SSGA FUNDS
STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT TRUST
STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL FUNDS
STATE STREET VARIABLE INSURANCE SERIES FUNDS, INC.
ELFUN GOVERNMENT MONEY MARKET FUND
ELFUN TAX-EXEMPT INCOME FUND
ELFUN INCOME FUND
ELFUN DIVERSIFIED FUND
ELFUN INTERNATIONAL EQUITY FUND
ELFUN TRUSTS
(collectively, the "Trusts")

Supplement dated September 18, 2025 to the currently effective Prospectuses and Statements of Additional Information (the "SAIs"), as each may be supplemented from time to time, with respect to the Trusts and the series of the Trusts listed on Appendix A

Effective September 22, 2025 (the "Effective Date"), the principal business address for the Trusts, SSGA Funds Management, Inc., and State Street Global Advisors Funds Distributors, LLC (the "Principal Address") will change. Accordingly, as of the Effective Date, all references to the Principal Address in the Prospectuses and SAIs are deleted and replaced as follows:

Principal Address prior to September 22, 2025	Principal Address as of September 22, 2025
One Iron Street Boston, MA 02110	One Congress Street Boston, MA 02114

This change in Principal Address will not result in any changes to the management of the Trusts or their series.

PLEASE RETAIN THIS SUPPLEMENT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

091825SUPP2

Appendix A

SSGA FUNDS
State Street International Stock Selection Fund
State Street S&P 500 Index Fund

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT TRUST
State Street Equity 500 Index Fund
State Street Aggregate Bond Index Fund
State Street Small/Mid Cap Equity Index Fund
State Street Global All Cap Equity Ex-U.S. Index Fund
State Street Emerging Markets Equity Index Fund
State Street Balanced Index Fund
State Street Hedged International Developed Equity Index Fund
State Street International Developed Equity Index Fund
State Street Equity 500 Index II Portfolio
State Street Aggregate Bond Index Portfolio
State Street Small/Mid Cap Equity Index Portfolio
State Street Global All Cap Equity Ex-U.S. Index Portfolio
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund
State Street Treasury Obligations Money Market Fund
State Street Federal Treasury Money Market Fund
State Street Federal Treasury Plus Money Market Fund
State Street Federal Government Money Market Fund
State Street Target Retirement Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2025 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2030 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2035 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2040 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2045 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2050 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2055 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2060 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2065 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2070 Fund
State Street U.S. Core Equity Fund
State Street Income Fund

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL FUNDS
State Street Institutional Small-Cap Equity Fund
State Street Institutional U.S. Equity Fund

STATE STREET VARIABLE INSURANCE SERIES FUNDS, INC.
State Street Small-Cap Equity V.I.S. Fund

State Street Total Return V.I.S. Fund
State Street Real Estate Securities V.I.S. Fund
State Street U.S. Equity V.I.S. Fund
State Street Income V.I.S. Fund
State Street Premier Growth Equity V.I.S. Fund
State Street S&P 500 Index V.I.S. Fund

ELFUN GOVERNMENT MONEY MARKET FUND

ELFUN TAX-EXEMPT INCOME FUND

ELFUN INCOME FUND

ELFUN DIVERSIFIED FUND

ELFUN INTERNATIONAL EQUITY FUND

ELFUN TRUSTS

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT TRUST

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL TREASURY MONEY MARKET FUND
Premier Class (TRIXX)
Investment Class (TRVXX)
Select Class (TYSXX)
Institutional Class (SSJXX)
Investor Class (SSNXX)
Administration Class (SSKXX)
Opportunity Class (OPRXX)
STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL TREASURY PLUS MONEY MARKET FUND
Premier Class (TPIXX)
Investment Class (TPVXX)
Select Class (TPSXX)
Institutional Class (SAJXX)
Investor Class (SAEXX)
Administration Class (SSQXX)
Trust Class (TPLXX)
Opportunity Class (OPTXX)
STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL U.S. GOVERNMENT MONEY MARKET FUND
Premier Class (GVMXX)
Investment Class (GVVXX)
Select Class (GVSXX)
Institutional Class (SAHXX)
Investor Class (SAMXX)
Administration Class (SALXX)
Class G (SSOXX)
Opportunity Class (OPGXX)
Trust Class (GVBXX)

STATE STREET TREASURY OBLIGATIONS MONEY MARKET FUND (TAQXX)

(each, a "Fund", and collectively, the "Funds")

Supplement dated July 16, 2025 to the Statement of Additional Information ("SAI"), dated April 30, 2025, as may be supplemented from time to time

Effective immediately, the section of the SAI entitled "Investment Advisory and Other Services – Shareholder Servicing Agent" beginning on page 39 is deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

Shareholder Servicing Agent

SSGA FD serves as a shareholder servicing agent of the Treasury Fund, the Treasury Plus Fund and the U.S. Government Fund, pursuant to a Shareholder Servicing Agreement between SSGA FD and the Trust (the "Shareholder Servicing Agreement"). Pursuant to the Shareholder Servicing Agreement, SSGA FD provides or arranges for the provision of various administrative, sub-accounting and personal services to investors in the Institutional Class, Trust Class, Investor Class, Administration Class, Investment Class and Opportunity Class shares of such Funds. Services provided by SSGA FD or that SSGA FD arranges to be provided by a financial intermediary pursuant to the Shareholder Servicing Agreement include, among other things: establishing and maintaining shareholder account registrations; sub-accounting with respect to shares held in omnibus accounts; receiving and processing purchase and redemption orders,

including aggregated orders, and delivering orders to the Fund's transfer agent; processing and delivering trade confirmations, periodic statements, prospectuses, annual reports, semi-annual reports, shareholder notices, and other SEC-required communications; processing dividend and distribution payments and issuing related documentation; providing shareholder tax reporting and processing tax data; receiving, tabulating, and transmitting proxies for proxy solicitations; and responding to inquiries from shareholders. Shareholder servicing fees paid for the last fiscal year included amounts paid to affiliates of the Adviser and SSGA FD including State Street Bank (on behalf of all of its North America business units) and State Street Global Markets, LLC and Global Services divisions of State Street Bank and Trust Company. These affiliates of the Adviser are also among the financial intermediaries that may receive fees from the Distribution Plan.

The Shareholder Servicing Agreement calls for payments by the Treasury Fund, Treasury Plus Fund and U.S. Government Fund at an annual rate (based on average net assets) as follows:

Premier Class	None
Institutional Class	0.03%
Trust Class (Treasury Plus Fund)	0.056%
Trust Class (US. Government Fund)	0.058%
Investor Class	0.08%
Administration Class	0.20%
Investment Class	0.25%
Opportunity Class	0.03%

The payments made for shareholder servicing pursuant to the Shareholder Servicing Agreement from the effective date of the agreement, as well as payments made pursuant to a prior arrangement between the Funds and SSGA FD, by the ILR Government Fund, the Treasury Fund, the Treasury Plus Fund and the U.S. Government Fund for the last three fiscal years ended December 31 are reflected in the chart below:

Fund	2024	2023	2022
ILR Government Fund*	$ 1,156,554	$ 1,154,890	$1,702,049
Treasury Fund	$ 1,990,175	$ 1,460,106	$1,951,793
Treasury Plus Fund	$ 6,418,265	$ 4,635,597	$4,245,884
U.S. Government Fund	$13,189,525	$10,608,325	$8,772,210

* The ILR Government Fund merged into the U.S. Government Fund effective June 13, 2025.

PLEASE RETAIN THIS SUPPLEMENT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

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SSGA FUNDS

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT TRUST

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL FUNDS

STATE STREET VARIABLE INSURANCE SERIES FUNDS, INC.

ELFUN GOVERNMENT MONEY MARKET FUND

ELFUN TAX-EXEMPT INCOME FUND

ELFUN INCOME FUND

ELFUN DIVERSIFIED FUND

ELFUN INTERNATIONAL EQUITY FUND

ELFUN TRUSTS

(collectively, the "Trusts")

Supplement dated June 30, 2025 to the currently effective Prospectuses ("Prospectus") and Statements of Additional Information ("SAI"), as each may be supplemented from time to time, with respect to the Trusts and the series of the Trusts listed on Appendix A

Effective June 30, 2025, the brand name of the global asset management business of State Street Corporation is changing from "State Street Global Advisors" to "State Street Investment Management." Accordingly, effective immediately, "SSIM" replaces "SSGA" as a defined term and "SSIM" is defined as "State Street Investment Management" in each Prospectus and SAI. The brand name change will not result in any changes to the management of the Funds.

PLEASE RETAIN THIS SUPPLEMENT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

063025SUPP3

Appendix A

SSGA FUNDS
State Street International Stock Selection Fund
State Street S&P 500 Index Fund

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT TRUST
State Street Equity 500 Index Fund
State Street Aggregate Bond Index Fund
State Street Small/Mid Cap Equity Index Fund
State Street Global All Cap Equity Ex-U.S. Index Fund
State Street Emerging Markets Equity Index Fund
State Street Balanced Index Fund
State Street Hedged International Developed Equity Index Fund
State Street International Developed Equity Index Fund
State Street Equity 500 Index II Portfolio
State Street Aggregate Bond Index Portfolio
State Street Small/Mid Cap Equity Index Portfolio
State Street Global All Cap Equity Ex-U.S. Index Portfolio
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund
State Street Treasury Obligations Money Market Fund
State Street Federal Treasury Money Market Fund
State Street Federal Treasury Plus Money Market Fund
State Street Federal Government Money Market Fund
State Street Target Retirement Fund
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State Street Target Retirement 2040 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2045 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2050 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2055 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2060 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2065 Fund
State Street Target Retirement 2070 Fund
State Street U.S. Core Equity Fund
State Street Income Fund

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL FUNDS
State Street Institutional Small-Cap Equity Fund
State Street Institutional U.S. Equity Fund

STATE STREET VARIABLE INSURANCE SERIES FUNDS, INC.
State Street Small-Cap Equity V.I.S. Fund

State Street Total Return V.I.S. Fund
State Street Real Estate Securities V.I.S. Fund
State Street U.S. Equity V.I.S. Fund
State Street Income V.I.S. Fund
State Street Premier Growth Equity V.I.S. Fund
State Street S&P 500 Index V.I.S. Fund

ELFUN GOVERNMENT MONEY MARKET FUND

ELFUN TAX-EXEMPT INCOME FUND

ELFUN INCOME FUND

ELFUN DIVERSIFIED FUND

ELFUN INTERNATIONAL EQUITY FUND

ELFUN TRUSTS

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT TRUST
(the "Trust")
One Iron Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02210

STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

April 30, 2025

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL LIQUID RESERVES GOVERNMENT MONEY MARKET FUND (formerly STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL LIQUID RESERVES FUND)
Premier Class (SSIXX)
Investment Class (SSVXX)
Institutional Class (SSHXX)
Investor Class (SSZXX)
Administration Class (SSYXX)
Trust Class (TILXX)
Opportunity Class (OPIXX)

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL TREASURY MONEY MARKET FUND
Premier Class (TRIXX)
Investment Class (TRVXX)
Select Class (TYSXX)
Institutional Class (SSJXX)
Investor Class (SSNXX)
Administration Class (SSKXX)
Opportunity Class (OPRXX)

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL TREASURY PLUS MONEY MARKET FUND
Premier Class (TPIXX)
Investment Class (TPVXX)
Select Class (TPSXX)
Institutional Class (SAJXX)
Investor Class (SAEXX)
Administration Class (SSQXX)
Trust Class (TPLXX)
Opportunity Class (OPTXX)

STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL U.S. GOVERNMENT MONEY MARKET FUND
Premier Class (GVMXX)
Investment Class (GVVXX)
Select Class (GVSXX)
Institutional Class (SAHXX)
Investor Class (SAMXX)
Administration Class (SALXX)
Class G (SSOXX)
Opportunity Class (OPGXX)
Trust Class (GVBXX)

STATE STREET TREASURY OBLIGATIONS MONEY MARKET FUND (TAQXX)

This Statement of Additional Information ("SAI") relates to the prospectuses dated April 30, 2025 as may be revised and/or supplemented from time to time thereafter for each of the Funds listed above (each, a "Prospectus" and collectively, the "Prospectuses").

The SAI is not a prospectus and should be read in conjunction with the Prospectuses. A copy of each Prospectus can be obtained free of charge by calling (877) 521-4083 or by written request to the Trust at the address listed above.

Each Fund's audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, including the independent registered public accounting firm reports thereon, are included in the Fund's Form N-CSR filing for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024 and are incorporated into this SAI by reference. Copies of the each Fund's annual reports, semi-annual reports, and other information such as each Fund's financial statements are available, without charge, upon request, by calling (877) 521-4083 or by written request to the Trust at the address above.

COMBOMMSAI

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GENERAL

The Trust was organized as a business trust under the laws of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts on February 16, 2000.

The Trust is an open-end management investment company. The Trust includes the following diversified series:

- State Street Aggregate Bond Index Fund;
- State Street Aggregate Bond Index Portfolio;
- State Street Balanced Index Fund;
- State Street Emerging Markets Equity Index Fund;
- State Street Equity 500 Index Fund;
- State Street Equity 500 Index II Portfolio;
- State Street Federal Government Money Market Fund;
- State Street Federal Treasury Money Market Fund;
- State Street Federal Treasury Plus Money Market Fund;
- State Street Global All Cap Equity ex-U.S. Index Fund;
- State Street Global All Cap Equity ex-U.S. Index Portfolio;
- State Street Hedged International Developed Equity Index Fund;
- State Street Income Fund;
- State Street International Developed Equity Index Fund;
- State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund (the “ILR Government Fund”);
- State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund (the “Treasury Fund”);
- State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund (the “Treasury Plus Fund”);
- State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund (the “U.S. Government Fund”);
- State Street Small/Mid Cap Equity Index Fund;
- State Street Small/Mid Cap Equity Index Portfolio;
- State Street Target Retirement Fund;
- State Street Target Retirement 2025 Fund;
- State Street Target Retirement 2030 Fund;
- State Street Target Retirement 2035 Fund;
- State Street Target Retirement 2040 Fund;
- State Street Target Retirement 2045 Fund;
- State Street Target Retirement 2050 Fund;
- State Street Target Retirement 2055 Fund;
- State Street Target Retirement 2060 Fund;
- State Street Target Retirement 2065 Fund;
- State Street Target Retirement 2070 Fund;
- State Street Treasury Obligations Money Market Fund (the “Treasury Obligations Fund”);
- State Street U.S. Core Equity Fund.

The ILR Government Fund, Treasury Fund, Treasury Plus Fund, U.S. Government Fund, and Treasury Obligations Fund are referred to in this SAI as the "Money Funds," "Money Market Funds," or the "Funds." The Treasury Fund, Treasury Plus Fund and the Treasury Obligations Fund are also sometimes separately referred to in this SAI as the "Treasury Funds."

Each Fund listed below as a feeder fund (each a "Feeder Fund" and collectively the "Feeder Funds") seeks to achieve its investment objective by investing substantially all of its investable assets in a corresponding master portfolio in the State Street Master Funds that has substantially similar investment strategies to those of the Feeder Fund. The table below shows the respective Portfolio in which each Feeder Fund invests. All Portfolios together are referred to in this SAI as the "Portfolios" and each Portfolio may be referred to in context as the "Portfolio" as appropriate.

Feeder Fund	Master Portfolio
ILR Government Fund	State Street U.S. Government Money Market Portfolio ("U.S. Government Portfolio")
Treasury Fund	State Street Treasury Money Market Portfolio ("Treasury Portfolio")
Treasury Plus Fund	State Street Treasury Plus Money Market Portfolio ("Treasury Plus Portfolio")
U.S. Government Fund	U.S. Government Portfolio
Treasury Obligations Fund	Treasury Plus Portfolio

The Treasury Portfolio, Treasury Plus Portfolio and U.S. Government Portfolio are referred to in this SAI as the "Money Portfolios," or "Money Market Portfolios." The Treasury Portfolio and Treasury Plus Portfolio are also sometimes separately referred to in this SAI as the "Treasury Portfolios."

Trust Class shares of the ILR Government Fund are issued only to former shareholders of SSGA Prime Money Market Fund and SSGA Money Market Fund, each a series of SSGA Funds. Trust Class shares of the Treasury Plus Fund are issued only to former shareholders of SSGA U.S. Treasury Money Market Fund, a series of SSGA Funds.

Effective March 10, 2025, State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Fund changed its name to State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund and began investing substantially all of its investable assets in the U.S. Government Portfolio. Prior to March 10, 2025, the ILR Government Fund invested substantially all of its investable assets in State Street Money Market Portfolio.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FUNDS AND THEIR INVESTMENTS AND RISKS

Each Fund's Prospectus contains information about the investment objective and policies of that Fund. This SAI should only be read in conjunction with the Prospectus of the Fund or Funds in which you intend to invest.

In addition to the principal investment strategies and the principal risks of the Funds and Portfolios described in each Fund's Prospectus, a Fund or Portfolio may employ other investment practices and may be subject to additional risks, which are described below. In reviewing these practices of the Feeder Funds, you should assume that the practices of the corresponding Portfolio are the same in all material respects.

ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS AND RISKS

To the extent consistent with its investment objective and restrictions, each Fund or Portfolio may invest in the following instruments and use the following techniques, and is subject to the following additional risks.

Auction Rate Securities.

Auction rate municipal securities permit the holder to sell the securities in an auction at par value at specified intervals. The dividend or interest is typically reset by "Dutch" auction in which bids are made by broker-dealers and other institutions for a certain amount of securities at a specified minimum yield. The rate set by the auction is the lowest interest or dividend rate that covers all securities offered for sale. While this process is designed to permit auction rate securities to be traded at par value, there is the risk that an auction will fail due to insufficient demand for the securities. A Portfolio will take the time remaining until the next scheduled auction date into account for purposes of determining the securities' duration.

Cash Reserves

Certain Funds may hold portions of its assets in cash or short-term debt instruments with remaining maturities of 397 days or less pending investment or to meet anticipated redemptions and day-to-day operating expenses. Short-term debt instruments consist of: (i) short-term obligations of the U.S. Government, its agencies, instrumentalities, authorities or

political subdivisions; (ii) other short- term debt securities rated at the time of purchase Aa or higher by Moody's Investors Service, Inc. ("Moody's") or AA or higher by Standard & Poor's Rating Group ("S&P") or, if unrated, of comparable quality in the opinion of SSGA Funds Management, Inc. (the "Adviser" or "SSGA FM"); (iii) commercial paper; (iv) bank obligations, including negotiable certificates of deposit, time deposits and bankers' acceptances; and (v) repurchase agreements.

Cleared Derivatives Transactions

Transactions in some types of derivatives are required to be centrally cleared by applicable rules and regulations and a Fund may also voluntarily centrally clear other transactions that are available for clearing. In a cleared derivatives transaction, a Portfolio's counterparty to the transaction is a central derivatives clearing organization, or clearing house, rather than a bank or broker. Because the Portfolios are not members of a clearing house, and only members of a clearing house can participate directly in the clearing house, the Portfolios hold cleared derivatives through accounts at clearing members. In cleared derivatives transactions, a Portfolio will make payments (including margin payments) to and receive payments from a clearing house through its accounts at clearing members. Clearing members guarantee performance of their clients' obligations to the clearing house. Centrally cleared derivative arrangements may be less favorable to a Portfolio than bilateral (non-cleared) arrangements. For example, a Portfolio may be required to provide greater amounts of margin for cleared derivatives transactions than for bilateral derivatives transactions. Also, in contrast to bilateral derivatives transactions, a clearing member generally can require termination of existing cleared derivatives transactions at any time and can increase margin requirements above the margin that the clearing member required at the beginning of a transaction. Clearing houses also have broad rights to increase margin requirements for existing transactions or to terminate transactions at any time. Each Portfolio is subject to risk if it enters into a derivatives transaction that is required to be cleared (or which the Adviser expects to be cleared), and no clearing member is willing or able to clear the transaction on the Portfolio's behalf. In that case, the transaction might have to be terminated, and the Portfolio could lose some or all of the benefit of the transaction, including loss of an increase in the value of the transaction and loss of hedging protection. In addition, the documentation governing the relationship between the Portfolios and clearing members is drafted by the clearing members and generally is less favorable to the Portfolios than typical bilateral derivatives documentation. For example, documentation relating to cleared derivatives generally includes a one-way indemnity by the Portfolio in favor of the clearing member for losses the clearing member incurs as the Portfolio's clearing member. Also, such documentation typically does not provide the Portfolio any remedies if the clearing member defaults or becomes insolvent.

Counterparty risk with respect to derivatives has been and will continue to be affected by rules and regulations relating to the derivatives market. With respect to a centrally cleared transaction, a party is subject to the credit risk of the clearing house and the clearing member through which it holds its cleared position. Credit risk of market participants with respect to centrally cleared derivatives is concentrated in a few clearing houses, and increasingly fewer clearing members. It is not clear how an insolvency proceeding of a clearing house would be conducted and what impact an insolvency of a clearing house would have on the financial system. A clearing member is obligated by contract and regulation to segregate all funds received from customers with respect to cleared derivatives positions from the clearing member's proprietary assets. However, all funds and other property received by a clearing member from its customers with respect to cleared derivatives are generally held by the clearing member on a commingled basis in an omnibus account (which can be invested in instruments permitted under the regulations). Therefore, a Portfolio might not be fully protected in the event of the bankruptcy of the Portfolio's clearing member because the Portfolio would be limited to recovering only a pro rata share of the funds held by the clearing member on behalf of customers with respect to the relevant account class, with a claim against the clearing member for any deficiency. Also, the clearing member is required to transfer to the clearing house the amount of margin required by the clearing house for cleared derivatives, which amount is generally held in an omnibus account at the clearing house for all customers of the clearing member. Regulations promulgated by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (the "CFTC") require that the clearing member notify the clearing house of the initial margin provided by the clearing member to the clearing house that is attributable to each customer. However, if the clearing member does not accurately report the Portfolio's initial margin, the Portfolio is subject to the risk that a clearing house will use the assets attributable to it in the clearing house's omnibus account to satisfy payment obligations a defaulting customer of the clearing member has to the clearing house. In addition, clearing members generally provide the clearing house the net amount of variation margin required for cleared derivatives for all of its customers, rather than individually for each customer. A Portfolio is therefore subject to the risk that a clearing house will not make variation margin payments owed to the Portfolio if another customer of the clearing member has suffered a loss and is in default, and the risk that the Portfolio will be required to provide additional margin to the clearing house before the clearing house will move the Portfolio's cleared derivatives positions to another clearing member. In addition, if a clearing member does

not comply with the applicable regulations or its agreement with the Portfolio, fails to maintain accurate records or in the event of fraud or misappropriation of customer assets by a clearing member, the Portfolio could have only an unsecured creditor claim in an insolvency of the clearing member with respect to the margin held by the clearing member. In addition, a Portfolio may be subject to execution risk if it enters into a derivatives transaction that is required to be (or the Portfolio expects to be) cleared, and no clearing member is willing to clear the transaction on the Portfolio's behalf. In that case, the transaction might have to be terminated, and the Portfolio could lose some or all of the benefit of any increase in the value of the transaction after the time of the trade.

Russia Sanctions Risk

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022, various countries, including the U.S. and the U.K., as well as the E.U., issued broad-ranging economic sanctions against Russia. The U.S. and other countries have also imposed economic sanctions on Belarus and may impose sanctions on other countries that support Russia's invasion. A large number of corporations and U.S. states have also announced plans to divest interests or otherwise curtail business dealings with certain Russian businesses. These sanctions and any additional sanctions or other intergovernmental actions that have been or may be undertaken in the future, against Russia, Russian entities or Russian individuals, or other countries that support Russia's military invasion, may result in the devaluation of Russian currency, a downgrade in the country's credit rating, an immediate freeze of Russian assets, a decline in the value and liquidity of Russian securities, property or interests, and/or other adverse consequences to the Russian economy or a Portfolio. The scope and scale of sanctions in place at a particular time may be expanded or otherwise modified in a way that have negative effects on a Portfolio. Sanctions, or the threat of new or modified sanctions, could impair the ability of a Portfolio to buy, sell, hold, receive, deliver or otherwise transact in certain affected securities or other investment instruments. Sanctions could also result in Russia taking counter measures or other actions in response (including cyberattacks and espionage), which may further impair the value and liquidity of Russian securities. These sanctions, and the resulting disruption of the Russian economy, may cause volatility in other regional and global markets and may negatively impact the performance of various sectors and industries, as well as companies in other countries, which could have a negative effect on the performance of a Portfolio, even if a Portfolio does not have direct exposure to securities of Russian issuers. As a collective result of the imposition of sanctions, Russian government countermeasures and the impact that they have had on the trading markets for Russian securities, certain Portfolios have used, and may in the future use, fair valuation procedures approved by the Portfolio's Board to value certain Russian securities, which could result in such securities being deemed to have a zero value.

Swap Execution Facilities

Certain derivatives contracts are required to be (or are capable of being) executed through swap execution facilities ("SEFs"). A SEF is a trading platform where multiple market participants can execute derivatives by accepting bids and offers made by multiple other participants in the platform. For derivatives that are required to be traded on a SEF, such requirements may make it more difficult and costly for investment funds, such as a Portfolio, to enter into highly tailored or customized transactions. Trading derivatives on a SEF may offer certain advantages over traditional bilateral over-the-counter trading, such as ease of execution, price transparency, increased liquidity and/or favorable pricing. Execution through a SEF is not, however, without additional costs and risks, as parties are required to comply with SEF and CFTC rules and regulations, including disclosure and recordkeeping obligations, and SEF rights of inspection, among others. SEFs typically charge fees, and if a Portfolio executes derivatives on a SEF through a broker intermediary, the intermediary may impose fees as well. A Portfolio also may be required to indemnify a SEF, or a broker intermediary who executes derivatives on a SEF on the Portfolio's behalf, against any losses or costs that may be incurred as a result of the Portfolio's transactions on the SEF. In addition, a Portfolio may be subject to execution risk if it enters into a derivatives transaction that is required to be (or the Adviser expects to be) executed on a SEF and cleared, and no SEF or clearing member is willing to accept and clear the transaction on the Portfolio's behalf. In that case, the transaction might have to be terminated, and the Portfolio could lose some or all of the benefit of any increase in the value of the transaction after the time of the trade.

Risks Associated with Derivatives Regulation

The U.S. government has enacted and is continuing to implement legislation that provides for regulation of the derivatives market, including clearing, margin, reporting, and registration requirements. The European Union ("E.U."), the United Kingdom (the "U.K.") and some other countries have also adopted and are continuing to implement similar requirements, which will affect a Portfolio when it enters into a derivatives transaction with a counterparty organized in that country or otherwise subject to that country's derivatives regulations. Such rules and other rules and regulations could, among other things, restrict a Portfolio's ability to engage in, or increase the cost to the Portfolio of, derivatives transactions, for

example, by making some types of derivatives no longer available to the Portfolio, increasing margin or capital requirements, or otherwise limiting liquidity or increasing transaction costs. While the rules and regulations and central clearing of some derivatives transactions are designed to reduce systemic risk (i.e., the risk that the interdependence of large derivatives dealers could cause them to suffer liquidity, solvency or other challenges simultaneously), there is no assurance that they will achieve that result, and in the meantime, as noted above, central clearing and related requirements expose the Portfolios to other kinds of costs and risks.

In the event of a counterparty's (or its affiliate's) insolvency, a Portfolio's ability to exercise remedies, such as the termination of transactions, netting of obligations and realization on collateral, could be stayed or eliminated under special resolution regimes adopted in the United States, the E.U., the U.K. and various other jurisdictions. Such regimes provide government authorities with broad authority to intervene when a financial institution is experiencing financial difficulty. In particular, with respect to counterparties who are subject to such proceedings in the E.U. and the U.K., the liabilities of such counterparties to the Portfolios could be reduced, eliminated, or converted to equity in such counterparties (sometimes referred to as a "bail in").

The Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") adopted Rule 18f-4 under the 1940 Act providing for the regulation of registered investment companies' use of derivatives and certain related instruments. The rule, among other things, limits derivatives exposure through one of two value-at-risk tests and in connection with adopting the rule, the SEC eliminated the asset segregation framework for covering derivatives and certain financial instruments arising from the SEC's Release 10666 and ensuing staff guidance. The rule also requires funds to adopt and implement a derivatives risk management program (including the appointment of a derivatives risk manager and the implementation of certain testing requirements) and subjects funds to certain reporting requirements in respect of derivatives. Limited derivatives users (as determined by Rule 18f-4) are not, however, subject to the full requirements under the rule.

