount adjusts upward.

2. *Substitute for CPI–U.* If publication of the CPI–U ceases, or if the CPI–U otherwise becomes unavailable or is altered in such a way as to be unusable, then the Bureau shall substitute another reliable cost of living indicator from the United States Government for the purpose of calculating adjustments pursuant to § 1002.104(b)(9)(ii).

Section 1002.105—Covered Financial Institutions and Exempt Institutions

105(a) Financial Institution

1. *Examples.* Section 1002.105(a) defines a financial institution as any partnership, company, corporation, association (incorporated or unincorporated), trust, estate, cooperative organization, or other entity that engages in any financial activity. This definition includes, but is not limited to, banks, savings associations, credit unions, online lenders, platform lenders, community development financial institutions, lenders involved in equipment and vehicle financing (captive financing companies and independent financing companies), commercial finance companies, organizations exempt from taxation pursuant to 26 U.S.C. 501(c), and governments or governmental subdivisions or agencies.

2. *Motor vehicle dealers.* Pursuant to § 1002.101(a), subpart B of this part excludes from coverage persons defined by section 1029 of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010, title X of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, Public Law 111–203, 124 Stat. 1376, 2004 (2010).

105(b) Covered Financial Institution

1. *Preceding calendar year.* The definition of covered financial institution refers to preceding calendar years. For example, in 2029, the two preceding calendar years are 2027 and 2028. Accordingly, in 2029, Financial Institution A does not meet the loan-volume threshold in § 1002.105(b) if did not originate at least 1,000 covered credit

transactions for small businesses both during 2027 and during 2028.

2. *Origination threshold.* A financial institution qualifies as a covered financial institution based on total covered credit transactions originated for small businesses, rather than covered applications received from small businesses. For example, if in both 2028 and 2029, Financial Institution B received 1,100 covered applications from small businesses and originated 900 covered credit transactions for small businesses, then for 2029, Financial Institution B is not a covered financial institution.

3. *Counting originations when multiple financial institutions are involved in originating a covered credit transaction.* For the purpose of counting originations to determine whether a financial institution is a covered financial institution under § 1002.105(b), in a situation where multiple financial institutions are involved in originating a single covered credit transaction, only the last financial institution with authority to set the material terms of the covered credit transaction is required to count the origination.

4. *Counting originations after adjustments to the gross annual revenue threshold due to inflation.* Pursuant to § 1002.106(b)(2), every five years, the gross annual revenue threshold used to define a small business in § 1002.106(b)(1) shall be adjusted, if necessary, to account for inflation. The first time such an adjustment could occur is in 2035, with an effective date of January 1, 2036. A financial institution seeking to determine whether it is a covered financial institution applies the gross annual revenue threshold that is in effect for each year it is evaluating. For example, a financial institution seeking to determine whether it is a covered financial institution in 2037 counts its originations of covered credit transactions for small businesses in calendar years 2035 and 2036. The financial institution applies the initial $1 million threshold to evaluate whether its originations were to small businesses in 2035. In this example, if the small business threshold were increased to $1.1 million effective January 1, 2036, the financial institution applies the $1.1 million threshold to count its originations for small businesses in 2036.

5. *Reevaluation, extension, or renewal requests, as well as credit line increases and other requests for additional credit amounts.* While requests for additional credit amounts on an existing account can constitute a ''covered application'' pursuant to § 1002.103(b)(1), such requests are not counted as originations for the purpose of determining whether a financial institution is a covered financial institution pursuant to § 1002.105(b). In addition, transactions that extend, renew, or otherwise amend a transaction are not counted as originations. For example, if a financial institution originates 600 term loans and 250 lines of credit for small businesses in each of the preceding two calendar years, along with 100 line increases for small businesses in each of those years, the financial institution is not a covered financial institution because it has not originated at least 1,000 covered credit transactions in each of the two preceding calendar years.

6. *Annual consideration.* Whether a financial institution is a covered financial institution for a particular year depends on its small business lending activity in the preceding two calendar years. Therefore, whether a financial institution is a covered financial institution is an annual consideration for each year that data may be compiled and maintained for purposes of subpart B of this part. A financial institution may be a covered financial institution for a given year of data collection (and the obligations arising from qualifying as a covered financial institution shall continue into subsequent years, pursuant to §§ 1002.110 and 1002.111), but the same financial institution may not be a covered financial institution for the following year of data collection. For example, Financial Institution C originated 1,100 covered transactions for small businesses in both 2027 and 2028. In 2029, Financial Institution C is a covered financial institution and therefore is obligated to compile and maintain applicable 2029 small business lending data under § 1002.107(a). During 2029, Financial Institution C originates 900 covered transactions for small businesses. In 2030, Financial Institution C is not a covered financial institution with respect to 2030 small business lending data, and is not obligated to compile and maintain 2030 data under § 1002.107(a) (although Financial Institution C may volunteer to collect and maintain 2030 data pursuant to § 1002.5(a)(4)(vii) and as explained in comment 105(b)–10). Pursuant to § 1002.109(a), Financial Institution C shall submit its small business lending application register for 2029 data in the format prescribed by the Bureau by June 1, 2030 because Financial Institution C is a covered financial institution with respect to 2029 data, and the data submission deadline of June 1, 2030 applies to 2029 data.

7. *Merger or acquisition—coverage of surviving or newly formed institution.* After a merger or acquisition, the surviving or newly formed financial institution is a covered financial institution under § 1002.105(b) if it, considering the combined lending activity of the surviving or newly formed institution and the merged or acquired financial institutions (or acquired branches or locations), satisfies the criteria included in § 1002.105(b). For example, Financial Institutions A and B merge. The surviving or newly formed financial institution meets the threshold in § 1002.105(b) if the combined previous components of the surviving or newly formed financial institution (A plus B) would have originated at least 1,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses for each of the two preceding calendar years. Similarly, if the combined previous components and the surviving or newly formed financial institution would have reported at least 1,000 covered transactions for small businesses for the year previous to the merger as well as 1,000 covered transactions for small businesses for the year of the merger, the threshold described in § 1002.105(b) would be met and the surviving or newly formed financial institution would be a covered institution under § 1002.105(b) for the year following the merger. Comment 105(b)–8 discusses a financial institution's responsibilities with respect to compiling and maintaining (and subsequently reporting) data during the calendar year of a merger.

8. *Merger or acquisition—coverage specific to the calendar year of the merger or acquisition.* The scenarios described below illustrate a financial institution's responsibilities specifically for data from the calendar year of a merger or acquisition. For purposes of these illustrations, an ''institution that is not covered'' means either an institution that is not a financial institution, as defined in § 1002.105(a), or a financial institution that is not a covered financial institution, as defined in § 1002.105(b).

i. Two institutions that are not covered financial institutions merge. The surviving or newly formed institution meets all of the requirements necessary to be a covered financial institution. No data are required to be compiled, maintained, or reported for the calendar year of the merger (even though the merger creates an institution that meets all of the requirements necessary to be a covered financial institution).

ii. A covered financial institution and an institution that is not covered merge. The covered financial institution is the surviving institution, or a new covered financial institution is formed. For the calendar year of the merger, data are required to be compiled, maintained, and reported for covered applications from the covered financial institution and is optional for covered applications from the financial institution that was previously not covered.

iii. A covered financial institution and an institution that is not covered merge. The institution that is not covered is the surviving institution and remains not covered after the merger, or a new institution that is not covered is formed. For the calendar year of the merger, data are required to be compiled and maintained (and subsequently reported) for covered applications from the previously covered financial institution that took place prior to the merger. After the merger date, compiling, maintaining, and reporting data is optional for applications from the institution that was previously covered for the remainder of the calendar year of the merger.

iv. Two covered financial institutions merge. The surviving or newly formed financial institution is a covered financial institution. Data are required to be compiled and maintained (and subsequently reported) for the entire calendar year of the merger. The surviving or newly formed financial institution files either a consolidated submission or separate submissions for that calendar year.

9. *Foreign applicability.* As discussed in comment 1(a)–2, Regulation B (including subpart B) generally does not apply to lending activities that occur outside the United States.

10. *Voluntary collection and reporting.* Section 1002.5(a)(4)(vii) through (x) permits a creditor that is not a covered financial institution under § 1002.105(b) to voluntarily collect and report information regarding covered applications from small businesses

in certain circumstances. If a creditor is voluntarily collecting information for covered applications regarding whether the applicant is a minority-owned business and/or a women-owned business under § 1002.107(a)(18), and regarding the ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners under § 1002.107(a)(19), it shall do so in compliance with §§ 1002.107, 1002.108, 1002.111, 1002.112 as though it were a covered financial institution. If a creditor is reporting those covered applications from small businesses to the Bureau, it shall do so in compliance with §§ 1002.109 and 1002.110 as though it were a covered financial institution.

Section 1002.106—Business and Small Business

106(b) Small Business Definition

106(b)(1) Small Business

1. *Change in determination of small business status—business is ultimately not a small business.* If a financial institution initially determines an applicant is a small business as defined in § 1002.106 based on available information and collects data required by § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) but later concludes that the applicant is not a small business, the financial institution does not violate the Act or this regulation if it meets the requirements of § 1002.112(c)(4). The financial institution shall not report the application on its small business lending application register pursuant to § 1002.109.

2. *Change in determination of small business status—business is ultimately a small business.* Consistent with comment 107(a)(14)–1, a financial institution need not independently verify gross annual revenue. If a financial institution initially determines that the applicant is not a small business as defined in § 1002.106(b), but later concludes the applicant is a small business prior to taking final action on the application, the financial institution must report the covered application pursuant to § 1002.109. In this situation, the financial institution shall endeavor to compile, maintain, and report the data required under § 1002.107(a) in a manner that is reasonable under the circumstances. For example, if the applicant initially provides a gross annual revenue of $1.1 million (that is, above the threshold for a small business as initially defined in § 1002.106(b)(1)), but during the course of underwriting the financial institution discovers the applicant's gross annual revenue was in fact $950,000 (meaning that the applicant is within the definition of a small business under § 1002.106(b)), the financial institution is required to report the covered application pursuant to § 1002.109. In this situation, the financial institution shall take reasonable steps upon discovery to compile, maintain, and report the data necessary under § 1002.107(a) to comply with subpart B of this part for that covered application. Thus, in this example, even if the financial institution's procedure is typically to request applicant-provided data together with the application form, in this circumstance, the financial institution shall seek to collect the data during the application process necessary to comply with subpart B in a manner that is reasonable under the circumstances.

