FPC Form 4 in January 1982. EIA's collection authority for the Form EIA–759 is provided by the Federal Energy Administration Act of 1974 (Public Law 93–275), sections 5(a), 5(b), 13(b), and 52.

Prior to 1980, the FPC Form 4 collected monthly data from all U.S. electric power plants operated by utilities and about 250 industrial power plants of 10 megawatts or more. In this timeframe, nonutilities consisted primarily of industrial manufacturers that produced electricity mainly for internal consumption. Due to the decreasing importance of nonutility generation, collection of monthly generation, fuel consumption, and fuel stocks from industrial power plants was discontinued in January 1981.

The role of nonutility power producers in the Nation's electricity supply has grown significantly since 1981 and reflects the emerging competition within the wholesale electric power markets. The near monopoly of electric generation by regulated electric utilities has ended, as many new industry participants generate and sell electric power to electric utilities, thus changing longestablished institutional relationships. In 1993, net generation by nonutilities was over 300 billion kilowatthours (kWh) or about 10 percent of the total 3,200 billion kWh generated in the United States. The outlook is for greater participation by nonutility power producers in wholesale power supply.

The changing roles and relationships between utilities and nonutilities in the Nation's electric power industry prompted EIA to reinstitute data collection from nonutilities in 1989. The Form EIA-867, "Annual Nonutility Power Producer Report," was implemented to collect generation, fuel consumption, and other electricityrelated data from nonutility power plants with a generating capacity of 1 megawatt or more. Data reported on the mandatory Form EIA-867 are considered confidential and summary statistics published by EIA from the Form EIA-867 are aggregated in a way to protect the confidentiality of individual respondents. Data reported on the Form EIA-759 are not confidential.

## II. Current Actions

To overcome the lack of monthly data from nonutilities—generation, fuel consumption, and fuel stocks—EIA is considering two data collection alternatives.

Alternative 1—Electric Control Area Reporting

The first alternative is to acquire monthly electronic data from U.S. electric control area operators. A control area is an electric power system or combination of electric power systems to which a common automatic generation control scheme is applied in order to: (1) Match, at all times, the power output of the generators within the electric power system(s) and capacity and energy purchased from entities outside the electric power system(s), with the load within the electric power system(s); (2) maintain scheduled interchange with other Control Areas; (3) maintain the frequency of the electric power system(s) within reasonable limits; and (4) provide sufficient generating capacity to maintain operating reserves. There are about 150 electric control areas operating in the United States each with a unique computer and telecommunication system for monitoring and controlling the generators and external interconnections in its area. Typically, remote meter readings are electronically transmitted every few seconds or minutes to the electric control area computers so that system performance can be continuously assessed and controlled.

The real-time data acquired and maintained by electric control area operators represents a potential new data source for EIA's monthly electric power statistics. Instead of surveying thousands of power plants each month, this alternative envisions electric control area operators providing electronic summaries of operational data for generators and power plants each month. Under this reporting scheme, real-time data for utility and nonutility generators (or plants) would be aggregated each month and transmitted electronically to EIA. Data file transfer could be accomplished using Internet, commercial É-mail systems, or modem-to-modem communication protocols. EIA would develop one or more standard formats that electric control area operators could use for the monthly filings.

If this alternative is technically feasible and will significantly reduce monthly respondent burden, implementation could begin in 1996. EIA would continue to use the Form EIA–759 until electric control area operators are filing monthly and the data have been validated for consistency. Implementation activities would include developing standard file formats, establishing electronic

communication procedures, ensuring the completeness and accuracy of data to be submitted, and working with respondents to overcome any technical challenges. EIA would consider conducting 1-day regional workshops for electric control area personnel to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of this alternative. There would be a phase-in period in which the Form EIA–759 could be used for any power plants not monitored by electric control area operators.

Alternative 2—Form EIA-759 Sample

The second alternative is to revise the coverage of the current Form EIA-759 and sample both utilities and nonutility power producers. Nonutilities would receive the Form EIA-759 by mail and be required to report monthly generation provided to the electric grid by each prime mover and fuel combination, fuel consumption by each prime mover, and end-of-month fuel stocks. Current procedures of preprinting static administrative information on the form would be continued to help respondents complete their submissions by the 10th working day of the month following the

reporting month.

If monthly electric power data collection is extended to nonutility power producers, the EIA-759 survey methodology would be changed from a census of utility power plants to a statistical sample of utility and nonutility power plants. EIA has determined that a sample of approximately 1,700 power plants would provide sufficient data to accurately estimate U.S. and NERC region monthly electricity generation by fuel type, fuel consumption, and end-ofthe-month fuel stocks. Implementation of this sampling methodology means that State and company-level information will no longer be available on a monthly basis. Monthly estimates of net generation aggregated by calendar year would be verified against annual electric power data collected by EIA (e.g., Forms EIA-861 and EIA-867) to ensure the accuracy of statistical estimates. There are about 5,100 power plants of 1 megawatt and greater in the United States—3,000 operated by electric utilities and 2,100 operated by nonutility power producers.

Implementation of this alternative would start with the January 1996 reporting period. Implementation activities would primarily consist of combining the utility and nonutility universes of power plants and selecting a statistical sample of about one-third of all power plants. EIA would work with all new Form EIA–759 respondents to