Additionally, U.S. regulators, the EU, the U.K. and certain other jurisdictions have adopted minimum margin and capital requirements for uncleared derivatives transactions. These rules impose minimum margin requirements on derivatives transactions between a Portfolio and its counterparties and may increase the amount of margin a Portfolio is required to provide. They impose regulatory requirements on the timing of transferring margin and the types of collateral that parties are permitted to exchange.

These and other regulations are evolving, so their full impact on the Portfolios and the financial system are not yet known.

Custodial Risk

There are risks involved in dealing with the custodians or brokers who hold a Portfolio's investments or settle a Portfolio's trades. It is possible that, in the event of the insolvency or bankruptcy of a custodian or broker, a Portfolio would be delayed or prevented from recovering its assets from the custodian or broker, or its estate, and may have only a general unsecured claim against the custodian or broker for those assets. In recent insolvencies of brokers or other financial institutions, the ability of certain customers to recover their assets from the insolvent's estate has been delayed, limited, or prevented, often unpredictably, and there is no assurance that any assets held by a Portfolio with a custodian or broker will be readily recoverable by the Portfolio. In addition, there may be limited recourse against non-U.S. sub-custodians in those situations in which a Portfolio invests in markets where custodial and/or settlement systems and regulations are not fully developed, including emerging markets, and the assets of the Portfolio have been entrusted to such sub-custodians. SSGA FM or an affiliate may serve as the custodian of the Portfolios.

Forward Commitments

Each Fund may invest in forward commitments. Each Fund may contract to purchase securities for a fixed price at a future date beyond customary settlement time consistent with the Fund's ability to manage its investment portfolio and meet redemption requests. A Fund may dispose of a commitment prior to settlement if it is appropriate to do so and realize short-term profits or losses upon such sale. Forward commitments involve a risk of loss if the value of the security to be purchased declines prior to the settlement date, or if the other party fails to complete the transaction.

Government Mortgage-Related Securities

The Government National Mortgage Association ("GNMA" or "Ginnie Mae") is the principal federal government guarantor of mortgage-related securities. GNMA is a wholly owned U.S. Government corporation within the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It guarantees, with the full faith and credit of the United States, full and timely payment of all monthly principal and interest on its mortgage-related securities. GNMA pass-through securities are considered to have a relatively low risk of default in that (1) the underlying mortgage loan portfolio is comprised entirely of government-backed loans and (2) the timely payment of both principal and interest on the securities is guaranteed by the full faith and credit of

the U.S. Government, regardless of whether they have been collected. GNMA pass-through securities are, however, subject to the same interest rate risk as comparable privately issued mortgage-related securities. Therefore, the effective maturity and market value of a Portfolio's GNMA securities can be expected to fluctuate in response to changes in interest rate levels.

Residential mortgage loans are also pooled by the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation ("FHLMC" or "Freddie Mac"), a corporate instrumentality of the U.S. Government. The mortgage loans in FHLMC's portfolio are not government backed; FHLMC, not the U.S. Government, guarantees the timely payment of interest and ultimate collection of principal on FHLMC securities. FHLMC also issues guaranteed mortgage certificates, on which it guarantees semiannual interest payments and a specified minimum annual payment of principal.

The Federal National Mortgage Association ("FNMA" or "Fannie Mae") is a government-sponsored corporation owned entirely by private stockholders. It is subject to general regulation by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. FNMA purchases residential mortgages from a list of approved seller/servicers, which include savings and loan associations, savings banks, commercial banks, credit unions and mortgage bankers. Pass-through securities issued by FNMA are guaranteed as to timely payment of principal and interest only by FNMA, not the U.S. Government.

Illiquid Securities

Each Portfolio may invest in illiquid securities. The absence of a regular trading market for illiquid securities imposes additional risks on investments in these securities. Illiquid securities may be difficult to value and may often be disposed of only after considerable expense and delay.

Each Money Market Portfolio (and Money Market Fund) is managed in accordance with Rule 2a-7 under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the "1940 Act"). As a result, each Money Market Portfolio (and Money Market Fund) has adopted the following liquidity policies (except as noted):

1. The Portfolio/Fund may not purchase an illiquid security if, immediately after purchase, the Portfolio/Fund would have invested more than 5% of its total assets in illiquid securities (securities that cannot be sold or disposed of in the ordinary course of business within seven days at approximately the market value ascribed to them by the Portfolio/Fund);
2. The Portfolio/Fund may not purchase a security other than a security offering daily liquidity if, immediately after purchase, the Portfolio/Fund would have invested less than 25% of its total assets in securities offering daily liquidity (includes securities that mature or are subject to demand within one business day, cash, direct U.S. Government obligations or amounts receivable and due unconditionally within one business day on pending sales of portfolio securities); and
3. The Portfolio/Fund may not purchase a security other than a security offering weekly liquidity if, immediately after purchase, the Portfolio/Fund would have invested less than 50% of its total assets in securities offering weekly liquidity (includes securities that mature or are subject to demand within five business days, cash, direct U.S. Government obligations, Government agency discount notes with remaining maturities of 60 days or less or amounts receivable and due unconditionally within five business days on pending sales of portfolio securities).

Under Rule 2a-7, "illiquid security" means a security that cannot be sold or disposed of in the ordinary course of business within seven calendar days at approximately the value ascribed to it by the seller.

Industrial Development and Private Activity Bonds

Industrial development bonds are issued to finance a wide variety of capital projects including: electric, gas, water and sewer systems; ports and airport facilities; colleges and universities; and hospitals. The principal security for these bonds is generally the net revenues derived from a particular facility, group of facilities, or in some cases, the proceeds of a special excise tax or other specific revenue sources. Although the principal security behind these bonds may vary, many provide additional security in the form of a debt service reserve fund whose money may be used to make principal and interest payments on the issuer's obligations. Some authorities provide further security in the form of a state's ability without obligation to make up deficiencies in the debt service reserve fund.

Private activity bonds are considered municipal securities if the interest paid thereon is exempt from federal income tax and they are issued by or on behalf of public authorities to raise money to finance various privately operated facilities for business and manufacturing, housing, sports, and pollution control. These bonds are also used to finance public facilities such as airports, mass transit systems, ports and parking. The payment of the principal and interest on such bonds is dependent solely on the ability of the facility's user to meet its financial obligations and the value of any real or personal property pledged as security for such payment.

Interest income on these bonds may be an item of tax preference subject to federal alternative minimum tax for shareholders subject to such tax.

Insured Municipal Securities

Insured municipal securities are those for which scheduled payments of interest and principal are guaranteed by a private (non-governmental) insurance company. The insurance entitles a fund to receive only the face or par value of the securities held by the fund, but the ability to be paid is limited to the claims paying ability of the insurer. The insurance does not guarantee the market value of the municipal securities or the net asset value ("NAV") of a Portfolio's shares. Insurers are selected based upon the diversification of their portfolios and the strength of the management team which contributes to the claims paying ability of the entity. However, the Adviser selects securities based upon the underlying credit, with bond insurance viewed as an enhancement only. The Adviser's objective is to have an enhancement that provides additional liquidity to insulate against volatility in changing markets.

Market Disruption and Geopolitical Risk

The Portfolios are subject to the risk that geopolitical events will disrupt securities markets and adversely affect global economies and markets. War, terrorism, and related geopolitical events have led, and in the future may lead, to increased short-term market volatility and may have adverse long-term effects on U.S. and world economies and markets generally. Likewise, trade policy changes or disputes, natural and environmental disasters, epidemics or pandemics, and systemic market dislocations may be highly disruptive to economies and markets. Those events as well as other changes in non-U.S. and domestic economic and political conditions also could adversely affect individual issuers or related groups of issuers, securities markets, interest rates, credit ratings, inflation, investor sentiment, and other factors affecting the value of a Portfolio's investments. Given the increasing interdependence between global economies and markets, conditions in one country, market, or region might adversely impact markets, issuers and/or foreign exchange rates in other countries, including the U.S. Continuing uncertainty as to the status of the euro and the Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union (the "EMU") has created significant volatility in currency and financial markets generally. Any partial or complete dissolution of the EMU, or any increased uncertainty as to its status, could have significant adverse effects on currency and financial markets, and on the values of a Fund's investments. On January 31, 2020, the United Kingdom ("UK") formally withdrew from the European Union ("EU") (commonly known as "Brexit"). An agreement between the UK and the EU governing their future trade relationship became effective January 1, 2021, but that agreement does not include an agreement on financial services, and it is unlikely that such agreement will be concluded. Moreover, the UK government has started a program of financial services law reform with the ultimate aim of repealing many EU financial services laws that were assimilated into UK law from January 1, 2021, and replacing them with legislation or rules made by the UK government or financial services regulators. Accordingly, uncertainty remains in certain areas as to the future relationship between the UK and the EU. Brexit has already had a significant impact on the UK, Europe, and global economies, and could continue to result in volatility and illiquidity, legal, political, economic and regulatory uncertainties and lower economic growth for these economies that could in turn have an adverse effect on the value of the Funds' investments. Any further exits from the EU, or the possibility of such exits, or the abandonment of the euro, may cause additional market disruption globally and introduce new legal and regulatory uncertainties.

Securities markets may be susceptible to market manipulation or other fraudulent trade practices, which could disrupt the orderly functioning of these markets or adversely affect the value of investments traded in these markets, including investments of a Fund.

Recent political activity in the U.S. has increased the risk that the U.S. could default on some or any of its obligations. While it is impossible to predict the consequences of such an unprecedented event, it is likely that a default by the U.S. would be highly disruptive to the U.S. and global securities markets and could significantly impair the value of the Funds' investments. Similarly, political events within the U.S. at times have resulted, and may in the future result, in a shutdown of

government services, which could negatively affect the U.S. economy, decrease the value of many Fund investments, and increase uncertainty in or impair the operation of the U.S. or other securities markets. To the extent a Fund has focused its investments in the stock market index of a particular region, adverse geopolitical and other events could have a disproportionate impact on the Fund.

Market Turbulence Resulting from Infectious Illness

A widespread outbreak of an infectious illness may lead to governments and businesses world-wide taking aggressive measures, including closing borders, restricting international and domestic travel, and the imposition of prolonged quarantines of large populations. The spread of such an illness may result in the disruption of and delays in the delivery of healthcare services and processes, the cancellation of organized events and educational institutions, the disruption of production and supply chains, a decline in consumer demand for certain goods and services, and general concern and uncertainty, all of which may contribute to increased volatility in global markets. Epidemics and pandemics that may arise in the future could adversely affect the economies of many nations, the global economy, individual companies, economic sectors and industries, and capital markets in ways that cannot be foreseen at the present time. In addition, the impact of infectious diseases in developing or emerging market countries may be greater due to limited healthcare resources. Political, economic and social stresses caused by an infectious illness also may exacerbate other pre-existing political, social and economic risks in certain countries. The duration of such an illness and its effects cannot be determined at this time, but the effects could be present for an extended period of time.

Mortgage-Related Securities

The Portfolios, except for the Treasury Portfolios, may invest in mortgage-related securities. Mortgage-related securities represent an interest in a pool of, or are secured by, mortgage loans. Mortgage-related securities may be issued or guaranteed by (i) U.S. Government agencies or instrumentalities such as GNMA, FNMA and FHLMC or (ii) other issuers, including private companies.

Many mortgage-related securities provide regular payments which consist of interest and, in most cases, principal. In contrast, other forms of debt securities normally provide for periodic payment of interest in fixed amounts with principal payments at maturity or specified call dates. In effect, payments on many mortgage-related securities are a “pass-through” of the payments made by the individual borrowers on their mortgage loans, net of any fees paid to the issuer or guarantor of such securities.

Besides the scheduled repayment of principal, repayments of principal may result from the voluntary prepayment, refinancing or foreclosure of the underlying mortgage loans. If property owners make unscheduled prepayments of their mortgage loans, these prepayments will typically result in early payment of the applicable mortgage-related securities. The occurrence of mortgage prepayments is affected by a variety of factors including the level of interest rates, general economic conditions, the location and age of the mortgage, and other social and demographic conditions. During periods of falling interest rates, the rate of mortgage prepayments tends to increase, thereby tending to decrease the life of mortgage-related securities. During periods of rising interest rates, the rate of mortgage prepayments usually decreases, thereby tending to increase the life of mortgage-related securities.

Because of the possibility of prepayments (and due to scheduled repayments of principal), mortgage-related securities are less effective than other types of securities as a means of “locking in” attractive long-term interest rates. Prepayments would have to be reinvested at lower rates. As a result, these securities may have less potential for capital appreciation during periods of declining interest rates than other securities of comparable maturities, although they may have a similar risk of decline in market value during periods of rising interest rates. Prepayments may also significantly shorten the effective maturities of these securities, especially during periods of declining interest rates. Conversely, during periods of rising interest rates, a reduction in prepayments may increase the effective maturities of these securities, subjecting them to a greater risk of decline in market value in response to rising interest rates than traditional debt securities, and, therefore, potentially increasing the volatility of the Portfolios.

Ongoing developments in the residential and commercial mortgage markets may have additional consequences for the market for mortgage-backed securities. During the periods of deteriorating economic conditions, such as recessions or periods of rising unemployment, delinquencies and losses generally increase, sometimes dramatically, with respect to securitizations involving mortgage loans. Many sub-prime mortgage pools have become distressed during the periods of economic distress and may trade at significant discounts to their face value during such period.

Collateralized mortgage obligations ("CMOs") may be issued by a U.S. Government agency or instrumentality or by a private issuer. CMOs are typically structured with classes or series that have different maturities and are generally retired in sequence. Each class of obligations receives periodic interest payments according to its terms. However, monthly principal payments and any prepayments from the collateral pool are generally paid first to the holders of the most senior class. Thereafter, payments of principal are generally allocated to the next most senior class of obligations until that class of obligations has been fully repaid. Any or all classes of obligations of a CMO may be paid off sooner than expected because of an increase in the payoff speed of the pool. Changes in prepayment rates may have significant effects on the values and the volatility of the various classes and series of a CMO. Payment of interest or principal on some classes or series of a CMO may be subject to contingencies or some classes or series may bear some or all of the risk of default on the underlying mortgages. Stripped mortgage-related securities are usually structured with two classes that receive different portions of the interest and principal distributions on a pool of mortgage loans. The yield to maturity on an interest only or "IO" class of stripped mortgage-related securities is extremely sensitive not only to changes in prevailing interest rates but also to the rate of principal payments (including prepayments) on the underlying assets. A rapid rate of principal prepayments may have a measurable adverse effect on a Fund's yield to maturity to the extent it invests in IOs. If the assets underlying the IO experience greater than anticipated prepayments of principal, the Fund may fail to recoup fully, or at all, its initial investment in these securities. Conversely, principal only securities or "POs" tend to increase in value if prepayments are greater than anticipated and decline if prepayments are slower than anticipated. The secondary market for stripped mortgage-related securities may be more volatile and less liquid than that for other mortgage-related securities, potentially limiting a Portfolio's ability to buy or sell those securities at any particular time.

Municipal and Municipal-Related Securities

The Portfolios may invest in municipal and municipal-related securities. Municipal securities may bear fixed, floating or variable rates of interest or may be zero coupon securities. Municipal securities are generally of two types: general obligations and revenue obligations. General obligations are backed by the full faith and credit of the issuer. These securities include tax anticipation notes, bond anticipation notes, general obligation bonds and commercial paper. Revenue obligations are backed by the revenues generated from a specific project or facility and include industrial development bonds and private activity bonds. Tax anticipation notes are issued to finance working capital needs of municipalities and are generally issued in anticipation of future tax revenues. Bond anticipation notes are issued in expectation of the issuer obtaining longer-term financing.

Municipal obligations are affected by economic, business or political developments. These securities may be subject to provisions of litigation, bankruptcy and other laws affecting the rights and remedies of creditors, or may become subject to future laws extending the time for payment of principal and/or interest, or limiting the rights of municipalities to levy taxes. The Portfolio may be more adversely impacted by changes in tax rates and policies than other funds. Because interest income from municipal securities is normally not subject to regular federal income taxation, the attractiveness of municipal securities in relation to other investment alternatives is affected by changes in federal income tax rates applicable to, or the continuing federal income tax-exempt status of, such interest income. Any proposed or actual changes in such rates or exempt status, therefore, can significantly affect the demand for and supply, liquidity and marketability of municipal securities. This could in turn affect a Portfolio's ability to acquire and dispose of municipal securities at desirable yield and price levels. Concentration of a Portfolio's investments in these municipal obligations will subject the Portfolio, to a greater extent than if such investment was not so concentrated, to the risks of adverse economic, business or political developments affecting the particular state, industry or other area of concentration. Issuers, including governmental issuers, of municipal securities may be unable to pay their obligations as they become due. Recent declines in tax revenues, and increases in liabilities, such as pension and healthcare liabilities, may increase the actual or perceived risk of default on such securities.

Municipal Leases

The Portfolios may purchase participation interests in municipal obligations, including municipal lease/purchase agreements. Municipal leases are an undivided interest in a portion of an obligation in the form of a lease or installment purchase issued by a state or local government to acquire equipment or facilities. These instruments may have fixed, floating or variable rates of interest, with remaining maturities of 13 months or less. Certain participation interests may permit a Portfolio to demand payment on not more than seven days' notice, for all or any part of the Portfolio's interest, plus accrued interest.

Municipal leases frequently have special risks not normally associated with general obligation or revenue bonds. Some leases or contracts include "non-appropriation" clauses, which provide that the governmental issuer has no obligation to make future payments under the lease or contract unless money is appropriated for such purpose by the appropriate legislative body on a yearly or other periodic basis. To reduce these risks, the Portfolios will only purchase municipal leases subject to a non-appropriation clause when the payment of principal and accrued interest is backed by a letter of credit or guarantee of a bank.

Whether a municipal lease agreement will be considered illiquid for the purpose of a Portfolio's restriction on investments in illiquid securities will be determined in accordance with procedures established by the Board of Trustees.

Pre-Refunded Municipal Securities

The interest and principal payments on pre-refunded municipal securities are typically paid from the cash flow generated from an escrow fund consisting of U.S. Government securities. These payments have been "pre-refunded" using the escrow fund.

Purchase of Other Investment Company Shares

Each Portfolio may, to the extent permitted under the 1940 Act and the rules thereunder, invest in shares of other investment companies, which include funds managed by SSGA FM, which invest exclusively in money market instruments or in investment companies with investment policies and objectives which are substantially similar to those of the Portfolios. These investments may be made temporarily, for example, to invest uncommitted cash balances or, in limited circumstances, to assist in meeting shareholder redemptions, or as long-term investments. In general, the 1940 Act prohibits a Portfolio from acquiring more than 3% of the voting shares of any one other investment company, and prohibits a Portfolio investing more than 5% of its total assets in the securities of any one other investment company or more than 10% of its total assets in securities of other investment companies in the aggregate. The percentage limitations above apply to investments in any investment company. Pursuant to rules adopted by the SEC, the Portfolio may invest in excess of these limitations if the Fund and the investment company in which the Portfolio would like to invest comply with certain conditions. Certain of the conditions do not apply if the Portfolio is investing in shares issued by affiliated funds. In addition, the Portfolio may invest in shares issued by money market funds, including certain unregistered money market funds, in excess of the limitations. The Portfolio's investments in another investment company will be subject to the risks of the purchased investment company's portfolio securities. The Portfolio's shareholders must bear not only their proportionate share of the Portfolio's fees and expenses, but they also must bear indirectly the fees and expenses of the other investment company.

Recent Money Market Regulatory Reforms

On July 12, 2023, the SEC adopted amendments to money market fund regulation ("Money Market Fund Reform") that increase the daily liquid asset requirements from 10% to 25% and increase the weekly liquid asset requirements from 30% to 50%. Money Market Fund Reform permits government money market funds (such as the Funds), that are experiencing a gross negative yield as a result of negative interest rates, to either convert from a stable share price to a floating share price or reduce the number of shares outstanding (through a reverse stock split) to maintain a stable net asset value per share, subject to certain Board determinations and disclosures to investors. Money Market Fund Reform, among other things, also imposes additional reporting requirements on money market funds.

Repurchase Agreements

Each Portfolio, except for the Treasury Portfolio, may enter into repurchase agreements with banks, other financial institutions, such as broker-dealers, and other institutional counterparties. Under a repurchase agreement, the Portfolio purchases securities from a financial institution that agrees to repurchase the securities at the Portfolio's original purchase price plus interest within a specified time. The Portfolio will limit repurchase transactions to those member banks of the Federal Reserve System, broker-dealers and other financial institutions whose creditworthiness the Adviser considers satisfactory. Should the counterparty to a transaction fail financially, the Portfolio may encounter delay and incur costs before being able to sell the securities, or may be prevented from realizing on the securities. Further, the amount realized upon the sale of the securities may be less than that necessary to fully compensate the Portfolio. The SEC has finalized new rules requiring the central clearing of certain repurchase transactions involving U.S. Treasuries. Historically, such transactions have not been required to be cleared and voluntary clearing of such transactions has generally been limited. While it is currently difficult to predict the full impact of these new rules particularly because the compliance date has not yet occurred and could be subject to delays, the new clearing requirements could make it more difficult for a Fund to execute certain investment strategies.

Reverse Repurchase Agreements

Each Portfolio, except the Treasury Portfolio, may enter into reverse repurchase agreements, which are a form of borrowing. Under reverse repurchase agreements, a Portfolio transfers possession of portfolio securities to financial institutions in return for cash in an amount equal to a percentage of the portfolio securities' market value and agrees to repurchase the securities at a future date by repaying the cash with interest. Each Portfolio retains the right to receive interest and principal payments from the securities. Reverse repurchase agreements involve the risk that the market value of securities sold by a Portfolio may decline below the price at which it is obligated to repurchase the securities. Reverse repurchase agreements involve the risk that the buyer of the securities sold might be unable to deliver them when a Portfolio seeks to repurchase the securities. If the buyer files for bankruptcy or becomes insolvent, a Portfolio may be delayed or prevented from recovering the security that it sold. The SEC has finalized new rules requiring the central clearing of certain repurchase transactions involving U.S. Treasuries. Historically, such transactions have not been required to be cleared and voluntary clearing of such transactions has generally been limited. While it is currently difficult to predict the full impact of these new rules particularly because the compliance date has not yet occurred and could be subject to delays, the new clearing requirements could make it more difficult for a Fund to execute certain investment strategies.

Tax Exempt Commercial Paper

The Portfolios may invest in tax exempt commercial paper. Tax exempt commercial paper is a short-term obligation with a stated maturity of 365 days or less. It is typically issued to finance seasonal working capital needs or as short-term financing in anticipation of longer term financing. Each instrument may be backed only by the credit of the issuer or may be backed by some form of credit enhancement, typically in the form of a guarantee by a commercial bank. Commercial paper backed by guarantees of foreign banks may involve additional risk due to the difficulty of obtaining and enforcing judgments against such banks and the generally less restrictive regulations to which such banks are subject. The Portfolios will only invest in commercial paper rated at the time of purchase not less than Prime-1 by Moody's, A-1 by S&P or F-1 by Fitch Ratings. See Appendix A for more information on the ratings of debt instruments.

Tender Option Bonds

A tender option is a municipal obligation (generally held pursuant to a custodial arrangement) having a relatively long maturity and bearing interest at a fixed rate substantially higher than prevailing short-term tax exempt rates, that has been coupled with the agreement of a third party, such as a bank, broker-dealer or other financial institution, pursuant to which such institution grants the security holders the option, at periodic intervals, to tender their securities to the institution and receive the face value thereof. As consideration for providing the option, the financial institution receives periodic fees equal to the difference between the municipal obligation's fixed coupon rate and the rate, as determined by a remarketing or similar agent at or near the commencement of such period, that would cause the securities, coupled with the tender option, to trade at par on the date of such determination. Thus, after payment of this fee, the security holder effectively holds a demand obligation that bears interest at the prevailing short-term tax exempt rate. Subject to applicable regulatory requirements, a Portfolio may buy tender option bonds if the agreement gives the Portfolio the right to tender the bond to its sponsor no less frequently than once every 397 days. The Adviser will consider on an ongoing basis the creditworthiness of the issuer of the underlying obligation, any custodian and the third-party provider of the tender option. In certain instances, and for certain tender option bonds, the option may be terminable in the event of a default in payment of principal or interest on the underlying municipal obligation and for other reasons.

Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities

The Portfolios may invest in Inflation-Protection Securities ("TIPSs"), a type of inflation-indexed Treasury security. TIPSs typically provide for semiannual payments of interest and a payment of principal at maturity. In general, each payment will be adjusted to take into account any inflation or deflation that occurs between the issue date of the security and the payment date based on the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers ("CPI-U").

Each semiannual payment of interest will be determined by multiplying a single fixed rate of interest by the inflation-adjusted principal amount of the security for the date of the interest payment. Thus, although the interest rate will be fixed, the amount of each interest payment will vary with changes in the principal of the security as adjusted for inflation and deflation.

TIPSs also provide for an additional payment (a "minimum guarantee payment") at maturity if the security's inflation-adjusted principal amount for the maturity date is less than the security's principal amount at issuance. The amount of the additional payment will equal the excess of the security's principal amount at issuance over the security's inflation-adjusted principal amount for the maturity date.

U.S. Government Securities

Each Portfolio may purchase U.S. Government securities. With respect to U.S. Government securities, the Treasury Portfolio will invest exclusively in direct obligations of the U.S. Treasury, such as U.S. Treasury bills, notes and bonds generally maturing within 397 days, and other mutual funds, subject to regulatory limitations, that invest exclusively in such obligations. The Treasury Plus Portfolio will invest only in direct obligations of the U.S. Treasury (U.S. Treasury bills, notes and bonds) and repurchase agreements collateralized by these obligations. The types of U.S. Government obligations in which each other Portfolio may at times invest include: (1) U.S. Treasury obligations and (2) obligations issued or guaranteed by U.S. Government agencies and instrumentalities which are supported by any of the following: (a) the full faith and credit of the U.S. Treasury, (b) the right of the issuer to borrow an amount limited to a specific line of credit from the U.S. Treasury, (c) discretionary authority of the U.S. Government agency or instrumentality, or (d) the credit of the instrumentality (examples of agencies and instrumentalities are: Federal Land Banks, Federal Housing Administration, Federal Farm Credit Bank, Farmers Home Administration, Export-Import Bank of the United States, Central Bank for Cooperatives, Federal Intermediate Credit Banks, Federal Home Loan Banks, General Services Administration, Maritime Administration, Tennessee Development Bank, Asian-American Development Bank, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Federal National Mortgage Association ("Fannie Mae" or "FNMA"). No assurance can be given that in the future the U.S. Government will provide financial support to U.S. Government securities it is not obligated to support.

The Portfolios may purchase U.S. Government obligations on a forward commitment basis.

Variable and Floating Rate Securities

The Portfolios may invest in variable and floating rate securities. In general, variable rate securities are instruments issued or guaranteed by entities such as (1) U.S. Government, or an agency or instrumentality thereof, (2) corporations, (3) financial institutions, (4) insurance companies or (5) trusts that have a rate of interest subject to adjustment at regular intervals. A variable rate security provides for the automatic establishment of a new interest rate on set dates. Interest rates on these securities are ordinarily tied to widely recognized market rates, which are typically set once a day. Generally, changes in interest rates will have a smaller effect on the market value of variable and floating rate securities than on the market value of comparable fixed income obligations. Variable rate obligations will be deemed to have a maturity equal to the period remaining until the next readjustment of the interest rate.

When-Issued Securities

Each Portfolio may purchase securities on a when-issued basis. Delivery of and payment for these securities may take place as long as a month or more after the date of the purchase commitment. The value of these securities is subject to market fluctuation during this period, and no income accrues to the Portfolio until settlement takes place. When entering into a when-issued transaction, the Portfolio will rely on the other party to consummate the transaction; if the other party fails to do so, the Portfolio may be disadvantaged. The Portfolios will not invest more than 25% of their respective net assets in when-issued securities.

Securities purchased on a when-issued basis and held by a Portfolio are subject to changes in market value based upon actual or perceived changes in the level of interest rates. Generally, the value of such securities will fluctuate inversely to changes in interest rates — i.e., they will appreciate in value when interest rates decline and decrease in value when interest rates rise. Therefore, if in order to achieve higher interest income a Portfolio remains substantially fully invested at the same time that it has purchased securities on a "when-issued" basis, there will be a greater possibility of fluctuation in the Portfolio's NAV.