3. *Applicant's representations regarding gross annual revenue; inclusion of affiliate revenue; updated or verified information.* A financial institution is permitted to rely on an applicant's representations regarding gross annual revenue (which may or may not include any affiliate's revenue) for purposes of determining small business status under § 1002.106(b). However, if the applicant provides updated gross annual revenue information or the financial institution verifies the gross annual revenue information (see comment 107(b)–1), the financial institution must use the updated or verified information in determining small business status.

4. *Multiple unaffiliated co-applicants—size determination.* The financial institution shall not aggregate unaffiliated co-applicants' gross annual revenues for purposes of determining small business status under § 1002.106(b). If a covered financial institution receives a covered application from multiple businesses who are not affiliates, as defined by § 1002.102(a), where at least one business is a small business under § 1002.106(b), the financial institution shall compile, maintain, and report data pursuant to §§ 1002.107 through 1002.109 regarding the covered application for only a single applicant that is a small business. See comment 103(a)–10 for additional details.

106(b)(2) Inflation Adjustment

1. *Inflation adjustment methodology.* The small business gross annual revenue threshold set forth in § 1002.106(b)(1) will be adjusted upward or downward to reflect changes, if any, in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (U.S. city average series for all items, not seasonally adjusted), as published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (''CPI–U''). The base for computing each adjustment is the January 2030 CPI–U; this base value shall be compared to the CPI–U value in January 2035 and every five years thereafter. For example, after the January 2035 CPI–U is made available, the adjustment is calculated by determining the percentage change in the CPI–U between January 2030 and January 2035, applying this change to the $1 million gross annual revenue threshold, and rounding to the nearest $100,000. If, as a result of this rounding, there is no change in the gross annual revenue threshold, there will be no adjustment. For example, if in January 2035 the adjusted value were $950,000 (reflecting a $50,000 decrease from January 2030 CPI–U), then the threshold would not adjust because $950,000 million would be rounded up to $1 million. If on the other hand, the adjusted value were $1.12 million, then the threshold would adjust to $1.1 million. Where the adjusted value is a multiple of $50,000 (*e.g.,* $1,050,000), then the threshold adjusts upward.

2. *Substitute for CPI–U.* If publication of the CPI–U ceases, or if the CPI–U otherwise becomes unavailable or is altered in such a way as to be unusable, then the Bureau shall substitute another reliable cost of living indicator from the United States Government for the purpose of calculating adjustments pursuant to § 1002.106(b)(2).

Section 1002.107—Compilation of Reportable Data

* * * * *

107(a)(2) Application Date

1. *Consistency.* Section 1002.107(a)(2) requires that, in reporting the date of covered application, a financial institution shall report the date the covered application was received or the date shown on a paper or electronic application form. Although a financial institution need not choose the same approach for its entire small business lending application register, it should generally be consistent in its approach by, for example, establishing procedures for how to report this date within particular scenarios, products, or divisions. If the financial institution chooses to report the date shown on an application form and the institution retains multiple versions of the application form, the institution reports the date shown on the first application form satisfying the definition of covered application pursuant to § 1002.103.

2. *Application received.* For an application submitted directly to the financial institution or its affiliate, the financial institution shall report the date it received the covered application, as defined under § 1002.103, or the date shown on a paper or electronic application form. For an application initially submitted to a third party, see comment 107(a)(2)–3.

3. *Indirect applications.* For an application that was not submitted directly to the financial institution or its affiliate, the financial institution shall report the date the application was received by the party that initially received the application, the date the application was received by the financial institution, or the date shown on the application form. Although a financial institution need not choose the same approach for its entire small business lending application register, it should generally be consistent in its approach by, for example, establishing procedures for how to report this date within particular scenarios, products, or divisions.

4. *Safe harbor.* Pursuant to § 1002.112(c)(1), a financial institution that reports on its small business lending application register an application date that is within three business days of the actual application date pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(2) does not violate the Act or subpart B of this part. For purposes of this paragraph, a business day means any day the financial institution is open for business.

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107(a)(5) Credit Type

1. *Reporting credit product—in general.* A financial institution complies with § 1002.107(a)(5)(i) by selecting the credit product applied for or originated, from the list below. If the credit product applied for or originated is not included on this list, the financial institution selects ''other,'' and reports the credit product via free-form text field. If an applicant requested more than one credit product at the same time, the financial institution reports each credit product requested as a separate application. However, if the applicant only requested a single

covered credit transaction, but had not decided on which particular product, the financial institution complies with § 1002.107(a)(5)(i) by reporting the credit product originated (if originated), or the credit product denied (if denied), or the credit product of greater interest to the applicant, if readily determinable. If the credit product of greater interest to the applicant is not readily determinable, the financial institution complies with § 1002.107(a)(5)(i) by reporting one of the credit products requested as part of the request for a single covered credit transaction, in its discretion. See comment 103(a)–5 for instructions on reporting requests for multiple covered credit transactions at one time.

i. Term loan—unsecured.
ii. Term loan—secured.
iii. Line of credit—unsecured.
iv. Line of credit—secured.
v. Credit card account, not private-label.
vi. Private-label credit card account.
vii. [Reserved]
viii. [Reserved]
ix. Other.
x. Not provided by applicant and otherwise undetermined.

2. *Credit card account, not private-label.* A financial institution complies with § 1002.107(a)(5)(i) by reporting the credit product as a ''credit card account, not private-label'' when the product is a business-purpose open-end credit account that is not private label and that may be accessed from time to time by a card, plate, or other single credit device to obtain credit, except that accounts or lines of credit secured by real property and overdraft lines of credit accessed by debit cards are not credit card accounts. The term credit card account does not include debit card accounts or closed-end credit that may be accessed by a card, plate, or single credit device. The term credit card account does include charge card accounts that are generally paid in full each billing period, as well as hybrid prepaid-credit cards. A financial institution reports multiple credit card account, not private-label applications requested at one time using the guidance in comment 103(a)–7.

3. *Private-label credit card account.* A financial institution complies with § 1002.107(a)(5)(i) by reporting the credit product as a ''private-label credit card account'' when the product is a business-purpose open-end private-label credit account that otherwise meets the description of a credit card account in comment 107(a)(5)–2. A private-label credit card account is a credit card account that can only be used to acquire goods or services provided by one business (for example, a specific merchant, retailer, independent dealer, or manufacturer) or a small group of related businesses. A co-branded or other card that can also be used for purchases at unrelated businesses is not a private-label credit card. A financial institution reports multiple private-label credit card account applications requested at one time in the same manner as credit card account, not private-label applications, using the guidance in comment 103(a)–7.

4. *Credit product not provided by the applicant and otherwise undetermined.* Pursuant to § 1002.107(c), a financial institution is required to maintain procedures reasonably designed to collect applicant-provided data, which includes credit product. However, if a financial institution is nonetheless unable to collect or otherwise determine credit product information because the applicant does not indicate what credit product it seeks and the application is denied, withdrawn, or closed for incompleteness before a credit product is identified, the financial institution reports that the credit product is ''not provided by applicant and otherwise undetermined.''

5. *Reporting credit product involving counteroffers.* If a financial institution presents a counteroffer for a different credit product than the product the applicant had initially requested, and the applicant does not agree to proceed with the counteroffer, the financial institution reports the application for the original credit product as denied pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(9). If the applicant agrees to proceed with consideration of the financial institution's counteroffer, the financial institution reports the disposition of the application based on the credit product that was offered and does not report the original credit product applied for. See comment 107(a)(9)–2.

6. [Reserved]

7. *Guarantees.* A financial institution complies with § 1002.107(a)(5)(ii) by selecting the type or types of guarantees that were obtained for an originated covered credit transaction, or that would have been obtained if the covered credit transaction was originated, from the list below. The financial institution selects, if applicable, up to a maximum of five guarantees for a single application. If the type of guarantee does not appear on the list, the financial institution selects ''other'' and reports the type of guarantee via free-form text field. If no guarantee is obtained or would have been obtained if the covered credit transaction was originated, the financial institution selects ''no guarantee.'' If an application is denied, withdrawn, or closed for incompleteness before any guarantee has been identified, the financial institution selects ''no guarantee.'' The financial institution chooses State government guarantee or local government guarantee, as applicable, based on the entity directly administering the program, not the source of funding.

i. Personal guarantee—owner(s).
ii. Personal guarantee—non-owner(s).
iii. SBA guarantee—7(a) program.
iv. SBA guarantee—504 program.
v. SBA guarantee—other.
vi. USDA guarantee.
vii. FHA insurance.
viii. Bureau of Indian Affairs guarantee.
ix. Other Federal guarantee.
x. State government guarantee.
xi. Local government guarantee.
xii. Other.
xiii. No guarantee.

8. *Loan term.* A financial institution complies with § 1002.107(a)(5)(iii) by reporting the number of months in the loan term for the covered credit transaction. The loan term is the number of months after which the legal obligation will mature or terminate, measured from the date of origination. For transactions involving real property, the financial institution may instead measure the loan term from the date of the first payment period and disregard the time that elapses, if any, between the settlement of the transaction and the first payment period. For example, if a loan closes on April 12, but the first payment is not due until June 1 and includes the interest accrued in May (but not April), the financial institution may choose not to include the month of April in the loan term. In addition, the financial institution may round the loan term to the nearest full month or may count only full months and ignore partial months, as it so chooses. If a credit product, such as a credit card, does not have a loan term, the financial institution reports that the loan term is ''not applicable.'' The financial institution also reports that the loan term is ''not applicable'' if the credit product is reported as ''not provided by applicant and otherwise undetermined.'' For a credit product that generally has a loan term, the financial institution reports ''not provided by applicant and otherwise undetermined'' if the application is denied, withdrawn, or determined to be incomplete before a loan term has been identified.

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107(a)(18) Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Statuses

1. *General.* A financial institution must ask an applicant whether it is a minority-owned and/or women-owned business. The financial institution must permit an applicant to refuse (*i.e.,* decline) to answer the financial institution's inquiry regarding business status and must inform the applicant that the applicant is not required to provide the information. See the sample data collection form in appendix E to this part for sample language for providing this notice to applicants. The financial institution must report the applicant's substantive response regarding each business status, that the applicant declined to answer the inquiry (that is, selected an answer option of ''I do not wish to provide this information'' or similar), or its failure to respond to the inquiry (that is, ''not provided by applicant''), as applicable.

