

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
For the Paperwork Reduction Act Information Collection Submission for
Rule 6c-11

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Necessity for the Information Collection

Rule 6c-11¹ under the Investment Company Act of 1940 (the “Act”) permits exchange-traded funds (“ETFs”) that satisfy certain conditions to operate without first obtaining an exemptive order from the Commission. The rule was designed to create a consistent, transparent, and efficient regulatory framework for ETFs and facilitate greater competition and innovation among ETFs. Rule 6c-11 requires an ETF to disclose certain information on its website, to maintain certain records, and to adopt and implement written policies and procedures governing its constructions of baskets, as well as written policies and procedures that set forth detailed parameters for the construction and acceptance of custom baskets that are in the best interests of the ETF and its shareholders. These requirements are “collection of information” within the meaning of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (“PRA”).² The information collection is integral to the framework of rule 6c-11 and therefore necessary to help further the rule’s aforementioned goals. The information collection also will assist the Commission’s examination staff in assessing ETFs’ compliance with the conditions of rule 6c-11. As adopted, rule 6c-11 includes a provision excluding “leveraged/inverse ETFs” from the scope of ETFs that may rely on the rule. The rule defines “leveraged/inverse ETF” to mean an ETF that seeks, directly or indirectly, to provide investment returns over a predetermined period of time that: (i) correspond to the performance of a market index by a specified multiple; or (ii) have an inverse relationship to the performance of a market index (including by an inverse multiple).

On November 2, 2020, the Commission adopted rule 18f-4 under the Act.³ The rule applies to mutual funds (other than money market funds), ETFs, registered closed-end funds, and companies that have elected to be treated as business development companies (“BDCs”) under the Act (collectively, “funds”). The rule permits these funds to enter into derivatives transactions and certain other

¹ 17 CFR 270.6c-11.

² See 44 U.S.C. 3501 through 3521.

³ See Use of Derivatives by Registered Investment Companies and Business Development Companies, Investment Company Act Release No. 34084 (Nov. 2, 2020) (“Derivatives Adopting Release”).

transactions, notwithstanding the restrictions under sections 18 and 61 of the Act, provided that the funds comply with the conditions of the rule.

Funds that are not “limited derivatives users” under rule 18f-4 are required to comply with a VaR-based outer limit on fund leverage risk. Leveraged/inverse ETFs that seek to provide leveraged or inverse market exposure exceeding 200% of the return or inverse return of the relevant index (“over-200% leveraged/inverse funds”) would not be able to comply with this outer limit on leverage risk. As such, rule 18f-4 includes a provision permitting over-200% leveraged/inverse funds to continue operating at their current leverage levels, provided they comply with all the provisions of rule 18f-4 other than the VaR-based limit on fund leverage risk and meet certain additional requirements.⁴

In view of these requirements under rule 18f-4, which is designed to create an updated and more comprehensive regulatory framework for the use of derivatives by funds, including provisions specifically applicable to leveraged/inverse ETFs, the Commission also amended rule 6c-11 to permit leveraged/inverse ETFs to rely on that rule 18 months following the publication of the final amendments in the Federal Register, provided they meet all applicable provisions of rule 18f-4.⁵ Accordingly, leveraged/inverse ETFs will be permitted to rely on rule 6c-11 and, in turn, be subject to the rule’s requirements, including the collections of information under the rule.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The collection of information under rule 6c-11 is integral to the framework of rule 6c-11 and therefore necessary to help further the rule’s goals of creating a consistent, transparent, and efficient regulatory framework for ETFs, including leveraged/inverse ETFs, and facilitating greater competition and innovation among ETFs. The information collection also will assist the Commission’s examination staff in assessing ETFs’ compliance with the conditions of rule 6c-11. The respondents to rule 6c-11, as amended, are ETFs registered as open-end management investment companies other than share-class ETFs and non-transparent ETFs.

3. Consideration Given to Information Technology

Rule 6c-11 does not require the reporting of any information or the filing of any documents with the Commission. The Electronic Signatures in Global and National

⁴ *See id.* at section II.F.5.

⁵ *See id.* at section II.F.6.

Commerce Act⁶ and conforming amendments to rules under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 permit ETF advisers to maintain records electronically.

4. Duplication

The Commission periodically evaluates rule-based reporting and recordkeeping requirements for duplication and reevaluates them whenever it adopts a new rule or a change to a rule. The information collection that is required by the amendments to rule 6c-11 is not duplicated elsewhere.