Zero Coupon Securities

The Portfolios may invest in zero coupon securities. Zero coupon securities are notes, bonds and debentures that: (1) do not pay current interest and are issued at a substantial discount from par value; (2) have been stripped of their unmatured interest coupons and receipts; or (3) pay no interest until a stated date one or more years into the future. These securities also include certificates representing interests in such stripped coupons and receipts. Generally, changes in interest rates will have a greater impact on the market value of a zero coupon security than on the market value of the comparable securities that pay interest periodically during the life of the instrument. In the case of any zero-coupon debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance that are treated as issued originally at a

discount, a Portfolio will be required to accrue original issue discount ("OID") for U.S. federal income tax purposes and, in the case of a Portfolio treated as a regulated investment company ("RIC"), may as a result be required to pay out as an income distribution an amount which is greater than the total amount of cash interest the Portfolio actually received. To generate sufficient cash to make the requisite distributions to maintain its qualification for treatment as a RIC under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), a Portfolio that is taxed as a RIC may be required to sell investments, including at a time when it may not be advantageous to do so.

The Portfolios may invest no more than 25% of their respective total assets in stripped securities that have been stripped by their holder, typically a custodian bank or investment brokerage firm. Privately-issued stripped securities are not themselves guaranteed by the U.S. Government, but the future payment of principal or interest on U.S. Treasury obligations which they represent is so guaranteed.

Fundamental Investment Restrictions

The Portfolios in which the Funds invest each have substantially the same investment restrictions as their corresponding Funds. In reviewing the description of a Fund's investment restrictions below, you should assume that the investment restrictions of the corresponding Portfolio are the same in all material respects as those of the Fund.

The Trust has adopted the following restrictions applicable to the Funds, which may not be changed without the affirmative vote of a "majority of the outstanding voting securities" of a Fund, which is defined in the 1940 Act to mean the affirmative vote of the lesser of (1) more than 50% of the outstanding shares of the Fund and (2) 67% or more of the shares present at a meeting if more than 50% of the outstanding shares are present at the meeting in person or by proxy.

1. A Fund may borrow money and issue senior securities to the extent consistent with applicable law from time to time.
2. A Fund may make loans, including to affiliated investment companies, to the extent consistent with applicable law from time to time.
3. A Fund may purchase or sell commodities to the extent consistent with applicable law from time to time.
4. A Fund may purchase, sell or hold real estate to the extent consistent with applicable law from time to time.
5. A Fund may underwrite securities to the extent consistent with applicable law from time to time.

For the Money Market Funds:

6. A Fund may not purchase any security if, as a result, 25% or more of the Fund's total assets (taken at current value) would be invested in a particular industry (for purposes of this restriction, investment companies are not considered to constitute a particular industry or group of industries), except as is consistent with applicable law from time to time and as follows: each Fund is permitted to invest without limit in "government securities" (as defined in the 1940 Act), tax-exempt securities issued by a U.S. territory or possession, a state or local government, or a political subdivision of any of the foregoing and bankers' acceptances, certificates of deposit and similar instruments issued by: (i) U.S. banks, (ii) U.S. branches of foreign banks (in circumstances in which the Adviser determines that the U.S. branches of foreign banks are subject to the same regulation as U.S. banks), (iii) foreign branches of U.S. banks (in circumstances in which the Adviser determines that the Fund will have recourse to the U.S. bank for the obligations of the foreign branch), and (iv) foreign branches of foreign banks (to the extent that the Adviser determines that the foreign branches of foreign banks are subject to the same or substantially similar regulations as U.S. banks).

With respect to investment policy on concentration (number 6 above), a Money Market Fund may concentrate in bankers' acceptances, certificates of deposit and similar instruments when, in the opinion of the Adviser, the yield, marketability and availability of investments meeting the Fund's quality standards in the banking industry justify any additional risks associated with the concentration of the Fund's assets in such industry.

For purposes of the above investment limitation number 6, in the case of a tax-exempt bond issued by a non-governmental user, where the tax-exempt bond is backed only by the assets and revenues of the non-governmental user, then such non-governmental user would be deemed to be the sole issuer. For each Fund, all percentage limitations (except the limitation to borrowings) on investments will apply at the time of the making of an investment and shall not be considered violated unless an excess or deficiency occurs or exists immediately after and as a result of such investment.

Except for the investment restrictions expressly identified as fundamental, or to the extent designated as such in the Prospectus with respect to a Fund, the other investment policies described in this SAI or in the Prospectus are not fundamental and may be changed by approval of the Trustees without shareholder approval.

Non-Fundamental Investment Restrictions

Names Rule Policy

To the extent a Fund is subject to Rule 35d-1 under the 1940 Act, the Fund has an investment policy, described in the Fund's prospectus, to either (1) under normal circumstances, invest at least 80% of its assets in the particular types of investments suggested by the Fund's name, or (2) invest only in the particular type of investments suggested by the Fund's name (each a "Name Policy"). "Assets" for the purposes of a Name Policy are net assets plus the amount of any borrowings for investment purposes. The percentage limitation applies at the time of purchase of an investment. A Fund's Name Policy may be changed by the Board of Trustees without shareholder approval. However, to the extent required by SEC regulations, shareholders will be provided with at least sixty (60) days' notice prior to any change in a Fund's Name Policy.

Additional Information

Fundamental Investment Restrictions (1) through (5), as numbered above limit a Fund's ability to engage in certain investment practices and purchase securities or other instruments to the extent consistent with applicable law as that law changes from time to time. Applicable law includes the 1940 Act, the rules or regulations thereunder and applicable orders of SEC as are currently in place. In addition, interpretations and guidance provided by the SEC staff may be taken into account, where deemed appropriate by a Fund, to determine if an investment practice or the purchase of securities or other instruments is permitted by applicable law. As such, the effects of these limitations will change as the statute, rules, regulations or orders (or, if applicable, interpretations) change, and no shareholder vote will be required or sought when such changes permit or require a resulting change in practice.

Disclosure of Portfolio Holdings

Introduction

The policies set forth below to be followed by State Street Bank and Trust Company ("State Street") and SSGA FM (collectively, the "Service Providers") for the disclosure of information about the portfolio holdings of SSGA Funds, State Street Master Funds, and State Street Institutional Investment Trust (each, a "Trust"). These disclosure policies are intended to ensure compliance by the Service Providers and the Trust with applicable regulations of the federal securities laws, including the 1940 Act and the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, as amended. The Board of Trustees must approve all material amendments to the policy.

General Policy

It is the policy of the Service Providers to protect the confidentiality of client holdings and prevent the selective disclosure of non-public information concerning the Trust.

No information concerning the portfolio holdings of the Trust may be disclosed to any party (including shareholders) except as provided below. The Service Providers are not permitted to receive compensation or other consideration in connection with disclosing information about a Fund's portfolio to third parties. In order to address potential conflicts between the interest of Fund shareholders, on the one hand, and those of the Service Providers or any affiliated person of those entities or of the Fund, on the other hand, the Fund's policies require that non-public disclosures of information regarding the Fund's portfolio may be made only if there is a legitimate business purpose consistent with fiduciary duties to all shareholders of the Fund.

The Board of Trustees exercises continuing oversight over the disclosure of each Fund's holdings by (i) overseeing the implementation and enforcement of the portfolio holding disclosure policy, Codes of Ethics and other relevant policies of each Fund and its service providers by the Trust's Chief Compliance Officer ("CCO") and (2) considering reports and recommendations by the Trust's CCO concerning any material compliance matters (as defined in Rule 38a-1 under the 1940 Act). The Board reserves the right to amend the policy at any time without prior notice in its sole discretion.

Publicly Available Information. Any party may disclose portfolio holdings information after the holdings are publicly available.

Each Fund generally will post on its website (or, in the case of a Portfolio, on the corresponding Feeder Fund's website) a full list of its portfolio holdings each Friday reflecting the portfolio holdings of the fund on the immediately preceding Wednesday. Each Fund will also post a full list of its portfolio holdings on its website (or, in the case of a Portfolio, on the corresponding Fund's website) no later than the fifth business day of each month, reflecting its portfolio holdings as of the last business day of the previous month. Such monthly posting shall contain such information as required by Rule 2a-7(h)(10) under the 1940 Act and remain posted on the website for not less than six months. Each Fund is also required to file with the SEC its complete portfolio holdings in monthly reports on Form N-MFP, available on the SEC's website at www.sec.gov.

Information about each Fund's 10 largest holdings generally is posted on the Funds' website at SSGA.com within 30 days following the end of each month.

Press Interviews, Brokers and Other Discussions

Portfolio managers and other senior officers or spokespersons of the Service Providers or the Trust may disclose or confirm the ownership of any individual portfolio holding position to reporters, brokers, shareholders, consultants or other interested persons only if such information has been previously publicly disclosed in accordance with these disclosure policies. For example, a portfolio manager discussing the Trust may indicate that he owns XYZ Company for the Trust only if the Trust's ownership of such company has previously been publicly disclosed.

Trading Desk Reports

State Street Global Advisors' ("SSGA") trading desk may periodically distribute lists of investments held by its clients (including the Trust) for general analytical research purposes. In no case may such lists identify individual clients or individual client position sizes. Furthermore, in the case of equity securities, such lists shall not show aggregate client position sizes.

Miscellaneous

Confidentiality Agreement. No non-public disclosure of the Funds' portfolio holdings will be made to any party unless such party has signed a written Confidentiality Agreement. For purposes of the disclosure policies, any Confidentiality Agreement must be in a form and substance acceptable to, and approved by, the Trust's officers.

Evaluation Service Providers. There are numerous mutual fund evaluation services (such as Morningstar, Inc. and Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc., formerly, Lipper, Inc.) and due diligence departments of broker-dealers and wirehouses that regularly analyze the portfolio holdings of mutual funds in order to monitor and report on various attributes. These services and departments then distribute the results of their analysis to the public, paid subscribers and/or in-house brokers. In order to facilitate the review of the Trust by these services and departments, the Trust may distribute (or authorize the Service Providers and the Trust's custodian or fund accountants to distribute) month-end portfolio holdings to such services and departments only if such entity has executed a confidentiality agreement.

Additional Restrictions. Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, the Board of Trustees, State Street and SSGA FM may, on a case-by-case basis, impose additional restrictions on the dissemination of portfolio information beyond those found in these disclosure policies.

Waivers of Restrictions. These disclosure policies may not be waived, or exceptions made, without the consent of the Trust's officers. All waivers and exceptions involving the Trust will be disclosed to the Board of Trustees no later than its next regularly scheduled quarterly meeting.

Disclosures Required by Law. Nothing contained herein is intended to prevent the disclosure of portfolio holdings information as may be required by applicable law. For example, SSGA FM, State Street, the Trust or any of its affiliates or service providers may file any report required by applicable law (such as Schedules 13D, 13G and 13F or Form N-MFP), respond to requests from regulators and comply with valid subpoenas.

MANAGEMENT OF THE TRUST AND STATE STREET MASTER FUNDS

The Board is responsible for overseeing generally the management, activities and affairs of the Funds and has approved contracts with various organizations to provide, among other services, day-to-day management required by the Trust (see the section called "Investment Advisory and Other Services"). The Board has engaged the Adviser to manage the Funds on a day-to day basis. The Board is responsible for overseeing the Adviser and other service providers in the operation of the Trust in accordance with the provisions of the 1940 Act, applicable Massachusetts law and regulation, other applicable

laws and regulations, and the Amended and Restated Declaration of Trust. The Trustees listed below are also Trustees of SSGA Funds, State Street Master Funds, State Street Navigator Securities Lending Trust (the "Navigator Trust"), State Street Institutional Funds, State Street Variable Insurance Series Funds, Inc., Elfun Diversified Fund, Elfun Government Money Market Fund, Elfun Tax-Exempt Income Fund, Elfun Income Fund, Elfun International Equity Fund and Elfun Trusts (collectively, the "Elfun Funds"), and their respective series. The following table provides information with respect to each Trustee, including those Trustees who are not considered to be "interested" as that term is defined in the 1940 Act (the "Independent Trustees"), and each officer of the Trusts.

Name, Address, and Year of Birth	Position(s) Held With Trust	Term of Office and Length of Time Served	Principal Occupation During Past Five Years and Relevant Experience	Number of Funds in Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee†	Other Directorships Held by Trustee During Past Five Years
INDEPENDENT TRUSTEES					
PATRICK J. RILEY c/o SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1948	Trustee and Chairperson of the Board	Term: Indefinite Elected: 1/14	Independent Director, State Street Global Advisors Europe Limited (investment company) (1998 – 2023); Independent Director, SSGA Liquidity plc (formerly, SSGA Cash Management Fund plc) (1998 – 2023); and Independent Director, SSGA Fixed Income plc (January 2009 – 2023).	55	Board Director and Chairman, SSGA SPDR ETFs Europe I plc Board (2011 – March 2023); Board Director and Chairman, SSGA SPDR ETFs Europe II plc (2013 – March 2023); Board Director, State Street Liquidity plc (1998 – March 2023).
MARGARET K. MCLAUGHLIN c/o SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1967	Trustee, Chairperson of the Qualified Legal Compliance Committee, and Vice-Chairperson of the Valuation Committee	Term: Indefinite Elected: 12/24	Consultant, Bates Group (consultants) (September 2020 – January 2023); Consultant, Madison Dearborn Partners (private equity) (2019 – 2020).	55	Director, Manning & Napier Fund Inc (2021 – 2022).
GEORGE M. PEREIRA c/o SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1964	Trustee, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, Chairperson of the Governance Committee, and Vice-Chairperson of the Qualified Legal Compliance Committee	Term: Indefinite Elected: 12/24	Chief Operating Officer (January 2011 – September 2020) and Chief Financial Officer (November 2004 – September 2020), Charles Schwab Investment Management.	55	Director, Pave Finance Inc. (May 2023 – present); Director, Pacific Premier Bancorp, Pacific Premier Bank (2021 – present); Director, Charles Schwab Asset Management (Ireland) Ltd., & Charles Schwab Worldwide Funds plc. (2005 – 2020).
DONNA M. RAPACCIOLI c/o SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1962	Trustee, Chairperson of the Audit Committee, Vice-Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, and Vice-Chairperson of the Governance Committee	Term: Indefinite Elected: 12/18	Dean of the Gabelli School of Business (2007 – June 2022) and Accounting Professor (1987 – present) at Fordham University.	55	Director- Graduate Management Admissions Council (2015 – 2022).
MARK E. SWANSON c/o SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210	Trustee, Chairperson of the Valuation Committee, and Vice-Chairperson	Term: Indefinite Elected: 12/24	Treasurer, Chief Accounting Officer and Chief Financial Officer, Russell Investment Funds ("RIF") (1998 –	55	Director and President, Russell Investments Fund Services, LLC (2010 – 2023); Director, Russell Investment

Name, Address, and Year of Birth	Position(s) Held With Trust	Term of Office and Length of Time Served	Principal Occupation During Past Five Years and Relevant Experience	Number of Funds in Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee†	Other Directorships Held by Trustee During Past Five Years
YOB: 1963	of the Audit Committee		2022); Global Head of Fund Services, Russell Investments (2013 – 2022); Treasurer, Chief Accounting Officer and Chief Financial Officer, Russell Investment Company ("RIC") (1998 – 2022); President and Chief Executive Officer, RIF (2016 – 2017 and 2020 to 2022); President and Chief Executive Officer, RIC (2016 – 2017 and 2020 – 2022).		Management, LLC, Russell Investments Trust Company and Russell Investments Financial Services, LLC (2010 – 2023).
INTERESTED TRUSTEE(1)					
JEANNE LAPORTA(2) c/o SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1965	Trustee	Term: Indefinite Elected: 12/24	Senior Managing Director and Head of Global Funds Management at State Street Global Advisors (August 2024 – present); Chief Administrative Officer at ClearAlpha Technologies LP (FinTech startup) (January 2021 – August 2024); Senior Managing Director at State Street Global Advisors (July 2016 – 2021); Manager of State Street Global Advisors Funds Distributors, LLC (May 2017 – 2021); Director of SSGA Funds Management, Inc. (March 2020 - 2021); President of State Street Institutional Funds and State Street Variable Insurance Series Funds, Inc. (April 2014 – March 2020).	213	Interested Trustee, Select Sector SDPR Trust, SPDR Series Trust, SDPR Index Shares Funds and SSGA Active Trust (November 2024 – present). Interested Trustee, Elfun Government Money Market Fund, Elfun Tax Exempt Income Fund, Elfun Income Fund, Elfun Diversified Fund, Elfun International Equity Fund Elfun Trusts (2016 – 2021).

† For the purpose of determining the number of portfolios overseen by the Trustees, "Fund Complex" comprises registered investment companies for which SSGA FM serves as investment adviser.

(1) The individual listed below is a Trustee who is an "interested person," as defined in the 1940 Act, of the Trust ("Interested Trustee").

(2) Ms. LaPorta was elected as Interested Trustee effective January 1, 2025. Ms. LaPorta is an Interested Trustee because of her employment with State Street Global Advisors, an affiliate of the Trust.

The following lists the principal officers for the Trust and State Street Master Funds, as well as their mailing addresses and ages, positions with the Trusts and length of time served, and present and principal occupations:

Name, Address, and Year of Birth	Position(s) Held With Trust	Term of Office and Length of Time Served	Principal Occupation During Past Five Years
OFFICERS:			
ANN M. CARPENTER SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1966	President and Principal Executive Officer; Deputy Treasurer	Term: Indefinite Served: since 5/23 (with respect to President and Principal Executive Officer); Term: Indefinite Served: since 4/19 (with respect to Deputy Treasurer)	Chief Operating Officer, SSGA Funds Management, Inc. (April 2005 – present)*; Managing Director, State Street Global Advisors (April 2005 – present).*
BRUCE S. ROSENBERG SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1961	Treasurer and Principal Financial Officer	Term: Indefinite Served: since 2/16	Managing Director, State Street Global Advisors and SSGA Funds Management, Inc. (July 2015 – present).
CHAD C. HALLETT SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1969	Deputy Treasurer	Term: Indefinite Served: since 2/16	Vice President, State Street Global Advisors and SSGA Funds Management, Inc. (November 2014 – present).
DARLENE ANDERSON-VASQUEZ SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1968	Deputy Treasurer	Term: Indefinite Served: since 11/16	Managing Director, State Street Global Advisors and SSGA Funds Management, Inc. (May 2016 – present).
ARTHUR A. JENSEN SSGA Funds Management, Inc. 1600 Summer Street Stamford, CT 06905 YOB: 1966	Deputy Treasurer	Term: Indefinite Served: since 11/16	Vice President, State Street Global Advisors and SSGA Funds Management, Inc. (July 2016 – present).
DAVID LANCASTER SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1971	Assistant Treasurer	Term: Indefinite Served: since 11/20	Vice President, State Street Global Advisors and SSGA Funds Management, Inc. (July 2017 – present).*
JOHN BETTENCOURT SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB:1976	Assistant Treasurer	Term: Indefinite Served: since 5/22	Vice President, State Street Global Advisors and SSGA Funds Management, Inc. (March 2020 – present).
VEDRAN VUKOVIC SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1985	Assistant Treasurer	Term: Indefinite Served: since 2/24	Vice President, State Street Global Advisors (2023 – present); Assistant Vice President, Brown Brothers Harriman & Co. (2011 – 2023).
BRIAN HARRIS SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1973	Chief Compliance Officer; Anti-Money Laundering Officer; Code of Ethics Compliance Officer	Term: Indefinite Served: since 7/16	Managing Director, State Street Global Advisors and SSGA Funds Management, Inc. (June 2013 – present).*
ANDREW J. DELORME SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1975	Chief Legal Officer	Term: Indefinite Served: since 2/24	Managing Director and Managing Counsel, State Street Global Advisors (March 2023 – present); Counsel, K&L Gates (February 2021 – March 2023); Vice President and Senior Counsel, State Street Global Advisors (August 2014 – February 2021).

Name, Address, and Year of Birth	Position(s) Held With Trust	Term of Office and Length of Time Served	Principal Occupation During Past Five Years
DAVID BARR SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1974	Secretary	Term: Indefinite Served: since 9/20	Vice President and Senior Counsel, State Street Global Advisors (October 2019 – present).
E. GERARD MAIORANA, JR. SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1971	Assistant Secretary	Term: Indefinite Served: since 5/23	Assistant Vice President, State Street Global Advisors (July 2014 – present).
DAVID URMAN SSGA Funds Management, Inc. One Iron Street Boston, MA 02210 YOB: 1985	Assistant Secretary	Term: Indefinite Served: since 8/19	Vice President and Senior Counsel, State Street Global Advisors (April 2019 – present).

* Served in various capacities and/or with various affiliated entities during noted time period.

The By-Laws of the Trust provide that the Trust shall indemnify each person who is or was a Trustee of the Trust against all expenses, judgments, fines, settlements and other amounts actually and reasonably incurred in connection with any proceedings if the person in good faith and reasonably believes that his or her conduct was in the Trust's best interest. The Trust, at its expense, provides liability insurance for the benefit of its Trustees and officers.

Summary of Trustees' Qualifications

Following is a summary of the experience, attributes and skills which qualify each Trustee to serve on the Boards of Trustees of the Trust and State Street Master Funds.

Patrick J. Riley: Mr. Riley is an experienced business executive with over 47 years of experience in the legal and financial services industries; his experience includes service as a trustee or director of various investment companies and Associate Justice of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He has served on the Board of Trustees and related committees of the Trust for 35 years and possesses significant experience regarding the operations and history of the Trust. Mr. Riley serves as a Trustee of the Trust, Navigator Trust, SSGA Funds, State Street Master Funds, Elfun Funds, and State Street Institutional Funds and a Director of State Street Variable Insurance Series Funds, Inc.

Margaret K. McLaughlin: Ms. McLaughlin has over 27 years of experience she has gained in a variety of roles encompassing regulatory, operating, legal, and compliance functions, serving both firms and their boards. Ms. McLaughlin formerly served as a founding member of the executive management team for Kramer Van Kirk Credit Strategies L.P. and its technology affiliate, Mariana Systems LLC, where she was integrally involved in corporate strategy, operational oversight, risk management and board governance. Prior to Kramer Van Kirk, Ms. McLaughlin was Assistant General Counsel to Harris Associates L.P., where she was responsible for legal, regulatory and compliance activities related to the Oakmark Mutual Funds. Ms. McLaughlin has an extensive understanding and perspective on governance, oversight, regulation, policies and procedures from these positions as well as her prior experience with both the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Department of Justice. Ms. McLaughlin currently serves on the Governing Counsel of the Independent Directors Council. Most recently, Ms. McLaughlin has held consulting positions at a major private equity firm and a management consulting firm. Ms. McLaughlin serves as a Trustee of the Trust, Navigator Trust, SSGA Funds, State Street Master Funds, Elfun Funds, and State Street Institutional Funds and a Director of State Street Variable Insurance Series Funds, Inc.

George M. Pereira: Mr. Pereira has over 32 years of experience in executive management with financial institutions, including extensive experience relating to financial reporting, operations, cybersecurity oversight, and enterprise risk management. Mr. Pereira retired from Charles Schwab Investment Management Inc., having served as Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer during his tenure. Previously, Mr. Pereira also served as Head of Financial Reporting for Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Earlier in his career, Mr. Pereira gained valuable regulatory experience and perspective while serving as managing director at the New York Stock Exchange. With this professional experience, Mr. Pereira has developed wide-ranging expertise in building and managing financial, operational, technology and risk control platforms for

growth and scale within the financial services industry. Additionally, Mr. Pereira is a member of the Latino Corporate Directors Association. Mr. Pereira serves as a Trustee of the Trust, Navigator Trust, SSGA Funds, State Street Master Funds, Elfun Funds, and State Street Institutional Funds and a Director of State Street Variable Insurance Series Funds, Inc.

Donna M. Rapaccioli: Ms. Rapaccioli has over 35 years of service as a full-time member of the business faculty at Fordham University, where she developed and taught undergraduate and graduate courses, including International Accounting and Financial Statement Analysis and has taught at the executive MBA level. Ms. Rapaccioli is dean emerita after serving as Dean of the Gabelli School of Business for 15 years. She has served on Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation team visits, as a director for the graduate management admissions council, as well as trustee at Emmanuel College. Ms. Rapaccioli has lectured on accounting and finance topics and consulted for numerous investment banks. Ms. Rapaccioli also serves as a Trustee of the Trust, Navigator Trust, SSGA Funds, State Street Master Funds, Elfun Funds, and State Street Institutional Funds and a Director of State Street Variable Insurance Series Funds, Inc.

Mark E. Swanson: Mr. Swanson has over 27 years of experience in executive management with financial services institutions, including extensive experience relating to, fund operations, financial reporting, fund accounting, and fund services. Mr. Swanson recently retired from Russell Investments, having served most recently as the Global Head of Fund Services. Additionally, Mr. Swanson served as Treasurer, Chief Accounting Officer and Chief Financial Officer of Russell Investment Company ("RIC") and Russell Investment Funds ("RIF"). Previously, Mr. Swanson served as Global Head of Fund Operations for Russell, as well as serving in different directorships with RIC, RIF and other Russell entities. Mr. Swanson serves as a Trustee of the Trust, Navigator Trust, SSGA Funds, State Street Master Funds, Elfun Funds, and State Street Institutional Funds and a Director of State Street Variable Insurance Series Funds, Inc.

Jeanne LaPorta: Ms. LaPorta is a Senior Managing Director of State Street Global Advisors and head of Global Funds Management. Prior to joining SSGA, she was the Chief Administrative Officer of a Fintech startup and served as a director of their flagship hedge fund. Ms. LaPorta previously worked at State Street Global Advisors from 2016 to 2021 as a Senior Managing Director and at GE Asset Management (GEAM) from 1997 to July 2016 where she held various positions at GEAM, including Senior Vice President and Commercial Operations Leader, Senior Vice President and Commercial Administrative Officer, Senior Vice President and Deputy General Counsel and Vice President and Associate General Counsel.

References to the experience, attributes and skills of Trustees above are pursuant to requirements of the SEC, do not constitute holding out of the Board or any Trustee as having any special expertise or experience, and shall not impose any greater responsibility or liability on any such person or on the Board by reason thereof.

Standing Committees

The Board of Trustees has established various committees to facilitate the timely and efficient consideration of various matters of importance to Independent Trustees, the Trust, and the Trust's shareholders and to facilitate compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Currently, the Board has created an Audit Committee, Governance Committee, Valuation Committee, Nominating Committee and Qualified Legal Compliance Committee (the "QLCC").

The Audit Committee is composed of all of the Independent Trustees. The Audit Committee meets twice a year, or more often as required, in conjunction with meetings of the Board of Trustees. The Audit Committee oversees and monitors the Trust's internal accounting and control structure, its auditing function and its financial reporting process. The Audit Committee is responsible for selecting and retaining the independent accountants for the Trust. The Audit Committee is responsible for approving the audit plans, fees and other material arrangements in respect of the engagement of the independent accountants, including non-audit services performed. The Audit Committee reviews the qualifications of the independent accountant's key personnel involved in the foregoing activities and monitors the independent accountant's independence. During the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, the Audit Committee held four meetings.

Each of the Governance Committee and the Nominating Committee is composed of all the Independent Trustees. The primary functions of the Governance Committee and the Nominating Committee are to review and evaluate the composition and performance of the Board; make nominations for membership on the Board and committees; review the responsibilities of each committee; and review governance procedures, compensation of Independent Trustees and independence of outside counsel to the Trustees. The Nominating Committee will consider nominees to the Board recommended by shareholders. Recommendations should be submitted in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Nominating Committee Charter and should be submitted in writing to the Trust, to the attention of the Trust's Secretary, at the address of the principal executive offices of the Trust. Shareholder recommendations must be delivered to, or mailed

and received at, the principal executive offices of the Trust not less than sixty (60) calendar days nor more than ninety (90) calendar days prior to the date of the Board or shareholder meeting at which the nominee candidate would be considered for election. The Governance Committee performs an annual self-evaluation of Board members. During the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, the Governance Committee and Nominating Committee held four combined meetings.

The Valuation Committee is composed of all the Independent Trustees. The Valuation Committee's primary purpose is to review the actions and recommendations of the Adviser's Oversight Committee no less often than quarterly. The Trust has established procedures and guidelines for valuing portfolio securities and making fair value determinations from time to time through the Valuation Committee, with the assistance of the Oversight Committee, State Street and SSGA FM. During the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, the Valuation Committee held four meetings.

