Dated: October 7, 1999.

Michael S. Hacskaylo,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 99–28180 Filed 10–27–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450–01–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL–6465–8]

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Title: Environmental Radiation Ambient Monitoring System (ERAMS); Subject: Environmental Monitoring

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), this document announces that EPA is planning to submit the following continuing Information Collection Request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB): Environmental Radiation Ambient Monitoring System (ERAMS); EPA ICR No. 0877.06; OMB Control No. 2060–0015; expiration date, January 2000. Before submitting the ICR to OMB for review and approval, EPA is soliciting comments on specific aspects of the proposed information collection as described below.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before December 27, 1999.

ADDRESSES: National Air and Radiation Environmental Laboratory, 540 South Morris Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36115–2601. Limited number of hard copies available at this address. ICR available electronically at www.epa.gov/narel.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Charles M. Petko: TEL (334) 270–3411; FAX (334) 270–3454; and E-MAIL petko.charles@epa.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Affected entities: Sample collectors.

Title: Environmental Radiation Ambient Monitoring System (ERAMS); OMB Control No. 2060–0015; EPA ICR No. 0877.06; expiration date January 2000.

Abstract: The Environmental Radiation Ambient Monitoring System (ERAMS) is a national network of stations collecting sampling media that include air, precipitation, drinking water, surface water, and milk. Samples are sent to EPA's National Air and Radiation Environ-mental Laboratory (NAREL) in Montgomery, AL, where they are analyzed for radioactivity. ERAMS provides emergency response and ambient monitoring information regarding levels of environmental radiation across the nation. All stations, usually manned by state and local personnel, participate in ERAMS voluntarily. Station operators complete information forms that accompany the samples. The forms request descriptive information related to sample collection, *e.g.*, sample type, sample location, length of sampling period, and volume represented. 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 EPA's regulations are listed in 40 CFR part 9 and 48 CFR Chapter 15.

The EPA would like to solicit comments to:

(i) Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(ii) Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collec-tion of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(iii) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(iv) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, *e.g.*, permitting electronic submission of responses.

Burden Statement: The annual public reporting and record keeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.37 hours per response. Burden means the total time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, or disclose or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions; develop, acquire, install, and utilize technology and systems for the purposes of collecting, validating, and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; adjust the existing ways to comply with any previously applicable instructions and requirements; train personnel to be able to respond to a collection of information; search data sources; complete and review the collection of information; and transmit or otherwise disclose the information.

Respondents/Affected Entities: Sample collectors, who are usually employed by state or, in a few cases, local government.

Estimated number of respondents: 313.

Frequency of Response: from twice weekly to four times annually, depending upon type of media being sampled.

Estimated Total Annual Hour Burden: 9201.8 hours.

Estimated Total Annualized Cost Burden: $178,515.20 (total refers to labor costs only).

Dated: October 22, 1999.

John G. Griggs,

Acting Director, NAREL.

[FR Doc. 99–28217 Filed 10–27–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL–6465–5]

CWA 303(d): Proposed Withdrawal of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for Copper in the Arthur Kill and the Kill Van Kull and Proposed Establishment of a TMDL for Nickel in the Hackensack River

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: EPA has has reached the following conclusions regarding certain segments of the New York-New Jersey Harbor: the applicable water quality standard for copper in the Arthur Kill and the Kill Van Kull is not likely to be exceeded (*i.e.*, the waters are not water quality-limited for copper) and, therefore, no TMDL is necessary for copper; and the Hackensack River below the Oradell Dam is water quality-limited for nickel.

Therefore, as part of this action, EPA is proposing to establish a TMDL for nickel.

EPA is hereby issuing public notice on its: proposed withdrawal of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for copper in the Arthur Kill and the Kill Van Kull; and, proposed establishment of a TMDL for nickel in the Hackensack River below the Oradell Dam.

