

National Agency Check Questionnaire for Peace Corps Volunteer Background Investigation [OMB Number 0420-0001]. The Agency will also seek an expiration date starting after the 90 day Emergency Clearance and ending three years from that approval date. Section 22 of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2501 et seq.) mandates that "all persons employed or assigned to duties under the Act shall be investigated to ensure employment or assignment is consistent with national interest in accordance with standards and procedures established by the President."

**DATES:** The Peace Corps invites comments until May 8, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the information collection may be obtained from Paul Davis, Manager Placement Unit, Peace Corps, 1111 20th Street NW, Washington, DC 20526. Mr. Davis may be contacted by telephone at (202) 692-1836. Comments on these forms should be addressed to Mr. David Rostker, Desk Officer, Office of Management and Budget, NEOB, Washington, DC 20523.

Dated: February 29, 2000.

**Michael J. Kole,**

*Director of Administrative Services and Certifying Official.*

[FR Doc. 00-5715 Filed 3-8-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 6051-01-M**

## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 35-27144]

### Filings Under the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935, as Amended ("Act")

March 1, 2000.

Notice is hereby given that the following filing(s) has/have been made with the Commission pursuant to provisions of the Act and rules promulgated under the Act. All interested persons are referred to the application(s) and/or declaration(s) for complete statements of the proposed transaction(s) summarized below. The application(s) and/or declaration(s) and any amendment(s) is/are available for public inspection through the Commission's Branch of Public Reference.

Interested persons wishing to comment or request a hearing on the application(s) and/or declaration(s) should submit their views in writing by March 23, 2000, to the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, Washington, D.C. 20549-0609, and serve a copy on the relevant applicant(s) and/or declarant(s) at the address(es)

specified below. Proof of service (by affidavit or, in the case of an attorney at law, by certificate) should be filed with the request. Any request for hearing should identify specifically the issues of facts or law that are disputed. A person who so requests will be notified of any hearing, if ordered, and will receive a copy of any notice or order issued in the matter. After March 23, 2000, the applicant(s) and/or declaration(s), as filed or as amended, may be granted and/or permitted to become effective.

*Northeast Utilities (70-9563)*

### Notice of Proposal to Amend Declaration of Trust; Order Authorizing Solicitation of Proxies

Northeast Utilities ("NU"), a registered holding company, located at 174 Brush Hill Avenue, West Springfield, Massachusetts 01090-0010, has filed a declaration under sections 6(a)(2), 7(e) and 12(e) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935, as amended ("Act"), and rules 62(d) and 65 under the Act.

NU has entered into an Agreement and Plan of Merger ("Merger Agreement"), dated October 13, 1999, amended and restated January 11, 2000, with Consolidated Edison, Inc. ("CEI"), a New York electric and gas public utility holding company exempt from registration under section 3(a)(1) of the Act under rule 2, Consolidated Edison, Inc. ("New CEI"),<sup>1</sup> a Delaware corporation and a wholly owned subsidiary of CEI, and N Acquisition LLC ("N Acquisition"), a Massachusetts limited liability company, which is directly and indirectly owned by New CEI. Under the Merger Agreement, CEI will be merged with and into New CEI, with New CEI as the surviving corporation, and N Acquisition will be merged with and into NU, with NU as the surviving entity ("Merger"). On January 20, 2000, NU and CEI filed a separate application-declaration (file no. 70-9613) with this Commission requesting authority to consummate the Merger.

NU proposes to make certain amendments ("Amendments") to its Declaration of Trust ("Trust Agreement"). The Amendment would specifically authorize NU to consummate a merger with one or more domestic limited liability companies under Massachusetts law.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> New CEI was originally incorporated as CWB Holdings, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> The Trust Agreement already authorizes the NU board of trustees to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any part or parts of the properties of NU to the extent permitted by law. Under Massachusetts law, however, for a business trust to merge with another

Amendments would also allow the number of trustees resulting from the merger to be fixed by the agreement providing for the merger.

NU also proposes to solicit proxies from its common shareholders for the purposes of obtaining required shareholder approvals related to the merger. Specifically, NU proposes to solicit proxies from its common shareholders to approve the Amendments and the Merger Agreement at a special meeting, which is expected to be held in the spring of 2000.

The proposed Amendments, which will be effected regardless of whether the Merger is consummated, and the Merger Agreement must be approved by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of all NU shareholders eligible to vote. The Amendments and the Merger have already been approved by the unanimous vote of the NU board of trustees.

NU requests that an order authorizing the solicitation of proxies be issued as soon as practicable under rule 62(d). It appears to the Commission that NU's declaration regarding the proposed solicitation of proxies should be permitted to become effective immediately under rule 62(d).

Fees, commissions, and expenses to be incurred in connection with the transactions described in the declaration are expected not to exceed \$500,000. NU states that no state or federal commission, other than this Commission, has jurisdiction over the proposed transactions.

*It is ordered*, under rule 62 under the Act, that the declaration regarding the proposed solicitation of proxies can become effective immediately, subject to the terms and conditions contained in rule 24 under the Act.

For the Commission, by the Division of Investment Management, under delegated authority.

**Margaret H. McFarland,**

*Deputy Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 00-5645 Filed 3-8-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 8010-01-M**

## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

### Sunshine Act Meeting

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of the Government in the Sunshine Act, Pub. L. 94-409, that the Securities and Exchange Commission

entity, its declaration of trust must explicitly authorize such a transaction. The Trust Agreement currently does not authorize NU to merge with another entity.

will hold the following meetings during the week of March 13, 2000.

An open meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 15, 2000 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 600. A closed meeting will be held on Thursday, March 16, 2000 at 11:00 a.m.