The QLCC is composed of all the Independent Trustees. The primary functions of the QLCC are to receive quarterly reports from the CCO; to oversee generally the Trust's responses to regulatory inquiries; and to investigate matters referred to it by the Chief Legal Officer and make recommendations to the Board regarding the implementation of an appropriate response to evidence of a material violation of the securities laws or breach of fiduciary duty or similar violation by the Trust, its officers or the Trustees. During the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, the QLCC held four meetings.

Leadership Structure and Risk Management Oversight

The Board has chosen to select different individuals as Chairperson of the Board of the Trust, as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Committees of the Board, and as President of the Trust. Currently, Mr. Riley, an Independent Trustee, serves as Chairperson of the Board, Ms. Rapaccioli serves as Chairperson of the Audit Committee, Ms. McLaughlin serves as Chairperson of the QLCC, Mr. Swanson serves as Chairperson of the Valuation Committee and Mr. Pereira serves as Chairperson of each of the Governance Committee and Nominating Committee. Mr. Swanson serves as Vice-Chairperson of the Audit Committee, Ms. McLaughlin serves as Vice-Chairperson of the Valuation Committee, Mr. Pereira serves as Vice-Chairperson of the QLCC, and Ms. Rapaccioli serves as Vice-Chairperson of each of the Governance Committee and Nominating Committee. Ms. Carpenter, who is an employee of the Adviser, serves as President of the Trust. The Board believes that this leadership structure is appropriate. Ms. Carpenter is available to provide the Board with insight regarding the Trust's day-to-day management when requested, while Mr. Riley provides an independent perspective on the Trust's overall operation and Ms. Rapaccioli provides a specialized perspective on audit matters.

The Board has delegated management of the Trust to service providers who are responsible for the day-to-day management of risks applicable to the Trust. The Board oversees risk management for the Trust in several ways. The Board receives regular reports from both the CCO and administrator for the Trust, detailing the results of the Trust's compliance with its Board-adopted policies and procedures, the investment policies and limitations of the Funds, and applicable provisions of the federal securities laws and the Code. As needed, the Adviser discusses management issues regarding the Trust with the Board, soliciting the Board's input on many aspects of management, including potential risks to the Funds. The Board's Audit Committee also receives reports on various aspects of risk that might affect the Trust and offers advice to management, as appropriate. The Trustees also meet in executive session with the independent counsel to the Independent Trustees, the independent registered public accounting firm, counsel to the Trust, the CCO and representatives of management, as needed. Through these regular reports and interactions, the Board oversees the risk management parameters for the Trust, which are effected on a day-to-day basis by service providers to the Trust.

Trustee Ownership of Securities of the Trust, Adviser and Distributor

As of December 31, 2024 none of the Independent Trustees or their immediate family members had any ownership of securities of the Adviser, State Street Global Advisors Funds Distributors, LLC ("SSGA FD" or the "Distributor"), the Trust's distributor, or any person directly or indirectly controlling, controlled by or under common control with the Adviser or SSGA FD.

The following table sets forth information describing the dollar range of the Trust's equity securities beneficially owned by each Trustee as of December 31, 2024.

Name of Trustee	Dollar Range Of Equity Securities In The Funds	Aggregate Dollar Range Of Equity Securities In All Registered Investment Companies Overseen By Trustees In Family of Investment Companies
Independent Trustees:		
Patrick J. Riley	None	Over $100,000
John R Costantino[1]	None	None
Michael A. Jessee[1]	None	None
Margaret McLaughlin	None	None
George M. Pereira	None	None
Donna M. Rapaccioli	None	None
Mark E. Swanson	None	None
Interested Trustee:		
Jeanne LaPorta[2]	None	None

(1) Messrs. Costantino and Jessee retired from the Board of Directors of the Trust effective December 31, 2024.

(2) Ms. LaPorta was elected as Interested Trustee effective January 1, 2025.

Trustee Compensation

Independent Trustees are compensated on a calendar year basis. An Interested Trustee does not receive compensation from the Funds for his or her service as a Trustee. Effective January 1, 2025, each Independent Trustee receives for his or her services to the State Street Master Funds, the Trust, the SSGA Funds, the Elfun Funds, the Navigator Trust, State Street Institutional Funds and State Street Variable Insurance Series Funds, Inc. (together, the "Fund Entities") a $400,000 annual base retainer. In addition, the Chairperson of each of the Valuation Committee, QLCC, Nominating Committee and Governance Committee will receive an additional $25,000 stipend and the Chairperson of the Audit Committee will receive an additional $40,000 stipend. As of January 1, 2024, each Independent Trustee receives an additional $25,000 for each special in-person meeting and $5,000 for each special telephonic meeting. The Chairperson of the Board receives an additional $100,000 annual retainer. The total annual compensation paid to the Independent Trustees (other than telephonic and special meeting fees) is allocated to each Fund Entity as follows: a fixed amount of $21,000 will be allocated to each Fund Entity or, if applicable, each series thereof; and the remainder will be allocated among the Fund Entities or, if applicable, each series thereof that is not a feeder fund in a master-feeder structure, based on relative net assets. The Independent Trustees are reimbursed for travel and other out-of-pocket expenses in connection with meeting attendance. As of the date of this SAI, the Trustees were not paid pension or retirement benefits as part of the Trust's expenses. The Trust's officers are compensated by the Adviser and its affiliates.

The following table sets forth the total remuneration of Trustees and officers of the Trust for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024:

Name of Trustee	Aggregate Compensation from the Trust	Pension or Retirement Benefits Accrued as Part of Trust Expenses	Estimated Annual Benefits Upon Retirement	Total Compensation from the Trust and Fund Complex Paid to Trustees
Independent Trustees:				
Patrick J. Riley	$139,092	$ 0	$ 0	$490,000
John R. Costantino[1]	$110,706	$ 0	$ 0	$390,000
Michael A. Jessee[1]	$110,706	$ 0	$ 0	$390,000
Donna M. Rapaccioli	$110,706	$ 0	$ 0	$390,000
Margaret McLaughlin	$110,706	$ 0	$ 0	$390,000
George M. Pereira	$110,706	$ 0	$ 0	$390,000
Mark E. Swanson	$110,706	$ 0	$ 0	$390,000
Interested Trustee:				
Jeanne LaPorta[2]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(1) Messrs. Costantino and Jessee retired from the Board of Directors of the Trust effective December 31, 2024.

(2) Ms. LaPorta was elected as Interested Trustee effective January 1, 2025.

PROXY VOTING PROCEDURES

The Board has delegated to the Adviser the responsibility to vote proxies on securities held by the Funds and Portfolios, subject to certain exceptions. The Board has retained authority to vote proxies for certain bank and bank holding company securities ("Bank Securities") that may be held by one or more Funds and Portfolios from time to time. The Board has adopted the Institutional Shareholder Services, Inc.'s ("ISS") benchmark proxy voting policy with respect to voting such Bank Securities' proxies. The Board has retained this authority in order to permit the Adviser to utilize exemptions from limitations arising under the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956, as amended, that might otherwise prevent the Adviser from investing a Fund's or Portfolio's assets in Bank Securities. Each of the Trust's and the Adviser's proxy voting policies, as well as ISS' benchmark proxy voting policy, are attached as an appendix to this SAI. Information regarding how a Fund or Portfolio voted proxies relating to its portfolio securities during the most recent twelve-month period ended June 30 is available: (1) without charge by calling 1-866-787-2257; (2) on the Funds' and Portfolios' website at https://www.ssga.com; and (3) on the SEC's website at https://www.sec.gov.

CONTROL PERSONS AND PRINCIPAL HOLDERS OF SECURITIES

As of March 31, 2025, the Trustees and officers of the Trust owned in the aggregate less than 1% of the shares of each class (if applicable) of each Fund.

Persons or organizations owning 25% or more of the outstanding shares of a Fund may be presumed to "control" (as that term is defined in the 1940 Act) a Fund. As a result, these persons or organizations could have the ability to approve or reject those matters submitted to the shareholders of such Fund for their approval.

As of March 31, 2025, to the knowledge of the Trust, the following persons held of record or beneficially through one or more accounts 25% or more of the outstanding shares of a Fund.

Name and Address	Percentage
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Premier Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	46.02%
State Street Bank & Trust FBO SSGA Pooled Investments Attn : Cash Sweep Sup 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	37.64%
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Investment Class Mass Abrop & Co, State Treasurer & Receiver General, Abandoned Property Division 1 Ashburton Place Boston, MA 02108-1518	100%
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Institutional Class Phoebe Putney Health System Inc Po Box 3770 Albany, GA 31706-3770	43.65%
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC For the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of MSSB 1 New York Plz, FL 12TH New York, NY 10004-1965	36.64%
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Investor Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	73.84%
Goldman Sachs & Co LLC Special Custody Account for the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of GS&CO (Customers of Citi) R Dr. Ste 500 Chicago, IL 60606-4673	25.22%

Name and Address	Percentage
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Trust Class GFAS Control Acct Mt01 State Street Bank PO Box 1992 Quincy, MA 02171	62.44%
MSCS Financial Services, LLC SEI Private Trust Company C/O Newport Trust, Attn: Mutual Fund Administrator One Freedom Valley Drive Oaks, PA 19456-9989	37.56%
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Opportunity Class Goldman Sachs & Co LLC Special Custody Account for the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of GS&CO (Customers of Citi) 71 S Wacker Dr. Ste 500 Chicago, IL 60606-4673	53.73%
State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	43.37%
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Premier Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	50.22%
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Investment Class MSCS Financial Services, LLC Zions First National Bank PO BOX 30880 Salt Lake City, UT 84130-0880	82.11%
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Institutional Class Bank Of New York Mellon Hare & Co 2 Attn: STIF Operations P.O. Box 223910 Pittsburgh, PA 12521-2910	42.69%
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Investor Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	88.66%
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Administration Class Citibank NA 480 Washington Blvd Jersey City, NJ 07310-2053	99.90%
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Opportunity Class Bofa Securities Inc Bofa Securities Inc For The Sole Benefit Of Its Customers 100 N TRYON St 34th FL Charlotte, NC 28202-4000	59.98%
Goldman Sachs & Co LLC Special Custody Account for the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of GS&CO (Customers of Citi) R Dr. Ste 500 Chicago, IL 60606-4673	39.69%
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Premier Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	34.99%
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Investment Class SSB-WMS State Street Bank And Trust Co As Cust FBO FNZ TR CO Clients PO BOX 5082 Boston, MA 02206-5082	75.52%

Name and Address	Percentage
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Institutional Class Bank Of New York Mellon Hare & Co 2 Attn: STIF Operations P.O. Box 223910 Pittsburgh, PA 12521-2910	40.12%
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Investor Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	92.12%
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Administration Class MSCS Financial Services, LLC Millennium Trust Co LLC FBO Various Beneficiaries 2001 Spring Road, Suite 700 Oak Brook, IL 60523-1890	80.49%
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Opportunity Class Goldman Sachs & Co LLC Special Custody Account for the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of GS&CO (Customers of Citi) 71 S Wacker Dr Ste 500 Chicago, IL 60606-4673	77.21%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Premier Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	30.41%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Investment Class SSB-WMS State Street Bank And Trust Co As Cust FBO FNZ TR CO Clients PO BOX 5082 Boston, MA 02206-5082	95.39%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Select Class Pershing LLC, Mutual Fund Operations FBO Project National 95 Christopher Columbus Dr. Jersey City, NJ 07302-2978	96.32%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Investor Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	78.15%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Class G State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	97.18%
State Street Treasury Obligations Money Market Fund State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	99.99%

As of March 31, 2025, to the knowledge of the Trust, the following persons held of record or beneficially through one or more accounts 5% or more of the outstanding shares of a class of a Fund.

Name and Address	Percentage
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Premier Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	46.02%

Name and Address	Percentage
State Street Bank & Trust FBO SSGA Pooled Investments Attn : Cash Sweep Sup 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	37.64%
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Investment Class Mass Abrop & Co, State Treasurer & Receiver General, Abandoned Property Division 1 Ashburton Place Boston, MA 02108-1518	100%
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Institutional Class Phoebe Putney Health System Inc Po Box 3770 Albany, GA 31706-3770	43.65%
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC For the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of MSSB 1 New York Plz, FL 12TH New York, NY 10004-1965	36.64%
SSGM-Fund Connect Astignes Asia Rates Compass Fund Ltd Cayman Islands PO BOX 309 Ugland House Grand Cayman KY1-1104 Cayman Islands	17.50%
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Investor Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	73.84%
Goldman Sachs & Co LLC Special Custody Account for the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of GS&CO (Customers of Citi) R Dr. Ste 500 Chicago, IL 60606-4673	25.22%
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Administration Class SSBT – Cash Sweep Mathworks Inc Wal3 3 Apple Hill Dr. Natick, MA 01760-2098	16.33%
SSBT – Cash Sweep Sscsil Mer Inv Fd 1 Concise Mjdp 1776 Heritage Dr. Quincy, MA 02171-2119	10.23%
SSBT- Cash Sweep Seven Seas Fund G6W3 661 RT 183 & Van Reed Road Reading, PA 19612	7.19%
Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, IVX1 417 Third Ave. Albany, GA 31702	5.99%
SSBT – Cash Sweep Rapides Foundation 1101 4TH St. Alexandria, LA 71301-8309	5.81%
SSBT – Cash Sweep Stowers Investor Pool/SRRA 1000 E. 50th St. Kansas City, MO 64110-2262	5.55%
SSBT – Cash Sweep Alternatives/ZKYW 1200 Memorial Dr Dalton, GA 30720-2529	5.42%
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Trust Class GFAS Control Acct Mt01 State Street Bank PO Box 1992 Quincy, MA 02171	62.44%

Name and Address	Percentage
MSCS Financial Services, LLC SEI Private Trust Company C/O Newport Trust, Attn: Mutual Fund Administrator One Freedom Valley Drive Oaks, PA 19456-9989	37.56%
State Street Institutional Liquid Reserves Government Money Market Fund – Opportunity Class Goldman Sachs & Co LLC Special Custody Account for the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of GS&CO (Customers of Citi) 71 S Wacker Dr. Ste 500 Chicago, IL 60606-4673	53.73%
State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	43.37%
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Premier Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	50.22%
Bofa Securities Inc Bofa Securities Inc For The Sole Benefit Of Its Customers 100 N TRYON St 34th FL Charlotte, NC 28202-4000	21.56%
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Investment Class MSCS Financial Services, LLC Zions First National Bank PO BOX 30880 Salt Lake City, UT 84130-0880	82.11%
SSB-WMS State Street Bank And Trust Co As Cust FBO FNZ TR CO Clients PO BOX 5082 Boston, MA 02206-5082	16.18%
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Institutional Class Bank Of New York Mellon Hare & Co 2 Attn: STIF Operations P.O. Box 223910 Pittsburgh, PA 12521-2910	42.69%
Bank Of New York Mellon Hare & Co 2 Attn: STIF Operations P.O. Box 223910 Pittsburgh, PA 12521-2910	19.84%
JPMorgan Chase Bank NA JPMS - Chase Processing 28521 JPMS IB 352, 4 Chase Metrotech Center 7th Fl. Brooklyn, NY 11245-0003	14.42%
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC For the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of MSSB 1 New York Plz, FL 12TH New York, NY 10004-1965	11.96%
PNC Capital Markets LLC The PNC Financial Services Group Inc 249 5TH Ave MSC PI-POPP-11-A Pittsburgh, PA 15222	6.92%
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Investor Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	88.66%
SSGM-Fund Connect Arrowood Indemnity Company (A Delaware Corporation) 3600 Arco Corporate Dr Charlotte, NC 28273-8100	7.17%

Name and Address	Percentage
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Administration Class Citibank NA 480 Washington Blvd Jersey City, NJ 07310-2053	99.90%
State Street Institutional Treasury Money Market Fund – Opportunity Class Bofa Securities Inc Bofa Securities Inc For The Sole Benefit Of Its Customers 100 N TRYON St 34th FL Charlotte, NC 28202-4000	59.98%
Goldman Sachs & Co LLC Special Custody Account for the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of GS&CO (Customers of Citi) R Dr. Ste 500 Chicago, IL 60606-4673	39.69%
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Premier Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	34.99%
Goldman Sachs & CO LLC GS Global Cash Services, Omnibus Account for the Benefit of Goldman Sachs & Co LLC Customers 71 S Wacker DR STE 500 Chicago, IL 60606-4673	9.07%
SSGM-Fund Connect State Street Global Markets LLC Attn Gregory Fortuna 1 Lincoln St # Sfc-6 Boston, MA 02111-2900	8.54%
Bank Of New York Mellon Hare & Co 2 Attn: STIF Operations P.O. Box 223910 Pittsburgh, PA 12521-2910	7.00%
Bofa Securities Inc Bofa Securities Inc For The Sole Benefit Of Its Customers 100 N TRYON St 34th FL Charlotte, NC 28202-4000	6.81%
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Investment Class SSB-WMS State Street Bank And Trust Co As Cust FBO FNZ TR CO Clients PO BOX 5082 Boston, MA 02206-5082	75.52%
Charles Schwab & Co Inc, Special Cust A/C FBO our Customers Attn: Mutual Funds 211 Main St. San Francisco, CA 94105-1901	24.48%
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Institutional Class Bank Of New York Mellon Hare & Co 2 Attn: STIF Operations P.O. Box 223910 Pittsburgh, PA 12521-2910	40.12%
Chicago Mercantile Exchange Inc Cleared Swaps Customer Account Attn: Clearing Financial Unit 20 S Wacker Dr. Chicago, IL 60606-7431	13.06%
Chicago Mercantile Exchange Inc CFTC 1.26 Futures Customer Segregated Omnibus Account Attn Mike Kobida 20 S Wacker Dr. Chicago, IL 60606-7431	9.33%

Name and Address	Percentage
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC For the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of MSSB 1 New York Plz, FL 12TH New York, NY 10004-1965	8.41%
JPMorgan Chase Bank NA JPMS - Chase Processing 28521 JPMS IB 352, 4 Chase Metrotech Center 7th Fl. Brooklyn, NY 11245-0003	6.34%
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Investor Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	92.12%
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Administration Class MSCS Financial Services, LLC Millennium Trust Co LLC FBO Various Beneficiaries 2001 Spring Road, Suite 700 Oak Brook, IL 60523-1890	80.49%
Citibank NA Citibank, NA FBO 13484500 Canaras Liquid Asset Strategies Fund LLC Principal Collection Account 480 Washington Blvd Jersey City, NJ 07310-2053	11.41%
State Street Institutional Treasury Plus Money Market Fund – Opportunity Class Goldman Sachs & Co LLC Special Custody Account for the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of GS&CO (Customers of Citi) 71 S Wacker Dr Ste 500 Chicago, IL 60606-4673	77.21%
State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	20.57%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Premier Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	30.41%
Goldman Sachs & CO LLC GS Global Cash Services, Omnibus Account for the Benefit of Goldman Sachs & Co LLC Customers 71 S Wacker DR STE 500 Chicago, IL 60606-4673	8.51%
Bofa Securities Inc Bofa Securities Inc For The Sole Benefit Of Its Customers 100 N TRYON St 34th FL Charlotte, NC 28202-4000	8.13%
Wells Fargo Bank, NA Exclusive Benefit of the Customers, Attn Money Funds 1525 W W T Harris Blvd Floor 1st, MAC D1109-010 Charlotte, NC 28262-8522	5.44%
JPMorgan Chase Bank NA JPMS - Chase Processing 28521 JPMS IB 352 FBO 0215176421 Facebook, INC. 4 Chase Metrotech Ctr Fl 7th Brooklyn, NY 11245-0003	5.24%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Investment Class SSB-WMS State Street Bank And Trust Co As Cust FBO FNZ TR CO Clients PO BOX 5082 Boston, MA 02206-5082	95.39%

Name and Address	Percentage
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Select Class Pershing LLC, Mutual Fund Operations FBO Project National 95 Christopher Columbus Dr. Jersey City, NJ 07302-2978	96.32%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Institutional Class Bank Of New York Mellon Hare & Co 2 Attn: STIF Operations P.O. Box 223910 Pittsburgh, PA 12521-2910	24.77%
Bank Of New York Mellon Hare & Co 2 Attn: STIF Operations P.O. Box 223910 Pittsburgh, PA 12521-2910	14.97%
PNC Capital Markets LLC The PNC Financial Services Group Inc 249 5TH Ave MSC PI-POPP-11-A Pittsburgh, PA 15222	9.47%
Chicago Mercantile Exchange Inc Cleared Swaps Customer Account Attn: Clearing Financial Unit 20 S Wacker Dr. Chicago, IL 60606-7431	6.45%
Chicago Mercantile Exchange Inc CFTC 1.26 Futures Customer Segregated Omnibus Account Attn Mike Kobida 20 S Wacker Dr. Chicago, IL 60606-7431	5.71%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Investor Class State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	78.15%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Class G State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	97.18%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Administration Class Citibank NA FBO 14265900 BMIF Collection AC 480 Washington BLVD Jersey City, NJ 07310-2053	8.48%
Citibank NA, FBO 13392100 Metronet Infrastructure Issuer 2022-1 Liquidity Reserve Account 480 Washington Blvd Fl. 30 Jersey City, NJ 07310-2053	8.20%
SSBT- Cash Sweep The INTL/Y81R 1776 Heritage Dr. Quincy, MA 02171-2119	5.15%
State Street Institutional U.S. Government Money Market Fund – Opportunity Class Bank Of New York Mellon Hare & Co 2 Attn: STIF Operations P.O. Box 223910 Pittsburgh, PA 12521-2910	22.94%
State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	20.84%

Name and Address	Percentage
JPMorgan Chase Bank NA JPMS - Chase Processing 28521 JPMS IB 352 FBO Alphabet Capital Us LLC 4 Chase Metrotech Ctr Fl 7th Brooklyn, NY 11245-0003	17.19%
City and County of San Francisco 1 Carlton B Goodlett Pl. Ste. 140 San Francisco, CA 94102-4626	9.46%
Goldman Sachs & Co LLC Special Custody Account for the Exclusive Benefit of Customers of GS&CO (Customers of Citi) 71 S Wacker Dr. Ste 500 Chicago, IL 60606-4673	6.97%
JPMorgan Chase Bank NA JPMS - Chase Processing 28521 JPMS IB 352 FBO American Honda Motor 4 Chase Metrotech Ctr Fl 7th Brooklyn, NY 11245-0003	6.10%
US Bank NA Band & Co C/O US Bank NA PO BOX 1787 Milwaukee, WI 53201-1787	5.72%
State Street Treasury Obligations Money Market Fund State Street Bank & Trust FBO Cash Sweep Clients Attn : Cash Sweep Sup - Rick Letham 1200 Crown Colony Dr. CC13 Quincy, MA 02169-0938	99.99%

INVESTMENT ADVISORY AND OTHER SERVICES

Investment Advisory Agreement

The Adviser is responsible for the investment management of the Funds pursuant to the Amended and Restated Investment Advisory Agreement dated November 17, 2015 as amended from time to time (the "Advisory Agreement"), by and between the Adviser and the Trust. The Adviser is a wholly-owned subsidiary of State Street Global Advisors, Inc., which itself is a wholly-owned subsidiary of State Street Corporation, a publicly held financial holding company. State Street is a wholly-owned subsidiary of State Street Corporation.

The Advisory Agreement will continue from year to year provided that such continuance is specifically approved at least annually by (a) the Trustees or by the vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of a Fund, and (b) vote of a majority of the Independent Trustees, cast in person at a meeting called for the purpose of voting on such approval. The Advisory Agreement may be terminated by the Adviser or the Trust without penalty upon sixty days' notice and will terminate automatically upon its assignment. The Adviser and its affiliates may have deposit, loan and other commercial banking relationships with the issuers of obligations that may be purchased on behalf of the Funds, including outstanding loans to such issuers that could be repaid in whole or in part with the proceeds of securities so purchased. Such affiliates deal, trade and invest for their own accounts in such obligations and are among the leading dealers of various types of such obligations. The Adviser has informed the Funds that, in making its investment decisions, it will not obtain or use material non-public information in its possession or in the possession of any of its affiliates. In making investment recommendations for a Fund, the Adviser will not inquire or take into consideration whether an issuer of securities proposed for purchase or sale by the Fund is a customer of the Adviser, its parent or its subsidiaries or affiliates and, in dealing with its customers, the Adviser, its parent, subsidiaries and affiliates will not inquire or take into consideration whether securities of such customers were held by any fund managed by the Adviser or any such affiliate.

In certain instances, there may be securities that are suitable for a Fund as well as for one or more of the Adviser's other clients.

Investment decisions for the Trust and for the Adviser's other clients are made with a view to achieving their respective investment objectives. It may develop that a particular security is bought or sold for only one client even though it might be held by, or bought or sold for, other clients. Likewise, a particular security may be bought for one or more clients when one or more clients are selling that same security. Some simultaneous transactions are inevitable when several clients receive investment advice from the same investment adviser, particularly when the same security is suitable for the investment objectives of more than one client. When two or more clients are simultaneously engaged in the purchase or sale of the

same security, the securities are allocated among clients in a manner believed to be equitable to each. The Trust recognizes that in some cases this system could have a detrimental effect on the price or volume of the security as far as a Fund is concerned. However, it is believed that the ability of each Fund to participate in volume transactions will produce better executions for the Funds.

Each Fund currently invests all of its assets in a related Portfolio that has the same investment objectives and substantially the same investment policies as the relevant Fund. As long as a Fund remains completely invested in its related Portfolio (or any other investment company), the Adviser is not entitled to receive any investment advisory fee with respect to the Fund. A Fund may withdraw its investment from the related Portfolio at any time. The Trust has retained the Adviser as investment adviser to manage a Fund's assets in the event that the Fund withdraws its investment from its related Portfolio.

The Adviser is also the investment adviser to each of the related Portfolios pursuant to an investment advisory agreement (the "Portfolio Advisory Agreement") between the Adviser and State Street Master Funds, on behalf of the Portfolios. The Adviser receives an investment advisory fee with respect to each related Portfolio. The Portfolio Advisory Agreement is the same in all material respects as the Advisory Agreement between the Trust on behalf of the Funds and the Adviser. Each Fund that invests in a related Portfolio bears a proportionate part of the management fees paid by the Portfolio (based on the percentage of the Portfolio's assets attributable to the Fund).

For the services provided under the Advisory Agreement and the Portfolio Advisory Agreement, each Fund pays the Adviser a fee at an annual rate set forth below of the Fund's average daily net assets.

Fund	Fee Rate
ILR Government Fund	0.05%
Treasury Fund	0.05%
Treasury Plus Fund	0.05%
U.S. Government Fund	0.05%
Treasury Obligations Fund	0.05%

The advisory fees paid by the Portfolios to SSGA FM for the last three fiscal years ended December 31 are as follows.

Portfolio	2024	2023	2022
Money Market Portfolio	$ 7,254,571	$ 6,587,155	$ 6,327,552
Treasury Portfolio	$ 6,555,416	$ 6,349,102	$ 7,513,540
Treasury Plus Portfolio	$24,905,996	$18,610,840	$19,365,971
U.S. Government Portfolio	$77,476,250	$53,561,767	$49,076,090

From time to time, the Adviser may contractually agree to waive the advisory fee and/or reimburse certain Fund expenses in excess of a certain percentage of average daily net assets on an annual basis (an "expense limitation"). The amount of advisory fees waived and/or reimbursed during the past fiscal year is shown below.

Fund	2024
ILR Government Fund	$ 77
Treasury Fund	$ 0
Treasury Plus Fund	$ 0
U.S. Government Fund	$ 33,857
Treasury Obligations Fund	$1,635,036

Total Annual Fund Operating Expense Waivers and Reimbursements. The Adviser has contractually agreed with the Trust through April 30, 2026, to waive up to the full amount of the advisory fee payable by the ILR Government Fund, the Treasury Money Market Fund, the Treasury Plus Fund and the U.S. Government Fund and/or reimburse a Fund for expenses to the extent that Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses (exclusive of non-recurring account fees, interest, taxes, extraordinary expenses, acquired fund fees, any class-specific expenses such as distribution, shareholder servicing, sub-transfer agency and administration fees) exceed the following percentage of average daily net assets on an annual basis:

Fund	Expense Limitation	Expiration Date
ILR Government Fund	0.07%	4/30/2026
Treasury Fund	0.07%	4/30/2026

Fund	Expense Limitation	Expiration Date
Treasury Plus Fund	0.07%	4/30/2026
U.S. Government Fund	0.07%	4/30/2026

With respect to the Treasury Obligations Money Market Fund, the Adviser has contractually agreed with the Trust through April 30, 2026, to waive up to the full amount of the advisory fee payable by the Treasury Obligations Money Market Fund and/or reimburse the Fund for expenses to the extent that Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses (exclusive of non-recurring account fees, interest, taxes, and extraordinary expenses) exceed 0.10% of the Fund's average daily net assets on an annual basis.