DATES: Comments on the proposed action must be submitted to EPA on or before November 29, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the relevant supporting documents may be obtained by writing to Ms. Rosella O'Connor, Fate & Effects Team, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 2, 290 Broadway, 24th Floor, New York, New

York 10006–1866, oconnor.rosella@epamail.epa.gov, or by calling (212) 637–3823.

The administrative record containing background technical information is on file and may be inspected at the U.S. EPA, Region 2 office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Arrangements to examine the administrative record may be made by contacting Ms. Rosella O'Connor.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Rosella O'Connor, telephone number (212) 637–3823.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background
II. Proposed Action

I. Background

A TMDL, or total maximum daily load, is the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can assimilate and still meet ambient water quality standards. TMDLs are established for water quality-limited segments, which are defined as ''any segment where it is known that water quality does not meet applicable water quality standards, and/or is not expected to meet applicable water quality standards, even after the application of technology-based effluent limitations* * *'' (40 CFR 130.2(j)).

On January 24, 1996, EPA established certain phased TMDLs, including waste load allocations (WLAs) and load allocations (LAs) for copper and mercury (61 F.R. 1930) for specific waters of the New York-New Jersey Harbor. The Phase I TMDLs established in January 1996 required additional data collection in the New Jersey Harbor waters before the establishment, as necessary, of revised Phase II TMDLs. Phase II TMDLs were to be established only if the additional data and/or modeling indicated that it was necessary to reduce point and/or nonpoint sources of certain metals below Phase I levels.

The New Jersey Harbor Dischargers Group (NJHDG), in cooperation with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and EPA, agreed to undertake the necessary additional ambient and load monitoring and modeling effort necessary to determining if copper, nickel and lead exceeded or potentially exceeded applicable water quality standards in the following New Jersey Harbor waters: Newark Bay, Hackensack River below the Oradell Dam, Passaic River below the Dundee Dam, Raritan River below the Fieldville Dam and Raritan Bay. Based on the results of the monitoring effort, it was determined that copper does not exceed the applicable water quality criteria in any of the above-mentioned waters. Therefore, the Phase I copper TMDLs, for the waters mentioned above, were withdrawn on September 19, 1997 (62 FR 49226). It was also determined that, of all of the above-mentioned waters, only the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers are potentially water quality-limited for nickel and required further assessment and, as necessary, the establishment of TMDLs for nickel. None of the above waters were water quality-limited for lead. The Arthur Kill and the Kill Van Kull were not directly included in this investigation, therefore the TMDLs for copper have remained in effect for those waters. The mercury TMDLs established in 1996 still remain in effect for those waters.

In 1997 and 1998, the NJHDG, NJDEP and EPA completed a monitoring program and water quality modeling to: (1) Determine if copper is actually water quality-limiting in the Arthur Kill and the Kill Van Kull; and, establish, as necessary, nickel TMDLs for the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers and Newark Bay. The ambient water quality data and modeling evaluation contained in the study entitled, ''Monitoring and Modeling of Nickel in The Hackensack and Passaic Rivers and Newark Bay and Monitoring and Data Analysis for Copper in The Arthur Kill and Kill Van Kull'', indicate that: (1) Copper is not water quality-limiting in the Arthur Kill and the Kill Van Kull, and therefore, the Phase I copper TMDLs (established January 24, 1996) are no longer necessary; (2) the Hackensack River is water quality-limited for nickel and requires the establishment of a TMDL for nickel; and (3) the Passaic River and Newark Bay are not water quality-limited for nickel and, at this time, do not require TMDLs for nickel. EPA is requesting comments on the first two actions.

