

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
for the Paperwork Reduction Act Submission
“Rule 31a-2”

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Information Collection Necessity

Section 31(a)(1) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (the “Act”) (15 U.S.C. 80a-30(a)(1)) requires registered investment companies (“funds”) and certain underwriters, broker-dealers, investment advisers, and depositors to maintain and preserve records as prescribed by Commission rules. Rule 31a-1 under the Act (17 CFR 270.31a-1) specifies the books and records that each of these entities must maintain. Rule 31a-2 under the Act (17 CFR 270.31a-2), which was adopted on April 17, 1944, specifies the time periods that entities must retain certain books and records, including those required to be maintained under rule 31a-1.

Rule 31a-2 requires the following:

1. Every fund must preserve permanently, and in an easily accessible place for the first two years, all books and records required under rule 31a-1(b)(1)-(4).¹
2. Every fund must preserve for at least six years, and in an easily accessible place for the first two years:
 - a. all books and records required under rule 31a-1(b)(5)-(12);²
 - b. all vouchers, memoranda, correspondence, checkbooks, bank statements,

¹ These include, among other records, journals detailing daily purchases and sales of securities, general and auxiliary ledgers reflecting all asset, liability, reserve, capital, income and expense accounts, separate ledgers reflecting separately for each portfolio security as of the trade date all “long” and “short” positions carried by the fund for its own account, and corporate charters, certificates of incorporation, by-laws and minute books.

² These include, among other records, records of each brokerage order given in connection with purchases and sales of securities by the fund, records of all other portfolio purchases or sales, records of all puts, calls, spreads, straddles or other options in which the fund has an interest, has granted, or has guaranteed, records of proof of money balances in all ledger accounts, files of all advisory material received from the investment adviser, and memoranda identifying persons, committees, or groups authorizing the purchase or sale of securities for the fund.

canceled checks, cash reconciliations, canceled stock certificates, and all schedules evidencing and supporting each computation of net asset value of fund shares, and other documents required to be maintained by rule 31a-1(a) and not enumerated in rule 31a-1(b);

- c. any advertisement, pamphlet, circular, form letter or other sales literature addressed or intended for distribution to prospective investors;
- d. any record of the initial determination that a director is not an interested person of the fund, and each subsequent determination that the director is not an interested person of the fund, including any questionnaire and any other document used to determine that a director is not an interested person of the company;
- e. any materials used by the disinterested directors of a fund to determine that a person who is acting as legal counsel to those directors is an independent legal counsel; and
- f. any documents or other written information considered by the directors of the fund pursuant to section 15(c) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 80a-15(c)) in approving the terms or renewal of a contract or agreement between the fund and an investment advisor.³

3. Every underwriter, broker, or dealer that is a majority-owned subsidiary of a fund must preserve records required to be preserved by brokers and dealers under rules adopted under section 17 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78q)

³ Section 15 of the Act requires that fund directors, including a majority of independent directors, annually approve the fund's advisory contract and that the directors first obtain from the adviser the information reasonably necessary to evaluate the contract. The information request requirement in section 15 provides fund directors, including independent directors, a tool for obtaining the information they need to represent shareholder interests.

(“section 17”) for the periods established in those rules.

4. Every depositor of a fund, and every principal underwriter of a fund (other than a closed-end fund), must preserve for at least six years records required to be maintained by brokers and dealers under rules adopted under section 17 to the extent the records are necessary or appropriate to record the entity’s transactions with the fund.
5. Every investment adviser that is a majority-owned subsidiary of a fund must preserve the records required to be preserved by investment advisers under rules adopted under section 204 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80b-4) (“section 204”) for the periods specified in those rules.
6. Every investment adviser that is not a majority-owned subsidiary of a fund must preserve for at least six years records required to be maintained by registered investment advisers under rules adopted under section 204 to the extent the records are necessary or appropriate to reflect the adviser’s transactions with the fund.

The records required to be maintained and preserved under this part may be maintained and preserved for the required time by, or on behalf of, a fund on (i) micrographic media, including microfilm, microfiche, or any similar medium, or (ii) electronic storage media, including any digital storage medium or system that meets the terms of rule 31a-2(f). The fund, or person that maintains and preserves records on its behalf, must arrange and index the records in a way that permits easy location, access, and retrieval of any particular record.⁴

⁴ In addition, the fund, or person who maintains and preserves records for the fund, must provide promptly any of the following that the Commission (by its examiners or other representatives) or the directors of the fund may request: (A) a legible, true, and complete copy of the record in the medium and format in which it is stored; (B) a legible, true, and complete printout of the record; and (C) means to access, view, and print the records; and must separately store, for the time

We periodically inspect the operations of all funds to ensure their compliance with the provisions of the Act and the rules under the Act. Our staff spends a significant portion of its time in these inspections reviewing the information contained in the books and records required to be kept by rule 31a-1 and to be preserved by rule 31a-2.