2. *Definitions.* When inquiring about minority-owned and women-owned business statuses (regardless of whether the request is made on a paper form, electronically, or orally), the financial institution also must provide the applicant with definitions of the terms ''minority-owned business'' and ''women-owned business'' as set forth in § 1002.102(m) and (s), respectively. The financial institution satisfies this requirement if it provides the definitions as set forth in the sample data collection form in appendix E.

3. *Combining questions.* A financial institution may combine on the same paper or electronic data collection form the questions regarding minority-owned and women-owned business status pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18) with principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(19) and the applicant's number

of principal owners pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(20). See the sample data collection form in appendix E.

4. *Notices.* When requesting minority-owned and women-owned business statuses from an applicant, a financial institution must inform the applicant that the financial institution cannot discriminate on the basis of the applicant's minority-owned or women-owned business statuses, or on whether the applicant provides its minority-owned or women-owned business statuses. A financial institution must also inform the applicant that Federal law requires it to ask for an applicant's minority-owned and women-owned business statuses to help ensure that all small business applicants for credit are treated fairly, and that communities' small business credit needs are being fulfilled. A financial institution may combine these notices regarding minority-owned and women-owned business statuses with the notices that a financial institution is required to provide when requesting principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex if a financial institution requests information pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) in the same data collection form or at the same time. See the sample data collection form in appendix E for sample language that a financial institution may use for these notices.

5. *Maintaining the record of an applicant's response regarding minority-owned and women-owned business statuses separate from the application.* A financial institution must maintain the record of an applicant's responses to the financial institution's inquiry pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18) separate from the application and accompanying information. See § 1002.111(b) and comment 111(b)–1. If the financial institution provides a paper or electronic data collection form, the data collection form must not be part of the application form or any other document that the financial institution uses to provide or collect any information other than minority-owned business status, women-owned business status, principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex, and the number of the applicant's principal owners. See the sample data collection form in appendix E. For example, if the financial institution sends the data collection form via email, the data collection form should be a separate attachment to the email or accessed through a separate link in the email. If the financial institution uses a web-based data collection form, the form should be on its own page.

6. *Minority-owned and/or women-owned business statuses not provided by applicant.* Pursuant to § 1002.107(c), a financial institution shall maintain procedures reasonably designed to collect applicant-provided data, which includes the applicant's minority-owned and women-owned business statuses. However, if a financial institution does not receive a response to the financial institution's inquiry pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18), the financial institution reports that the applicant's business statuses were ''not provided by applicant.''

7. *Applicant declines to provide information about minority-owned and/or women-owned business statuses.* A financial institution reports that the applicant responded that it did not wish to provide the information about an applicant's minority-owned and women-owned business statuses, if the applicant declines to provide the information by selecting such a response option on a paper or electronic form (*e.g.,* by selecting an answer option of ''I do not wish to provide this information'' or similar). The financial institution also reports an applicant's refusal to provide such information in this way, if the applicant orally declines to provide such information for a covered application taken by telephone or another medium that does not involve providing any paper or electronic documents.

8. *Conflicting responses provided by applicants.* If the applicant both provides a substantive response to the financial institution's inquiry regarding business status (that is, indicates that it is a minority-owned and/or women-owned business, or checks ''none apply'' or similar) and also checks the box indicating ''I do not wish to provide this information'' or similar, the financial institution reports the substantive response(s) provided by the applicant (rather than reporting that the applicant declined to provide the information).

9. *No verification of business statuses.* Notwithstanding § 1002.107(b), a financial institution must report the applicant's substantive response(s), that the applicant declined to answer the inquiry (that is, selected an answer option of ''I do not wish to provide this information'' or similar), or the applicant's failure to respond to the inquiry (that is, that the information was ''not provided by applicant'') pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18), even if the financial institution verifies or otherwise obtains an applicant's minority-owned and/or women-owned business statuses for other purposes. For example, if a financial institution uses a paper data collection form to ask an applicant if it is a minority-owned business and/or a women-owned business, and the applicant does not indicate that it is a minority-owned business, the financial institution must not report that the applicant is a minority-owned business, even if the applicant indicates that it is a minority-owned business for other purposes, such as for a special purpose credit program or a Small Business Administration program.

107(a)(19) Ethnicity, Race, and Sex of Principal Owners

1. *General.* A financial institution must ask an applicant to provide its principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex. The financial institution must permit an applicant to refuse (*i.e.,* decline) to answer the financial institution's inquiry and must inform the applicant that it is not required to provide the information. See the sample data collection form in appendix E to this part for sample language for providing this notice to applicants. The financial institution must report the applicant's substantive responses regarding principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex, that the applicant declined to answer an inquiry (that is, selected an answer option of ''I do not wish to provide this information'' or similar), or its failure to respond to an inquiry (that is, ''not provided by applicant''), as applicable. The financial institution must report an applicant's responses about its principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex, regardless of whether an applicant declines or fails to answer an inquiry about the number of its principal owners under § 1002.107(a)(20). If an applicant provides some, but not all, of the requested information about the ethnicity, race, and sex of a principal owner, the financial institution reports the information that was provided by the applicant and reports that the applicant declined to provide or did not provide (as applicable) the remainder of the information. See comments 107(a)(19)–6 and –7.

2. *Definition of principal owner.* When requesting a principal owner's ethnicity, race, and sex, the financial institution must also provide the applicant with the definition of the term ''principal owner'' as set forth in § 1002.102(o). The financial institution satisfies this requirement if it provides the definition of principal owner as set forth in the sample data collection form in appendix E.

3. *Combining questions.* A financial institution may combine on the same paper or electronic data collection form the questions regarding the principal owners' ethnicity, race and sex pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(19) with the applicant's number of principal owners pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(20) and the applicant's minority-owned and women-owned business statuses pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18). See the sample data collection form in appendix E.

4. *Notices.* When requesting a principal owner's ethnicity, race, and sex from an applicant, a financial institution must inform the applicant that the financial institution cannot discriminate on the basis of a principal owner's ethnicity, race, or sex, or on whether the applicant provides the information. A financial institution must also inform the applicant that Federal law requires it to ask for the principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex to help ensure that all small business applicants for credit are treated fairly, and that communities' small business credit needs are being fulfilled. A financial institution may combine these notices with the similar notices that a financial institution is required to provide when requesting minority-owned business status and women-owned business status, if a financial institution requests information pursuant to § 102.107(a)(18) and (19) in the same data collection form or at the same time. See the sample data collection form in appendix E for sample language that a financial institution may use for these notices.

5. *Maintaining the record of an applicant's responses regarding principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex separate from the application.* A financial institution must maintain the record of an applicant's response to the financial institution's inquiries pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(19) separate from the application and accompanying information. *See* § 1002.111(b) and comment 111(b)–1. If the financial institution provides a paper or electronic data collection form, the data collection form must not be part of the application form or

any other document that the financial institution uses to provide or collect any information other than minority-owned business status, women-owned business status, principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex, and the number of the applicant's principal owners. See the sample data collection form in appendix E for sample language. For example, if the financial institution sends the data collection form via email, the data collection form should be a separate attachment to the email or accessed through a separate link in the email. If the financial institution uses a web-based data collection form, the form should be on its own page.

6. *Ethnicity, race, or sex of principal owners not provided by applicant.* Pursuant to § 1002.107(c), a financial institution shall maintain procedures reasonably designed to collect applicant-provided data, which includes the ethnicity, race, and sex of an applicant's principal owners. However, if an applicant does not provide the information, such as in response to a request for a principal owner's ethnicity, race, or sex on a paper or electronic data collection form, the financial institution reports the ethnicity, race, or sex (as applicable) as ''not provided by applicant'' for that principal owner. For example, if the financial institution provides a paper data collection form to an applicant with two principal owners, and asks the applicant to complete and return the form but the applicant does not do so, the financial institution reports that the two principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex were ''not provided by applicant.'' Similarly, if the financial institution provides an electronic data collection form, the applicant indicates that it has two principal owners, the applicant provides ethnicity, race, and sex for the first principal owner, and the applicant does not make any selections for the second principal owner's ethnicity, race, or sex, the financial institution reports the ethnicity, race, and sex that the applicant provided for the first principal owner and reports that the ethnicity, race, and sex for the second principal owner was ''not provided by applicant.'' Additionally, if the financial institution provides an electronic or paper data collection form, the applicant indicates that it has one principal owner, provides the principal owner's ethnicity and sex information, but does not provide information about the principal owner's race and also does not select a response of ''I do not wish to provide this information'' with regard to race, the financial institution reports the ethnicity and sex provided by the applicant and reports that the race of the principal owner was ''not provided by applicant.''

7. *Applicant declines to provide information about a principal owner's ethnicity, race, or sex.* A financial institution reports that the applicant did not wish to provide the information about a principal owner's ethnicity, race or sex (as applicable), if the applicant declines to provide the information, such as by selecting a response option of ''I do not wish to provide this information'' on a paper or electronic form (*e.g.,* by selecting an answer option of ''I do not wish to provide this information'' or similar). The financial institution also reports an applicant's refusal to provide such information in this way, if the applicant orally declines to provide such information for a covered application taken by telephone or another medium that does not involve providing any paper or electronic form or providing a similar response for an application taken by telephone.

8. *Conflicting responses provided by applicant.* If the applicant both provides a substantive response to a request for a principal owner's ethnicity, race, or sex (that is, identifies a principal owner's ethnicity, race, or sex) and also checks the box indicating ''I do not wish to provide this information'' or similar, the financial institution reports the information on ethnicity, race, or sex that was provided by the applicant (rather than reporting that the applicant declined provide the information). For example, if an applicant is completing a paper data collection form and indicates that a principal owner's sex is female and also indicates on the form that the applicant does not wish to provide information regarding that principal owner's sex, the financial institution reports the principal owner's sex as female. A financial institution may, but is not required, to prevent conflicting responses from being entered on an electronic data collection form.

9. *No verification of ethnicity, race, and sex of principal owners.* Notwithstanding § 1002.107(b), a financial institution must report the applicant's substantive responses as to its principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex (that is, the applicant's identification of its principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex), that the applicant declined to answer the inquiry (that is, selected an answer option of ''I do not wish to provide this information'' or similar), or the applicant's failure to respond to the inquiry (that is, the information was ''not provided by applicant'') pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(19), even if the financial institution verifies or otherwise obtains the ethnicity, race, or sex of the applicant's principal owners for other purposes.