Voluntary Expense Waivers. The Adviser has voluntarily agreed to waive its advisory fee and/or to reimburse the Treasury Obligations Fund for expenses to the extent that the Fund's total annual operating expenses exceed 0.08% of average daily net assets on an annual basis (each a "Voluntary Expense Waiver"). The Adviser may discontinue either Voluntary Expense Waiver at any time, in its sole discretion. For the period ended December 31, 2024, the Adviser voluntarily waived expenses in the amount of $887,909.36 for the Treasury Obligations Fund.

Voluntary Yield Waivers. For each Money Market Fund, each of SSGA FM and SSGA FD (each a "Service Provider") may voluntarily reduce all or a portion of its fees and/or reimburse expenses for a fund or a share class to the extent necessary to maintain a certain minimum net yield, which may vary from time to time in SSGA FM's sole discretion (any such waiver or reimbursement of expenses being referred to herein as a "Voluntary Reduction"). The Adviser may, in its sole discretion, implement the Voluntary Reduction for some Funds, or some share classes of a Fund, and not others. The amount of any Voluntary Reduction may differ between Funds and share classes in the Adviser's sole discretion. The business objectives of the Adviser and its affiliates and their broader relationships with certain Fund shareholders, Financial Intermediaries or distribution channels could give the Adviser an incentive to implement the Voluntary Reduction for some Funds or share classes and not others, or to implement it to a greater degree for some Funds or share classes than others. Under an agreement with the Service Providers relating to the Voluntary Reduction, the Funds and the Portfolios have agreed to reimburse the Service Providers for the full dollar amount of any Voluntary Reduction beginning on May 1, 2020, subject to certain limitations. Each Service Provider may, in its sole discretion, irrevocably waive receipt of any or all reimbursement amounts due from a Fund, without limitation. Fees reduced or expenses reimbursed by the Service Providers in connection with the Voluntary Reduction for the period ended December 31, 2024 were $0 for the ILR Government Fund, $0 for the Treasury Fund, $0 for the Treasury Plus Fund, $0 for the U.S. Government Fund, and $0 for the Treasury Obligations Fund.

Administrator

SSGA FM serves as the administrator for the Funds pursuant to an Amended and Restated Administration Agreement dated June 1, 2015. Under the Amended and Restated Administration Agreement, SSGA FM is obligated to continuously provide business management services to the Trust and each Fund and will generally, subject to the general oversight of the Trustees and except as otherwise provided in the Amended and Restated Administration Agreement, manage all of the business and affairs of the Trust. The nature and amount of services provided by SSGA FM under the Amended and Restated Administration Agreement may vary as between classes of shares of a Fund, and a Fund may pay fees to SSGA FM under that Agreement at different rates in respect of its different share classes. Except as noted below, as consideration for SSGA FM's services as administrator to each Fund, SSGA FM receives an annual fee of 0.05% of the average daily net assets of such Fund, accrued daily at the rate of 1/365th and payable monthly on the first business day of each month. As consideration for SSGA FM's services as administrator to Class G shares of the U.S. Government Fund, SSGA FM receives an annual fee of 0.01% of the average daily net assets of such class, accrued daily at the rate of 1/365th and payable monthly on the first business day of each month. The Funds reimburse SSGA FM for certain out-of-pocket travel expenses of the CCO and compliance team incurred on the Funds' behalf.

The administration fees paid to SSGA FM for the last three fiscal years are set forth in the table below.

Fund	2024	2023	2022
ILR Government Fund	$ 7,253,741	$ 6,587,346	$ 6,326,522
Treasury Fund	$ 6,225,358	$ 6,011,471	$ 7,173,918
Treasury Plus Fund	$22,687,073	$16,343,182	$16,624,212
U.S. Government Fund	$74,921,959	$51,454,626	$46,648,264
Treasury Obligations Fund	$ 2,219,774	$ 2,267,810	$ 2,743,013

Sub-Administrator, Custody and Fund Accounting

State Street serves as the sub-administrator for the Trust, pursuant to a sub-administration agreement dated June 1, 2015 (the "Sub-Administration Agreement"). State Street serves as the custodian for the Trust, pursuant to a custody agreement dated April 11, 2012 (the "Custody Agreement"). Under the Sub-Administration Agreement, State Street is obligated to provide certain sub-administrative services to the Trust. Under the Custody Agreement, State Street is obligated to provide certain custody services to the Trust, as well as basic portfolio recordkeeping required by the Trust for regulatory and financial reporting purposes. State Street is a wholly owned subsidiary of State Street Corporation, a publicly held financial holding company, and is affiliated with the Adviser. State Street's mailing address is One Congress Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02114.

As consideration for sub-administration services, State Street receives an annual fee from the Adviser (payable monthly). As consideration for custody and fund accounting services, each Fund pays State Street an annual fee (payable monthly) based on the average monthly net assets of each Fund. Each Fund also pays State Street transaction and service fees for these services and reimburses State Street for out-of-pocket expenses.

The sub-administration, custodian and fund accounting fees paid by the Funds to State Street for the last three fiscal years ended December 31 are set forth in the table below.

Fund	2024	2023	2022
ILR Government Fund	$65,178	$65,864	$71,197
Treasury Fund	$40,475	$40,938	$46,854
Treasury Plus Fund	$47,798	$48,312	$54,922
U.S. Government Fund	$51,509	$50,071	$59,762
Treasury Obligations Fund	$14,258	$14,717	$18,222

Transfer Agent and Dividend Paying Agent

SS&C GIDS, Inc. serves as the Transfer and Dividend Paying Agent. SS&C GIDS, Inc. is paid for the following annual account services and activities including but not limited to: establishment and maintenance of each shareholder's account; closing an account; acceptance and processing of trade orders; preparation and transmission of payments for dividends and distributions declared by each Fund; customer service support including receipt of correspondence and responding to shareholder and financial intermediary inquiries; investigation services; tax related support; financial intermediary fee payment processing; and charges related to compliance and regulatory services.

Portfolio fees are allocated to each Fund based on the average net asset value of each Fund and are billable on a monthly basis at the rate of 1/12 of the annual fee. SS&C GIDS, Inc. is reimbursed by each Fund for supplying certain out-of-pocket expenses including confirmation statements, investor statements, banking fees, postage, forms, audio response, telephone, records retention, customized programming/enhancements, reports, transcripts, microfilm, microfiche, and expenses incurred at the specific direction of the Fund. SS&C GIDS, Inc. principal business address is 2000 Crown Colony Drive, Quincy, MA 02169.

Codes of Ethics

The Trust, the Adviser and SSGA FD have each adopted a code of ethics (together, the "Codes of Ethics") pursuant to Rule 17j-1 under the 1940 Act as required by applicable law, which is designed to prevent affiliated persons of the Trust, the Adviser and SSGA FD from engaging in deceptive, manipulative or fraudulent activities in connection with securities held or to be acquired by the Funds (which may also be held by persons subject to the Codes of Ethics). The Codes of Ethics permit personnel, subject to the Codes of Ethics and their provisions, to invest in securities for their personal investment accounts, subject to certain limitations, including securities that may be purchased or held by the Trust, Adviser, State Street or SSGA FD.

Distributor

SSGA FD serves as the distributor of the Funds pursuant to the Distribution Agreement by and between SSGA FD and the Trust. Pursuant to the Distribution Agreement, the Funds, except for the Treasury Obligations Fund, pay SSGA FD fees under the Rule 12b-1 Plan in effect for the Funds. For a description of the fees paid to SSGA FD under the Rule 12b-1 Plan, see "Distribution Plans," below. SSGA FD is an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of State Street Corporation. SSGA FD's mailing address is One Iron Street, Boston, MA 02210.

Distribution Plans

To compensate SSGA FD for the services it provides and for the expenses it bears in connection with the distribution of shares of the Funds, SSGA FD will be entitled to receive any front-end sales load applicable to the sale of shares of the Fund. Each Fund, except for the Treasury Obligations Fund, may make payments ("Rule 12b-1 Fees") from the assets attributable to certain classes of its shares to SSGA FD under a distribution plan adopted pursuant to Rule 12b-1 under the 1940 Act (the "Distribution Plan"). The Distribution Plan is a compensation plan that provides for payments at annual rates (based on average daily net assets) set out below. Because Rule 12b-1 Fees are paid on an ongoing basis, they will increase the cost of your investment and may cost you more than paying other types of sales loads. The principal business address of SSGA FD is One Iron Street, Boston, MA 02210.

The Board, including all of the Trustees who are not interested persons (as defined in the 1940 Act) of the Trust (the "Independent Trustees") and who have no direct or indirect financial interest in the Distribution Plan or any related agreements, (the "Qualified Distribution Plan Trustees") approved the Distribution Plan. The Distribution Plan will continue in effect with respect to a class of shares of a Fund only if such continuance is specifically approved at least annually by a vote of both a majority of the Board of Trustees of the Trust and a majority of the Qualified Distribution Plan Trustees. The Distribution Plan may not be amended to increase materially the amount of a Fund's permitted expenses thereunder without the approval of a majority of the outstanding shares of the affected share class and may not be materially amended in any case without a vote of the majority of both the Trustees and the Qualified Distribution Plan Trustees. As of December 31, 2024, none of the Independent Trustees had a direct or indirect financial interest in the operation of the Distribution Plan. The Distribution Plan calls for payments at an annual rate (based on each Fund's average net assets) as follows:

Premier Class	0.00%
Select Class*	0.00%
Investment Class	0.10%
Institutional Class	0.00%
Investor Class	0.00%
Administration Class	0.05%
Class G†	0.00%
Trust Class††	0.00%
Opportunity Class	0.00%

* U.S. Government Fund, Treasury Fund and Treasury Plus Fund only.

† U.S. Government Fund only.

†† ILR Government Fund, Treasury Plus Fund and U.S. Government Fund only.

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, the total Rule 12b-1 fees retained by SSGA FD and the total Rule 12b-1 fees paid by SSGA FD to intermediaries out of payments it receives from the Funds under the Rule 12b-1 Distribution Plan are reflected in the chart below.

Fund	Rule 12b-1 Fees Retained by SSGA FD[1]	Rule 12b-1 Fees Paid by SSGA FD to Intermediaries
ILR Government Fund		
Investment Class	$ 7	$ -
Administration Class	$ 1,027	$145,131
Treasury Fund		
Investment Class	$277,018	$148,964
Administration Class	$ 788	$ 52,590
Treasury Plus Fund		
Investment Class	$ 2,018	$ 9,878
Administration Class	$ 26	$ 1,422
U.S. Government Fund		
Investment Class	$ 9,118	$232,444
Administration Class	$ (32,169)	$989,247

(1) Amounts shown are net of payments made by SSGA FD to other intermediaries.

The Distribution Plan may benefit the Funds by increasing sales of shares and reducing redemptions of shares, resulting potentially, for example, in economies of scale and more predictable flows of cash into and out of the Funds. Because Rule 12b-1 fees are paid out of a Fund's assets, all shareholders share in that expense; however, because shareholders hold their shares through varying arrangements (for example, directly or through financial intermediaries), they may not share equally in the benefits of the Distribution Plan.

Shareholder Servicing Agent

SSGA FD serves as a shareholder servicing agent of the ILR Government Fund, the Treasury Fund, the Treasury Plus Fund and the U.S. Government Fund, pursuant to a Shareholder Servicing Agreement between SSGA FD and the Trust (the "Shareholder Servicing Agreement"). Pursuant to the Shareholder Servicing Agreement, SSGA FD provides or arranges for the provision of various administrative, sub-accounting and personal services to investors in the Institutional Class, Trust Class, Investor Class, Administration Class, Investment Class and Opportunity Class shares of such Funds. Services provided by SSGA FD or that SSGA FD arranges to be provided by a financial intermediary pursuant to the Shareholder Servicing Agreement include, among other things: establishing and maintaining shareholder account registrations; sub-accounting with respect to shares held in omnibus accounts; receiving and processing purchase and redemption orders, including aggregated orders, and delivering orders to the Fund's transfer agent; processing and delivering trade confirmations, periodic statements, prospectuses, annual reports, semi-annual reports, shareholder notices, and other SEC-required communications; processing dividend and distribution payments and issuing related documentation; providing shareholder tax reporting and processing tax data; receiving, tabulating, and transmitting proxies for proxy solicitations; and responding to inquiries from shareholders. Shareholder servicing fees paid for the last fiscal year included amounts paid to affiliates of the Adviser and SSGA FD including State Street Bank (on behalf of all of its North America business units) and State Street Global Markets, LLC and Global Services divisions of State Street Bank and Trust Company. These affiliates of the Adviser are also among the financial intermediaries that may receive fees from the Distribution Plan.

The Shareholder Servicing Agreement calls for payments by the ILR Government Fund, Treasury Fund, Treasury Plus Fund and U.S. Government Fund at an annual rate (based on average net assets) as follows:

Premier Class	None
Institutional Class	0.03%
Trust Class (Treasury Plus Fund)	0.056%
Trust Class (ILR Government Fund)	0.058%
Investor Class	0.08%
Administration Class	0.20%
Investment Class	0.25%
Opportunity Class	0.03%

The payments made for shareholder servicing pursuant to the Shareholder Servicing Agreement from the effective date of the agreement, as well as payments made pursuant to a prior arrangement between the Funds and SSGA FD, by the ILR Government Fund, the Treasury Fund, the Treasury Plus Fund and the U.S. Government Fund for the last three fiscal years ended December 31 are reflected in the chart below:

Fund	2024	2023	2022
ILR Government Fund	$ 1,156,554	$ 1,154,890	$1,702,049
Treasury Fund	$ 1,990,175	$ 1,460,106	$1,951,793
Treasury Plus Fund	$ 6,418,265	$ 4,635,597	$4,245,884
U.S. Government Fund	$13,189,525	$10,608,325	$8,772,210

Payments to Financial Intermediaries

Financial intermediaries are firms that sell shares of mutual funds, including the Funds, and/or provide certain administrative and account maintenance services to mutual fund shareholders. Financial intermediaries may include, among others, brokers, financial planners or advisors, banks, retirement plan recordkeepers, and insurance companies. In some cases, a financial intermediary may hold its clients' Fund shares in nominee or street name and may utilize omnibus accounts. Shareholder services provided by a financial intermediary may (though they will not necessarily) include, among other things: establishing and maintaining shareholder account registrations; sub-accounting with respect to shares held in omnibus accounts; receiving and processing purchase and redemption orders, including aggregated orders, and delivering orders to the Fund's transfer agent; processing and delivering trade confirmations, periodic statements, prospectuses,

annual reports, semi-annual reports, shareholder notices, and other SEC-required communications; processing dividend and distribution payments and issuing related documentation; providing shareholder tax reporting and processing tax data; receiving, tabulating, and transmitting proxies for proxy solicitations; and responding to inquiries from shareholders.

Some portion of SSGA FD's payments to financial intermediaries will be made out of amounts received by SSGA FD under the Distribution Plans and pursuant to the Shareholder Servicing Agreement. In addition, the Funds may reimburse SSGA FD for payments SSGA FD makes to financial intermediaries that provide recordkeeping, shareholder servicing, sub-transfer agency, administrative and/or account maintenance services (collectively, "servicing"). The amount of the reimbursement for servicing compensation and the manner in which it is calculated are reviewed by the Trustees periodically.

A financial intermediary is often compensated by SSGA FD or its affiliates for the services the financial intermediary performs and, in such cases, it is typically paid continually over time, during the period when the intermediary's clients hold investments in the Funds. The compensation to financial intermediaries may include networking fees and account-based fees. The amount of continuing compensation paid by SSGA FD to different financial intermediaries varies. In the case of most financial intermediaries, compensation for servicing in excess of any amount covered by payments under a Distribution Plan is generally paid at an annual rate of 0.03% – 0.25% of the aggregate average daily net asset value of Fund shares held by that financial intermediary's customers, although in some cases the compensation may be paid at higher annual rates (which may, but will not necessarily, reflect enhanced or additional services provided by the financial intermediary). The amount paid by a Fund may vary by share class.

If you invest through a Financial Intermediary and meet the eligibility criteria for more than one share class, you should discuss with your Financial Intermediary which share class is appropriate for you. Your financial adviser and the Financial Intermediary employing him or her may have an incentive to recommend one share class over another, when you are eligible to invest in more than one share class. Please speak with your financial adviser to learn more about the total amounts paid to your financial adviser and his or her firm by the Fund or its affiliates with respect to the different share classes offered by the Fund.

SSGA FD and its affiliates (including SSGA FM), at their own expense and out of their own assets, may also provide compensation to financial intermediaries in connection with sales of the Funds' shares or servicing of shareholders or shareholder accounts by financial intermediaries. Such compensation may include, but is not limited to, ongoing payments, financial assistance to financial intermediaries in connection with conferences, sales, or training programs for their employees, seminars for the public, advertising or sales campaigns, or other financial intermediary-sponsored special events. In some instances, this compensation may be made available only to certain financial intermediaries whose representatives have sold or are expected to sell significant amounts of shares. Financial intermediaries may not use sales of the Funds' shares to qualify for this compensation to the extent prohibited by the laws or rules of any state or any self-regulatory agency, such as FINRA. The level of payments made to a financial intermediary in any given year will vary and, in the case of most financial intermediaries, will not exceed 0.05% of the value of assets attributable to the financial intermediary invested in shares of funds in the SSGA FM-fund complex. In certain cases, the payments described in the preceding sentence are subject to minimum payment levels.

If payments to financial intermediaries by the distributor or adviser for a particular mutual fund complex exceed payments by other mutual fund complexes, your financial advisor and the financial intermediary employing him or her may have an incentive to recommend that fund complex over others. Please speak with your financial advisor to learn more about the total amounts paid to your financial advisor and his or her firm by SSGA FD and its affiliates, and by sponsors of other mutual funds he or she may recommend to you. You should also consult disclosures made by your financial intermediary at the time of purchase. Because the Funds pay distribution, service and other fees for the sale of their shares and for services provided to shareholders out of the Funds' assets on an ongoing basis, over time those fees will increase the cost of an investment in a Fund.

A Fund may pay distribution fees, service fees and other amounts described above at a time when shares of the Fund are not being actively promoted to new investors generally, or when shares of that Fund are unavailable for purchase.

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, the Funds have been informed by SSGA FD that the following expenditures were made using the amounts each Fund paid under its 12b-1 Distribution Plan:

Fund	Advertising	Printing	Compensation to Dealers	Compensation to Sales Personnel	Other*
ILR Government Fund	$610	$0	$145,131	$5,882	$17,210

Fund	Advertising	Printing	Compensation to Dealers	Compensation to Sales Personnel	Other*
Treasury Fund	$1,110	$0	$ 201,554	$10,709	$ 31,333
Treasury Plus Fund	$ 31	$0	$ 11,300	$ 298	$ 872
U.S. Government Fund	$4,505	$0	$1,221,691	$43,456	$127,143

* Includes such items as compensation for travel, conferences and seminars for staff, professional fees, technology, services, and overhead (including space/facilities and management).

Set forth below is a list of those financial intermediaries to which SSGA FD (and its affiliates) expects, as of April 30, 2025, to pay compensation in the manner described in this "Payments to Financial Intermediaries" section. This list may change over time. Please contact your financial intermediary to determine whether it or its affiliate currently may be receiving such compensation and to obtain further information regarding any such compensation.

- Ariel Distributors Inc.
- Ascensus Broker Dealer Services, LLC
- BMO Capital Markets Corp.
- Blaylock Van, LLC
- BofA Securities, Inc.
- Cabrera Capital Markets LLC
- Charles Schwab & Co., Inc.
- Citibank, N.A.
- Computershare Trust Company, N.A.
- Commerce Bank
- Empower Financial Services, Inc.
- FIS Brokerage & Securities Services LLC
- State Street Brokerage Services, Inc.
- Goldman Sachs & Co
- Institutional Cash Distributors, LLC
- J.P. Morgan Securities LLC
- JP Morgan Chase bank, N.A.
- Lasalle Street Securities
- Mid-Atlantic Capital Corporation
- Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC
- MSCS Financial Services LLC
- MUFG Union Bank, National Association
- National Financial Services, LLC
- Pershing LLC
- PNC Capital Markets, LLC
- RBC Capital Markets, LLC
- Securities Finance Trust Company
- SEI Trust Company
- State Street Bank and Trust Company – Global Services Business Units
- State Street Global Markets, LLC
- TD Prime Services LLC
- The Bank of New York Mellon
- Treasury Curve

- UBS Financial Services Inc.
- US Bank, National Association
- Valic Financial Advisors, Inc.
- Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.
- Wells Fargo Clearing Services
- Wells Fargo Securities LLC

Counsel and Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

Ropes & Gray LLP serves as counsel to the Trust. The principal business address of Ropes & Gray LLP is 800 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02199. Sullivan & Worcester LLP, located at One Post Office Square, Boston, Massachusetts 02109, serves as independent counsel to the Independent Trustees.

Ernst & Young LLP serves as the independent registered public accounting firm for the Trust and provides (i) audit services and (ii) tax services. In connection with the audit of the 2024 financial statements, the Trust entered into an engagement agreement with Ernst & Young LLP that sets forth the terms of Ernst & Young LLP's audit engagement. The principal business address of Ernst & Young LLP is 200 Clarendon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116.

BROKERAGE ALLOCATION AND OTHER PRACTICES

All portfolio transactions are placed on behalf of a Fund by the Adviser. Purchases and sales of securities on a securities exchange are affected through brokers who charge a commission for their services. Ordinarily commissions are not charged on over-the-counter orders (e.g., fixed income securities) because the Funds pay a spread which is included in the cost of the security and represents the difference between the dealer's quoted price at which it is willing to sell the security and the dealer's quoted price at which it is willing to buy the security. When a Fund executes an over-the-counter order with an electronic communications network or an alternative trading system, a commission is charged by such electronic communications networks and alternative trading systems as they execute such orders on an agency basis. Securities may be purchased from underwriters at prices that include underwriting fees.

In placing a portfolio transaction, the Adviser seeks to achieve best execution. The Adviser's duty to seek best execution requires the Adviser to take reasonable steps to obtain for the client as favorable an overall result as possible for Fund portfolio transactions under the circumstances, taking into account various factors that are relevant to the particular transaction.

The Adviser refers to and selects from the list of approved trading counterparties maintained by the Adviser's Credit Risk Management team. In selecting a trading counterparty for a particular trade, the Adviser seeks to weigh relevant factors including, but not limited to the following:

- Prompt and reliable execution;
- The competitiveness of commission rates and spreads, if applicable;
- The financial strength, stability and/or reputation of the trading counterparty;
- The willingness and ability of the executing trading counterparty to execute transactions (and commit capital) of size in liquid and illiquid markets without disrupting the market for the security;
- Local laws, regulations or restrictions;
- The ability of the trading counterparty to maintain confidentiality;
- The availability and capability of execution venues, including electronic communications networks for trading and execution management systems made available to Adviser;
- Market share;
- Liquidity;
- Price;
- Execution related costs;
- History of execution of orders;
- Likelihood of execution and settlement;

- Order size and nature;
- Clearance and settlement capabilities, especially in high volatility market environments;
- Availability of lendable securities;
- Sophistication of the trading counterparty's trading capabilities and infrastructure/facilities;
- The operational efficiency with which transactions are processed and cleared, taking into account the order size and complexity;
- Speed and responsiveness to the Adviser;
- Access to secondary markets;
- Counterparty exposure; and
- Depending upon the circumstances, the Adviser may take other relevant factors into account if the Adviser believes that these are important in taking all sufficient steps to obtain the best possible result for execution of the order.

In selecting a trading counterparty, the price of the transaction and costs related to the execution of the transaction typically merit a high relative importance, depending on the circumstances. The Adviser does not necessarily select a trading counterparty based upon price and costs but may take other relevant factors into account if it believes that these are important in taking reasonable steps to obtain the best possible result for a Fund under the circumstances. Consequently, the Adviser may cause a client to pay a trading counterparty more than another trading counterparty might have charged for the same transaction in recognition of the value and quality of the brokerage services provided. The following matters may influence the relative importance that the Adviser places upon the relevant factors:

(i) The nature and characteristics of the order or transaction. For example, size of order, market impact of order, limits, or other instructions relating to the order;

(ii) The characteristics of the financial instrument(s) or other assets which are the subject of that order. For example, whether the order pertains to an equity, fixed income, derivative or convertible instrument;

(iii) The characteristics of the execution venues to which that order can be directed, if relevant. For example, availability and capabilities of electronic trading systems;

(iv) Whether the transaction is a 'delivery versus payment' or 'over-the-counter' transaction. The creditworthiness of the trading counterparty, the amount of existing exposure to a trading counterparty and trading counterparty settlement capabilities may be given a higher relative importance in the case of 'over-the-counter' transactions; and/or

(v) Any other circumstances that the Adviser believes are relevant at the time.

The process by which trading counterparties are selected to effect transactions is designed to exclude consideration of the sales efforts conducted by broker-dealers in relation to the Funds.

The Adviser does not currently use the Funds' assets in connection with third-party soft dollar arrangements. While the Adviser does not currently use "soft" or commission dollars paid by the Funds for the purchase of third-party research, the Adviser reserves the right to do so in the future.

DECLARATION OF TRUST, CAPITAL STOCK AND OTHER INFORMATION

Capitalization

Under the Declaration of Trust, the Trustees are authorized to issue an unlimited number of shares of each Fund. Upon liquidation or dissolution of a Fund, investors are entitled to share pro rata in the Fund's net assets available for distribution to its investors. Investments in a Fund have no preference, preemptive, conversion or similar rights, except as determined by the Trustees or as set forth in the Bylaws, and are fully paid and non-assessable, except as set forth below.

Declarations of Trust

The Declarations of Trust of the Trust and the Master Trust each provide that a Trust may redeem shares of a Fund at the redemption price that would apply if the share redemption were initiated by a shareholder. It is the policy of each Trust that, except upon such conditions as may from time to time be set forth in the then current prospectus of a Fund or to facilitate a Trust's or a Fund's compliance with applicable law or regulation, a Trust would not initiate a redemption of shares unless it were to determine that failing to do so may have a substantial adverse consequence for a Fund or the Trust.

Each Trust's Declaration of Trust provides that a Trustee who is not an "interested person" (as defined in the 1940 Act) of a Trust will be deemed independent and disinterested with respect to any demand made in connection with a derivative action or proceeding. It is the policy of each Trust that it will not assert that provision to preclude a shareholder from claiming that a Trustee is not independent or disinterested with respect to any demand made in connection with a derivative action or proceeding; provided, however, that the foregoing policy will not prevent the Trusts from asserting applicable law (including Section 2B of Chapter 182 of the Massachusetts General Laws) to preclude a shareholder from claiming that a Trustee is not independent or disinterested with respect to any demand made in connection with a derivative action or proceeding.

A Trust will not deviate from the foregoing policies in a manner that adversely affects the rights of shareholders of a Fund without the approval of "a vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities" (as defined in the 1940 Act) of such Fund.

Voting

Each shareholder is entitled to a vote in proportion to the number of Fund shares it owns. Shares do not have cumulative voting rights in the election of Trustees, and shareholders holding more than 50% of the aggregate outstanding shares in the Trust may elect all of the Trustees if they choose to do so. The Trust is not required and has no current intention to hold annual meetings of shareholders but the Trust will hold special meetings of shareholders when in the judgment of the Trustees it is necessary or desirable to submit matters for a shareholder vote.

Massachusetts Business Trust

Under Massachusetts law, shareholders in a Massachusetts business trust could, under certain circumstances, be held personally liable for the obligations of the trust. However, the Declaration of Trust disclaims shareholder liability for acts or obligations of the Trust and provides for indemnification out of the property of the applicable series of the Trust for any loss to which the shareholder may become subject by reason of being or having been a shareholder of that series and for reimbursement of the shareholder for all expense arising from such liability. Thus, the risk of a shareholder incurring financial loss on account of shareholder liability should be limited to circumstances in which the series would be unable to meet its obligations.

PRICING OF SHARES

Pricing of shares of the Funds does not occur on New York Stock Exchange ("NYSE") holidays. The NYSE is open for trading every weekday except for: (a) the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, Washington's Birthday (the third Monday in February), Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth National Independence Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas; and (b) the preceding Friday or the subsequent Monday when one of the calendar-determined holidays falls on a Saturday or Sunday, respectively. Purchases and withdrawals will be effected at the time of determination of NAV next following the receipt of any purchase or withdrawal order which is determined to be in good order. The Funds' securities will be valued pursuant to guidelines established by the Board of Trustees.