II. Proposed Action

EPA is requesting comments on the (1) proposed withdrawal of TMDLs for copper in the Arthur Kill and Kill Van Kull because those waters are not impaired for copper and effluent limitations required of point sources under Section 301(b) of the Clean Water Act are stringent enough to implement water quality standards for copper applicable to such waters (*i.e,* these waters are not water quality-limited for copper) and (2) the proposed establishment of a TMDL for nickel in the Hackensack River. EPA is establishing the nickel TMDL in the Hackensack River at the request of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. These proposed actions are appropriate given the specific circumstances, original and additional monitoring data, and management approach agreed upon by the States of New Jersey and New York and EPA, for the waters of the New York-New Jersey Harbor.

The supporting technical documentation for these actions is contained in ''Proposed Withdrawal of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for Copper in the Arthur Kill and Kill Van Kull and Proposed Establishment of a TMDL for Nickel in the Hackensack River (EPA, September 1999) and ''Monitoring and Modeling of Nickel in The Hackensack and Passaic Rivers and Newark Bay and Monitoring and Data Analysis for Copper in The Arthur Kill and Kill Van Kull'' (Great Lakes Environmental Center, 1998).

The determination that TMDLs for copper are no longer necessary in the Arthur Kill and Kill Van Kull is based on additional monitoring data and modeling conducted by the NJHDG's consultant, with assistance from EPA. Monitoring and modeling projections included more recent municipal plant effluent data and New Jersey storm water and combined sewer overflow data. Previous modeling projections and TMDLs were based on New York storm water and combined sewer overflow data. These data were used due to a lack of data for New Jersey storm water and combined sewer overflows. The more recent storm water and combined sewer overflow data are much lower than the original estimates. The data and modeling projections now indicate that the applicable copper criterion is not likely to be exceeded in these waters. Therefore, the Arthur Kill and Kill Van Kull are not water quality-limited for copper and do not require TMDLs. EPA is soliciting public comment on the proposed withdrawal of the copper TMDLs in the Arthur Kill and Kill Van Kull.

Analysis of ambient data and modeling projections in the Hackensack River indicate that the applicable nickel criterion of 8.2 μg/L (expressed in the dissolved form) is likely to be exceeded, and therefore, a TMDL is required. NJHDG's consultant developed a water quality model to facilitate the development of a TMDL. Modeling projections indicate that the Hackensack River is an effluent-dominated river. The ambient nickel concentration is driven by the concentration of nickel in the Bergen County Utilities Authority (BCUA) discharge. BCUA represents the largest source of nickel to the River. Other smaller sources include: North Bergen Sewage Treatment Plant,

Secaucus Sewage Treatment Plant, combined sewer overflows (CSOs), storm water, atmospheric and background (upstream sources). Using the calibrated water quality model, EPA calculated a TMDL of 4.98 lbs µg/day of nickel which will meet the applicable nickel criterion, taking into account seasonal variations and critical conditions, and including a margin of safety. The TMDL was allocated to point sources (waste load allocations) and nonpoint sources (load allocations). The existing loads of nickel, waste load (WLA), and load allocations (LA) needed to achieve the TMDL are shown below. The WLA for BCUA represents a major reduction in nickel load to the Hackensack River. This reduction will result in meeting the applicable water quality criterion for nickel. Because the other loads represent relatively small contributions, and reducing their load has little or no impact on receiving water quality, no other reductions are being proposed at this time.

TABLE—1. PROPOSED TMDL/WLAS/LAS FOR NICKEL IN THE HACKENSACK RIVER

Source	Existing load (lbs/day)	WLA/LA (lbs/day)
BCUA [NJ0020028] ..	11.3	[1] 2.2
North Bergen STP ..... [NJ0034339]	0.28	[2] 0.38
Secaucus STP .. [NJ0025038]	0.04	[3] 0.06
CSOs	0.10	0.10
Storm Water	0.81	0.81
.....	ΣWLAs	3.55
Atmospheric	1.06	1.06
Boundary (Background) [4]	0.37	0.37
.....	TMDL	4.98

[1] The WLA of 2.2 lbs/day is established at an effluent concentration of 3.6 µg/L (total recoverable) and flow of 75 mgd; if the effluent flow is 109 mgd, the WLA is 3.3 lbs/day with an effluent concentration of 3.6 µg/L.