10. *Reporting for fewer than four principal owners.* If an applicant has fewer than four principal owners, the financial institution reports ethnicity, race, and sex information for the number of principal owners that the applicant has and reports the ethnicity, race, and sex fields for additional principal owners as ''not applicable.'' For example, if an applicant has only one principal owner, the financial institution reports ethnicity, race, and sex information for the first principal owner and reports as ''not applicable'' the ethnicity, race, and sex data fields for principal owners two through four.

11. *Previously collected ethnicity, race, and sex information.* If a financial institution reports one or more principal owners' ethnicity, race, or sex information based on previously collected data under § 1002.107(d), the financial institution does not need to collect any additional ethnicity, race, or sex information for other principal owners (if any). See also comment 107(d)–9.

12. *Guarantors.* A financial institution does not collect or report a guarantor's ethnicity, race, or sex unless the guarantor is also a principal owner of the applicant, as defined in § 1002.102(o).

13. *Ethnicity.* i. *Aggregate categories.* A financial institution must permit an applicant to provide each principal owner's ethnicity for purposes of § 1002.107(a)(19) using one or more of the following aggregate categories:

A. Hispanic or Latino.

B. Not Hispanic or Latino.

ii. *Disaggregated subcategories.* A financial institution must permit an applicant to provide each principal owner's ethnicity for purposes of § 1002.107(a)(19) using one or more of the following disaggregated subcategories, regardless of whether the applicant has indicated that the relevant principal owner is Hispanic or Latino and regardless of whether the applicant selects any aggregate categories: Cuban; Mexican; Puerto Rican; or Other Hispanic or Latino. If an applicant indicates that a principal owner is Other Hispanic or Latino, the financial institution must permit the applicant to provide additional information regarding the principal owner's ethnicity, by using free-form text on a paper or electronic data collection form or using language that informs the applicant of the opportunity to self-identify when taking the application by means other than a paper or electronic data collection form, such as by telephone. The financial institution must permit the applicant to provide additional information indicating, for example, that the principal owner is Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, or Spaniard. See the sample data collection form in appendix E for sample language. If an applicant chooses to provide additional information regarding a principal owner's ethnicity, such as by indicating that a principal owner is Argentinean orally or in writing on a paper or electronic form, a financial institution must report that additional information via free-form text. If the applicant provides such additional information but does not also indicate that the principal owner is Other Hispanic or Latino (*e.g.,* by selecting Other Hispanic or Latino on a paper or electronic form), a financial institution is permitted, but not required, to report Other Hispanic or Latino as well.

iii. *Selecting multiple categories.* The financial institution must permit the applicant to select one, both, or none of the aggregate categories and as many disaggregated subcategories as the applicant chooses. A financial institution must permit an applicant to select a disaggregated subcategory even if the applicant does not select the corresponding aggregate category. For example, an applicant must be permitted to select the Mexican disaggregated subcategory for a principal owner without being required to select the Hispanic or Latino aggregate category. If an applicant provides ethnicity information for a principal owner, the financial institution reports all of the aggregate categories and disaggregated subcategories provided by the applicant. For example, if an applicant selects both aggregate categories and four disaggregated subcategories for a principal owner, the financial institution reports the two aggregate

categories that the applicant selected and all four of the disaggregated subcategories that the applicant selected. Additionally, if an applicant selects only the Mexican disaggregated subcategory for a principal owner and no aggregate categories, the financial institution reports Mexican for the ethnicity of the applicant's principal owner but does not also report Hispanic or Latino. Further, if the applicant selects an aggregate category (*e.g.,* Not Hispanic or Latino) and a disaggregated subcategory that does not correspond to the aggregate category (*e.g.,* Puerto Rican), the financial institution reports the information as provided by the applicant (*e.g.,* Not Hispanic or Latino, and Puerto Rican).

14. *Race.* i. *Aggregate categories.* A financial institution must permit an applicant to provide each principal owner's race for purposes of § 1002.107(a)(19) using one or more of the following aggregate categories:

A. American Indian or Alaska Native.

B. Asian.

C. Black or African American.

D. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

E. White.

ii. *Disaggregated subcategories.* The financial institution must permit an applicant to provide a principal owner's race for purposes of § 1002.107(a)(19) using one or more of the disaggregated subcategories as listed in this comment 107(a)(19)–14.ii, regardless of whether the applicant has selected the corresponding aggregate category.

A. The Asian aggregate category includes the following disaggregated subcategories: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Other Asian. An applicant must also be permitted to provide the principal owner's race using one or more of these disaggregated subcategories regardless of whether the applicant indicates that the principal owner is Asian and regardless of whether the applicant selects any aggregate categories. Additionally, if an applicant indicates that a principal owner is Other Asian, the financial institution must permit the applicant to provide additional information about the principal owner's race, by using free-form text on a paper or electronic data collection form or using language that informs the applicant of the opportunity to self-identify when taking the application by means other than a paper or electronic data collection form, such as by telephone. The financial institution must permit the applicant to provide additional information indicating, for example, that the principal owner is Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Pakistani, or Thai. See the sample data collection form in appendix E for sample language.

B. The Black or African American aggregate category includes the following disaggregated subcategories: African American, Ethiopian, Haitian, Jamaican, Nigerian, Somali, and Other Black or African American. An applicant must also be permitted to provide the principal owner's race using one or more of these disaggregated subcategories regardless of whether the applicant indicates that the principal owner is Black or African American and regardless of whether the applicant selects any aggregate categories. Additionally, if an applicant indicates that a principal owner is Other Black or African American, the financial institution must permit the applicant to provide additional information about the principal owner's race, by using free-form text on a paper or electronic data collection form or using language that informs the applicant of the opportunity to self-identify when taking the application by means other than a paper or electronic data collection form, such as by telephone. The financial institution must permit the applicant to provide additional information indicating, for example, that the principal owner is Barbadian, Ghanaian, or South African. See the sample data collection form in appendix E for sample language.

C. The Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander aggregate category includes the following disaggregated subcategories: Guamanian, Chamorro, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, and Other Pacific Islander. An applicant must also be permitted to provide the principal owner's race using one or more of these disaggregated subcategories regardless of whether the applicant indicates that the principal owner is Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and regardless of whether the applicant selects any aggregate categories. Additionally, if an applicant indicates that a principal owner is Other Pacific Islander, the financial institution must permit the applicant to provide additional information about the principal owner's race, by using free-form text on a paper or electronic data collection form or using language that informs the applicant of the opportunity to self-identify when taking the application by means other than a paper or electronic data collection form, such as by telephone. The financial institution must permit the applicant to provide additional information indicating, for example, that the principal owner is Fijian or Tongan. See the sample data collection form in appendix E for sample language.

D. If an applicant chooses to provide additional information regarding a principal owner's race, such as indicating that a principal owner is Cambodian, Barbadian, or Fijian orally or in writing on a paper or electronic form, a financial institution must report that additional information via free-form text in the appropriate data reporting field. If the applicant provides such additional information but does not also indicate that the principal owner is Other Asian, Other Black or African American, or Other Pacific Islander, as applicable (*e.g.,* by selecting Other Asian on a paper or electronic form), a financial institution is permitted, but not required, to report the corresponding ''Other'' race disaggregated subcategory (*i.e.,* Other Asian, Other Black or African American, or Other Pacific Islander).

E. In addition to permitting an applicant to indicate that a principal owner is American Indian or Alaska Native, a financial institution must permit an applicant to provide the name of an enrolled or principal tribe, by using free-form text on a paper or electronic data collection form or using language that informs the applicant of the opportunity to self-identify when taking the application by means other than a paper or electronic data collection form, such as by telephone. If an applicant chooses to provide the name of an enrolled or principal tribe, a financial institution must report that information via free-form text in the appropriate data reporting field. If the applicant provides the name of an enrolled or principal tribe but does not also indicate that the principal owner is American Indian or Alaska Native (*e.g.,* by selecting American Indian or Alaska Native on a paper or electronic form), a financial institution is permitted, but not required, to report American Indian or Alaska Native as well.

iii. *Selecting multiple categories.* The financial institution must permit the applicant to select as many aggregate categories and disaggregated subcategories as the applicant chooses. A financial institution must permit an applicant to select one or more disaggregated subcategories even if the applicant does not select an aggregate category. For example, an applicant must be permitted to select the Chinese disaggregated subcategory for a principal owner without being required to select the Asian aggregate category. If an applicant provides race information for a principal owner, the financial institution reports all of the aggregate categories and disaggregated subcategories provided by the applicant. For example, if an applicant selects two aggregate categories and five disaggregated subcategories for a principal owner, the financial institution reports the two aggregate categories that the applicant selected and the five disaggregated subcategories that the applicant selected. Additionally, if an applicant selects only the Chinese disaggregated subcategory for a principal owner, the financial institution reports Chinese for the race of the principal owner but does not also report that the principal owner is Asian. Similarly, if the applicant selects an aggregate category (*e.g.,* Asian) and a disaggregated subcategory that does not correspond to the aggregate category (*e.g.,* Native Hawaiian), the financial institution reports the information as provided by the applicant (*e.g.,* Asian and Native Hawaiian).

15. *Sex.* A financial institution must permit an applicant to provide each principal owner's sex for purposes of § 1002.107(a)(19) using the categories male or female.

16. *Ethnicity and race information requested orally.* As described in comments 107(a)(19)–13 and –14, when collecting principal owners' ethnicity and race pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(19), a financial institution must present the applicant with the specified aggregate categories and disaggregated subcategories. When collecting ethnicity and race information orally, such as by telephone, a financial institution may not present the applicant with the option to decline to provide the information without also presenting the applicant with the specified aggregate categories and disaggregated subcategories.

i. *Ethnicity and race categories.* Notwithstanding comments 107(a)(19)–13 and –14, a financial institution is not required to read aloud every disaggregated subcategory when collecting ethnicity and

race information orally, such as by telephone. Rather, the financial institution must orally present the lists of aggregate ethnicity and race categories, followed by the disaggregated subcategories (if any) associated with the aggregate categories selected by the applicant or which the applicant requests to be presented. After the applicant makes any disaggregated category selections associated with the aggregate ethnicity or race category, the financial institution must also ask if the applicant wishes to hear the lists of disaggregated subcategories for any aggregate categories not selected by the applicant. The financial institution must record any aggregate categories selected by the applicant, as well as any disaggregated subcategories regardless of whether such subcategories were selected based on the disaggregated subcategories read by the financial institution or were otherwise provided by the applicant.

ii. *More than one principal owner.* If an applicant has more than one principal owner, the financial institution is permitted to ask about ethnicity and race in a manner that reduces repetition when collecting ethnicity and race information orally, such as by telephone. For example, if an applicant has two principal owners, the financial institution may ask for both principal owners' ethnicity at the same time, rather than asking about ethnicity, race, and sex for the first principal owner followed by ethnicity, race, and sex for the second principal owner.

