

B. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Burden on Competition

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

C. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Comments on the Proposed Rule Change Received From Members, Participants, or Others

Written comments on the proposed rule change were neither solicited or received.

III. Date of Effectiveness of the Proposed Rule Change and Timing for Commission Action

The foregoing rule change has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Exchange Act and subparagraph (e) of Exchange Act Rule 19b-4 because it constitutes or changes a due, fee, or other charge imposed by the Exchange. At any time within 60 days of the filing of such proposed rule change, the Commission may summarily abrogate such rule change if it appears to the Commission that such action is necessary or appropriate in the public interest, for the protection of investors, or otherwise in furtherance of the purposes of the Exchange Act.

IV. Solicitation of Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views and arguments concerning the foregoing, including whether the proposed rule change is consistent with the Act. Persons making written submissions should file six copies thereof with the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Reference Room, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. Copies of such filing will also be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the PCX. All submissions should refer to File No. SR-PCX-98-05 and should be submitted by April 20, 1998.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.⁵

Margaret H. McFarland,

Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-8202 Filed 3-27-98; 8:45 am]

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-39788; File No. 600-25]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Participants Trust Company; Notice of Filing and Order Approving Application for Extension of Temporary Registration as a Clearing Agency

March 24, 1998.

On February 9, 1998, the Participants Trust Company ("PTC") filed¹ with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") a request pursuant to Section 19(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act")² for extension of its temporary registration as a clearing agency under Section 17A of the Act³ while the Commission completes its review of PTC's request for permanent registration.⁴ The Commission is publishing this notice and order to solicit comments from interested persons and to grant PTC's request for an extension of its temporary registration as a clearing agency through March 31, 1999.

On March 28, 1989, the Commission granted PTC's application for registration as a clearing agency pursuant to Sections 17A(b)(2) and 19(a) of the Act⁵ on a temporary basis for a period of one year.⁶ Subsequently, the Commission issued orders that extended PTC's temporary registration as a clearing agency with the last extending PTC's registration through March 31, 1998.⁷

As discussed in detail in the initial order granting PTC's temporary

registration,⁸ one of the primary reasons for PTC's registration was to allow it to develop depository facilities for mortgage-backed securities, particularly securities guaranteed by the Government National Mortgage Association. PTC's services include certificate safekeeping, book-entry deliveries, and other services related to the immobilization of securities certificates. Its participants include twenty-seven banks, twenty-three broker-dealers, two government-sponsored enterprises, and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

PTC continues to make significant progress in the areas of financial performance, regulatory commitments, and operational capabilities. For example, the original face value of securities on deposit at PTC as of December 31, 1997, totaled \$1.3 trillion, an increase of approximately \$130 billion over the amount on deposit as of December 31, 1996. Total pools on deposit, which were held at PTC in a total of 1.3 million participant positions, rose from 350,000 as of December 31, 1996, to more than 374,383 as of December 31, 1997. PTC declared a dividend of \$1.05 per share to stockholders of record on December 31, 1998.⁹

In connection with PTC's original temporary registration, PTC committed to the Commission and to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York ("FRBNY") to make a number of operational and procedural changes.¹⁰ During the past year, the FRBNY relieved PTC of the only commitment remaining outstanding, the commitment to make principal and interest advances

⁸ *Supra* note 6.

⁹ Securities Exchange Act Release No. 39509 (December 31, 1997), 63 FR 1523.

¹⁰ The operational and procedural changes PTC committed to make were:

- (1) eliminating trade reversals from PTC's procedures to cover a participant default;
- (2) phasing out the aggregate excess net debit limitation for extensions under the net debit monitoring level procedures;
- (3) making principal and interest advances, now mandatory, optional;
- (4) allowing participants to retrieve securities in the abeyance account and not allowing participants to reverse transfers because customers may not be able to fulfill financial obligations to the participants;
- (5) eliminating the deliverer's security interest and replacing it with a substitute;
- (6) reexamining PTC's account structure rules to make them consistent with PTC's lien procedures;
- (7) expanding and diversifying PTC's lines of credit;
- (8) assuring operational integrity by developing and constructing a back-up facility; and
- (9) reviewing PTC rules and procedures for consistency with current operations.

⁵ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

¹ Letter from John J. Sceppa, President and Chief Executive Officer, PTC (February 9, 1998).

² 15 U.S.C. 78s(a).

³ 15 U.S.C. 78q-1.

⁴ On February 7, 1997, PTC filed an amended Form CA-1 with the Commission requesting permanent registration as a clearing agency under Section 17A of the Act. PTC's request is currently under review by the Commission.

⁵ 15 U.S.C. 78q-1(b)(2) and 78s(a).

⁶ Securities Exchange Act Release No. 26671 (March 28, 1989), 54 FR 13266.

