

filing patent applications in DOCX format. The feedback from stakeholders during this transition to a DOCX system has been extremely helpful to the USPTO in improving its systems. The USPTO is no longer seeing any errors being reported as a result of filing patent applications in DOCX format when applicants follow the guidance provided by the USPTO.

The USPTO recognizes that, during the transition, some applicants have been hesitant to file patent applications in DOCX format for fear that certain technical information including formulas might not be accurately reflected in the DOCX version. Accordingly, in April 2022, the USPTO announced that, for a period of time ending December 31, 2022, it was providing patent applicants with the option to submit a back-up applicant-generated PDF version of the application along with the DOCX file(s) when filing an application in Patent Center. See Filing Patent Applications in DOCX Format, 87 FR 25226 (Apr. 28, 2022). The USPTO believed that the initial period would encourage applicants to file in DOCX while ensuring that if any discrepancies were discovered, the back-up version could be used to correct the discrepancies. As with the DOCX version of the application, the applicant-generated PDF version also becomes part of the official record.

The USPTO expresses its gratitude to those who have used DOCX during this period and have reported any discrepancies. That effort allowed the USPTO to engage in enhanced testing of its information technology systems, and improve its guidance, as more users filed in DOCX. Even though the USPTO is no longer receiving discrepancy reports from those who file in DOCX following the USPTO's guidance, based on stakeholder requests, the USPTO is extending the temporary period to submit applicant-generated PDFs through June 30, 2023.

The USPTO reminds applicants that the option to submit an applicant-generated PDF version of the application is not available for applications filed via EFS-Web. The agency anticipates that more applicants will begin filing applications in DOCX format once the non-DOCX filing surcharge fee becomes effective on January 1, 2023. Nevertheless, extending the temporary period during which patent applicants have the option to submit an applicant-generated PDF of the application along with the validated DOCX file(s) through June 30, 2023, will provide applicants additional time to gain confidence in the reliability and

accuracy of the USPTO system when filing applications in DOCX format and safeguard the applicant should any conversion discrepancies take place. Applicants are also reminded that they can file test submissions through Patent Center training mode to practice filing in DOCX. Information on filing application documents in DOCX and a link to the DOCX training sessions are available at www.uspto.gov/patents/docx.

As discussed in the notice published on April 28, 2022, patent applicants who choose to submit an applicant-generated PDF with the validated DOCX file(s) when filing an application in Patent Center during the temporary period will not have to pay additional fees, such as an application size fee, as a result of filing the applicant-generated PDF, and, on petition, will be able to rely on the applicant-generated PDF if a discrepancy occurs during the filing process. To avoid incurring additional fees for the PDF, applicants must follow the process for submitting an applicant-generated PDF (Auxiliary PDF) set forth in the quick reference guide available at www.uspto.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Aux_PDF_QRG_Final_2022.docx. The USPTO will continue to waive the petition fee under 37 CFR 1.17(f) for a petition under 37 CFR 1.182 that relies on an applicant-generated PDF that was filed in Patent Center during the temporary period as the source to make a correction to the record. The USPTO will include the applicant-generated PDF in any certified copy of the application as filed, if the applicant-generated PDF remains part of the official record when applicant's request is processed. After the expiration of the temporary period (June 30, 2023), patent applicants who submit an applicant-generated PDF with the validated DOCX file(s) will need to pay the non-DOCX filing surcharge fee and any other additional fees, such as an application size fee, as a result of filing the applicant-generated PDF.

As a reminder, the USPTO published a final rule in the **Federal Register** that included a new non-DOCX filing surcharge fee, set forth in 37 CFR 1.16(u), with an effective date of January 1, 2022. See Setting and Adjusting Patent Fees During Fiscal Year 2020, 85 FR 46932 (Aug. 3, 2020). The USPTO later announced it was delaying the effective date of this fee until January 1, 2023. See Setting and Adjusting Patent Fees During Fiscal Year 2020, 86 FR 66192 (Nov. 22, 2021). The effective date of the non-DOCX filing surcharge fee now set forth in 37 CFR 1.16(u) is not being delayed. The non-DOCX filing surcharge fee, which applies only to

non-reissue (original), nonprovisional utility applications filed under 35 U.S.C. 111, including continuing applications, will become effective on January 1, 2023. Small and micro-entity discounts will apply.