The subject matter of the open meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 15, 2000 is:

Consideration of whether to propose amendments to Form N-1A under the Investment Company Act of 1940 and the Securities Act of 1933, Rule 482 under the Securities Act of 1933, and Rule 34b-1 under the Investment Company Act of 1940. The amendments would improve disclosure to investors of the effect of taxes on the performance of open-end management investment companies ("mutual funds" or "funds"). Under the proposed amendments, mutual funds would be required to disclose standardized after-tax returns in the risk/return summary of the prospectus and in Management's Discussion of Fund Performance, which is typically located in the annual report. The proposal also would require funds that chose to include after-tax returns in advertisements and other sales materials to include standardized after-tax returns. For further information, contact Maura S. McNulty, Division of Investment Management, at (202) 942-0721.

Commissioners, Counsel to the Commissioners, the Secretary to the Commission, and recording secretaries will attend the closed meeting. Certain staff members who have an interest in the matters may also be present.

The General Counsel of the Commission, or his designee, has certified that, in his opinion, one or more of the exemptions set forth in 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(4), (8), (9)(A) and (10) and 17 CFR 200.402(a)(4), (8), (9)(A) and (10), permit consideration for the scheduled matters at the closed meeting.

Commissioner Johnson, as duty officer, voted to consider the items listed for the closed meeting in a closed session.

The subject matters of the closed meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 16, 2000 are:

Institution and settlement of injunctive actions;

Institution and settlement of administrative proceedings of an enforcement nature; and

A litigation matter.

At times, changes in Commission priorities require alterations in the scheduling of meeting items. For further information and to ascertain what, if any, matters have been added, deleted or postponed, please contact:

Dated: March 7, 2000.

**Jonathan G. Katz,**

*Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 00-5909 Filed 3-7-00; 12:37 p.m.]

**BILLING CODE 8010-01-M**

## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-42493; File No. SR-OPRA-00-03]

### Options Price Reporting Authority; Notice of Filing and Order Granting Accelerated Effectiveness of Amendment to OPRA Plan Adopting a Temporary Capacity Allocation Plan

March 3, 2000.

Pursuant to Rule 11Aa3-2 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act"),<sup>1</sup> notice is hereby given that on March 3, 2000, the Options Price Reporting Authority ("OPRA")<sup>2</sup> submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC" or "Commission") an amendment to the Plan for Reporting of Consolidated Options Last Sale Reports and Quotation Information ("Plan"). The amendment proposes to allocate the message handling capacity of OPRA's processor among the participant exchanges for a temporary period ending May 13, 2000, to minimize the likelihood that during this period the total number of messages generated by the participants will exceed the processor's (*i.e.*, Securities Industry Automation Corporation) aggregate message handling capacity.<sup>3</sup> The Commission is publishing this notice and order to solicit comments from interested persons on the proposed Plan amendment, and to grant accelerated

approval to the proposed Plan amendment through May 13, 2000.

### I. Description and Purpose of the Amendment

As discussed above, OPRA proposes to allocate the message handling capacity of its processor among the participant exchanges for a temporary period ending May 13, 2000, to minimize the likelihood that during this period the total number of messages generated by the participants will exceed the processor's aggregate message handling capacity. During this period, the processor's aggregate message-handling capacity, which is estimated by the processor to be 3,540 messages per second, will be allocated among the participants by automatically limiting the number of messages that each participant may input to the processor as follows:

American Stock Exchange: 1,024 messages per second  
Chicago Board Options Exchange: 1,366 messages per second  
Pacific Exchange: 635 messages per second  
Philadelphia Stock Exchange: 515 messages per second

OPRA proposes to allocate the message handling capacity of its processor in response to significant increases in the number of options quotations that have recently been experienced by all of the participant exchanges as a result of the greater number of options series being traded on the exchanges and the heightened volatility in the underlying securities. Although the aggregate amount of options market information messages is generally still within the capacity of the OPRA processor, the aggregate options message traffic is now so close to reaching the processor's maximum message-handling capacity that some short-term solution to the problem is necessary to avoid risking unacceptable delays and queuing in the dissemination of real-time options market information. Although some long-term solutions have been proposed in the course of the Options Capacity Planning and Quote Mitigation Program that has been taking place over the past several months, these may not be in place soon enough to deal with the current expansion of message traffic.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, beginning in January 2000, OPRA's

<sup>1</sup> 17 CFR 240.11Aa3-2.

<sup>2</sup> OPRA is a National Market System Plan approved by the Commission pursuant to Section 11A of the Act and Rule 11Aa3-2 thereunder. See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 17638 (Mar. 18, 1981).

The Plan provides for the collection and dissemination of last sale and quotation information on options that are traded on the member exchanges. The five exchanges that agreed to the OPRA Plan are the American Stock Exchange ("AMEX"); the Chicago Board Options Exchange ("CBOE"); the New York Stock Exchange ("NYSE"); the Pacific Exchange ("PCX"); and the Philadelphia Stock Exchange ("PHLX").

<sup>3</sup> OPRA has determined to treat this proposed capacity allocation as an amendment to its national market system plan and, accordingly, to file the proposed capacity allocation for Commission review and approval pursuant to paragraph (b) of Rule 11Aa3-2. Any determination made by OPRA to continue the effectiveness of the proposed capacity allocations or any revised capacity allocations beyond May 13, 2000 will be the subject of a separate filing under the same Rule.

<sup>4</sup> See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 41843 (September 8, 1999) in which the Commission issued an order authorizing the options exchanges, OPRA, OPRA's processor and other parties to act jointly in planning, developing and discussing approaches and strategies with respect to options quote message traffic and related matters ("September 1999 Order").