

*Date:* October 10, 2023; *Filing Authority:* 39 U.S.C. 3642, 39 CFR 3040.130 through 3040.135, and 39 CFR 3035.105; *Public Representative:* Kenneth R. Moeller; *Comments Due:* October 18, 2023.

This Notice will be published in the **Federal Register**.

**Erica A. Barker,**  
*Secretary.*

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## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[SEC File No. 270-240, OMB Control No. 3235-0216]

### Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Extension: Rule 19a-1

*Upon Written Request, Copies Available From:* Securities and Exchange Commission, Office of FOIA Services, 100 F Street NE, Washington, DC 20549-2736

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3520), the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission") is soliciting comments on the collection of information summarized below. The Commission plans to submit this existing collection of information to the Office of Management and Budget for extension and approval.

Section 19(a) (15 U.S.C. 80a-19(a)) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (the "Act") (15 U.S.C. 80a) makes it unlawful for any registered investment company to pay any dividend or similar distribution from any source other than the company's net income, unless the payment is accompanied by a written statement to the company's shareholders which adequately discloses the sources of the payment. Section 19(a) authorizes the Commission to prescribe the form of such statement by rule.

Rule 19a-1 (17 CFR 270.19a-1) under the Act, entitled "Written Statement to Accompany Dividend Payments by Management Companies," sets forth specific requirements for the information that must be included in statements made pursuant to section 19(a) by or on behalf of management companies.<sup>1</sup> The rule requires that the statement indicate what portions of distribution payments are made from

<sup>1</sup> Section 4(3) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 80a-4(3)) defines "management company" as "any investment company other than a face amount certificate company or a unit investment trust."

net income, net profits from the sale of a security or other property ("capital gains") and paid-in capital. When any part of the payment is made from capital gains, rule 19a-1 also requires that the statement disclose certain other information relating to the appreciation or depreciation of portfolio securities. If an estimated portion is subsequently determined to be significantly inaccurate, a correction must be made on a statement made pursuant to section 19(a) or in the first report to shareholders following the discovery of the inaccuracy.

The purpose of rule 19a-1 is to afford fund shareholders adequate disclosure of the sources from which distribution payments are made. The rule is intended to prevent shareholders from confusing income dividends with distributions made from capital sources. Absent rule 19a-1, shareholders might receive a false impression of fund gains.

Based on a review of filings made with the Commission, the staff estimates that approximately 12,900 series of registered investment companies that are management companies may be subject to rule 19a-1 each year,<sup>2</sup> and that each portfolio on average mails two statements per year to meet the requirements of the rule.<sup>3</sup> The staff further estimates that the time needed to make the determinations required by the rule and to prepare the statement required under the rule is approximately 1 hour per statement. The total annual burden for all portfolios therefore is estimated to be approximately 25,800 burden hours.<sup>4</sup>

The staff estimates that approximately one-third of the total annual burden (8,600 hours) would be incurred by a paralegal with an average hourly wage rate of approximately \$253 per hour,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This estimate is as of December 2022 and is based on the Commission staff's review of EDGAR filings through July 31, 2023. The number of management investment company portfolios that make distributions for which compliance with rule 19a-1 is required depends on a wide range of factors and can vary greatly across years. Therefore, the calculation of estimated burden hours below is based on the total number of management investment company portfolios, each of which may be subject to rule 19a-1.

<sup>3</sup> A few portfolios make monthly distributions from sources other than net income, so the rule requires them to send out a statement 12 times a year. Other portfolios never make such distributions.

<sup>4</sup> This estimate is based on the following calculation: 12,900 management investment company portfolios  $\times$  2 statements per year  $\times$  1 hour per statement = 25,800 burden hours.

<sup>5</sup> Hourly rates are derived from the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association ("SIFMA"), Management and Professional Earnings in the Securities Industry 2013, modified to account for a 1,800-hour work-year and inflation, and multiplied by 5.35 to account for bonuses, firm size, employee benefits, and overhead.

and approximately two-thirds of the annual burden (17,200 hours) would be incurred by a compliance clerk with an average hourly wage rate of \$82 per hour.<sup>6</sup> The staff therefore estimates that the aggregate annual burden, in dollars, of the hours needed to comply with the paperwork requirements of the rule is approximately \$3,586,200 ((8,600 hours  $\times$  \$253 = \$2,175,800) + (17,200 hours  $\times$  \$82 = \$1,410,400)). It is estimated that there is no cost burden of rule 19a-1 other than these estimates.

To comply with state law, many investment companies already must distinguish the different sources from which a shareholder distribution is paid and disclose that information to shareholders. Thus, many investment companies would be required to distinguish the sources of shareholder dividends whether or not the Commission required them to do so under rule 19a-1.

These estimates are made solely for the purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act, and are not derived from a comprehensive or even a representative survey or study of the costs of Commission rules. Compliance with the collection of information required by rule 19a-1 is mandatory for management companies that make statements to shareholders pursuant to section 19(a) of the Act. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid control number.