5. Effect on Small Entities

The information collection requirements of rule 6c-11 do not distinguish between small entities and other entities. We do not believe that exempting any subset of ETFs, including small entities, from rule 6c-11 would permit the Commission to achieve its stated objectives. Similarly, the Commission does not believe that it can establish simplified or consolidated compliance requirements for small entities under the rule without compromising its objectives. The conditions necessary to rely on rule 6c-11 are designed to provide investor protection benefits. These benefits should apply to investors in smaller funds as well as investors in larger funds.

Finally, the Commission believes that rule 6c-11 appropriately uses a combination of performance and design standards. Rule 6c-11 provides ETFs that satisfy the requirements of the rule with exemptions from certain provisions of the Act necessary for ETFs to operate. Because the provisions of the Act from which ETFs would be exempt provide important investor and market protections, the conditions of the rule must be specifically designed to ensure that these investor and market protections are maintained. However, where the Commission believes that flexibility is beneficial, it adopted performance-based standards that provide a regulatory framework, rather than prescriptive requirements, to give funds the opportunity to adopt policies and procedures tailored to their specific needs without raising investor or market protection concerns.

6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection

The collection of information under rule 6c-11 is integral to the framework of rule 6c-11 and therefore necessary to help further the rule's goals of creating a consistent, transparent, and efficient regulatory framework for such ETFs and facilitating greater competition and innovation among ETFs. Thus, not requiring this collection of information would be incompatible with the goals of rule 6c-11.

⁶ P.L. 106-229, 114 Stat. 464 (June 30, 2000).

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

Rule 6c-11 requires ETFs to preserve and maintain copies of all written authorized participant agreements ETFs. Additionally, rule 6c-11 requires ETFs to maintain records setting forth the following information for each basket exchanged with an authorized participant: (i) the names and quantities of the positions composing the basket; (ii) identification of the basket as a “custom basket” and a record stating that the custom basket complies with the ETF’s custom basket policies and procedures (if applicable); (iii) cash balancing amounts (if any); and (iv) the identity of the authorized participant conducting the transaction. ETFs have to maintain these records for at least five years, the first two years in an easily accessible place. Although this five-year period exceeds the three-year guideline for most kinds of records under 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2), the Commission believes that this is warranted because the rule contributes to the effectiveness of the Commission’s examination and inspection program. Because the period between examinations may be as long as five years, it is important that the Commission have access to records that cover the entire period between examinations.

8. Consultation Outside the Agency

The Commission and the staff of the Division of Investment Management participate in an ongoing dialogue with representatives of the investment company industry through public conferences, meetings, and informal exchanges. These various forums provide the Commission and the staff with a means of ascertaining and acting upon paperwork burdens confronting the industry. Before adopting the amendments to rule 6c-11, the Commission received and evaluated public comments on the proposed amendments to rule 6c-11. The Commission did not receive any comments specifically addressing the collections of information related to the proposed amendments.

9. Payment or Gift

No payment or gift to respondents was provided.

10. Confidentiality

Responses provided to the Commission in connection with staff examinations or investigations would be kept confidential subject to the provisions of applicable law. If information collected pursuant to rule 6c-11 is reviewed by the Commission’s examination staff, it will be accorded the same level of confidentiality accorded to other responses provided to the Commission in the context of its examination and oversight program.

11. Sensitive Questions

No information of a sensitive nature, including social security numbers, will be required under this collection of information. The information collection does not collect personally identifiable information (PII). The agency has determined that a system of records notice (SORN) and privacy impact assessment (PIA) are not required in connection with the collection of information.

12. Estimate of Hour Burden

The following estimates of average burden hours and costs are made solely for purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act and are not derived from a comprehensive or even representative survey or study of the cost of Commission rules and forms.⁷

Rule 6c-11 requires an ETF to disclose certain information on its website, to maintain certain records, and to adopt and implement written policies and procedures governing its constructions of baskets, as well as written policies and procedures that set forth detailed parameters for the construction and acceptance of custom baskets that are in the best interests of the ETF and its shareholders. These requirements are collections of information under the PRA.

The current respondents to rule 6c-11 are ETFs registered as open-end management investment companies other than share-class ETFs, leveraged/inverse ETFs, or non-transparent ETFs. This collection is not mandatory, but is necessary for those ETFs seeking to operate without individual exemptive orders.