* * * * *

107(b) Reliance on and Verification of Applicant-Provided Data

1. *Reliance on information provided by an applicant or appropriate third-party sources.* A financial institution may rely on statements made by an applicant (whether made in writing or orally) or information provided by an applicant when compiling and reporting data pursuant to subpart B of this part for applicant-provided data; the financial institution is not required to verify those statements or that information. However, if the financial institution does verify applicant statements or information for its own business purposes, such as statements relating to gross annual revenue or time in business, the financial institution reports the verified information. Depending on the circumstances and the financial institution's procedures, certain applicant-provided data can be collected from appropriate third-party sources without a specific request from the applicant, and such information may also be relied on. For example, gross annual revenue or NAICS code may be collected from tax return documents; a financial institution may also collect an applicant's NAICS code using third-party sources such as business information products. Applicant-provided data are the data that are or could be provided by the applicant, including § 1002.107(a)(5) through (7), (13) through (15), and (17) through (20). See comment 107(c)(1)–3. In regard to restrictions on verification of minority-owned and women-owned business statuses, and principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex, see comments 107(a)(18)–9 and 107(a)(19)–9.

107(c) Time and Manner of Collection

107(c)(1) In General

1. *Procedures.* The term ''procedures'' refers to the actual practices followed by a financial institution as well as its stated procedures. For example, if a financial institution's stated procedure is to collect applicant-provided data on or with a paper application form, but employees encourage applicants to skip the page that asks whether the applicant is a minority-owned business or a women-owned business under § 1002.107(a)(18), the financial institution's procedures are not reasonably designed to obtain a response.

2. *Latitude to design procedures.* A financial institution has flexibility to establish procedures concerning the timing and manner in which it collects applicant-provided data that work best for its particular lending model and product offerings, provided those procedures are reasonably designed to collect the applicant-provided data in § 1002.107(a), as required pursuant to § 1002.107(c)(1), and where applicable comply with the minimum requirements set forth in § 1002.107(c)(2).

3. *Applicant-provided data.* Applicant-provided data are the data that are or could be provided by the applicant, including § 1002.107(a)(5) (credit type), § 1002.107(a)(6) (credit purpose), § 1002.107(a)(7) (amount applied for), § 1002.107(a)(13) (address or location for purposes of determining census tract), § 1002.107(a)(14) (gross annual revenue), § 1002.107(a)(15) (NAICS code, or information about the business such that the financial institution can determine the applicant's NAICS code), § 1002.107(a)(17) (time in business), § 1002.107(a)(18) (minority-owned business status and women-owned business status), § 1002.107(a)(19) (ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners), and § 1002.107(a)(20) (number of principal owners). Applicant-provided data do not include data that are generated or supplied only by the financial institution, including § 1002.107(a)(1) (unique identifier), § 1002.107(a)(2) (application date), § 1002.107(a)(8) (amount approved or originated), § 1002.107(a)(9) (action taken), § 1002.107(a)(10) (action taken date), and § 1002.107(a)(13) (census tract, based on address or location provided by the applicant).

4. *Collecting applicant-provided data without a direct request to the applicant.* Depending on the circumstances and the financial institution's procedures, certain applicant-provided data can be collected without a direct request to the applicant. For example, credit type may be collected based on the type of product chosen by the applicant. Similarly, a financial institution may rely on appropriate third-party sources to collect certain applicant-provided data. See § 1002.107(b) concerning the use of third-party sources.

5. *Data updated by the applicant.* A financial institution reports updated data if it obtains more current data from the applicant during the application process. For example, if an applicant states its gross annual revenue for the preceding fiscal year was $900,000, but then the applicant notifies the financial institution that its revenue in the preceding fiscal year was actually $950,000, the financial institution reports gross annual revenue of $950,000. For reporting verified applicant-provided data, see § 1002.107(b) and comment 107(b)–1. If a financial institution has already verified data and then the applicant updates it, the financial institution reports the information it believes to be more accurate, in its discretion. If a financial institution receives updates from the applicant after the application process has closed (for example, after closing or account opening), the financial institution may, at its discretion, update the data at any time prior to reporting the covered application to the Bureau.

107(c)(2) Applicant-Provided Data Collected Directly From the Applicant

1. *In general.* Whether a financial institution's procedures are reasonably designed to collect applicant-provided data is a fact-based determination and may depend on the financial institution's particular lending model, product offerings, and other circumstances; procedures that are reasonably designed to obtain a response may therefore require additional provisions beyond the minimum criteria set forth in § 1002.107(c)(2). In general, reasonably designed procedures will make applicant-provided data available for collection. While the requirements of § 1002.107(c)(2) do not apply to applicant-provided data that a financial institution obtains without a direct request to the applicant, as explained in comment 107(c)(1)–4, in such instances, a covered financial institution must still comply with § 1002.107(c)(1).

2. *Specific components.* i. *Timing of initial collection attempt.* While a financial institution has some flexibility concerning when applicant-provided data is are collected, it should attempt to make the initial request for applicant-provided data before notifying an applicant of final action taken on a covered application. Generally, the earlier in the application process the financial institution initially seeks to collect applicant-provided data, the more likely the timing of collection is reasonably designed to obtain a response.

ii. *The request for applicant-provided data is prominently displayed or presented.* Pursuant to § 1002.107(c)(2)(ii), a financial institution must make a reasonable attempt to ensure an applicant actually sees, hears, or is otherwise presented with the request for applicant-provided data. A financial institution also does not have reasonably designed procedures if it obscures, prevents, or inhibits an applicant from accessing or reviewing a request for applicant-provided data.

iii. [Reserved]

iv. *The applicant can easily provide a response.* Pursuant to § 1002.107(c)(2)(iv), a financial institution must structure the request for information in a manner that makes it easy for the applicant to provide a response. For example, a financial institution requests applicant-provided data in the same format as other information required for the covered application, provides applicants multiple methods to provide or return applicant-provided data (for example, on a

written form, through a web portal, or through other means), or provides the applicant some other type of straightforward and seamless method to provide a response. Conversely, a financial institution must avoid imposing unnecessary burden on an applicant to provide the information requested or requiring the applicant to take steps that are inconsistent with the rest of its application process. For example, a financial institution does not have reasonably designed procedures if it collects application information related to its own creditworthiness determination in electronic form, but mails a paper form to the applicant initially seeking the data required under § 1002.107(a) that the financial institution does not otherwise need for its creditworthiness determination and requiring the applicant to mail it back. On the other hand, a financial institution complies with § 1002.107(c)(2)(iv) if, at its discretion, it requests the applicant to respond to inquiries made pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) through a reasonable method intended to keep the applicant's responses discrete and protected from view.

v. *Multiple requests for applicant-provided data.* A financial institution is permitted, but not required, to make more than one attempt to obtain applicant-provided data if the applicant does not respond to an initial request. For example, if an applicant initially does not respond when asked early in the application process (before notifying the applicant of final action taken on the application, pursuant to § 1002.107(c)(2)(i)) to inquiries made pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19), a financial institution may request this information again, for example, during a subsequent in-person meeting with the applicant or after notifying the applicant of final action taken on the covered application. However, making multiple inquiries for applicant-provided data does not evidence the existence of reasonably designed procedures.

107(d) Previously Collected Data

1. *In general.* A financial institution may, for the purpose of reporting such data pursuant to § 1002.109, reuse certain previously collected data if the requirements of § 1002.107(d) are met. In that circumstance, a financial institution need not seek to collect the data anew in connection with a subsequent covered application to satisfy the requirements of this subpart. For example, if an applicant applies for and is granted a term loan, and then subsequently applies for a credit card in the same calendar year, the financial institution need not request again the data specified in § 1002.107(d). Similarly, if an applicant applies for more than one covered credit transaction at one time, a financial institution need only ask once for the data specified in § 1002.107(d).

2. *Data that can be reused.* Subject to the requirements of § 1002.107(d), a financial institution may reuse the following data: § 1002.107(a)(13) (address or location for purposes of determining census tract), § 1002.107(a)(14) (gross annual revenue) (subject to comment 107(d)–7), § 1002.107(a)(15) (NAICS code), § 1002.107(a)(17) (time in business) (subject to comment 107(d)–8), § 1002.107(a)(18) (minority-owned business status and women-owned business status) (subject to comment 107(d)–9), § 1002.107(a)(19) (ethnicity, race, and sex of applicant's principal owners) (subject to comment 107(d)–9), and § 1002.107(a)(20) (number of principal owners). A financial institution is not, however, permitted to reuse other data, such as § 1002.107(a)(6) (credit purpose).

3. *Previously reported data without a substantive response.* Data have not been ''previously collected'' within the meaning of § 1002.107(d) if the applicant did not provide a substantive response to the financial institution's request for that data and the financial institution was not otherwise able to obtain the requested data (for example, from the applicant's credit report, or tax returns).

4. *Updated data.* If, after the application process has closed on a prior covered application, a financial institution obtains updated information relevant to the data required to be collected and reported pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(13) through (15) and (17) through (20), and the applicant subsequently submits a new covered application, the financial institution must use the updated information in connection with the new covered application (if the requirements of § 1002.107(d) are otherwise met) or seek to collect the data again. For example, if a business notifies a financial institution of a change of address of its sole business location, and subsequently submits a covered application within the time period specified in § 1002.107(d)(1) for reusing previously collected data, the financial institution must report census tract based on the updated information. In that circumstance, the financial institution may still reuse other previously collected data to satisfy § 1002.107(a)(14), (15), and (17) through (20) if the requirements of § 1002.107(d) are met.

5. *Collection within the preceding 36 months.* Pursuant to § 1002.107(d)(1), data can be reused to satisfy § 1002.107(a)(13), (15), and (17) through (20) if they are collected within the preceding 36 months. A financial institution may measure the 36-month period from the date of final action taken (§ 1002.107(a)(9)) on a prior application to the application date (§ 1002.107(a)(2)) on a subsequent application. For example, if a financial institution takes final action on an application on February 1, 2027, it may reuse certain previously collected data pursuant to § 1002.107(d)(1) for subsequent covered applications dated or received by the financial institution through January 31, 2030.