Each Fund seeks to maintain a constant price per share of $1.00 for purposes of sales and redemptions of shares by using the amortized cost valuation method to value its portfolio instruments in accordance with Rule 2a-7 under the 1940 Act. There can be no assurance that the $1.00 NAV per share will be maintained. The amortized cost method involves valuing an instrument at its cost and thereafter assuming a constant amortization to maturity of any discount or premium, even though the portfolio security may increase or decrease in market value, generally in response to changes in interest rates. While this method provides certainty in valuation, it may result in periods during which value, as determined by amortized cost, is higher or lower than the price each Fund would receive if it sold the instrument.

For example, in periods of declining interest rates, the daily yield on each of the Fund's shares computed by dividing the annualized daily income on the Fund's portfolio by the NAV based upon the amortized cost valuation technique may tend to be higher than a similar computation made by using a method of valuation based upon market prices and estimates thereof. In periods of rising interest rates, the daily yield on each Fund's shares computed the same way may tend to be lower than a similar computation made by using a method of calculation based upon market prices and estimates.

The Trustees have established procedures reasonably designed to stabilize each Fund's price per share at $1.00. These procedures include: (1) the determination of the deviation from $1.00, if any, of each Fund's NAV using market values; (2) periodic review by the Trustees of the amount of and the methods used to calculate the deviation; and (3) maintenance of records of such determination. The Trustees will promptly consider what action, if any, should be taken if such deviation exceeds 1/2 of one percent.

Negative Interest Rate Environments

In the event of a negative interest rate environment, the net income of a Fund may fall below zero (i.e., become negative). If this occurs, the Trustees may enact certain measures to seek to maintain a stable NAV per share at $1.00 for each applicable Fund. These measures may include the reduction or suspension of the issuance of dividends, the implementation of reverse distributions, or periodic reverse share splits, as necessary in the Trustees' judgment, to seek to maintain a stable NAV per share at $1.00. The measures taken by the Trustees in an effort to stabilize the NAV per share at $1.00 are subject to applicable law and the provisions of the Fund's organizational documents. Investments in a Fund are subject to the potential that the Trustees may enact such measures.

A Fund may also effect reverse distributions to offset the impact of the negative income on a Fund's NAV per share, thereby reducing the number of shares outstanding and maintaining a stable NAV per share at $1.00. In a reverse distribution, the number of shares would be reduced on a pro rata basis from each shareholder. If there is a reverse share split, the number of shares of a Fund will decrease, on a pro rata basis, as necessary to reflect the negative income of the Fund and maintain a stable NAV per share at $1.00.

Depending on the specific measure(s) taken, these measures would result in shareholders not receiving a dividend, holding fewer shares of the Fund and/or experiencing a loss in the aggregate value of their investment in the Fund. There is no assurance that the Trustees will take such actions or that such measures will result in a stable NAV per share of $1.00.

If the Trustees determine that it is no longer in the best interests of the Trust and its shareholders to maintain a stable price of $1.00 per share or if the Trustees believe that maintaining such price no longer reflects a market based NAV, the Trustees have the right to change from an amortized cost basis of valuation to valuation based on market quotations. If a Fund changes from an amortized cost basis of valuation to valuation based on market quotations, the Fund's losses would be reflected in the Fund's share price. The Trust will notify shareholders of an applicable Fund of any such change from using an amortized cost basis of valuation to valuation based on market quotations.

TAXATION OF THE FUNDS

The following discussion of U.S. federal income tax consequences of an investment in the Funds is based on the Code, U.S. Treasury regulations, and other applicable authority, as of the date of this SAI. These authorities are subject to change by legislative or administrative action, possibly with retroactive effect. The following discussion is only a summary of some of the important U.S. federal income tax considerations generally applicable to investments in the Funds. There may be other tax considerations applicable to particular shareholders. Shareholders should consult their own tax advisors regarding their particular situation and the possible application of foreign, state and local tax laws.

Each Fund invests substantially all of its assets in a corresponding Portfolio (which may be a series of State Street Master Funds) (in each case, a "Portfolio"), and so substantially all of each such Fund's income will result from distributions or deemed distributions, or allocations, as the case may be, from the corresponding Portfolio. Therefore, as applicable, references to the U.S. federal income tax treatment of the Funds, including to the assets owned and the income earned by the Funds, will be to or will include such treatment of the corresponding Portfolio, and, as applicable, the assets owned and the income earned by the corresponding Portfolio. See "Tax Considerations Applicable to Funds Investing in Portfolios Treated as Partnerships" and "Tax Considerations Applicable to Funds Investing in Portfolios Treated as RICs" below for further information.

Special tax rules apply to investments through defined contribution plans and other tax-qualified plans or tax-advantaged arrangements. Shareholders should consult their tax advisors to determine the suitability of shares of a Fund as an investment through such plans and arrangements and the precise effect of an investment on their particular tax situations.

Qualification as a Regulated Investment Company

Each Fund has elected or intends to elect to be treated as a RIC under Subchapter M of the Code and intends each year to qualify and be eligible to be treated as such. In order to qualify for the special tax treatment accorded RICs and their shareholders, each Fund must, among other things, (a) derive at least 90% of its gross income for each taxable year from (i) dividends, interest, payments with respect to certain securities loans, gains from the sale of securities or foreign currencies, or other income (including but not limited to gains from options, futures or forward contracts) derived with respect to its business of investing in such stock, securities or currencies and (ii) net income derived from interests in "qualified publicly traded partnerships" (as defined below); (b) diversify its holdings so that, at the end of each quarter of the Fund's taxable year, (i) at least 50% of the value of the Fund's total assets consists of cash and cash items (including receivables), U.S. Government securities, securities of other RICs, and other securities limited in respect of any one issuer to a value not greater than 5% of the value of the Fund's total assets and no more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of such issuer, and (ii) no more than 25% of its assets are invested, including through corporations in which the Fund owns a 20% or more voting stock interest, (x) in the securities (other than those of the U.S. Government or other RICs) of any one issuer or of two or more issuers which the Fund controls and which are engaged in the same, similar or related trades and businesses, or (y) in the securities of one or more qualified publicly traded partnerships (as defined below); and (c) distribute with respect to each taxable year at least 90% of the sum of its investment company taxable income (as that term is defined in the Code without regard to the deduction for dividends paid – generally taxable ordinary income and the excess, if any, of net short-term capital gains over net long-term capital losses) and net tax-exempt income, for such year.

In general, for purposes of the 90% gross income requirement described in (a) above, income derived from a partnership will be treated as qualifying income only to the extent such income is attributable to items of income of the partnership which would be qualifying income if realized directly by the RIC.

However, 100% of the net income derived from an interest in a "qualified publicly traded partnership" (a partnership (x) the interests in which are traded on an established securities market or are readily tradable on a secondary market or the substantial equivalent thereof, and (y) that derives less than 90% of its income from the qualifying income described in section (a)(i) of the preceding paragraph), will be treated as qualifying income. In general, such entities will be treated as partnerships for U.S. federal income tax purposes, because they meet the passive income requirement under Code Section 7704(c)(2). Further, although in general the passive loss rules of the Code do not apply to RICs, such rules do apply to a RIC with respect to items attributable to an interest in a qualified publicly traded partnership.

For purposes of the diversification test in (b) above, the term "outstanding voting securities of such issuer" will include the equity securities of a qualified publicly traded partnership. Also, for purposes of the diversification test in (b) above, the identification of the issuer (or, in some cases, issuers) of a particular investment can depend on the terms and conditions of that investment. In some cases, identification of the issuer (or issuers) is uncertain under current law, and an adverse determination or future guidance by the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") with respect to issuer identification for a particular type of investment may adversely affect a Fund's ability to meet the diversification test in (b) above.

If a Fund qualifies as a RIC that is accorded special tax treatment, the Fund will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax on income or gains distributed in a timely manner to its shareholders in the form of dividends (including Capital Gain Dividends, as defined below). If a Fund were to fail to meet the income, diversification or distribution test described above, the Fund could in some cases cure such failure, including by paying a Fund-level tax, paying interest or disposing of certain assets. If such Fund were ineligible to or otherwise did not cure such failure for any year, or if such Fund were otherwise to fail to qualify as a RIC accorded special tax treatment in any taxable year, the Fund would be subject to tax at the Fund level on its taxable income at corporate rates, and all distributions from earnings and profits, including any distributions of net tax-exempt income (if any) and net capital gains (as defined below), would be taxable to shareholders as ordinary income. Some portions of such distributions may be eligible for the dividends-received deduction in the case of corporate shareholders and may be eligible to be treated as "qualified dividend income" in the case of shareholders taxed as individuals, provided, in both cases, the shareholder meets certain holding period and other requirements in respect of a Fund's shares (each as described below). In addition, a Fund could be required to recognize unrealized gains, pay substantial taxes and interest and make substantial distributions before re-qualifying as a RIC that is accorded special tax treatment.

Each Fund intends to distribute at least annually to its shareholders all or substantially all of its investment company taxable income (computed without regard to the dividends-paid deduction) and its net tax-exempt income (if any), and may distribute its net capital gain (that is, the excess of net long-term capital gain over net short-term capital loss, in each case determined with reference to any loss carryforwards). Any taxable income retained by a Fund will be subject to tax at the Fund level at regular corporate rates. If a Fund retains any net capital gain, it will be subject to tax at regular corporate rates on the amount retained, but it is permitted to designate the retained amount as undistributed capital gain in a timely notice to its shareholders who (a) will be required to include in income for U.S. federal income tax purposes, as long-term capital gain, their shares of such undistributed amount, and (b) will be entitled to credit their proportionate shares of the tax paid by the Fund on such undistributed amount against their U.S. federal income tax liabilities, if any, and to claim refunds on a properly-filed U.S. tax return to the extent the credit exceeds such liabilities. If a Fund makes this designation, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, the tax basis of shares owned by a shareholder of the Fund will be increased by an amount equal to the difference between the amount of undistributed capital gains included in the shareholder's gross income under clause (a) of the preceding sentence and the tax deemed paid by the shareholder under clause (b) of the preceding sentence. The Funds are not required to, and there can be no assurance a Fund will, make this designation if it retains all or a portion of its net capital gain in a taxable year.

In determining its net capital gain, including in connection with determining the amount available to support a Capital Gain Dividend (as defined below), its taxable income, and its earnings and profits, a RIC generally may elect to treat part or all of any post-October capital loss (defined as any net capital loss attributable to the portion, if any, of the taxable year after October 31 or, if there is no such loss, the net long-term capital loss or net short-term capital loss attributable to any such portion of the taxable year) or late-year ordinary loss (generally, the sum of its (i) net ordinary loss, if any, from the sale, exchange or other taxable disposition of property, attributable to the portion, if any, of the taxable year after October 31, and its (ii) other net ordinary loss, if any, attributable to the portion, if any, of the taxable year after December 31) as if incurred in the succeeding taxable year.

If a Fund were to fail to distribute in a calendar year at least an amount equal, in general, to the sum of 98% of its ordinary income for such year and 98.2% of its capital gain net income for the one-year period ending October 31 of such year (or November 30 or December 31, if the Fund is eligible to elect and so elects), plus any such amounts retained from the prior year, the Fund would be subject to a nondeductible 4% excise tax on the undistributed amounts. For purposes of the required excise tax distribution, a RIC's ordinary gains and losses from the sale, exchange or other taxable disposition of property that would otherwise be taken into account after October 31 of a calendar year (or November 30, if the Fund makes the election referred to above) generally are treated as arising on January 1 of the following calendar year; in the case of a Fund with a December 31 year end that makes the election described above, no such gains or losses will be so treated. Also, for these purposes, a Fund will be treated as having distributed any amount on which it is subject to corporate income tax for the taxable year ending within the calendar year. Each Fund intends generally to make distributions sufficient to avoid imposition of the excise tax, although there can be no assurance that it will be able to do so. Distributions declared by a Fund during October, November and December to shareholders of record on a date in any such month and paid by the Fund during the following January will be treated for U.S. federal tax purposes as paid by the Fund and received by shareholders on December 31 of the year in which declared.

Capital losses in excess of capital gains ("net capital losses") are not permitted to be deducted against a Fund's net investment income. Instead, potentially subject to certain limitations, a Fund may carry net capital losses from any taxable year forward to subsequent taxable years to offset capital gains, if any, realized during such subsequent taxable years. Distributions from capital gains are generally made after applying any available capital loss carryforwards. Capital loss carryforwards are reduced to the extent they offset current-year net realized capital gains, whether the Fund retains or distributes such gains. A Fund may carry net capital losses forward to one or more subsequent taxable years without expiration; any such carryforward losses will retain their character as short-term or long-term. The Fund must apply such carryforwards first against gains of the same character. See a Fund's most recent annual shareholder report for the Fund's available capital loss carryovers as of the end of its most recently ended fiscal year.

Taxation of Distributions Received by Shareholders

For U.S. federal income tax purposes, distributions of investment income are generally taxable to shareholders as ordinary income. Taxes on distributions of capital gains are determined by how long a Fund owned (or is deemed to have owned) the investments that generated them, rather than how long a shareholder has owned his or her Fund shares. In general, a Fund will recognize long-term capital gain or loss on the disposition of assets the Fund has owned (or is deemed to have owned) for more than one year, and short-term capital gain or loss on the disposition of investments the Fund has owned (or is deemed to have owned) for one year or less. Distributions of net-capital gain (that is, the excess of net long-term

capital gain over net short-term capital loss) that are properly reported by a Fund as capital gain dividends ("Capital Gain Dividends") generally will be taxable to a shareholder receiving such distributions as long-term capital gains includible in net capital gain and taxed to individuals at reduced rates relative to ordinary income. Distributions from capital gains are generally made after applying any available capital loss carryovers. The IRS and the Department of the Treasury have issued regulations that impose special rules in respect of Capital Gain Dividends received through partnership interests constituting "applicable partnership interests" under Section 1061 of the Code. The Funds do not expect to distribute Capital Gain Dividends. Distributions of net short-term capital gain (as reduced by any net long-term capital loss for the taxable year) will be taxable to shareholders as ordinary income. Distributions of investment income properly reported by a Fund and, in the case of a Fund investing in a Portfolio treated as a RIC, the Portfolio, as derived from "qualified dividend income" will be taxed in the hands of individuals at the rates applicable to net capital gain, provided holding period and other requirements are met at each of the shareholder, the Portfolio and, in the case of a Fund investing in a Portfolio treated as a RIC, the Fund level. The Funds do not expect Fund distributions to be derived from qualified dividend income.

The Code generally imposes a 3.8% Medicare contribution tax on the net investment income of certain individuals, trusts and estates to the extent their income exceeds certain threshold amounts. For these purposes, "net investment income" generally includes, among other things, (i) distributions paid by a Fund of net investment income and capital gains, and (ii) any net gain from the sale, redemption, exchange or other taxable disposition of Fund shares. Shareholders are advised to consult their tax advisors regarding the possible implications of this additional tax on their investment in a Fund.

If a Fund makes a distribution to a shareholder in excess of the Fund's current and accumulated earnings and profits in any taxable year, the excess distribution will be treated as a return of capital to the extent of such shareholder's tax basis in its shares, and thereafter as capital gain. A return of capital is not taxable, but it reduces a shareholder's tax basis in its shares, thus reducing any loss or increasing any gain on a subsequent taxable disposition by the shareholder of its shares.

Shareholders of a Fund will be subject to U.S. federal income taxes as described herein on distributions made by the Fund whether received in cash or reinvested in additional shares of the Fund.

Distributions with respect to a Fund's shares are generally subject to U.S. federal income tax as described herein to the extent they do not exceed the Fund's realized income and gains, even though such distributions may economically represent a return of a particular shareholder's investment. Such distributions are likely to occur in respect of shares purchased at a time when a Fund's NAV includes either unrealized gains, or realized but undistributed income or gains, that were therefore included in the price the shareholder paid. Such distributions may reduce the fair market value of the Fund's shares below the shareholder's cost basis in those shares. As described above, a Fund is required to distribute realized income and gains regardless of whether the Fund's NAV also reflects unrealized losses.

In order for some portion of the dividends received by a Fund shareholder to be "qualified dividend income," the corresponding Portfolio must meet holding period and other requirements with respect to the dividend-paying stocks held by the Portfolio, the shareholder must meet holding period and other requirements with respect to the Fund's shares, and in the case of a Fund investing in a Portfolio treated as a RIC, the Fund must meet holding period and other requirements with respect to its shares in the Portfolio. In general, a dividend will not be treated as qualified dividend income (at any of the Portfolio, Fund or shareholder level, as applicable) (a) if the dividend is received with respect to any share of stock held for fewer than 61 days during the 121-day period beginning on the date which is 60 days before the date on which such share becomes ex-dividend with respect to such dividend (or, in the case of certain preferred stock, 91 days during the 181-day period beginning 90 days before such date), (b) to the extent that the recipient is under an obligation (whether pursuant to a short sale or otherwise) to make related payments with respect to positions in substantially similar or related property, (c) if the recipient elects to have the dividend income treated as investment income for purposes of the limitation on deductibility of investment interest, or (d) if the dividend is received from a foreign corporation that is (i) not eligible for the benefits of a comprehensive income tax treaty with the United States (with the exception of dividends paid on stock of such a foreign corporation readily tradable on an established securities market in the United States) or (ii) treated as a passive foreign investment company.

In general, distributions of investment income properly reported by a Fund as derived from qualified dividend income will be treated as qualified dividend income in the hands of a shareholder taxed as an individual, provided the shareholder meets the holding period and other requirements described above with respect to the Fund's shares. If the aggregate qualified dividends (a) allocated to a Fund by a Portfolio that is treated as a partnership or (b) received by a Fund from a

Portfolio that is treated as a RIC, during any taxable year are 95% or more of the Fund's gross income (excluding net long-term capital gain over net short-term capital loss), then 100% of the Fund's dividends (other than dividends properly reported as Capital Gain Dividends) will be eligible to be treated as qualified dividend income.

In general, dividends of net investment income received by corporate shareholders of a Fund will qualify for the dividends-received deduction generally available to corporations to the extent of the amount of eligible dividends from domestic corporations received by a Portfolio (a) that is treated as a partnership and allocated to the Fund, or (b) that is treated as a RIC and in turn paid by the Portfolio to the Fund for the taxable year. A dividend so allocated or paid to a Fund will not be treated as a dividend eligible for the dividends-received deduction (at any of the Portfolio, Fund or shareholder level, as applicable) (a) if it has been received with respect to any share of stock that the Portfolio has held for less than 46 days (91 days in the case of certain preferred stock) during the 91-day period beginning on the date which is 45 days before the date on which such share becomes ex-dividend with respect to such dividend (during the 181-day period beginning 90 days before such date in the case of certain preferred stock) or (b) to the extent that the Portfolio is under an obligation (pursuant to a short sale or otherwise) to make related payments with respect to positions in substantially similar or related property. Moreover, a Fund that invests in a corresponding Portfolio that is treated as a RIC must meet similar requirements with respect to its shares of the corresponding Portfolio. Finally, the dividends-received deduction may otherwise be disallowed or reduced (x) if the corporate shareholder fails to satisfy the foregoing requirements with respect to its shares of the Fund or (y) by application of various provisions of the Code (for instance, the dividends-received deduction is reduced in the case of a dividend received on debt-financed portfolio stock (generally, stock acquired with borrowed funds)). The Funds do not expect Fund distributions to be eligible for the dividends-received deduction.

Any distribution of income that is attributable to (a) income received by a Fund in lieu of dividends with respect to securities on loan pursuant to a securities lending transaction or (b) dividend income received by a Fund on securities it temporarily purchased from a counterparty pursuant to a repurchase agreement that is treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a loan by the Fund, will not constitute qualified dividend income to individual shareholders and will not be eligible for the dividends-received deduction for corporate shareholders.

If a Fund holds, directly or indirectly, one or more "tax credit bonds" issued on or before December 31, 2017, on one or more applicable dates during a taxable year, the Fund may elect to permit its shareholders to claim a tax credit on their income tax returns equal to each shareholder's proportionate share of tax credits from the bond otherwise allowed to the Fund. In such a case, a shareholder will be deemed to receive a distribution of money with respect to its Fund shares equal to the shareholder's proportionate share of the amount of such credits and be allowed a credit against the shareholder's U.S. federal income tax equal to the amount of such deemed distribution. A shareholder's ability to claim a tax credit associated with one or more tax credit bonds may be subject to certain limitations imposed by the Code, and the amount of the tax credits may not exceed the amount reported by the Fund in a written notice to shareholders. Even if a Fund is eligible to pass through tax credits to shareholders, the Fund may choose not to do so.

Tax Considerations Applicable to Funds Investing in Portfolios Treated as Partnerships

Certain Funds invest substantially all of their investable assets in a corresponding Portfolio that is treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In such cases the nature and character of each such Fund's income, gains, losses and deductions will generally be determined at the Portfolio level and each such Fund will be allocated its share of Portfolio income and gains. As applicable, references to income, gains, losses and deductions of a Fund will be to income, gains and losses recognized and deductions accruing at the Portfolio level and allocated to or otherwise taken into account by the Fund, and references to assets of a Fund will be to the Fund's allocable share of the assets of the corresponding Portfolio.

A Fund may be required to redeem a portion of its interest in a Portfolio in order to obtain sufficient cash to make the requisite distributions to maintain its qualification for treatment as a RIC. The Portfolio in turn may be required to sell investments in order to meet such redemption requests, including at a time when it may not be advantageous to do so.

A Fund is permitted to realize a loss on a redemption of Portfolio shares only if and when all Portfolio shares held by the Fund are completely redeemed for cash.

Tax Considerations Applicable to Funds Investing in Portfolios Treated as RICs

The following considerations are relevant to shareholders of Funds that invest substantially all of their assets in a corresponding Portfolio that has elected or intends to elect to be treated and to qualify and be eligible to be treated each year as a RIC.

Substantially all of such a Fund's income will result from distributions or deemed distributions from the corresponding Portfolio. Additionally, whether a Fund will meet the asset diversification test described above will depend on whether the corresponding Portfolio meets each of the income, diversification and distribution tests. If a Portfolio were to fail to meet any such test and were ineligible to or otherwise were not to cure such failure, the corresponding Fund would as a result itself fail to meet the asset diversification test and might be ineligible or unable to or might otherwise not cure such failure.

Because each Fund invests substantially all of its assets in shares of the corresponding Portfolio, its distributable income and gains will normally consist substantially of distributions from the corresponding Portfolio. To the extent that a Portfolio realizes net losses on its investments for a given taxable year, the corresponding Fund will not be able to benefit from those losses until, and only to the extent that (i) the Portfolio realizes gains that it can reduce by those losses, or (ii) the Fund recognizes its share of those losses when it disposes of shares of the Portfolio in a transaction qualifying for sale or exchange treatment. Moreover, even when a Fund does make such a disposition, any loss will be recognized as a capital loss, a portion of which may be a long-term capital loss. The Fund will not be able to offset any capital losses from its dispositions of shares of the corresponding Portfolio against its ordinary income (including distributions of any net short-term capital gains realized by a Portfolio), and the Fund's long-term capital losses first offset its long-term capital gains, increasing the likelihood that the Fund's short-term capital gains are distributed to shareholders as ordinary income.

The foregoing rules may cause the tax treatment of a Fund's gains, losses and distributions to differ at times from the tax treatment that would apply if the Fund invested directly in the types of securities held by the corresponding Portfolio. As a result, investors may receive taxable distributions earlier and recognize higher amounts of capital gain or ordinary income than they otherwise would.

Finally, a RIC generally must look through its 20 percent voting interest in a corporation, including a RIC, to the underlying assets thereof for purposes of the diversification test; special rules potentially provide limited relief from the application of this rule where a RIC owns such an interest in an underlying RIC (as defined below), such as a Portfolio.

Investments in Other RICs.

If a Fund receives dividends from a Portfolio treated as a RIC, or a Portfolio receives dividends from a mutual fund, an ETF or another investment company that qualifies as a RIC (each an "underlying RIC") and the underlying RIC reports such dividends as qualified dividend income, then the Fund, or Portfolio, as applicable, is permitted, in turn, to report a portion of its distributions as "qualified dividend income," provided the Fund, or Portfolio, as applicable, meets the holding period and other requirements with respect to shares of the underlying RIC.

If a Fund or Portfolio receives dividends from an underlying RIC and the underlying RIC reports such dividends as eligible for the dividends-received deduction, then the Fund or Portfolio, as applicable, is permitted, in turn, to report a portion of its distributions as eligible for the dividends-received deduction as well when it distributes such portion to its shareholders, provided holding period and other requirements are met.

If an underlying RIC in which a Fund invests elects to pass through tax credit bond credits to its shareholders, then the Fund is permitted in turn to elect to pass through its proportionate share of those tax credits to its shareholders, provided that the Fund meets shareholder notice and other requirements.

The foregoing rules may cause the tax treatment of a Fund's gains, losses and distributions to differ at times from the tax treatment that would apply if the Fund invested directly in the types of securities held by the underlying RIC. As a result, investors may receive taxable distributions earlier and recognize higher amounts of capital gain or ordinary income than they otherwise would.

Tax Implications of Certain Fund Investments

Special Rules for Debt Obligations. Some debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance (and zero-coupon debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance) will be treated as debt obligations that are issued originally at a discount. Generally, OID is treated as interest income and is included in a Fund's income and required to be distributed by the Fund over the term of the debt obligation, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, upon partial or full repayment or disposition of the debt obligation. In addition, payment-in-kind obligations will give rise to income which is required to be distributed and is taxable even though the Fund holding the obligation receives no interest payment in cash on the obligation during the year.

Some debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance that are acquired in the secondary market by a Fund may be treated as having "market discount." Very generally, market discount is the excess of the stated redemption price of a debt obligation (or in the case of an obligation issued with OID, its "revised issue price")

over the purchase price of such obligation. Generally, any gain recognized on the disposition of, and any partial payment of principal on, a debt obligation having market discount is treated as ordinary income to the extent the gain, or principal payment, does not exceed the "accrued market discount" on such debt obligation. Alternatively, a Fund may elect to accrue market discount currently, in which case the Fund will be required to include the accrued market discount in income (as ordinary income) and thus distribute it over the term of the debt obligation, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, upon partial or full repayment or disposition of the debt obligation. If a Fund makes the election referred to in the preceding sentence, then the rate at which the market discount accrues, and thus is included in a Fund's income, will depend upon which of the permitted accrual methods the Fund elects.

If a Fund holds the foregoing kinds of obligations, or other obligations subject to special rules under the Code, the Fund may be required to pay out as an income distribution each year an amount which is greater than the total amount of cash interest the Fund actually received. Such distributions may be made from the cash assets of the Fund or, if necessary, by disposition of portfolio securities, including at a time when it may not be advantageous to do so. These dispositions may cause a Fund to realize higher amounts of short-term capital gains (generally taxed to shareholders at ordinary income tax rates) and, in the event the Fund realizes net capital gains from such transactions, its shareholders may receive a larger Capital Gain Dividend than they would have if the Fund had not held such obligations.

A portion of the OID accrued on certain high yield discount obligations may not be deductible to the issuer and will instead be treated as a dividend paid by the issuer for purposes of the dividends-received deduction. In such cases, if the issuer of the high yield discount obligations is a domestic corporation, dividend payments by a Fund may be eligible for the dividends-received deduction to the extent attributable to the deemed dividend portion of such OID.

Securities Purchased at a Premium. Very generally, where a Fund purchases a bond at a price that exceeds the redemption price at maturity – that is, at a premium – the premium is amortizable over the remaining term of the bond. In the case of a taxable bond, if a Fund makes an election applicable to all such bonds it purchases, which election is irrevocable without consent of the IRS, the Fund reduces the current taxable income from the bond by the amortized premium and reduces its tax basis in the bond by the amount of such offset; upon the disposition or maturity of such bonds acquired on or after January 4, 2013, the Fund is permitted to deduct any remaining premium allocable to a prior period.

At-risk or Defaulted Securities. Investments in debt obligations that are at risk of or in default present special tax issues for the Funds. Tax rules are not entirely clear about issues such as when a Fund may cease to accrue interest, OID or market discount; whether, when or to what extent the Fund should recognize market discount on such debt obligations; when and to what extent a Fund may take deductions for bad debts or worthless securities; and how a Fund should allocate payments received on obligations in default between principal and income. These and other related issues will be addressed by a Fund when, as and if it invests in such securities, in order to seek to ensure that it distributes sufficient income to preserve its status as a RIC and does not become subject to U.S. federal income or excise tax.