*Written comments are invited on:* (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Commission's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Consideration will be given to comments and suggestions submitted by December 18, 2023.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information under the PRA unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Please direct your written comments to: David Bottom, Acting Director/Chief

<sup>6</sup> Hourly rates are derived from SIFMA's Office Salaries in the Securities Industry 2013, modified to account for a 1,800-hour work-year and multiplied by 2.93 to account for bonuses, firm size, employee benefits and overhead.

Information Officer, Securities and Exchange Commission, c/o John Pezzullo, 100 F Street NE, Washington, DC 20549 or send an email to: [PRA\\_Mailbox@sec.gov](mailto:PRA_Mailbox@sec.gov).

Dated: October 11, 2023.

**Sherry R. Haywood,**

*Assistant Secretary.*

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## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[SEC File No. 270-208, OMB Control No. 3235-0213]

### Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Extension: Rule 17g-1

*Upon Written Request, Copies Available From:* Securities and Exchange Commission, Office of FOIA Services, 100 F Street NE, Washington, DC 20549-2736

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3520), the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission") is soliciting comments on the collection of information summarized below. The Commission plans to submit this existing collection of information to the Office of Management and Budget for extension and approval.

Rule 17g-1 (17 CFR 270.17g-1) under the Investment Company Act of 1940 (the "Act") (15 U.S.C. 80a-17(g)) governs the fidelity bonding of officers and employees of registered management investment companies ("funds") and their advisers. Rule 17g-1 requires, in part, the following:

#### Independent Directors' Approval

The form and amount of the fidelity bond must be approved by a majority of the fund's independent directors at least once annually, and the amount of any premium paid by the fund for any "joint insured bond," covering multiple funds or certain affiliates, must be approved by a majority of the fund's independent directors.

#### Terms and Provisions of the Bond

The amount of the bond may not be less than the minimum amounts of coverage set forth in a schedule based on the fund's gross assets. The bond must provide that it shall not be cancelled, terminated, or modified except upon 60-days written notice to the affected party and to the Commission. In the case of a joint insured bond, 60-days written notice must also be given to each fund covered

by the bond. A joint insured bond must provide that the fidelity insurance company will provide all funds covered by the bond with a copy of the agreement, a copy of any claim on the bond, and notification of the terms of the settlement of any claim prior to execution of that settlement. Finally, a fund that is insured by a joint bond must enter into an agreement with all other parties insured by the joint bond regarding recovery under the bond.

#### Filings With the Commission

Upon the execution of a fidelity bond or any amendment thereto, a fund must file with the Commission within 10 days: (i) a copy of the executed bond or any amendment to the bond, (ii) the independent directors' resolution approving the bond, and (iii) a statement as to the period for which premiums have been paid on the bond. In the case of a joint insured bond, a fund must also file: (i) a statement showing the amount the fund would have been required to maintain under the rule if it were insured under a single insured bond; and (ii) the agreement between the fund and all other insured parties regarding recovery under the bond. A fund must also notify the Commission in writing within five days of any claim or settlement on a claim under the fidelity bond.

#### Notices to Directors

A fund must notify by registered mail each member of its board of directors of: (i) any cancellation, termination, or modification of the fidelity bond at least 45 days prior to the effective date; and (ii) the filing or settlement of any claim under the fidelity bond when notification is filed with the Commission.

Rule 17g-1's independent directors' annual review requirements, fidelity bond content requirements, joint bond agreement requirement, and the required notices to directors are designed to ensure the safety of fund assets against losses due to the conduct of persons who may obtain access to those assets. These requirements also seek to facilitate oversight of a fund's fidelity bond. The rule's required filings with the Commission are designed to assist the Commission in monitoring funds' compliance with the fidelity bond requirements.

Based on conversations with representatives in the fund industry, the Commission staff estimates that for each of the estimated 2,543 active funds (respondents),<sup>1</sup> the average annual

paperwork burden associated with rule 17g-1's requirements is two hours, one hour each for a compliance attorney and the board of directors as a whole. The time spent by a compliance attorney includes time spent filing reports with the Commission for fidelity losses (if any) as well as paperwork associated with any notices to directors, and managing any updates to the bond and the joint agreement (if one exists). The time spent by the board of directors as a whole includes any time spent initially establishing the bond, as well as time spent on annual updates and approvals. The Commission staff therefore estimates the total ongoing paperwork burden hours per year for all funds required by rule 17g-1 to be 5,086 hours (2,543 funds × 2 hours = 5,086 hours). Commission staff continues to estimate that the filing and reporting requirements of rule 17g-1 do not entail any external cost burdens.

These estimates of average burden hours are made solely for the purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act. These estimates are not derived from a comprehensive or even a representative survey or study of Commission rules. The collection of information required by rule 17g-1 is mandatory and will not be kept confidential. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid control number.

Written comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Commission's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Consideration will be given to comments and suggestions submitted by December 18, 2023.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information under the PRA unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Please direct your written comments to: David Bottom, Acting Director/Chief Information Officer, Securities and

<sup>1</sup> 2022, Commission staff calculates there are 2,186 funds (registered open- and closed-end funds, and business development companies) that must comply with the collections of information under rule 17g-1, and which collectively submit an estimated 2,543 filings on Form 17G annually.

<sup>1</sup> Based on a review of fund filings for the three-year period from January 1, 2020 to December 31,