6. *Reason to believe data are inaccurate.* Whether a financial institution has reason to believe data are inaccurate pursuant to § 1002.107(d)(2) depends on the particular facts and circumstances. For example, a financial institution may have reason to believe data on the applicant's minority-owned business status and women-owned business status may be inaccurate if it knows that the applicant has had a change in ownership or a change in an owner's percentage of ownership.

7. *Collection of gross annual revenue in the same calendar year.* Pursuant to § 1002.107(d)(1), gross annual revenue information can be reused to satisfy § 1002.107(a)(14) provided it is collected in the same calendar year as the current covered application, as measured from the application date. For example, if an application is received and gross annual revenue is collected in connection with a covered application in one calendar year, but then final action was taken on the application in the following calendar year, the data may only be reused for the calendar year in which it was collected and not the calendar year in which final action was taken on the application. However, if an application is received and gross annual revenue is collected in connection with a covered application in one calendar year, a financial institution may reuse that data pursuant to § 1002.107(d) in a subsequent application initiated in the same calendar year, even if final action was taken on the subsequent application in the following calendar year.

8. *Time in business.* A financial institution that decides to reuse previously collected data to satisfy § 1002.107(a)(17) (time in business) must update the data to reflect the passage of time since the data were collected. If a financial institution only knows that the applicant had been in business less than two years at the time the data was initially collected, as described in comment 107(a)(17)–1.ii or iii, it updates the data based on the assumption that the applicant had been in business for 12 months at the time of the prior collection. For example:

i. If a financial institution previously collected data on a prior covered application that the applicant has been in business for four years, and then seeks to reuse that data for a subsequent covered application submitted one year later, it must update the data to reflect that the applicant has been in business for five years.

ii. If a financial institution previously collected data on a prior covered application that the applicant had been in business less than two years (and was not aware of the business's actual length of time in business at the time), and then seeks to reuse that data for a subsequent covered application submitted 18 months later, the financial institution reports time in business on the subsequent covered application as over two years in business.

9. *Minority-owned business status, women-owned business status, and principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex.* A financial institution may not reuse data to satisfy § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) unless the data were collected in connection with a prior covered application pursuant to this subpart B. If the financial institution previously asked the applicant to provide its minority-owned business status and women-owned business status, and principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex for purposes of § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19), and the applicant declined to provide the information (such as by selecting ''I do not wish to provide this information'' or similar on a data collection form or by telling the financial institution that it did not wish to provide the information), the financial institution may use that response when reporting data for a

subsequent application pursuant to § 1002.107(d). However, if the applicant failed to respond (such as by leaving the response to the question blank or by failing to return a data collection form), the financial institution must inquire about the applicant's minority-owned business status, women-owned business status, and principal owners' ethnicity, race, or sex, as applicable, in connection with a subsequent application because the data were not previously obtained. See also comment 107(a)(19)–11 concerning previously collected ethnicity, race, and sex information.

Section 1002.108—Firewall

* * * * *

108(b) Prohibition on Access to Certain Information

1. *Scope of persons subject to the prohibition.* The prohibition in § 1002.108(b) applies to an employee or officer of a covered financial institution or its affiliate if the employee or officer is involved in making any determination concerning a covered application from a small business. For example, if a financial institution is affiliated with company B and an employee of company B is involved in making a determination concerning a covered application on behalf of the financial institution, then the financial institution must comply with § 1002.108 with regard to company B's employee. Section 1002.108 does not require a financial institution to limit the access of employees and officers of third parties who are not affiliates of the financial institution.

2. *Scope of information that cannot be accessed when the prohibition applies to an employee or officer.* i. *Information that cannot be accessed when the prohibition applies.* If a particular employee or officer is involved in making a determination concerning a covered application from a small business, the prohibition in § 1002.108(b) only limits that employee's or officer's access to that small business applicant's responses to the inquiries that the covered financial institution makes to satisfy § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19). For example, if a financial institution uses a paper data collection form to request information pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19), an employee or officer that is subject to the prohibition is not permitted access to the paper data collection form that contains the applicant's responses to the inquiries made pursuant to pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19), or to any other record that identifies how the particular applicant responded to those inquires. Similarly, if a financial institution makes the inquiries required pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) during a telephone call, the prohibition applies to the applicant's responses to those inquiries provided during that telephone call and to any record that identifies how the particular applicant responded to those inquiries.

ii. *Information that can be accessed when the prohibition applies.* If a particular employee or officer is involved in making a determination concerning a covered application, the prohibition in § 1002.108(b) does not limit that employee's or officer's access to an applicant's responses to inquiries regarding whether the applicant is a minority-owned or women-owned business, or principal owners' ethnicity, race, or sex, made for purposes other than compliance with § 1002.107(a)(18) or (19). Thus, for example, an employee or officer who is subject to the prohibition in § 1002.108(b) may have access to information regarding whether an applicant is eligible for a Small Business Administration program for women-owned businesses without regard to whether the exception in § 1002.108(c) is satisfied. Additionally, an employee or officer who knows that an applicant is a minority-owned business or a women-owned business, or who knows the ethnicity, race, or sex of any of the applicant's principal owners due to activities unrelated to the inquiries made to satisfy the financial institution's obligations under § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) is not prohibited from making a determination concerning the applicant's covered application. Thus, an employee or officer who knows, for example, that an applicant is a minority-owned business due to a social relationship or another professional relationship with the applicant or any of its principal owners may make determinations concerning the applicant's covered application. Furthermore, an employee or officer that is involved in making a determination concerning a covered application may see, consider, refer to, or use data collected to satisfy aspects of § 1002.107 other than § 1002.107(a)(18) or (19), such as gross annual revenue and time in business.

* * * * *

108(d) Notice

1. *General.* If a financial institution determines that one or more employees or officers should have access pursuant to § 1002.108(c), the financial institution must provide the required notice to, at a minimum, the applicant or applicants whose responses will be accessed by an employee or officer involved in making determinations concerning the applicant's or applicants' covered applications. Alternatively, a financial institution may also provide the required notice to applicants whose responses will not or might not be accessed. For example, a financial institution could provide the notice to all applicants for covered credit transactions or all applicants for a specific type of product.

2. *Content of the required notice.* The notice must inform the applicant that one or more employees and officers involved in making determinations concerning the applicant's covered application may have access to the applicant's responses regarding the applicant's minority-owned business status and women-owned business status, and its principal owners' ethnicity, race, and sex. See the sample data collection form in appendix E to this part for sample language for providing this notice to applicants. If a financial institution establishes and maintains a firewall and chooses to use the sample data collection form, the financial institution can delete this sample language from the form.

3. *Timing for providing the notice.* If the financial institution is providing the notice orally, it must provide the notice required by § 1002.108(d) prior to asking the applicant if it is a minority-owned business or women-owned business and prior to asking for a principal owner's ethnicity, race, or sex. If the notice is provided on the same paper or electronic data collection form as the inquiries about minority-owned business status, women-owned business status, and the principal owners' ethnicity, race, or sex, the notice must appear before the inquiries. If the notice is provided in an electronic or paper document that is separate from the data collection form, the notice must be provided at the same time as the data collection form or prior to providing the data collection form. Additionally, the notice must be provided with the non-discrimination notices required pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19). See appendix E for sample language.

Section 1002.109—Reporting of Data to the Bureau

* * * * *

109(a)(3) Reporting Obligations Where Multiple Financial Institutions Are Involved in a Covered Credit Transaction

1. *General.* The following clarifies how to report applications involving more than one financial institution. The discussion below assumes that all parties involved with the covered credit transaction are covered financial institutions. However, the same principles apply if any party is not a covered financial institution.

i. A financial institution shall report the action that it takes on a covered application, whether or not the covered credit transaction closed in the financial institution's name and even if the financial institution used underwriting criteria supplied by another financial institution. However, where it is necessary for more than one financial institution to make a credit decision in order to approve a single covered credit transaction, only the last financial institution with authority to set the material terms of the covered credit transaction is required to report. Setting the material terms of the covered credit transaction include, for example, selecting among competing offers, or modifying pricing information, amount approved or originated, or repayment duration. In this situation, the determinative factor is not which financial institution actually made the last credit decision prior to closing, but rather which financial institution last had the authority for setting the material terms of the covered credit transaction prior to closing. Whether a financial institution has taken action for purposes of § 1002.109(a)(3) and comment 109(a)(3)–1 is not relevant to, and is not intended to repeal, abrogate, annul, impair, or interfere with, section 701(d) (15 U.S.C. 1691(d)) of the Act, § 1002.9, or any other provision within subpart A of this Regulation.

ii. A financial institution takes action on a covered application for purposes of § 1002.109(a)(3) if it denies the application, originates the application, approves the application but the applicant did not accept the transaction, or closes the file or denies for incompleteness. The financial institution

must also report the application if it was withdrawn. For reporting purposes, it is not relevant whether the financial institution receives the application directly from the applicant or indirectly through another party, such as a broker, or (except as otherwise provided in comment 109(a)(3)–1.i) whether another financial institution also reviews and reports an action taken on a covered application involving the same credit transaction.

iii. Where it is necessary for more than one financial institution to make a credit decision in order to approve a single covered credit transaction and where more than one financial institution denies the application or otherwise does not approve the application, the reporting financial institution (the last financial institution with authority to set the material terms of the covered credit transaction) shall have a consistent procedure for determining how it reports inconsistent or differing data points for purposes of subpart B. For example, Financial Institution A is the reporting entity because it has the last authority to set the material credit terms. Financial Institution A sends the application to Financial Institution B and Financial Institution C for review, but both Financial Institution B and Financial Institution C deny the application. Based on these denials, Financial Institution A follows suit and denies the application.