For more information regarding the filing of an applicant-generated PDF in Patent Center, including the options available for making corrections to the record, please see Filing Patent Applications in DOCX Format, 87 FR 25226 (Apr. 28, 2022).

Katherine K. Vidal,

Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

[FR Doc. 2022-27366 Filed 12-19-22; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-16-P

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

Sunshine Act Meetings

TIME AND DATE: 1:30 p.m.–3 p.m., January 5, 2023.

PLACE: Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, 625 Indiana Avenue NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20004.

STATUS: Closed. During the closed meeting, the Board Members will discuss issues dealing with potential Recommendations to the Secretary of Energy. The Board is invoking the exemption to close a meeting described in 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(3) and 10 CFR 1704.4(c). The Board has determined that it is necessary to close the meeting since conducting an open meeting is likely to disclose matters that are specifically exempted from disclosure by statute. In this case, the deliberations will pertain to potential Board Recommendations which, under 42 U.S.C. 2286d(b) and (h)(3), may not be made publicly available until after they have been received by the Secretary of Energy or the President, respectively.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: The meeting will proceed in accordance with the closed meeting agenda which is posted on the Board's public website at www.dnfsb.gov. Technical staff may present information to the Board. The Board Members are expected to conduct deliberations regarding potential Recommendations to the Secretary of Energy.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION: Tara Tadlock, Associate Director for Board Operations, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, 625 Indiana Avenue NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20004-2901, (800) 788-4016. This is a toll-free number.

Dated: December 15, 2022.

Joyce Connery,
Chair.

[FR Doc. 2022–27643 Filed 12–16–22; 11:15 am]

BILLING CODE 3670–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[Docket No.: ED–2022–SCC–0154]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Comment Request; William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program Repayment Plan Selection Form

AGENCY: Federal Student Aid (FSA), Department of Education (ED).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, the Department is proposing an extension without change of a currently approved information collection request (ICR).

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before February 21, 2023.

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–2022–SCC–0154. 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 www.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 Manager of the Strategic Collections and Clearance Governance and Strategy Division, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave, SW, LBJ, Room 6W203, Washington, DC 20202–8240.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For specific questions related to collection activities, please contact Beth Grebeldinger, (202) 377–4018.

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: William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program Repayment Plan Selection Form.

OMB Control Number: 1845–0014.

Type of Review: Extension without change of a currently approved ICR.

Respondents/Affected Public: Individuals or households. *Total Estimated Number of Annual Responses:* 660,000.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Burden Hours: 110,220.

Abstract: This is a request for an extension without change to the current respondent/response/burden hour assessment in OMB Control Number 1845–0014—Repayment Plan Request: Standard Repayment Plan/Extended Repayment Plan/Graduated Repayment Plan—William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program. The Department files this request with the same total annual number of respondents for this renewal collection used in the prior filing. Due to the effects of the COVID–19 pandemic and the suspension of the collection of loans, the Department lacks sufficient data to allow for more accurate updates to the usage of these forms.

Dated: December 15, 2022.

Kun Mullan,

PRA Coordinator, Strategic Collections and Clearance, Governance and Strategy Division, Office of Chief Data Officer, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development.

[FR Doc. 2022–27560 Filed 12–19–22; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[Docket No.: ED–2022–SCC–0127]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget for Review and Approval; Comment Request; State and Local Educational Agency Record and Reporting Requirements Under Part B of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), Department of Education (ED).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, the Department is proposing an extension without change of a currently approved information collection request (ICR).

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before January 19, 2023.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and recommendations for proposed information collection requests should be submitted within 30 days of publication of this notice. Click on this link www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain to access the site. Find this information collection request (ICR) by selecting “Department of Education” under “Currently Under Review,” then check the “Only Show ICR for Public Comment” checkbox. *Reginfo.gov* provides two links to view documents related to this information collection request. Information collection forms and instructions may be found by clicking on the “View Information Collection (IC) List” link. Supporting statements and other supporting documentation may be found by clicking on the “View Supporting Statement and Other Documents” link.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For specific questions related to collection activities, please contact Diana Yu, 202–245–6061.

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