2. Information Collection Purpose

The retention of records, as required by the rule, is necessary to ensure access to material business and financial information about funds and certain related entities. As noted above, we periodically inspect the operations of funds to ensure they are in compliance with the Act and regulations under the Act. Due to the limits on our resources, however, each fund may only be inspected at intervals of several years. In addition, the prosecution of persons who have engaged in certain violations of the federal securities laws may not be limited by timing restrictions. For these reasons, we often need information relating to events or transactions that occurred years ago. Without the requirement to preserve books, records and other documents, our staff would have difficulty determining whether the fund was in compliance with the law in such areas as valuation of its portfolio securities, computation of the prices investors paid and, when purchasing and selling fund shares, types and amounts of expenses the fund incurred, kinds of investments the fund purchased, actions of affiliated persons, or whether the fund had engaged in any illegal or fraudulent activities. As part of our examinations of funds, our staff also reviews the materials that directors consider in approving the advisory contract.

required for preservation of the original record, a duplicate copy of the record on any medium allowed by rule 31a-2(f). In the case of records retained on electronic storage media, the fund, or person that maintains and preserves records on its behalf, must establish and maintain procedures: (i) to maintain and preserve the records, so as to reasonably safeguard them from loss, alteration, or destruction; (ii) to limit access to the records to properly authorized personnel, the directors of the fund, and the Commission (including its examiners and other representatives); and (iii) to reasonably ensure that any reproduction of a non-electronic original record on electronic storage media is complete, true, and legible when retrieved.

3. Improved Information Technology

The Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act⁵ and rule 31a-2(f) permit many records that are required to be maintained and preserved under the rule to be maintained electronically. The Commission's Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis and Retrieval System (“EDGAR”) provides for the automated filing, processing, and dissemination of full disclosure filings. The automation provides for speed, accuracy and public availability of information, generating benefits to investors and financial markets. Although the rule does not require the filing of any documents with the Commission, the Commission may use its EDGAR facility in the future to improve the examination of records that funds and their affiliated entities keep under the rule.

4. Duplication

The requirements of rule 31a-2 are not generally duplicated anywhere else. While funds may currently maintain records under the requirements of rule 31a-1, rule 31a-1 does not specifically require preservation of these records.

5. Effect on Small Entities

The recordkeeping requirements of rule 31a-2 do not distinguish between large and small entities. We believe that compliance with rule 31a-2 is not unduly burdensome for large or small entities.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

Rule 31a-1 requires funds, certain of their majority-owned subsidiaries, and other related entities to maintain certain records. The frequency with which entities collect this information depends, to a large extent, on the circumstances of the activities and transactions of the fund and these entities. Rule 31a-2 requires funds, their majority-owned subsidiaries, and other related

⁵ P.L. 106-229, 114 Stat. 464 (June 30, 2000).

entities to preserve the records required to be maintained under rule 31a-1. Rule 31a-2 also requires funds to maintain advertising materials, materials considered by a fund board each time it approves a fund's advisory contract, and materials relating to the independence of legal counsel and fund directors. If entities did not have to preserve these records, our staff would have difficulty determining whether a fund is in compliance with the Act.

7. Inconsistencies with Guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2)

Rule 31a-2 requires funds to preserve certain records for six years and other records permanently. We believe that the long-term retention of records is necessary to carry out our examination and enforcement responsibilities, and our mandate to ensure that the Act's provisions are legally enforceable. We periodically inspect the operations of funds to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations under the Act; however, each fund may be inspected only at intervals of several years due to limits on our resources. Furthermore, the prosecution of persons that have engaged in certain violations of the federal securities laws may not be limited by timing restrictions. For these reasons, we often need information relating to events or transactions that occurred years ago. In section 31(a) of the Act,⁶ Congress specifically authorized the Commission to require funds to "maintain and preserve" books and records "for such period or periods" as the Commission may prescribe by rules. Electronic record storage has made long-term retention of records less burdensome.