⁷ Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 27858 (March 28, 1990), 55 FR 12614; 29024 (March 28, 1991), 56 FR 13848; 30537 (April 9, 1992), 57 FR 12351; 32040 (March 23, 1993), 58 FR 16902; 33734 (March 8, 1994), 59 FR 11815; 35482 (March 13, 1995), 60 FR 14806; 37024 (March 26, 1996), 61 FR 14357; and 38452 (March 28, 1997), 62 FR 16638.

optional.¹¹ The FRBNY noted that although PTC has not changed its rules as specifically required by its commitment, it has addressed the issue that was the subject of that commitment by eliminating the pro rata charge to participants. In addition, the FRBNY stated that PTC has significantly improved its procedures for collection of principal and interest payments by encouraging issuers to use electronic means of payment and by making other operational improvements to accelerate the collection of principal and interest payments made by check.

PTC has functioned effectively as a registered clearing agency for over 8 years. Accordingly, in light of PTC's past performance and the need for continuity of the services PTC provides to its participants, the Commission believes that it is necessary and appropriate in the public interest and for the prompt and accurate clearance and settlement of securities transactions to extend PTC's temporary registration through March 31, 1999. Any comments received during PTC's temporary registration will be considered in conjunction with the Commission's review of PTC's request for permanent registration as a clearing agency under Section 17A¹² of the Act.

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments concerning the foregoing. Persons making written submissions should file six copies thereof with the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the request for extension of temporary registration as a clearing agency that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the requested extension between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Reference Section, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. Copies of such filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of PTC. All submissions should refer to File No. 600-25.

On the basis of the foregoing, the Commission finds that PTC's request for

extension of temporary registration as a clearing agency is consistent with the Act and in particular with Section 17A of the Act.

It is Therefore Ordered, that PTC's registration as a clearing agency be and hereby is approved on a temporary basis through March 31, 1999.

For the Commission by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.¹³

Margaret H. McFarland,

Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-8199 Filed 3-27-98; 8:45 am]

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SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Data Collection Available for Public Comments and Recommendations

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Small Business Administration's intentions to request approval on a new, and/or currently approved information collection.

DATES: Comments should be submitted on or before May 29, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Curtis B. Rich, Management Analyst, Small Business Administration, 409 3rd Street, S. W., Suite 5000, Washington, D. C. 20416. Phone Number: 202-205-6629.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: "Title VII Study and Report".

Type of Request: New Request.

Form No: N/A.

Description of Respondents: Service-Disabled Veterans who own and operate Small Businesses.

Annual Responses: 1,360.

Annual Burden: 680.

Comments: Send all comments regarding this information collection to Reginald Teamer, Regional Coordination Specialist, Office of the Assistant Administrator for Veterans Affairs Small Business Administration, 409 3rd Street, S.W., Suite 6000, Washington, D.C. 20416. Phone No: 202-205-7278.

Send comments regarding whether this information collection is necessary for the proper performance of the function of the agency, accuracy of burden estimate, in addition to ways to minimize this estimate, and ways to enhance the quality.

Jacqueline White,

Chief, Administrative Information Branch.

[FR Doc. 98-8243 Filed 3-27-98; 8:45 am]

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SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Interest Rates: Quarterly Determinations

The Small Business Administration publishes an interest rate called the optional "peg" rate (13 CFR 120.214) on a quarterly basis. This rate is a weighted average cost of money to the government for maturities similar to the average SBA direct loan. This rate may be used as a base rate for guaranteed fluctuating interest rate SBA loans. This rate will be 5¾ percent for the April-June quarter of FY 98.

Pursuant to 13 CFR 120.921(b), the maximum legal interest rate for a commercial loan which funds any portion of the cost of a project (see 13 CFR 120.801) shall be the greater of 6% over the New York prime rate or the limitation established by the constitution or laws of a given State. The initial rate for a fixed rate loan shall be the legal rate for the term of the loan.

Jane Palsgrove Butler,

Acting Associate Administrator for Financial Assistance.

[FR Doc. 98-8244 Filed 3-27-98; 8:45 am]

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SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Social Security Ruling, SSR 98-1p; Title XVI: Determining Medical Equivalence in Childhood Disability Claims When a Child Has Marked Limitations in Cognition and Speech

AGENCY: Social Security Administration.

ACTION: Notice of Social Security Ruling.

SUMMARY: In accordance with 20 CFR 402.35(b)(1), the Commissioner of Social Security gives notice of Social Security Ruling, SSR 98-1p. This Ruling results from the "top-to-bottom" review of the implementation of changes to the Supplemental Security Income childhood disability program necessitated by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-193). It provides a policy interpretation that children who have a "marked" limitation in cognitive functioning and a "marked" limitation in speech have an impairment or combination of impairments that medically equals Listing 2.09. It also provides guidance for determining when a child has a "marked" or an "extreme" limitation in each of these areas.

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 30, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ken Nibali, Social Security Administration,

¹¹ Letter from William Wiles, Secretary of the Board, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, to John Sceppe, President and Chief Executive Officer, PTC dated (July 30, 1997).

¹² 15 U.S.C. 78q-1.

¹³ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(50).