

AEASat
Annual Retail Trade Survey (2017-2019), Census Bureau
Public Comment Opportunity

The Census Bureau invites the public to provide comments to OMB on the proposed continuation of the [Annual Retail Trade Survey](#) (ARTS) for the years 2017-19.

The ARTS requests firms to provide annual sales, sales tax, e-commerce sales, year-end inventories held inside and outside the United States, total operating expenses, purchases, and accounts receivable. Also requested, for selected industries are, sales and e-commerce sales by merchandise line.

AEA members are invited to comment on the value of the ARTS for policy and research and suggest changes that would enhance data quality, value, and accessibility and lower respondent burden and federal cost.

- *Federal Register* notice: [December 4, 2017](#) (includes instructions for submitting comments)
 - [Information Collection Request](#) (ICR) submitted to OMB, including:
 - [Survey instruments](#)
 - [Supporting Statement](#)
 - Due date: January 5, 2018
 - More information: Chris Savage, Chief of the Retail Trade Branch, Economy-Wide Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, 301-763-4834, John.C.Savage@census.gov
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Information on ICR Process:

- By law, each data collection carried out by a federal agency must be cleared by OMB. Through the *Federal Register* notice, Census is announcing that it has submitted a request to OMB for clearance to conduct the ARTS for 2017-19 and offers the public a 30-day opportunity to submit comments to OMB.
- After the close of the 30-day comment period, OMB will make its decision.

Guidance on Preparing Comments:

- AEA members may comment on any aspect of the proposed data collection. Possible topics, for instance, include needs, uses, methodology, survey design, cost, schedule, and consultation with data users.
- AEA members may frame their comments on specific topics in any way, such as:
 - assessments – identifying what they do and do not like and support
 - suggestions – for how Census might proceed in this or future collections

- requests – for example, for a change in the design of the survey instrument, to be consulted in the future, to carry out research on an alternative approach
- observations – for example, implications of the sample size for statistical reliability
- AEA members may consider proposing that OMB incorporate a request in its “terms of clearance.” For instance, a member could suggest as a term of clearance that Census research the efficacy of an alternative set of questions and report back to OMB in a year on the results.

For assistance in preparing comments, feel free to contact AEASat staff—Andrew Reamer (Research Professor, George Washington Institute of Public Policy, George Washington University) at areamer@gwu.edu or (202) 994-7866.