8. Consultation Outside the Agency

Rule 31a-2 has been previously amended through rulemaking actions. Comments generally are received from registrants, trade associations, the legal and accounting profession, and other interested parties. In addition, we, and the staff of the Division of Investment Management, participate in an ongoing dialogue with representatives of the fund industry

⁶ 15 U.S.C. 80a-30(a).

through public conferences, meetings, and information exchanges. These various forums assist us and our staff in ascertaining the magnitude of paperwork burdens confronting the industry.

The Commission requested public comment on the information collection requirement with respect to rule 31a-2 before submitting this request for extension to the Office of Management and Budget. The Commission received no comments in response to its request.

9. Payment or Gifts

Not applicable.

10. Confidentiality

Not applicable.

11. Sensitive Questions

Not applicable.

12. Annual Information Collection Burden

There are 3,484 funds currently operating as of March 31, 2012, all of which are required to comply with rule 31a-2. Based on conversations with representatives of the fund industry and past estimates, our staff estimates that each fund currently spends 220 total hours per year complying with rule 31a-2. Our staff estimates that the 220 hours spent by a typical fund would be split evenly between administrative and computer operation personnel,⁷ with 110 hours spent by a general clerk at a rate of \$52 per hour and 110 hours spent by a senior computer operator at a rate of \$81 per hour.⁸ Based on these estimates, our staff estimates that the total annual burden for all funds to comply with rule 31a-2 is 766,480 hours at an estimated cost of \$50,970,920.⁹

⁷ However, the hour burden may be incurred by a variety of fund staff, and the type of staff position used for compliance with the rule may vary widely from fund to fund.

⁸ The estimated salary rates are derived from SIFMA's *Office Salaries in the Securities Industry 2011*, modified by Commission staff to account for an 1800-hour work-year and multiplied by 2.93 to account for bonuses, firm size, employee benefits and overhead.

⁹ This estimate is based on the following calculations: 3,484 funds × 220 hours = 766,480 total

The hour burden estimates for retaining records under rule 31a-2 are based on our experience with registrants and our experience with similar requirements under the Act and the rules under the Act. The number of burden hours may vary depending on, among other things, the complexity of the fund, the issues faced by the fund, and the number of series and classes of the fund. The estimated average burden hours are made solely for purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act and are not derived from quantitative, comprehensive, or even representative survey or study of the burdens associated with our rules and forms.

13. Total Annual Cost Burden

Based on conversations with representatives of the fund industry and past estimates, our staff estimates that the average cost of preserving books and records required by rule 31a-2 is approximately \$70,000 annually per fund. As discussed previously, there are 3,484 funds currently operating, for a total cost of preserving records as required by rule 31a-2 of approximately \$243,880,000 per year.¹⁰ Our staff understands, however, based on previous conversations with representatives of the fund industry, that funds would already spend approximately half of this amount (\$121,940,000) to preserve these same books and records, as they are also necessary to prepare financial statements, meet various state reporting requirements, and prepare their annual federal and state income tax returns. Therefore, we estimate that the total annual cost burden for all funds as a result of compliance with rule 31a-2 is approximately \$121,940,000 per year.

14. Cost to the Federal Government

There is no cost to the Federal Government for these recordkeeping activities.

hours; $776,480 \text{ hours} / 2 = 383,240 \text{ hours}$; $383,240 \times \$52 \text{ rate per hour for a clerk} = \$19,928,480$; $383,240 \times \$81 \text{ rate per hour for a computer operator} = \$31,042,440$; $\$19,928,480 + \$31,042,440 = \$50,970,920 \text{ total cost}$.

¹⁰ This estimate is based on the following calculation: $3,484 \text{ funds} \times \$70,000 = \$243,880,000$.

15. Changes in Burden

The staff's hour burden estimate for compliance with rule 31a-2 has decreased, from 994,840 hours to 776,480 hours, a net decrease of 228,360 hours. Similarly, the staff's estimate for the cost of compliance has been reduced from approximately \$158,270,000 to approximately \$121,940,000, a reduction of \$36,330,000. Both of these changes are primarily due to a decrease in the number of active funds to which the rule applies, from approximately 4,522 to 3,484.

16. Information Collection Planned for Statistical Purposes

Not Applicable.

17. Approval to Omit OMB Expiration Date

Not Applicable. The Commission is not seeking approval to omit the expiration date.

18. Exceptions to Certification Statements

Not Applicable.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

Not applicable.