2. *Examples.* The following scenarios illustrate how a financial institution reports a particular covered application. The illustrations assume that all parties involved with the covered credit transaction are covered financial institutions. However, the same principles apply if any party is not a covered financial institution. Examples i through iv involve a single financial institution with responsibility for making a credit decision without the involvement of an intermediary. Example v describes a financial institution intermediary with only passive involvement in the covered credit transaction. Example vi describes a transaction where multiple financial institutions independently decision and take action on a covered application. Examples vii and viii describe situations where more than one financial institution must make a credit decision in order to approve the covered credit transaction. Examples ix and x describe situations involving pooled and participation interests.

i. Financial Institution A received a covered application from an applicant and approved the application before closing the covered credit transaction in its name. Financial Institution A was not acting as Financial Institution B's agent. Financial Institution B later purchased the covered credit transaction from Financial Institution A. Financial Institution A was not acting as Financial Institution B's agent. Financial Institution A reports the application. Financial Institution B has no reporting obligation for this transaction.

ii. Financial Institution A received a covered application from an applicant. If approved, the covered credit transaction would have closed in Financial Institution B's name. Financial Institution A denied the application without sending it to Financial Institution B for approval. Financial Institution A was not acting as Financial Institution B's agent. Since Financial Institution A took action on the application, Financial Institution A reports the application as denied. Financial Institution B does not report the application.

iii. Financial Institution A reviewed a covered application and made a credit decision to approve it using the underwriting criteria provided by a Financial Institution B. Financial Institution B did not review the application and did not make a credit decision prior to closing. Financial Institution A was not acting as Financial Institution B's agent. Financial Institution A reports the application. Financial Institution B has no reporting obligation for this application.

iv. Financial Institution A reviewed and made the credit decision on a covered application based on the criteria of a third-party insurer or guarantor (for example, a government or private insurer or guarantor). Financial Institution A reports the action taken on the application.

v. Financial Institution A received a covered application from an applicant and forwarded that application to Financial Institution B. Financial Institution B reviewed the application and made a credit decision approving the application prior to closing. The covered credit transaction closed in Financial Institution A's name. Financial Institution B purchased the covered credit transaction from Financial Institution A after closing. Financial Institution B was not acting as Financial Institution A's agent. Since Financial Institution B made the credit decision prior to closing, and Financial Institution A's approval was not necessary for the credit transaction, Financial Institution B reports the origination. Financial Institution A does not report the application. Assume the same facts, except that Financial Institution B reviewed the application before the covered credit transaction would have closed, but Financial Institution B denied the application. Financial Institution B reports the application as denied. Financial Institution A does not report the application because it did not take an action on the application. If, under the same facts, the application was withdrawn before Financial Institution B made a credit decision, Financial Institution B would report the application as withdrawn and Financial Institution A would not report the application for the same reason.

vi. Financial Institution A received a covered application and forwarded it to Financial Institutions B and C. Financial Institution A made a credit decision, acting as Financial Institution D's agent, and approved the application. Financial Institutions B and C are not working together with Financial Institutions A or D, or with each other, and are solely responsible for setting the terms of their own credit transactions. Financial Institution B made a credit decision approving the application, and Financial Institution C made a credit decision denying the application. The applicant did not accept the covered credit transaction from Financial Institution D. Financial Institution D reports the application as approved but not accepted. Financial Institution A does not report the application, because it was acting as Financial Institution D's agent. The applicant accepted the offer of credit from Financial Institution B, and credit was extended. Financial Institution B reports the application as originated. Financial Institution C reports the application as denied.

vii. Financial Institution A received a covered application and made a credit decision to approve it using the underwriting criteria provided by Financial Institution B. Financial Institution A was not acting as Financial Institution B's agent. Financial Institution A forwarded the application to Financial Institution B. Financial Institution B reviewed the application and made a credit decision approving the application prior to closing. Financial Institution A makes a credit decision on the application and modifies the credit terms (the interest rate and repayment term) offered by Financial Institution B. The covered credit transaction reflecting the modified terms closes in Financial Institution A's name. Financial Institution B purchases the covered credit transaction from Financial Institution A after closing. As the last financial institution with the authority for setting the material terms of the covered credit transaction, Financial Institution A reports the application as originated. Financial Institution B does not report the origination because it was not the last financial institution with the authority to set the material terms on the application. If, under the same facts, Financial Institution A did not modify the credit terms offered by Financial Institution B, Financial Institution A still reports the application as originated because it was still the last financial institution with the authority for setting the material terms, even if it chose not to so do in a particular instance. Financial Institution B does not report the origination.

viii. Financial Institution A received a covered application and forwarded it to Financial Institutions B, C, and D. Financial Institution A was not acting as anyone's agent. Financial Institution B and C reviewed the application and made a credit decision approving the application and Financial Institution D reviewed the application and made a credit decision denying the application. Prior to closing, Financial Institution A makes a credit decision on the application by deciding to offer to the applicant the credit terms offered by Financial Institution B and does not convey to the applicant the credit terms offered by Financial Institution C. The applicant does not accept the covered credit transaction. As the last financial institution with the authority for setting the material terms of the covered credit transaction, Financial Institution A reports the application as approved but not accepted. Financial Institutions B, C, and D do not report the application because they were not the last financial institution with the authority for setting the material terms of the covered credit transaction. Assume the same facts, except the applicant accepts the terms of the covered credit transaction from Financial

Institution B as offered by Financial Institution A. The covered credit transaction closes in Financial Institution A's name. Financial Institution B purchases the transaction after closing. Here, Financial Institution A reports the application as originated. Financial Institutions B, C, and D do not report the application because they were not the last financial institution responsible for setting the material terms of the covered credit transaction.

ix. Financial Institution A receives a covered application and approves it, and then Financial Institution A elects to organize a loan participation agreement where Financial Institutions B and C agree to purchase a partial interest in the covered credit transaction. Financial Institution A reports the application. Financial Institutions B and C have no reporting obligation for this application.

x. Financial Institution A purchases an interest in a pool of covered credit transactions, such as credit-backed securities or real estate investment conduits. Financial Institution A does not report this purchase.

3. *Agents.* If a covered financial institution takes action on a covered application through its agent, the financial institution reports the application. For example, acting as Financial Institution A's agent, Financial Institution B approved an application prior to closing and a covered credit transaction was originated. Financial Institution A reports the covered credit transaction as an origination. State law determines whether one party is the agent of another.

109(b) Financial Institution Identifying Information

1. *Changes to financial institution identifying information.* If a financial institution's information required pursuant to § 1002.109(b) changes, the financial institution shall provide the new information with the data submission for the collection year of the change. For example, assume two financial institutions that previously reported data under subpart B of this part merge and the surviving institution retained its Legal Entity Identifier but obtained a new TIN in February 2029. The surviving institution must report the new TIN with its data submission for its 2029 data (which is due by June 1, 2030) pursuant to § 1002.109(b)(5). Likewise, if that financial institution's Federal prudential regulator changes in February 2029 as a result of the merger, it must identify its new Federal prudential regulator in its annual submission for its 2029 data.

* * * * *

Paragraph 109(b)(9)

1. *Type of financial institution.* A financial institution complies with § 1002.109(b)(9) by selecting the applicable type or types of financial institution from the list below. A financial institution shall select all applicable types.

i. Bank or savings association.

ii. Minority depository institution.

iii. Credit union.

iv. Nondepository institution.

v. Community development financial institution (CDFI).

vi. Other nonprofit financial institution.

vii. [Reserved]

viii. Government lender.

ix. Commercial finance company.

x. Equipment finance company.

xi. Industrial loan company.

xii. Online lender.

xiii. Other.

2. *Use of ''other'' for type of financial institution.* A financial institution reports type of financial institution as ''other'' where none of the enumerated types of financial institution appropriately describe the applicable type of financial institution, and the institution reports the type of financial institution via free-form text field. A financial institution that selects at least one type from the list is permitted, but not required, to also report ''other'' (with appropriate free-form text) if there is an additional aspect of its business that is not one of the enumerated types set out in comment 109(b)(9)–1.

3. *Additional types of financial institution.* The Bureau may add additional types of financial institutions via the Filing Instructions Guide and related materials. Refer to the Filing Instructions Guide for any updates for each reporting year.

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Section 1002.112—Enforcement

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112(c) Safe Harbors

1. *Information from a Federal agency—census tract.* Section 1002.112(c)(2) provides that an incorrect entry for census tract is not a violation of the Act or subpart B of this part, if the financial institution obtained the census tract using a geocoding tool provided by the FFIEC or the Bureau. However, this safe harbor provision does not extend to a financial institution's failure to provide the correct census tract number for a covered application on its small business lending application register, as required by § 1002.107(a)(13), because the FFIEC or Bureau geocoding tool did not return a census tract for the address provided by the financial institution. In addition, this safe harbor provision does not extend to a census tract error that results from a financial institution entering an inaccurate address into the FFIEC or Bureau geocoding tool.

2. *Applicability of NAICS code safe harbor.* The safe harbor in § 1002.112(c)(3) applies to an incorrect entry for the 3-digit NAICS code that financial institutions must collect and report pursuant to § 1002.107(a)(15), provided certain conditions are met. For purposes of § 1002.112(c)(3)(i), a financial institution is permitted to rely on statements made by the applicant, information provided by the applicant, or on other information obtained through its use of appropriate third-party sources, including business information products. See also comments 107(a)(15)–4 and 107(b)–1.

3. *Incorrect determination of small business status, covered credit transaction, or covered application—examples.* Section 1002.112(c)(4) provides a safe harbor from violations of the Act or this regulation for a financial institution that initially collects data under § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) regarding whether an applicant for a covered credit transaction is a minority-owned or women-owned business, and the ethnicity, race, and sex of the applicant's principal owners, but later concludes that it should not have collected this data, if certain conditions are met. Specifically, to qualify for this safe harbor, § 1002.112(c)(4) requires that the financial institution have had a reasonable basis at the time it collected data under § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) for believing that the application was a covered application for a covered credit transaction from a small business pursuant to §§ 1002.103, 1002.104, and 1002.106, respectively. For example, Financial Institution A collected data under § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19) from an applicant for a covered credit transaction that had self-reported its gross annual revenue as $900,000. Sometime after Financial Institution A had collected this data from the applicant, the financial institution reviewed the applicant's tax returns, which indicated the applicant's gross annual revenue was in fact $1.1 million. Financial Institution A is permitted to rely on representations made by the applicant regarding gross annual revenue in determining whether an applicant is a small business (see § 1002.107(b) and comments 106(b)(1)–3 and 107(a)(14)–1). Thus, Financial Institution A may have had a reasonable basis to believe, at the time it collected data under § 1002.107(a)(18) and (19), that the applicant was a small business pursuant to § 1002.106, in which case Financial Institution A's collection of such data would not violate the Act or this regulation.