Certain Investments in Mortgage Pooling Vehicles. Certain Funds may invest directly or indirectly in residual interests in real estate mortgage investment conduits ("REMICs") (including by investing in residual interests in CMOs with respect to which an election to be treated as a REMIC is in effect) or equity interests in taxable mortgage pools ("TMPs"). Under a notice issued by the IRS in October 2006 and Treasury regulations that have yet to be issued but may apply retroactively, a portion of a Fund's income (including income allocated to the Fund from certain pass-through entities) that is attributable to a residual interest in a REMIC or an equity interest in a TMP (referred to in the Code as an "excess inclusion") will be subject to U.S. federal income tax in all events. This notice also provides, and the regulations are expected to provide, that excess inclusion income of a RIC, such as a Fund, will be allocated to shareholders of the RIC in proportion to the dividends received by such shareholders, with the same consequences as if the shareholders held the related interest directly. As a result, a RIC investing in such securities may not be a suitable investment for charitable remainder trusts ("CRTs"), as noted below.

In general, excess inclusion income allocated to shareholders (i) cannot be offset by net operating losses (subject to a limited exception for certain thrift institutions), (ii) will constitute unrelated business taxable income ("UBTI") to entities (including a qualified pension plan, an individual retirement account, a 401(k) plan, a Keogh plan or other tax-exempt entity) subject to tax on UBTI, thereby potentially requiring such an entity that is allocated excess inclusion income, and that otherwise might not be required to file a tax return, to file a tax return and pay tax on such income, and (iii) in the case of a foreign shareholder will not qualify for any reduction in U.S. federal withholding tax. A shareholder will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on such inclusions notwithstanding any exemption from such income tax otherwise available under the Code.

Foreign Currency Transactions. Any transaction by a Fund in foreign currencies, foreign currency-denominated debt obligations or certain foreign currency options, futures contracts or forward contracts (or similar instruments) may give rise to ordinary income or loss to the extent such income or loss results from fluctuations in the value of the foreign currency concerned. Any such net gains could require a larger dividend toward the end of the calendar year. Any such net losses will generally reduce and potentially require the recharacterization of prior ordinary income distributions. Such ordinary income treatment may accelerate a Fund's distributions to shareholders and increase the distributions taxed to shareholders as ordinary income. Any net ordinary losses so created cannot be carried forward by the Fund to offset income or gains earned in subsequent taxable years.

Options and Futures. In general, option premiums received by a Fund are not immediately included in the income of the Fund. Instead, the premiums are recognized when the option contract expires, the option is exercised by the holder, or the Fund transfers or otherwise terminates the option (e.g., through a closing transaction). If a call option written by a Fund is exercised and the Fund sells or delivers the underlying stock, the Fund generally will recognize capital gain or loss equal to (a) the sum of the strike price and the option premium received by the Fund minus (b) the Fund's basis in the stock. Such gain or loss generally will be short-term or long-term depending upon the holding period of the underlying stock. If securities are purchased by a Fund pursuant to the exercise of a put option written by it, the Fund generally will subtract the premium received for purposes of computing its cost basis in the securities purchased. Gain or loss arising in respect of a termination of a Fund's obligation under an option other than through the exercise of the option will be short-term gain or loss depending on whether the premium income received by the Fund is greater or less than the amount paid by the Fund (if any) in terminating the transaction. Thus, for example, if an option written by a Fund expires unexercised, the Fund generally will recognize short-term gain equal to the premium received.

A Fund's options activities may include transactions constituting straddles for U.S. federal income tax purposes, that is, that trigger the U.S. federal income tax straddle rules contained primarily in Section 1092 of the Code. Such straddles include, for example, positions in a particular security, or an index of securities, and one or more options that offset the former position, including options that are "covered" by a Fund's long position in the subject security. Very generally, where applicable, Section 1092 requires (i) that losses be deferred on positions deemed to be offsetting positions with respect to "substantially similar or related property," to the extent of unrealized gain in the latter, and (ii) that the holding period of such a straddle position that has not already been held for the long-term holding period be terminated and begin anew once the position is no longer part of a straddle. Options on single stocks that are not "deep in the money" may constitute qualified covered calls, which generally are not subject to the straddle rules; the holding period on stock underlying qualified covered calls that are "in the money" although not "deep in the money" will be suspended during the period that such calls are outstanding. Thus, the straddle rules and the rules governing qualified covered calls could cause gains that would otherwise constitute long-term capital gains to be treated as short-term capital gains, and distributions that would otherwise constitute "qualified dividend income" or qualify for the dividends-received deduction to fail to satisfy the holding period requirements and therefore to be taxed as ordinary income or fail to qualify for the dividends-received deduction, as the case may be.

The tax treatment of certain positions entered into by a Fund, including regulated futures contracts, certain foreign currency positions and certain listed non-equity options, will be governed by section 1256 of the Code ("section 1256 contracts"). Gains or losses on section 1256 contracts generally are considered 60% long-term and 40% short-term capital gains or losses ("60/40"), although certain foreign currency gains and losses from such contracts may be treated as ordinary in character. Also, section 1256 contracts held by a Fund at the end of each taxable year (and, for purposes of the 4% excise tax, on certain other dates as prescribed under the Code) are "marked to market" with the result that unrealized gains or losses are treated as though they were realized and the resulting gain or loss is treated as ordinary or 60/40 gain or loss, as applicable.

Derivatives, Hedging, and Related Transactions. In addition to the special rules described above in respect of futures and options transactions, a Fund's transactions in other derivative instruments (e.g., forward contracts and swap agreements), as well as any of its hedging, short sale, securities loan or similar transactions, may be subject to one or more special tax rules (e.g., notional principal contract, straddle, constructive sale, wash sale and short sale rules). These rules may affect whether gains and losses recognized by a Fund are treated as ordinary or capital, accelerate the recognition of income or gains to the Fund, defer losses to the Fund, and cause adjustments in the holding periods of the Fund's securities, thereby affecting whether capital gains and losses are treated as short-term or long-term. These rules could therefore affect the amount, timing and/or character of distributions to shareholders.

Because these and other tax rules applicable to these types of transactions are in some cases uncertain under current law, an adverse determination or future guidance by the IRS with respect to these rules (which determination or guidance could be retroactive) may affect whether a Fund has made sufficient distributions, and otherwise satisfied the relevant requirements, to maintain its qualification as a RIC and avoid a Fund-level tax.

Book-Tax Differences. Certain of a Fund's investments in derivative instruments and foreign currency-denominated instruments, and any of the Fund's transactions in foreign currencies and hedging activities, are likely to produce a difference between its book income and the sum of its taxable income and net tax-exempt income (if any). If such a difference arises, and a Fund's book income is less than the sum of its taxable income and net tax-exempt income, the Fund could be required to make distributions exceeding book income to qualify as a RIC that is accorded special tax treatment and to avoid an entity-level tax. In the alternative, if a Fund's book income exceeds the sum of its taxable income (including realized capital gains) and net tax-exempt income, the distribution (if any) of such excess generally will be treated as (i) a dividend to the extent of the Fund's remaining earnings and profits (including earnings and profits arising from tax-exempt income), (ii) thereafter, as a return of capital to the extent of the recipient's basis in its shares, and (iii) thereafter as gain from the sale or exchange of a capital asset.

Backup Withholding

A Fund generally is required to withhold and remit to the U.S. Treasury a percentage of the taxable distributions and redemption proceeds paid to any individual shareholder who fails to properly furnish the Fund with a correct taxpayer identification number ("TIN"), who has under-reported dividend or interest income, or who fails to certify to the Fund that he or she is not subject to such withholding.

Backup withholding is not an additional tax. Any amounts withheld may be credited against the shareholder's U.S. federal income tax liability, provided the appropriate information is furnished to the IRS.

Tax-Exempt Shareholders

Income of a RIC that would be UBTI if earned directly by a tax-exempt entity will not generally constitute UBTI when distributed to a tax-exempt shareholder of the RIC. Notwithstanding this "blocking" effect, a tax-exempt shareholder could realize UBTI by virtue of its investment in a Fund if shares in the Fund constitute debt-financed property in the hands of the tax-exempt shareholder within the meaning of Code Section 514(b).

A tax-exempt shareholder may also recognize UBTI if a Fund recognizes "excess inclusion income" derived from direct or indirect investments in residual interests in REMICs or equity interests in TMPs if the amount of such income recognized by the Fund exceeds the Fund's investment company taxable income (after taking into account deductions for dividends paid by the Fund).

In addition, special tax consequences apply to CRTs that invest in RICs that invest directly or indirectly in residual interests in REMICs or equity interests in TMPs. Under legislation enacted in December 2006, a CRT (as defined in Section 664 of the Code) that realizes any UBTI for a taxable year must pay an excise tax annually of an amount equal to such UBTI. Under IRS guidance issued in October 2006, a CRT will not recognize UBTI as a result of investing in a RIC that recognizes "excess inclusion income." Rather, if at any time during any taxable year a CRT (or one of certain other tax-exempt shareholders, such as the United States, a state or political subdivision, or an agency or instrumentality thereof, and certain energy cooperatives) is a record holder of a share in a RIC that recognizes "excess inclusion income," then the RIC will be subject to a tax on that portion of its "excess inclusion income" for the taxable year that is allocable to such shareholders at the highest U.S. federal corporate income tax rate. The extent to which this IRS guidance remains applicable in light of the December 2006 legislation is unclear. To the extent permitted under the 1940 Act, each Fund may elect to specially allocate any such tax to the applicable CRT, or other shareholder, and thus reduce such shareholder's distributions for the year by the amount of the tax that relates to such shareholder's interest in a Fund. CRTs are urged to consult their tax advisors concerning the consequences of investing in each Fund.

Redemptions and Exchanges

Redemptions and exchanges of each Fund's shares are taxable events and, accordingly, shareholders may realize gain or loss on these transactions to the extent the NAV of Fund Shares varies from a shareholder's tax basis in such shares. In general, any gain or loss realized upon a taxable disposition of shares will be treated as long-term capital gain or loss if the shares have been held for more than 12 months. Otherwise, the gain or loss on the taxable disposition of Fund shares will be treated as short-term capital gain or loss. However, any loss realized upon a taxable disposition of Fund shares held by a shareholder for six months or less will be treated as long-term, rather than short-term, to the extent of any Capital Gain Dividends received (or deemed received) by the shareholder with respect to the shares.

The IRS permits a simplified method of accounting for gains and losses realized upon the disposition of shares of a RIC that is a money market fund. Very generally, rather than realizing gain or loss upon each redemption of a share, a shareholder of a Fund using such method of accounting will recognize gain or loss with respect to such a Fund's shares for a given computation period (the shareholder's taxable year or shorter period selected by the shareholder) equal to the value of all the Fund shares held by the shareholder on the last day of the computation period, less the value of all Fund shares held by the shareholder on the last day of the preceding computation period, less the shareholder's net investment in the Fund (generally, purchases minus redemptions) made during the computation period. Additionally, any loss realized on a sale of shares of the Fund will not be disallowed under "wash sale" rules to the extent the Fund qualifies as a "money market fund" under the 1940 Act. Shareholders of a Fund are urged to consult their own tax advisors regarding their investment in the Fund.

Tax Shelter Reporting

Under U.S. Treasury regulations, if a shareholder recognizes a loss of at least $2 million in any single taxable year or $4 million in any combination of taxable years for an individual shareholder or at least $10 million in any taxable year or $20 million in any combination of taxable years for a corporate shareholder, the shareholder must file with the IRS a disclosure statement on IRS Form 8886. Direct shareholders of portfolio securities are in many cases excepted from this reporting requirement, but under current guidance, shareholders of a RIC are not excepted. Future guidance may extend the current exception from this reporting requirement to shareholders of most or all RICs. The fact that a loss is reportable under these regulations does not affect the legal determination of whether the taxpayer's treatment of the loss is proper. Shareholders should consult their tax advisors to determine the applicability of these regulations in light of their individual circumstances.

Non-U.S. Shareholders

Non-U.S. shareholders in a Fund should consult their tax advisors concerning the tax consequences of ownership of shares in the Fund. Distributions by a Fund to shareholders that are not "U.S. persons" within the meaning of the Code ("foreign shareholders") properly reported by the Fund as (1) Capital Gain Dividends, (2) short-term capital gain dividends, and (3) interest-related dividends, each as defined and subject to certain conditions described below, generally are not subject to withholding of U.S. federal income tax.

In general, the Code defines (1) "short-term capital gain dividends" as distributions of net short-term capital gains in excess of net long-term capital losses and (2) "interest-related dividends" as distributions from U.S.-source interest income of types similar to those not subject to U.S. federal income tax if earned directly by an individual foreign shareholder, in each case to the extent such distributions are properly reported as such by a Fund in a written notice to shareholders.

The exceptions to withholding for Capital Gain Dividends and short-term capital gain dividends do not apply to (A) distributions to an individual foreign shareholder who is present in the United States for a period or periods aggregating 183 days or more during the year of the distribution and (B) distributions attributable to gain that is treated as effectively connected with the conduct by the foreign shareholder of a trade or business within the United States under special rules regarding the disposition of "U.S. real property interests" ("USRPIs") as described below. The exception to withholding for interest-related dividends does not apply to distributions to a foreign shareholder (i) that has not provided a satisfactory statement that the beneficial owner is not a U.S. person, (ii) to the extent that the dividend is attributable to certain interest on an obligation if the foreign shareholder is the issuer or is a 10% shareholder of the issuer, (iii) that is within certain foreign countries that have inadequate information exchange with the United States, or (iv) to the extent the dividend is attributable to interest paid by a person that is a related person of the foreign shareholder and the foreign shareholder is a controlled foreign corporation. If a Fund invests in a RIC that pays such distributions to the Fund, such distributions retain their character as not subject to withholding if properly reported when paid by the Fund to foreign shareholders. A RIC is permitted to report such parts of its dividends as are eligible to be treated as interest-related or short-term capital gain dividends, but is not required to do so. In the case of shares held through an intermediary, the intermediary may withhold even if a Fund reports all or a portion of a payment as an interest-related or short-term capital gain dividend to shareholders.

Foreign shareholders should contact their intermediaries regarding the application of withholding rules to their accounts.

Distributions by a Fund to foreign shareholders other than Capital Gain Dividends, short-term capital gain dividends and interest-related dividends (e.g., dividends attributable to dividend income or to short-term capital gains or U.S. source interest income to which the exception from withholding described above does not apply) are generally subject to withholding of U.S. federal income tax at a rate of 30% (or lower applicable treaty rate).

A foreign shareholder is not, in general, subject to U.S. federal income tax on gains (and is not allowed a deduction for losses) realized on the sale of shares of a Fund unless (a) such gain is effectively connected with the conduct of a trade or business carried on by such holder within the United States, (b) in the case of an individual holder, the holder is present in the United States for a period or periods aggregating 183 days or more during the year of the sale and certain other conditions are met, or (c) the special rules relating to gain attributable to the sale or exchange of USRPIs apply to the foreign shareholder's sale of shares of the Fund (as described below).

Foreign shareholders with respect to whom income from a Fund is effectively connected with a trade or business conducted by the foreign person within the United States will in general be subject to U.S. federal income tax on the income derived from the Fund at the graduated rates applicable to U.S. citizens, residents or domestic corporations, whether such income is received in cash or reinvested in shares of the Fund and, in the case of a foreign corporation, may also be subject to a branch profits tax. If a foreign shareholder is eligible for the benefits of a tax treaty, any effectively connected income or gain will generally be subject to U.S. federal income tax on a net basis only if it is also attributable to a permanent establishment maintained by the shareholder in the United States. More generally, foreign shareholders who are residents in a country with an income tax treaty with the United States may obtain different tax results than those described herein, and are urged to consult their tax advisors.

Special rules would apply if a Fund were a qualified investment entity ("QIE") because it is either a "U.S. real property holding corporation" ("USRPHC") or would be a USRPHC but for the operation of certain exceptions to the definition thereof. Very generally, a USRPHC is a domestic corporation that holds USRPIs the fair market value of which equals or exceeds 50% of the sum of the fair market values of the corporation's USRPIs, interests in real property located outside the United States, and other trade or business assets. USRPIs are generally defined as any interest in U.S. real property and any interest (other than solely as a creditor) in a USRPHC or, very generally, an entity that has been a USRPHC in the last five years. A Fund that holds, directly or indirectly, significant interests in real estate investment trusts ("REITs") may be a USRPHC. Interests in domestically controlled QIEs, including REITs and RICs that are QIEs, not-greater-than-10% interests in publicly traded classes of stock in REITs and not-greater-than-5% interests in publicly traded classes of stock in RICs generally are not USRPIs, but these exceptions do not apply for purposes of determining whether a Fund is a QIE. If an interest in a Fund were a USRPI, the Fund would be required to withhold U.S. tax on the proceeds of a share redemption by a greater-than-5% foreign shareholder, in which case such foreign shareholder generally would also be required to file U.S. tax returns and pay any additional taxes due in connection with the redemption.

If a Fund were a QIE under a special "look-through" rule, any distributions by the Fund to a foreign shareholder attributable directly or indirectly to (i) distributions received by the Fund from a lower-tier RIC or REIT that the Fund is required to treat as USRPI gain in its hands and (ii) gains realized on the disposition of USRPIs by the Fund, would retain their character as gains realized from USRPIs in the hands of the Fund's foreign shareholders and would be subject to U.S. tax withholding. In addition, such distributions could result in the foreign shareholder being required to file a U.S. tax return and pay tax on the distributions at regular U.S. federal income tax rates. The consequences to a foreign shareholder, including the rate of such withholding and character of such distributions (e.g., as ordinary income or USRPI gain), would vary depending upon the extent of the foreign shareholder's current and past ownership of the Fund. Each Fund generally does not expect that it will be a QIE.

Foreign shareholders of a Fund also may be subject to "wash sale" rules to prevent the avoidance of the tax-filing and –payment obligations discussed above through the sale and repurchase of Fund shares.

Foreign shareholders should consult their tax advisors and, if holding shares through intermediaries, their intermediaries, concerning the application of these rules to their investment in a Fund.

In order for a foreign shareholder to qualify for any exemptions from withholding described above or for lower withholding tax rates under income tax treaties, or to establish an exemption from back-up withholding, the foreign shareholder must comply with special certification and filing requirements relating to its non-U.S. status (including, in general, furnishing an IRS Form W-8BEN, IRS Form W-8BEN-E, or substitute form). Foreign shareholders in a Fund should consult their tax advisors in this regard.

Special rules (including withholding and reporting requirements) apply to foreign partnerships and those holding Fund shares through foreign partnerships. Additional considerations may apply to foreign trusts and estates. Investors holding Fund shares through foreign entities should consult their tax advisors about their particular situation.

A foreign shareholder may be subject to state and local tax and to the U.S. federal estate tax in addition to the U.S. federal income tax on income referred to above.

Shareholder Reporting Obligations With Respect To Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts

Shareholders that are U.S. persons and own, directly or indirectly, more than 50% of a Fund by vote or value could be required to report annually their "financial interest" in the Fund's "foreign financial accounts," if any, on FinCEN Form 114, Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts ("FBAR"). Shareholders should consult a tax advisor, and persons investing in a Fund through an intermediary should contact their intermediary, regarding the applicability to them of this reporting requirement.

Other Reporting and Withholding Requirements

Sections 1471-1474 of the Code and the U.S. Treasury and IRS guidance issued thereunder (collectively, "FATCA") generally require a Fund to obtain information sufficient to identify the status of each of its shareholders under FATCA or under an applicable intergovernmental agreement (an "IGA") between the United States and a foreign government. If a shareholder fails to provide the requested information or otherwise fails to comply with FATCA or an IGA, the Fund may be required to withhold under FATCA at a rate of 30% with respect to that shareholder on ordinary dividends it pays. The IRS and the Department of Treasury have issued proposed regulations providing that these withholding rules will not apply to the gross proceeds of share redemptions or Capital Gain Dividends a Fund pays. If a payment by a Fund is subject to FATCA withholding, the Fund is required to withhold even if such payment would otherwise be exempt from withholding under the rules applicable to foreign shareholders described above (e.g., short- term capital gain dividends and interest-related dividends).

Each prospective investor is urged to consult its tax advisor regarding the applicability of FATCA and any other reporting requirements with respect to the prospective investor's own situation, including investments through an intermediary.

General Considerations

The U.S. federal income tax discussion set forth above is for general information only. Prospective investors should consult their tax advisors regarding the specific U.S. federal income tax consequences of purchasing, holding, and disposing of shares of the Funds, as well as the effects of state, local, foreign, and other tax laws and any proposed tax law changes.

UNDERWRITER

SSGA FD serves as the Funds' distributor pursuant to the Distribution Agreement by and between SSGA FD and the Trust. Pursuant to the Distribution Agreement, the Funds pay SSGA FD fees under the Rule 12b-1 Plan in effect for the Funds. For a description of the fees paid to SSGA FD under the Rule 12b-1 Plan, see "Distribution Plans," above. SSGA FD is not obligated to sell any specific number of shares and will sell shares of a Fund on a continuous basis only against orders to purchase shares. The principal business address of SSGA FD is One Iron Street, Boston, MA 02210.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024 for the Funds are included in each Fund's Form N-CSR filing, which were filed with the SEC on March 6, 2025 (SEC Accession No. 0001193125-25-048021) and are incorporated into this SAI by reference. Each Fund's Form N-CSR filing is available, without charge, upon request, by calling (800) 647-7327 or through the Funds' website at www.ssga.com.

APPENDIX A

RATINGS OF DEBT INSTRUMENTS

MOODY'S INVESTORS SERVICE, INC. ("MOODY'S")

GLOBAL LONG-TERM RATING SCALE

Ratings assigned on Moody's global long-term rating scale are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial obligations issued by non-financial corporates, financial institutions, structured finance vehicles, project finance vehicles, and public sector entities. Long-term ratings are assigned to issuers or obligations with an original maturity of one year or more and reflect both on the likelihood of a default on contractually promised payments and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default.

Aaa: Obligations rated Aaa are judged to be of the highest quality, subject to the lowest level of credit risk.

Aa: Obligations rated Aa are judged to be of high quality and are subject to very low credit risk.

A: Obligations rated A are judged to be upper-medium grade and are subject to low credit risk.

Baa: Obligations rated Baa are judged to be medium-grade and subject to moderate credit risk and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics.

Ba: Obligations rated Ba are judged to be speculative and are subject to substantial credit risk.

B: Obligations rated B are considered speculative and are subject to high credit risk.

Caa: Obligations rated Caa are judged to be speculative of poor standing and are subject to very high credit risk.

Ca: Obligations rated Ca are highly speculative and are likely in, or very near, default, with some prospect of recovery of principal and interest.

C: Obligations rated C are the lowest rated and are typically in default, with little prospect for recovery of principal or interest.

Note: Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa. The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category. Additionally, a "(hyb)" indicator is appended to all ratings of hybrid securities issued by banks, insurers, finance companies, and securities firms.*

* By their terms, hybrid securities allow for the omission of scheduled dividends, interest, or principal payments, which can potentially result in impairment if such an omission occurs. Hybrid securities may also be subject to contractually allowable write-downs of principal that could result in impairment. Together with the hybrid indicator, the long-term obligation rating assigned to a hybrid security is an expression of the relative credit risk associated with that security.

GLOBAL SHORT-TERM RATING SCALE

Ratings assigned on Moody's global short-term rating scale are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial obligations issued by non-financial corporates, financial institutions, structured finance vehicles, project finance vehicles, and public sector entities. Short-term ratings are assigned to obligations with an original maturity of thirteen months or less and reflect both on the likelihood of a default on contractually promised payments and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default.

P-1: Ratings of Prime-1 reflect a superior ability to repay short-term obligations.

P-2: Ratings of Prime-2 reflect a strong ability to repay short-term obligations.

P-3: Ratings of Prime-3 reflect an acceptable ability to repay short-term obligations.

NP: Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Not Prime do not fall within any of the Prime rating categories.

S&P GLOBAL RATINGS ("S&P")

ISSUE CREDIT RATING DEFINITIONS

An S&P Global Ratings issue credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to a specific financial obligation, a specific class of financial obligations, or a specific financial program (including ratings on medium-term note programs and commercial paper programs). It takes into consideration the creditworthiness of guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation and takes into account the currency in which the obligation is denominated. The opinion reflects S&P Global Ratings' view of the obligor's capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments as they come due, and this opinion may assess terms, such as collateral security and subordination, which could affect ultimate payment in the event of default.

Issue credit ratings can be either long-term or short-term. Short-term ratings are generally assigned to those obligations considered short-term in the relevant market. Short-term ratings are also used to indicate the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to put features on long-term obligations. Medium-term notes are assigned long-term ratings.

LONG-TERM ISSUE CREDIT RATINGS*

AAA: An obligation rated 'AAA' has the highest rating assigned by S&P Global Ratings. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is extremely strong.

AA: An obligation rated 'AA' differs from the highest-rated obligations only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is very strong.

A: An obligation rated 'A' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher-rated categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is still strong.

BBB: An obligation rated 'BBB' exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

BB; B; CCC; CC; and C: Obligations rated 'BB', 'B', 'CCC', 'CC', and 'C' are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. 'BB' indicates the least degree of speculation and 'C' the highest. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions.

BB: An obligation rated 'BB' is less vulnerable to nonpayment than other speculative issues. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

B: An obligation rated 'B' is more vulnerable to nonpayment than obligations rated 'BB', but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

CCC: An obligation rated 'CCC' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment, and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

CC: An obligation rated 'CC' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment. The 'CC' rating is used when a default has not yet occurred, but S&P Global Ratings expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.

C: An obligation rated 'C' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, and the obligation is expected to have lower relative seniority or lower ultimate recovery compared with obligations that are rated higher.

D: An obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within five business days in the absence of a stated grace period or within the earlier of the stated grace period or 30 calendar days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. A rating on an obligation is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed debt restructuring.

NR: This indicates that a rating has not been assigned or is no longer assigned.

* Ratings from 'AA' to 'CCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the rating categories.

SHORT-TERM ISSUE CREDIT RATINGS

A-1: A short-term obligation rated 'A-1' is rated in the highest category by S&P Global Ratings. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is strong. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on these obligations is extremely strong.

A-2: A short-term obligation rated 'A-2' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher rating categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is satisfactory.

A-3: A short-term obligation rated 'A-3' exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken an obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

B: A short-term obligation rated 'B' is regarded as vulnerable and has significant speculative characteristics. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.

C: A short-term obligation rated 'C' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

D: A short-term obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

FITCH RATINGS. ("FITCH")

ISSUER DEFAULT RATINGS

Rated entities in a number of sectors, including financial and non-financial corporations, sovereigns, insurance companies and certain sectors within public finance, are generally assigned Issuer Default Ratings (IDRs). IDRs are also assigned to certain entities in global infrastructure and project finance. IDRs opine on an entity's relative vulnerability to default on financial obligations. The threshold default risk addressed by the IDR is generally that of the financial obligations whose non-payment would best reflect the uncured failure of that entity. As such, IDRs also address relative vulnerability to bankruptcy, administrative receivership or similar concepts.

In aggregate, IDRs provide an ordinal ranking of issuers based on the agency's view of their relative vulnerability to default, rather than a prediction of a specific percentage likelihood of default.

AAA: Highest credit quality.

'AAA' ratings denote the lowest expectation of default risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

AA: Very high credit quality.

'AA' ratings denote expectations of very low default risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

A: High credit quality.

'A' ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

BBB: Good credit quality.

'BBB' ratings indicate that expectations of default risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

BB: Speculative.

'BB' ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to default risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time; however, business or financial flexibility exists that supports the servicing of financial commitments.

B: Highly speculative.

'B' ratings indicate that material default risk is present, but a limited margin of safety remains. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.

CCC: Substantial credit risk.

Very low margin for safety. Default is a real possibility.

CC: Very high levels of credit risk.

Default of some kind appears probable.

C: Near default

A default or default-like process has begun, or the issuer is in standstill, or for a closed funding vehicle, payment capacity is irrevocably impaired. Conditions that are indicative of a 'C' category rating for an issuer include:

a. the issuer has entered into a grace or cure period following non-payment of a material financial obligation;

b. the issuer has entered into a temporary negotiated waiver or standstill agreement following a payment default on a material financial obligation;

c. the formal announcement by the issuer or their agent of a distressed debt exchange;

d. a closed financing vehicle where payment capacity is irrevocably impaired such that it is not expected to pay interest and/or principal in full during the life of the transaction, but where no payment default is imminent.