[2] Based on design flow of 10 mgd and mean effluent concentration of 4.6 µg/L (total recoverable).

[3] Based on design flow of 5.12 mgd and mean effluent concentration of 1.5 µg/L (total recoverable).

[4] Calculated at the boundary condition of the Hackensack River upstream at the Oradell Dam.

EPA is soliciting public comment on the proposed TMDL for nickel in the Hackensack River.

Dated: September 30, 1999.

William J. Muszynski, Acting

Acting Regional Administrator, Region 2.

[FR Doc. 99–28213 Filed 10–27–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P 4163–18–P

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Public Information Collections Approved by Office of Management and Budget

October 22, 1999.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has received Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval for the following public information collections pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104–13. 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 control number. For further information contact Shoko B. Hair, Federal Communications Commission, (202) 418–1379.

Federal Communications Commission

OMB Control No.: 3060–0526.

Expiration Date: 10/31/2002.

Title: Density Pricing Zone Plans, Expanded Interconnection with Local Telephone Company Facilities—CC Docket No. 91–141.

Form No.: N/A.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit.

Estimated Annual Burden: 13 respondents; 48 hours per response (avg.); 624 total annual burden hours for all collections.

Estimated Annual Reporting and Recordkeeping Cost Burden: $0.

Frequency of Response: On occasion.

Description: Pursuant to Section 203 of the Communications Act, LECs are required to tariff communications service offerings with the Commission. Sections 201 and 202 of the Act require that all tariffed charges, practices, classifications, and regulations be just and reasonable and not unjustly or unreasonably discriminatory. The Commission concluded that it will allow LECs additional special access pricing flexibility for services subject to competition in any study area in which expanded interconnection offerings are operational. If they choose, LECs may file density pricing plans establishing systems of pricing zones. Rates for special access services subject to competition will be averaged within zones, but will be allowed to diverge between zones over time subject to a price cap mechanism. LECs will be permitted to lower the weighted average rate level in any zone by as much as 10 percent annually relative to the price cap index for the special access basket, or to raise the weighted average rate level in any zone by up to five percent annually relative to the price cap index for the special access basket, without triggering any of the additional cost justification or advance notice requirements contained in the price cap rules. Material supporting each LEC's density pricing plan is necessary to ensure that these plans generally reflect cost differences and foster fair competition. Absent the review of such information by the Commission, the LECs would have strong incentives to attempt to use this additional pricing flexibility in an anticompetitive manner. In the Switched Transport Expanded Interconnection Order, the Commission created a density zone pricing plan that allows some degree of deaveraging for switched transport services. The Commission concluded that relaxing the pricing rules in this manner would enable price cap LECs to respond to increased competition in the interstate switched transport market. For purposes of deaveraging services in the trunking basket, the Commission in the Fifth Report and Order issued in CC Docket No. 96–262, released August 27, 1999, eliminates the limitations inherent in its current density zone pricing plan and allow price cap LECs to define the scope and number of zones within a study area, provided that each zone, except the highest-cost zone, accounts for at least fifteen percent of the incumbent LEC's trunking basket revenues in the study area. In addition, the Commission eliminates the requirement that LECs file zone pricing plans prior to filing their tariffs. The density pricing plan information is used by the FCC staff to ensure that the tariff rates to be paid for special access services are just, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory, as Sections 201 and 202 of the Communications Act require. The filing of density pricing plans is necessary to allow review of the number of zones and how offices were assigned to the different zones. The information is used to determine if the carriers have complied with our order on zone density. Without this information, the FCC would be unable to determine whether the rates for these services are just, reasonable, nondiscriminatory, and otherwise in accordance with the law. The density pricing plans are to be filed whenever a LEC voluntarily elects to implement additional special access pricing flexibility. Obligation to comply: Required to obtain or retain benefits.