



Research

A Review of the Administration's Regulatory Review

SAM BATKINS | AUGUST 29, 2011

Last week Professor Cass Sunstein took to the [editorial pages](#) to tout the administration's regulatory reform push. All cabinet-level agencies submitted their final plans to rescind or streamline onerous regulations. However, to date no independent agency has submitted a final review plan.

The administration estimated a top-line savings from this reform effort of [\\$10 billion](#) "over the next five years" and \$4 billion in "finalized" savings. There has been only one significant deregulatory move published in the [Federal Register](#), however.

Below is the Forum's review of the administration's plan for proposed reductions in paperwork burden hours and compliance costs.

- Agriculture:
 - SNAP reforms could save 20.7 million annual paperwork hours;
 - SNAP program participants could save 113,000 hours;
 - Simplify program access for meat and poultry labeling: reduction of 70,000 paperwork hours;
 - Proposed food safety rule could **increase** paperwork requirements by 73,730 hours;
 - Rural energy reform could reduce 8,832 paperwork hours;

- Loan guarantee review could reduce 2,002 paperwork hours;
 - **Total Proposed Reductions:** 20.82 million paperwork burden hours.
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- Energy:
 - \$500 million in proposed savings from use of alternative efficiency determination methods;
 - 270,000 in reduced paperwork hours through a streamlined financial assistance process;
 - Combined streamlined process could reduce up to 282,000 annual paperwork burden hours;
 - **Total Proposed Reductions:** 552,000 paperwork burden hours and \$500 million.
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- Health and Human Services:
 - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) could save hospitals \$13.6 million annually;
 - CMS proposal to remove “obsolete or burdensome requirements” could save \$3 billion over five years;
 - HIPAA reforms could save health plans a total of 2 million paperwork burden hours and \$120 million;
 - Elimination of actuarial reporting for hospitals could save \$375,000;
 - **Total Proposed Reductions:** 2 million paperwork hours and \$3.13 billion.
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- Homeland Security:
 - H1-B reform could save 13,750 hours;
 - Transitional Worker Classification reform could save \$6.8 million through 2014;
 - Coast Guard reform could save the private-sector \$35,000;
 - Student Exchange System reform could save \$220,100 annually;

- Fees to “Alien Flight Students” could be reduced by \$18,107 over a five-year period;
 - FEMA grant process reviews could reduce paperwork burdens by 2,860,526;
 - **Total Proposed Reductions:** 2,874,276 paperwork hours and \$7 million.
- State: contractors could save 10,000 annual burden hours through new electronic submissions.
- Treasury:
 - IRS initiative could reduce 55 million annual paperwork hours “as early as 2011;”
 - Distilled spirits industry could save \$312,442 per year in reporting burdens and 23,218 annual paperwork burden hours;
 - **Total Proposed Reductions:** 55.02 million paperwork burden hours and \$312,442.
- Transportation: Initial positive train control installation could save between \$223.7 million and \$403 million.
- Social Security Administration: A combined 79,666 reduction in annual paperwork hours through eliminating “unnecessary questions” and employing “electronic authorization.”
- Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation: Waiver of “premium payment penalties” could save employers as much as \$400,000 annually.
- General Services Administration: Reduction of up to 126,000 annual paperwork

burden hours.

- Environmental Protection Agency:
 - “Spilled Milk Rule:” \$145 to \$148 million in cost savings;
 - Alternative Fuel Conversions of Vehicles and Engines: \$1.1 million;
 - Vehicle Vapor Recovery System: \$87 million;
 - E-Manifest Reform: \$76 to \$124 million;
 - **Total:** \$360.1 million in completed and proposed rescissions, according to EPA calculations.

Aggregate Proposed Paperwork Burden Hour Reductions: 81.48 million.

Aggregate Proposed Cost Reductions: \$4.31 billion.

These figures include reductions for businesses and the private-sector; where the administration provided a range of savings, the Forum used the average. The Forum omitted agencies that failed to quantify potential cost savings.