Section 1002.114—Effective Date, Compliance Date, and Special Transition Rules

114(b) Compliance Date

1. *Application of compliance date.* The compliance date in § 1002.114(b) is the date by which the covered financial institution must begin to compile data as specified in § 1002.107, comply with the firewall requirements of § 1002.108, and begin to maintain records as specified in § 1002.111. In addition, the covered financial institution must comply with § 1002.110(c) and (d) no later than June 1 of the year after the compliance date.

2. [Reserved]

3. [Reserved]

4. *Examples.* The following scenarios illustrate how to determine whether a financial institution is a covered financial institution subject to the initial compliance date specified in § 1002.114(b)(1).

i. Financial Institution A originated 3,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses in calendar year 2026, and 3,000 in calendar year 2027. Financial Institution A has a compliance date of January 1, 2028.

ii. [Reserved]

iii. [Reserved]

iv. Financial Institution D originated 990 covered credit transactions to small businesses in calendar year 2026, 1,020 in calendar year 2027, and 990 in calendar years 2028 and 2029. Because Financial Institution D did not originate at least 1,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses in each of 2026 and 2027, it is not subject to the initial compliance date set forth in

§ 1002.114(b)(1). Because Financial Institution D did not originate at least 1,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses in subsequent consecutive calendar years, it is not a covered financial institution under § 1002.105(b) and is not required to comply with the rule in 2029 or 2030.

v. [Reserved]

vi. Financial Institution F originated 990 covered credit transactions for small businesses in calendar year 2026, and 1,020 in 2027, 2028, and 2029. Because Financial Institution F did not originate at least 1,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses in each of 2026 and 2027, it is not subject to the initial compliance date set forth in § 1002.114(b)(1). Because Financial Institution F originated at least 1,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses in subsequent calendar years, § 1002.114(b)(4), which cross-references § 1002.105(b), applies to Financial Institution F. Because Financial Institution F originated at least 1,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses in each of 2027 and 2028, it is a covered financial institution under § 1002.105(b) and is required to comply with the rule beginning January 1, 2029.

vii. [Reserved]

viii. [Reserved]

114(c) Special Transition Rules

1. *Collection of certain information prior to a financial institution's compliance date.* Notwithstanding § 1002.5(a)(4)(ix), a financial institution that chooses to collect information on covered applications as permitted by § 1002.114(c)(1) in the 12 months prior to the initial compliance date as specified in § 1002.114(b)(1) need comply only with the requirements set out in §§ 1002.107(a)(18) and (19), 1002.108, and 1002.111(b) and (c) with respect to the information collected. During this 12-month period, a covered financial institution need not comply with the provisions of § 1002.107 (other than §§ 1002.107(a)(18) and (19)), § 1002.109, § 1002.110, § 1002.111(a), or § 1002.114.

2. *Transition rule for applications received prior to a compliance date but final action is taken after a compliance date.* If a covered financial institution receives a covered application from a small business prior to the initial compliance date specified in § 1002.114(b)(1), but takes final action on or after that date, the financial institution is not required to collect data regarding that application pursuant to § 1002.107 nor to report the application pursuant to § 1002.109. For example, if a financial institution receives an application on December 27, 2027, but does not take final action on the application until January 25, 2028, the financial institution is not required to collect data pursuant to § 1002.107 nor to report data to the Bureau pursuant to § 1002.109 regarding that application.

3. *Has readily accessible the information needed to determine small business status.* A financial institution has readily accessible the information needed to determine whether its originations of covered credit transactions were for small businesses as defined in § 1002.106 if, for instance, it in the ordinary course of business collects data on the precise gross annual revenue of the businesses for which it originates loans, it obtains information sufficient to determine whether an applicant for business credit had gross annual revenues of $1 million or less, or if it collects and reports similar data to Federal or State government agencies pursuant to other laws or regulations.

4. *Does not have readily accessible the information needed to determine small business status.* A financial institution does not have readily accessible the information needed to determine whether its originations of covered credit transactions were for small businesses as defined in § 1002.106 if it did not in the ordinary course of business collect either precise or approximate information on whether the businesses to which it originated covered credit transactions had gross annual revenue of $1 million or less. In addition, even if precise or approximate information on gross annual revenue was initially collected, a financial institution does not have readily accessible this information if, to retrieve this information, for example, it must review paper loan files, recall such information from either archived paper records or scanned records in digital archives, or obtain such information from third parties that initially obtained this information but did not transmit such information to the financial institution.

5. *Reasonable method to estimate the number of originations.* The reasonable methods that financial institutions may use to estimate originations for 2026 and 2027 include, but are not limited to, the following:

i. A financial institution may comply with § 1002.114(c)(2) by determining the small business status of covered credit transactions by asking every applicant, prior to the closing of approved transactions, to self-report whether it had gross annual revenue for its preceding fiscal year of $1 million or less, during the period October 1 through December 31, 2026. The financial institution may annualize the number of covered credit transactions it originates to small businesses from October 1 through December 31, 2026, by quadrupling the originations for this period, and apply the annualized number of originations to both calendar years 2026 and 2027.

ii. A financial institution may comply with § 1002.114(c)(2) by asking a representative sample of applicants for covered credit transactions whether they are small businesses.

iii. A financial institution may comply with § 1002.114(c)(2) by using another methodology provided that such methodology is reasonable and documented in writing.

6. *Examples.* The following scenarios illustrate the potential application of § 1002.114(c)(2) to a financial institution's initial compliance date under § 1002.114(b).

i. Prior to July 1, 2026, Financial Institution A did not collect gross annual revenue or other information that would allow it to determine the small business status of the businesses for whom it originated covered credit transactions in calendar year 2026. Financial Institution A chose to use the methodology set out in comment 114(c)–5.i and as of July 1, 2026, began to collect information on gross annual revenue as defined in § 1002.107(a)(14) for its covered credit transactions originated for businesses. Using this information, Financial Institution A determined that it had originated 750 covered credit transactions for businesses that were small as defined in § 1002.106. On an annualized basis, Financial Institution A originated 3,000 covered credit transactions for small businesses (750 originations * 4 = 3,000 originations per year). Applying this annualized figure of 3,000 originations to both calendar years 2026 and 2027, Financial Institution A is subject to the initial compliance date set forth in § 1002.114(b)(1).

ii. Prior to July 1, 2026, Financial Institution B collected gross annual revenue information for some applicants for business credit, but such information was only noted in its paper loan files. Financial Institution B thus does not have reasonable access to information that would allow it to determine the small business status of the businesses for whom it originated covered credit transactions for the first half of calendar year 2026. Financial Institution B chose to use the methodology set out in comment 114(c)–5.i, and as of October 1, 2026, Financial Institution B began to ask all businesses for whom it was closing covered credit transactions if they had gross annual revenues in the preceding fiscal year of $1 million or less. Using this information, Financial Institution B determined that it had originated 850 covered credit transactions for businesses that were small as defined in § 1002.106. On an annualized basis, Financial Institution B originated 3,400 covered credit transactions for small businesses (850 originations * 4 = 3,400 originations per year). Applying this estimated figure of 3,400 originations to both calendar years 2026 and 2027, Financial Institution B is subject to the initial compliance date set forth in § 1002.114(b)(1).

iii. [Reserved]

iv. Financial Institution D did not collect gross annual revenue or other information that would allow it to determine the small business status of the businesses for whom it originated covered credit transactions in calendar years 2026 and 2027. Financial Institution D determined that it had originated 3,000 total covered credit transactions for businesses in each of 2026 and 2027. Applying the methodology specified in comment 114(c)–5.ii, Financial Institution D assumed that all 3,000 covered credit transactions originated in each of 2026 and 2027 were to small businesses. On that basis, Financial Institution D is subject to the initial compliance date set forth in § 1002.114(b)(1).

v. [Reserved]

vi. Financial Institution F does not have readily accessible gross annual revenue or other information that would allow it to determine the small business status of the businesses for whom it originated covered credit transactions in calendar years 2026 and 2027. Financial Institution F determined that it had originated 480 total covered credit transactions for businesses in 2026 and 550 total covered credit transactions for businesses in 2027. Applying the

methodology set out in comment 114(c)–5.ii, Financial Institution F assumed that all such transactions originated in 2026 and 2027 were originated for small businesses. On that basis, Financial Institution E is not subject to the initial compliance date set forth in § 1002.114(b)(1).

vii. [Reserved]

* * * * *

Russell Vought,

Acting Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

[FR Doc. 2025–19865 Filed 11–12–25; 8:45 am]

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FEDERAL REGISTER

Vol. 90 Thursday,
No. 217 November 13, 2025

Part III

The President

Proclamation 10988—Anti-Communism Week, 2025

Federal Register
Vol. 90, No. 217
Thursday, November 13, 2025

Presidential Documents

Title 3—

The President

Proclamation 10988 of November 7, 2025

Anti-Communism Week, 2025

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

This week, our Nation observes Anti-Communism Week, a solemn remembrance of the devastation caused by one of history's most destructive ideologies. Across continents and generations, communism has wrought devastation upon nations and souls. More than 100 million lives have been taken by regimes that sought to erase faith, suppress freedom, and destroy prosperity earned through hard work, violating the God-given rights and dignity of those they oppressed. As we honor their memory, we renew our national promise to stand firm against communism, to uphold the cause of liberty and human worth, and to affirm once more that no system of government can ever replace the will and conscience of a free people.

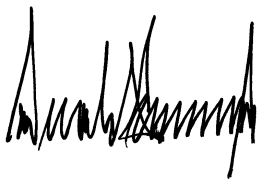
For more than a century, communism has brought nothing but ruin. Wherever it spreads, it silences dissent, punishes beliefs, and demands that generations kneel before the power of the state instead of standing for freedom. Its story is written in blood and sorrow, a grim reminder that communism is nothing more than another word for servitude.

In the 34 years since the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed both the triumph of democracy and the persistence of tyranny in new forms. New voices now repeat old lies, cloaking them in the language of ''social justice'' and ''democratic socialism,'' yet their message remains the same: give up your freedom, place your trust in the power of the government, and trade the promise of prosperity for the empty comfort of control. America rejects this evil doctrine. We remain a Nation founded on the eternal truth that liberty and opportunity are the birthrights of every person, and that no ideology, whether foreign or domestic, can extinguish them.

As we mark Anti-Communism Week, we stand united in defense of the values that define us as a free people. We honor the victims of oppression by keeping their cause alive and by ensuring that communism and every system that denies the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness will find their place, once and for all, on the ash heap of history.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the week of November 2 through November 8, 2025, as Anti-Communism Week.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fiftieth.



[FR Doc. 2025–19892
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