Under current PRA estimates, 1,735 ETFs would be subject to these requirements. The current PRA estimates for rule 6c-11 include 74,466 total internal burden hours, \$24,771,740 in internal time costs, and \$1,735,000 in external time costs.

The Commission believes that the current annual burden and cost estimates for rule 6c-11 are appropriate, but estimates that the amendments to rule 6c-11 would result in an increase in the number of respondents. Specifically, the Commission estimates that an additional 172 ETFs (all leveraged/inverse ETFs) will rely on rule

⁷ The Commission's estimates of the relevant wage rates in the tables below are based on salary information for the securities industry compiled by the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association's Office Salaries in the Securities Industry 2013. The estimated wage figures are modified by Commission staff to account for an 1,800-hour work-year and multiplied by 5.35 to account for bonuses, firm size, employee benefits, overhead, and adjusted to account for the effects of inflation. *See* Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association, Report on Management & Professional Earnings in the Securities Industry 2013.

6c-11, resulting in an increase in the number of respondents to 1,907 ETFs.⁸ Table 1 below summarizes these revisions to the estimated annual responses, burden hours, and burden-hour costs based on the amendments to rule 6c-11.

⁸ See Derivatives Adopting Release, *supra* note 3, at section IV.C.

Table 1: Rule 6c-11 PRA Estimates

	Previously estimated annual internal hour burden ¹	Updated estimated annual internal hour burden ²	Previously estimated annual internal burden time cost	Updated estimated annual internal time burden cost	Previously estimated annual external cost burden	Updated estimated annual external cost burden
Website disclosure	33,398.75 hours	36,709.75 hours	\$10,717,945.15	\$11,780,473.43	\$1,735,000	\$1,907,000
Recordkeeping	8,675 hours	9,535 hours	\$680,987.50	\$748,497.50	\$0	\$0
Policies and procedures	32,392.45 hours	35,603.69 hours	\$13,372,807.45	\$14,698,526.69	\$0	\$0
Total annual burden	74,466 hours	81,848 hours	\$24,771,740.10	\$27,227,497.62	\$1,735,000	\$1,907,000
Number of affected ETFs	÷ 1,735	÷ 1,907	÷ 1,735	÷ 1,907	÷ 1,735	÷ 1,907
Average annual burden per ETF	42.92 hours	42.92 hours	\$14,277.66	\$14,277.66	\$1,000	\$1,000

Notes:

1. The previously estimated burdens and costs in this table are based on an estimate of 1,899 ETFs relying on rule 6c-11.
2. The updated estimated burdens and costs in this table are based on an estimate of 172 leveraged/inverse ETFs that would rely on rule 6c-11 pursuant to the amendments to that rule, for a total estimate of 1,907 ETFs that would rely on rule 6c-11.

13. Cost to Respondents

As shown in Table 1 above, the estimated external cost burden is the estimated cost associated with ETFs consulting outside professionals to assist with website development relating to new website disclosures. The current estimate of the initial external cost is \$3,000 for an external website developer to develop the webpage. Commission staff does not believe there will be any ongoing external costs related to the website disclosure requirements. Amortized over a 3-year period, the external cost is approximately \$1,000. The Commission estimates that an additional 172 ETFs would rely on rule 6c-11, resulting in an increase in the number of respondents to 1,907 ETFs from 1,735 ETFs. Accordingly, the Commission estimates that the total external cost related to the website disclosures would be \$1,907,000. We estimate that the costs related to rule 6c-11's recordkeeping and policies and procedures requirements are fully captured as internal hour burdens in Item 12.

14. Costs to Federal Government

The annual cost of reviewing and processing disclosure documents, including new registration statements, post-effective amendments, proxy statements, shareholder reports, and other filings of investment companies amounted to approximately \$21.2 million in fiscal year 2019, based on the Commission's computation of the value of staff time devoted to this activity and related overhead.

15. Changes in Burden

The total annual hour burden of 81,848 hours represents an increase of 7,382 hours over the previous burden hour estimate of 74,466 hours. In addition, the annual external cost burden of \$1,907,000 represents an increase of \$172,000 over the previous annual external cost burden estimate of \$1,735,000. The changes in burden hours and external cost burdens are due to the staff's estimates of the time costs and external costs that would result from the amendments to rule 6c-11.

16. Information Collection Planned for Statistical Purposes

Not applicable.

17. Approval to Omit OMB Expiration Date

The Commission is not seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

The Commission is not seeking an exception to the certification statement.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

The collection of information will not employ statistical methods.