RD: Restricted default.

'RD' ratings indicate an issuer that in Fitch's opinion has experienced:

a. an uncured payment default or distressed debt exchange on a bond, loan or other material financial obligation, but

b. has not entered into bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation, or other formal winding-up procedure, and

c. has not otherwise ceased operating.

This would include:

i. the selective payment default on a specific class or currency of debt;

ii. the uncured expiry of any applicable grace period, cure period or default forbearance period following a payment default on a bank loan, capital markets security or other material financial obligation;

iii. the extension of multiple waivers or forbearance periods upon a payment default on one or more material financial obligations, either in series or in parallel; ordinary execution of a distressed debt exchange on one or more material financial obligations.

D: Default.

'D' ratings indicate an issuer that in Fitch's opinion has entered into bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other formal winding-up procedure or that has otherwise ceased business.

Default ratings are not assigned prospectively to entities or their obligations; within this context, non-payment on an instrument that contains a deferral feature or grace period will generally not be considered a default until after the expiration of the deferral or grace period, unless a default is otherwise driven by bankruptcy or other similar circumstance, or by a distressed debt exchange.

In all cases, the assignment of a default rating reflects the agency's opinion as to the most appropriate rating category consistent with the rest of its universe of ratings and may differ from the definition of default under the terms of an issuer's financial obligations or local commercial practice.

SHORT-TERM RATINGS ASSIGNED TO ISSUERS AND OBLIGATIONS

A short-term issuer or obligation rating is based in all cases on the short-term vulnerability to default of the rated entity and relates to the capacity to meet financial obligations in accordance with the documentation governing the relevant obligation. Short-term deposit ratings may be adjusted for loss severity. Short-Term Ratings are assigned to obligations whose initial maturity is viewed as "short term" based on market convention. Typically, this means up to 13 months for corporate, sovereign, and structured obligations and up to 36 months for obligations in U.S. public finance markets.

F1: Highest Short-Term Credit Quality. Indicates the strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments; may have an added "+" to denote any exceptionally strong credit feature.

F2: Good Short-Term Credit Quality. Good intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments.

F3: Fair Short-Term Credit Quality. The intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is adequate.

B: Speculative Short-Term Credit Quality. Minimal capacity for timely payment of financial commitments, plus heightened vulnerability to near term adverse changes in financial and economic conditions.

C: High Short-Term Default risk. Default is a real possibility.

RD: Restricted Default. Indicates an entity that has defaulted on one or more of its financial commitments, although it continues to meet other financial obligations. Typically applicable to entity ratings only.

D: Default. Indicates a broad-based default event for an entity, or the default of a short-term obligation.

Note: The modifiers "+" or "-" may be appended to a rating to denote relative status within major rating categories. For example, the rating category 'AA' has three notch-specific rating levels ('AA+'; 'AA'; 'AA-'; each a rating level). Such suffixes are not added to 'AAA' ratings and ratings below the 'CCC' category. For the short-term rating category of 'F1', a '+' may be appended. For Viability Ratings, the modifiers "+" or "–" may be appended to a rating to denote relative status within categories from 'AA' to 'CCC'. For derivative counterparty ratings the modifiers "+" or "–" may be appended to the ratings within 'AA(dcr)' to 'CCC(dcr)' categories.

APPENDIX B – TRUST'S PROXY VOTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

SSGA FUNDS
STATE STREET MASTER FUNDS
STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT TRUST
ELFUN GOVERNMENT MONEY MARKET FUND
ELFUN TAX-EXEMPT INCOME FUND
ELFUN INCOME FUND
ELFUN DIVERSIFIED FUND
ELFUN INTERNATIONAL EQUITY FUND
ELFUN TRUSTS
STATE STREET NAVIGATOR SECURITIES LENDING TRUST
STATE STREET INSTITUTIONAL FUNDS
STATE STREET VARIABLE INSURANCE SERIES FUNDS, INC. (THE "COMPANY")[1]

PROXY VOTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

As of September 20, 2017

The Board of Trustees/Directors of the Trust/Company (each series thereof, a "Fund") have adopted the following policy and procedures with respect to voting proxies relating to portfolio securities held by the Trust/Company's investment portfolios.

1. Proxy Voting Policy

The policy of the Trust/Company is to delegate the responsibility for voting proxies relating to portfolio securities held by the Trust/Company to SSGA Funds Management, Inc., the Trust/Company's investment adviser (the "Adviser"), subject to the Trustees/Directors' continuing oversight.

2. Fiduciary Duty

The right to vote proxies with respect to a portfolio security held by the Trust/Company is an asset of the Trust/Company. The Adviser acts as a fiduciary of the Trust/Company and must vote proxies in a manner consistent with the best interest of the Trust/Company and its shareholders.

3. Proxy Voting Procedures

A. At least annually, the Adviser shall present to the Boards of Trustees/Directors its policies, procedures and other guidelines for voting proxies ("Policy") and the policy of any Sub-adviser (as defined below) to which proxy voting authority has been delegated (see Section 9 below). In addition, the Adviser shall notify the Trustees/Directors of material changes to its Policy or the policy of any Sub-adviser promptly and not later than the next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees/Directors after such amendment is implemented.

B. At least annually, the Adviser shall present to the Boards of Trustees/Directors its policy for managing conflicts of interests that may arise through the Adviser's proxy voting activities. In addition, the Adviser shall report any Policy overrides involving portfolio securities held by a Fund to the Trustees/Directors at the next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees/Directors after such override(s) occur.

C. At least annually, the Adviser shall inform the Trustees/Director that a record is available with respect to each proxy voted with respect to portfolio securities of the Trust/Company during the year. Also see Section 5 below.

4. Revocation of Authority to Vote

The delegation by the Trustees/Directors of the authority to vote proxies relating to portfolio securities of the Trust/Company may be revoked by the Trustees/Directors, in whole or in part, at any time.

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1 Unless otherwise noted, the singular term "Trust/Company" used throughout this document means each of SSGA Funds, State Street Master Funds, State Street Institutional Investment Trust, State Street Navigator Securities Lending Trust, Elfun Government Money Market Fund, Elfun Tax-Exempt Income Fund, Elfun Income Fund, Elfun Diversified Fund, Elfun International Equity Fund, Elfun Trusts, State Street Institutional Funds, and State Street Variable Insurance Series Funds, Inc.

5. Annual Filing of Proxy Voting Record

The Adviser shall provide the required data for each proxy voted with respect to portfolio securities of the Trust/Company to the Trust/Company or its designated service provider in a timely manner and in a format acceptable to be filed in the Trust/Company's annual proxy voting report on Form N-PX for the twelve-month period ended June 30. Form N-PX is required to be filed not later than August 31 of each year.

6. Retention and Oversight of Proxy Advisory Firms

A. In considering whether to retain or continue retaining a particular proxy advisory firm, the Adviser will ascertain whether the proxy advisory firm has the capacity and competency to adequately analyze proxy issues, act as proxy voting agent as requested, and implement the Policy. In this regard, the Adviser will consider, at least annually, among other things, the adequacy and quality of the proxy advisory firm's staffing and personnel and the robustness of its policies and procedures regarding its ability to identify and address any conflicts of interest. The Adviser shall, at least annually, report to Boards of Trustees/Directors regarding the results of this review.

B. The Adviser will request quarterly and annual reporting from any proxy advisory firm retained by the Adviser, and hold ad hoc meetings with such proxy advisory firm, in order to determine whether there has been any business changes that might impact the proxy advisory firm's capacity or competency to provide proxy voting advice or services or changes to the proxy advisory firm's conflicts policies or procedures. The Adviser will also take reasonable steps to investigate any material factual error, notified to the Adviser by the proxy advisory firm or identified by the Adviser, made by the proxy advisory firm in providing proxy voting services.

7. Periodic Sampling

The Adviser will periodically sample proxy votes to review whether they complied with the Policy. The Adviser shall, at least annually, report to the Boards of Trustees/Directors regarding the frequency and results of the sampling performed.

8. Disclosures

A. The Trust/Company shall include in its registration statement:

1. A description of this policy and of the policies and procedures used by the Adviser to determine how to vote proxies relating to portfolio securities; and

2. A statement disclosing that information regarding how the Trust/Company voted proxies relating to portfolio securities during the most recent twelve-month period ended June 30 is available without charge, upon request, by calling the Trust/Company's toll-free telephone number; or through a specified Internet address; or both; and on the Securities and Exchange Commission's (the "SEC") website.

B. The Trust/Company shall include in its Form N-CSR filings to shareholders:

1. A statement disclosing that a description of the policies and procedures used by or on behalf of the Trust/Company to determine how to vote proxies relating to portfolio securities of the Funds is available without charge, upon request, by calling the Trust/Company's toll-free telephone number; through a specified Internet address, if applicable; and on the SEC's website; and

2. A statement disclosing that information regarding how the Trust/Company voted proxies relating to portfolio securities during the most recent twelve-month period ended June 30 is available without charge, upon request, by calling the Trust/Company's toll-free telephone number; or through a specified Internet address; or both; and on the SEC's website.

9. Sub-Advisers

For certain Funds, the Adviser may retain investment management firms ("Sub-advisers") to provide day-to-day investment management services to the Funds pursuant to sub-advisory agreements. It is the policy of the Trust/Company that the Adviser may delegate proxy voting authority with respect to a Fund to a Sub-adviser. Pursuant to such delegation, a Sub-adviser is authorized to vote proxies on behalf of the applicable Fund or Funds for which it serves as sub-adviser, in accordance with the Sub-adviser's proxy voting policies and procedures.

10. Review of Policy

The Trustees/Directors shall review this policy to determine its continued sufficiency as necessary from time to time.

APPENDIX C – ADVISER'S PROXY VOTING PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Adviser's Proxy Voting Policies and Procedures

STATE STREET GLOBAL ADVISORS

March 2025

Global Proxy Voting and Engagement Policy

State Street Global Advisors is the investment management arm of State Street Corporation, a leading provider of financial services to institutional investors. As an asset manager, State Street Global Advisors votes its clients' proxies where the client has delegated proxy voting authority to it, and State Street Global Advisors votes these proxies and engages with companies in the manner that we believe will most likely protect and promote the long-term economic value of client investments, as described in this document.[1]

When engaging with and voting proxies with respect to the portfolio companies in which we invest our clients' assets, we do so on behalf of and in the best interests of the client accounts we manage and do not seek to change or influence control of any such portfolio companies. The State Street Global Advisors Global Proxy Voting and Engagement Policy (the "Policy") contains certain policies that State Street Global Advisors will only apply in jurisdictions where permitted by local law and regulations. State Street Global Advisors will not apply any policies contained herein in any jurisdictions where State Street Global Advisors believes that implementing or following such policies would be deemed to constitute seeking to change or influence control of a portfolio company.

Introduction

At State Street Global Advisors, we take our fiduciary duties as an asset manager very seriously. Our primary fiduciary obligation to our clients is to maximize the long-term value of their investments. State Street Global Advisors focuses on risks and opportunities that may impact long-term value creation for our clients. We rely on the elected representatives of the companies in which we invest — the board of directors — to oversee these firms' strategies. We expect effective independent board oversight of the material risks and opportunities to a firm's business and operations. We believe that appropriate consideration of these risks and opportunities is an essential component of a firm's long-term business strategy, and expect boards to actively oversee the management of this strategy.

Our Asset Stewardship Program

State Street Global Advisors' Asset Stewardship Team is responsible for developing and implementing this Policy, the implementation of third-party proxy voting guidelines where applicable, case-by-case voting items, issuer engagement activities, and research and analysis of corporate governance issues and proxy voting items. The Asset Stewardship Team's activities are overseen by our internal governance body, State Street Global Advisors' Global Fiduciary and Conduct Committee ("GFCC"). The GFCC is responsible for reviewing State Street Global Advisors' stewardship strategy, engagement priorities, the Policy, and for monitoring the delivery of voting objectives.

In order to facilitate the execution of our proxy votes, we retain Institutional Shareholder Services Inc. ("ISS"). We utilize ISS to: (1) act as our proxy voting agent (providing State Street Global Advisors with vote execution and administration services), (2) assist in applying the Policy, and (3) provide research and analysis relating to general corporate governance issues and specific proxy items. State Street Global Advisors does not follow the voting recommendations of any policy offered by ISS or any other proxy voting policy provider in implementing the Policy.

All voting decisions and engagement activities for which State Street Global Advisors has been given voting discretion are undertaken in accordance with this Policy, ensuring that the interests of our clients remain the sole consideration when discharging our stewardship responsibilities. Exceptions to this policy include the use of an independent third party to vote on State Street Corporation ("State Street") stock and the stock of other State Street affiliated entities, to mitigate a

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1 This Policy is applicable to SSGA Funds Management, Inc., State Street Global Advisors Trust Company, and other investment advisory affiliates of State Street Corporation.

conflict of interest of voting on our parent company or affiliated entities, and other situations where we believe we may be conflicted from voting (for example, stock of a public company for which a State Street director also serves as a director, or due to an outside business interest). In such cases, delegated third parties exercise vote decisions based on their independent voting policy.

We aim to vote at all shareholder meetings where our clients have given us the authority to vote their shares and where it is feasible to do so. However, when we deem appropriate, we may refrain from voting at meetings in cases where:

- Power of attorney documentation is required.
- Voting would have a material impact on our ability to trade the security.
- Voting is not permissible due to sanctions affecting a company or individual.
- Issuer-specific special documentation is required or various market or issuer certifications are required.
- Certain market limitations would prohibit voting (e.g., partial/split voting prohibitions or residency restrictions).
- Unless a client directs otherwise in so-called “share blocking” markets (markets where proxy voters have their securities blocked from trading during the period of the annual meeting).

Additionally, we are unable to vote proxies when certain custodians used by our clients do not offer proxy voting in a jurisdiction or when they charge a meeting-specific fee in excess of the typical custody service agreement.

Voting authority attached to certain securities held by State Street Global Advisors pooled funds may be delegated to an independent third party as required by regulatory or other requirements. Under such arrangements, voting will be conducted by the independent third party pursuant to its proxy voting policy and not pursuant to this Policy.

The State Street Global Advisors Proxy Voting Choice Program

In addition to the option of delegating proxy voting authority to State Street Global Advisors pursuant to this Policy, clients may alternatively choose to participate in the State Street Global Advisors Proxy Voting Choice Program (the “Proxy Voting Choice Program”), which empowers clients to direct the proxy voting of shares held by the eligible fund or segregated account they own. Clients that participate in the Proxy Voting Choice Program have the option of selecting a third-party proxy voting guideline from the policies included in the Proxy Voting Choice Program to apply to the vote of the client’s pro rata share of the securities held by the eligible fund or segregated account they own. This Policy does not apply to shares voted under the Proxy Voting Choice Program.

Securities Not Voted Pursuant to the Policy

Where clients have asked State Street Global Advisors to vote the client’s shares on their behalf, including where a pooled fund fiduciary has delegated the responsibility to vote the fund’s securities to State Street Global Advisors, State Street Global Advisors votes those securities in a unified manner, consistent with the principles described in this Policy. Exceptions to this unified voting policy are: (1) where State Street Global Advisors has made its Proxy Voting Choice Program available to its separately managed account clients and investors within a fund managed by State Street Global Advisors, in which case a pro rata portion of shares held by the fund or segregated account attributable to clients who choose to participate in the Proxy Voting Choice Program will be voted consistent with the third-party proxy voting guidelines selected by the clients, (2) where a pooled investment vehicle managed by State Street Global Advisors utilizes a third party proxy voting guideline as set forth in that fund’s organizational and/or offering documents, and (3) where voting authority with respect to certain securities held by State Street Global Advisors pooled funds may be delegated to an independent third party as required by regulatory or other requirements. With respect to such funds and separately managed accounts utilizing third-party proxy voting guidelines, the terms of the applicable third-party proxy voting guidelines shall apply in place of the Policy described herein and the proxy votes implemented with respect to such a fund or account may differ from and be contrary to the votes implemented for other portfolios managed by State Street Global Advisors pursuant to this Policy.

Regional Nuances

When voting and engaging with companies, we may consider market-specific nuances that may be relevant to that company. We expect companies to observe the relevant laws and regulations of their respective markets, as well as country-specific best practice guidelines and corporate governance codes, and to publicly disclose their level of compliance with the applicable provisions and requirements. Except where specified, this Policy applies globally.

Our Proxy Voting and Engagement Principles

State Street Global Advisors' proxy voting and engagement program focuses on three broad principles:

1. **Effective Board Oversight:** We believe that well-governed companies can protect and pursue shareholder interests better and withstand the challenges of an uncertain economic environment. Principally, a board acts on behalf of shareholders by protecting their interests and preserving their rights. In order to carry out their primary responsibilities, directors undertake activities that include setting strategy and providing guidance on strategic matters, selecting the CEO and other senior executives, overseeing executive management, creating a succession plan for the board and management, and providing effective oversight of material risks and opportunities relevant to their business. Further, good corporate governance necessitates the existence of effective internal controls and risk management systems, which should be governed by the board.

   We view board quality as a measure of director independence, director succession planning, board diversity, evaluations and refreshment, and company governance practices. We believe independent directors are crucial to good corporate governance; they help management establish sound corporate governance policies and practices. We believe a sufficiently independent board is key to effectively monitoring management, maintaining appropriate governance practices, and performing oversight functions necessary to protect shareholder interests. We also believe the right mix of skills, independence, diversity, and qualifications among directors provides boards with the knowledge and experience to manage risks and operating structures that are often complex and industry-specific.

2. **Disclosure:** It is important for shareholders to receive timely and accurate reporting of a company's financial performance and strategy so that they are able to assess both the value and risk of their investment. In addition to information related to strategy and performance, companies should also provide disclosure relating to their approach to corporate governance and shareholder rights. Such information allows investors to determine whether their economic interests have been safeguarded by the board and provides insights into the quality of the board's oversight of management. Ultimately, the board of directors is accountable for the oversight and disclosure of the material risks and opportunities faced by the company.

3. **Shareholder Protection:** State Street Global Advisors believes it is in the best interest of shareholders for companies to have appropriate shareholder rights and accountability mechanisms in place. As a starting place for voting rights, it is necessary for ownership rights to reflect one vote for one share to ensure that economic interests and proxy voting power are aligned. This share structure best supports the shareholders' right to exercise their proxy vote on matters that are important to the protection of their investment, such as share issuances and other dilutive events, authorization of strategic transactions, approval of a shareholder rights plan, and changes to the corporate bylaws or charter, among others. In terms of accountability to shareholders and appropriate checks and balances, we believe there should be annual elections of the full board of directors.

Application of Principles

These three principles of effective board oversight, disclosure and shareholder protection apply across all of State Street Global Advisors' proxy voting decisions. When voting at portfolio companies in different markets, State Street Global Advisors may apply the principles in ways that are specific to a given market based on factors such as availability of data, resources, disclosure practices, and size of holdings in our clients' accounts.

Shareholder Proposals

When voting our clients' proxies, we may be presented with shareholder proposals at portfolio companies that must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the principles set forth above. For proposals related to commonly requested disclosure topics, we have developed the criteria found in Appendix A to assess the effectiveness of disclosure on such topics in connection with these types of proposals.

Engagement

We conduct engagements with individual issuers to communicate the principles set forth in this Policy and to learn more about companies' strategy, board oversight and disclosure practices. We do not seek to change or influence control of any portfolio company through these engagements. In addition, we encourage issuers to increase the amount of direct communication board members have with shareholders. We believe direct communication with executive board members and independent non- executive directors is critical to helping companies understand shareholder concerns.

Section I. Effective Board Oversight

Director Independence

We believe independent directors are crucial to good corporate governance; they help management establish sound corporate governance policies and practices. We have developed criteria for determining director independence, which vary by region and/or local jurisdiction. These criteria generally follow relevant listing standards, local regulatory requirements and/or local market practice standards. Such criteria may include:

- Participation in related-party transactions or other material business relations with the company
- Employment history with the company
- Status as founder or member of the founding family
- Government representative
- Excessive tenure and preponderance of long-tenured directors
- Relations with significant shareholders
- Close family ties with any of the company's advisers, directors or senior employees
- Cross-directorships
- Receipt of non-board related compensation from the issuer, its auditors or advisors
- Company's own classification of a director as non-independent

In some cases, State Street Global Advisors' criteria may be more rigorous than applicable local or listing requirements.

Majority Independent Board

We believe a sufficiently independent board is key to effectively monitoring management, maintaining appropriate governance practices, and performing oversight functions necessary to protect shareholder interests.

Separation of Chair/CEO

Our primary focus is to ensure there is strong independent leadership of the board, in accordance with the principles discussed above. We generally believe the board is best placed to choose the governance structure that is most appropriate for that company.

Board Committees

We believe that board committees are crucial to robust corporate governance and should be composed of a sufficient number of independent directors. We use the same criteria for determining committee independence as we do for determining director independence, which varies by region and/or local jurisdiction. Although we recognize that board structures may vary by jurisdiction, where a board has established an audit committee and/or compensation/remuneration committee, we generally expect the committee to be primarily, and in some cases, fully independent.

Refreshment and Tenure

We believe that average board tenure should generally align with the length of the business cycle of the respective industry in which a company operates. In assessing excessive tenure, we consider factors such as the preponderance of long tenured directors, board refreshment practices, classified board structures and the business cycle for the industry in which a company operates.

Director Time Commitments

We believe a company's nominating committee is best placed to determine appropriate time commitments for the company's directors. We consider if a company publicly discloses its director time commitment policy (e.g., within corporate governance guidelines, proxy statement, annual report, company website, etc.) and if this policy or associated disclosure outlines the factors that the nominating committee considers to assess director time commitments during the annual policy review process.

Board Composition

We believe effective board oversight of a company's long-term business strategy necessitates a diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, which may include a range of characteristics such as skills, gender, race, ethnicity, and age. By having a critical mass of diverse perspectives, boards could experience the benefits that may lead to innovative ideas and foster more robust conversations about a company's strategy.

We recognize that many factors may influence board composition, including board size, geographic location, and local regulations, among others. Further, we believe that a robust nominating and governance process is essential to achieving a board composition that is designed to facilitate effective, independent oversight of a company's long-term strategy. We believe nominating committees are best placed to determine the most effective board composition and we encourage companies to ensure that there are sufficient levels of diverse experiences and perspectives represented in the boardroom.

Board Expertise

We believe board members should have adequate skills to provide effective oversight of corporate strategy, operations, and risks, including sustainability-related issues.

Boards should also have a regular evaluation process in place to assess the effectiveness of the board and the skills of board members to address issues, such as emerging risks, changes to corporate strategy, and diversification of operations and geographic footprint. We believe nominating committees are best positioned to evaluate the skillset and expertise of both existing and prospective board members. However, we may take such considerations into account in certain circumstances.

Board Accountability

Oversight of Strategy and Risk

We believe that risk management is a key function of the board, which is responsible for setting the overall risk appetite of a company and for providing oversight on the risk management process established by senior executives at a company. We allow boards to have discretion regarding the ways in which they provide oversight in this area. However, we expect companies to disclose how the board provides oversight of its risk management system and risk identification. Boards should also review existing and emerging risks that evolve in tandem with the changing political and economic landscape or as companies diversify or expand their operations into new areas.

As responsible stewards, we believe in the importance of effective risk management and oversight of issues that are material to a company. To effectively manage and assess the risk of our clients' portfolios, we expect our portfolio companies to manage risks and opportunities that are material and industry-specific and that have a demonstrated link to long-term value creation, and to provide high-quality disclosure of this process to shareholders.

When evaluating a board's oversight of risks and opportunities, we assess the following factors, based on disclosures by, and engagements with, portfolio companies:

1. Oversees Long-term Strategy
   - Articulates the material risks and opportunities and how those risks and opportunities fit into the firm's long-term business strategy
   - Regularly assesses the effectiveness of the company's long-term strategy, and management's execution of this strategy
2. Demonstrates an Effective Oversight Process
   - Describes which committee(s) have oversight over specific risks and opportunities, as well as which topics are overseen and/or discussed at the full-board level
   - Includes risks and opportunities in board and/or committee agendas, and articulates how often specific topics are discussed at the committee and/or full- board level
   - Utilizes KPIs or metrics to assess the effectiveness of risk management processes
   - Engages with key stakeholders including employees and investors
3. Ensures Effective Leadership
   - Holds management accountable for progress on relevant metrics and targets

- Integrates necessary skills and perspectives into the board nominating and executive hiring processes, and provides training to directors and executives on topics material to the company's business or operations
- Conducts a periodic effectiveness review

4. Ensures Disclosures of Material Information
   - Ensures publication of relevant disclosures, including those regarding material topics

Compliance with Corporate Governance Principles
Our minimum expectation is that companies will comply with their respective market governance codes and/or stewardship principles. Issuers are encouraged to provide explanations of their level of compliance with their local market code and why their preferred governance structure (if not compliant with the code) serves shareholders' long-term interests.

We will review governance practices at companies in selected indexes for their adherence to market governance codes and/or stewardship principles.

Proxy Contests
We believe nominating committees that are comprised of independent directors are best placed to assess which individuals are adequately equipped with the skills and expertise to fulfill the duties of board members, and to act as effective fiduciaries.

While our default position is to support the committees' judgement, we consider the following factors when evaluating dissident nominees:

- Strategy presented by dissident nominees versus that of current management, as overseen by the incumbent board
- Effectiveness, quality, and experience of the management slate
- Material governance failures and the level of responsiveness to shareholder concerns and market signals by the incumbent board
- Quality of disclosure and engagement practices to support changes to shareholder rights, capital allocation and/or governance structure
- Company performance and, if applicable, the merit of a recovery plan
- Expertise of board members with respect to company industry and strategy

Board Oversight of Geopolitical Risk
As stewards of our clients' assets, we are aware of the financial risks associated with geopolitical risk, including risks arising from unexpected conflict between or among nations. We expect portfolio companies that may be impacted by geopolitical risk to:

- Manage and mitigate risks related to operating in impacted markets, which may include financial, sanctions-related, regulatory, and/or reputational risks, among others;
- Strengthen board oversight of these efforts; and
- Describe these efforts in public disclosures.

Compensation and Remuneration
We consider it the board's responsibility to determine the appropriate level of executive compensation. Despite the differences among the possible types of plans and awards, there is a simple underlying philosophy that guides our analysis of executive compensation: we believe that there should be a direct relationship between executive compensation and company performance over the long term.

Shareholders should have the opportunity to assess whether pay structures and levels are aligned with business performance. When assessing remuneration reports, we consider factors such as adequate disclosure of various remuneration elements, absolute and relative pay levels, peer selection and benchmarking, the mix of long-term and short-term incentives, alignment of pay structures with shareholder interests, as well as with corporate strategy and performance.

For example, criteria we may consider include the following:

- Overall quantum relative to company performance
- Vesting periods and length of performance targets
- Mix of performance, time and options-based stock units

- Use of special grants and one-time awards
- Retesting and repricing features
- Disclosure and transparency

Board Meeting Attendance
We expect directors to attend at least 75 percent of board meetings in the last financial year or provide an appropriate explanation for why they were unable to meet this attendance threshold.

Section II. Disclosure

It is important for shareholders to receive timely and accurate reporting of a company's financial performance and strategy so that they are able to assess both the value and risk of their investment. In addition to information related to strategy and performance, companies should provide disclosure relating to their approach to corporate governance and shareholder rights. Such information allows investors to determine whether their financial interests have been protected by the board and provides insights into the board's oversight of management. Ultimately, the board of directors is accountable for the oversight and disclosure of the material risks and opportunities faced by the company.

Reporting

Financial Statements
We believe the disclosure and availability of reliable financial statements in a timely manner is imperative for investment analysis. We expect external auditors to provide assurance of a company's financial condition.

Sustainability-related Disclosures
We believe in the importance of effective risk management and governance of issues that are material to a company. This may include sustainability-related risks and opportunities where a company has identified such risks and opportunities as material to its business. Such disclosure allows shareholders to effectively assess companies' oversight, strategy, and business practices related to these sustainability issues identified as material.

We look to companies to provide disclosure on sustainability-related risks and opportunities relevant to their businesses in line with applicable local regulatory requirements and any voluntary standards and frameworks adopted by the company.

Climate-related Disclosures
We believe that managing climate-related risks and opportunities is a key element in maximizing long-term risk-adjusted returns for our clients. As a result, we have a longstanding commitment to enhancing investor-useful disclosure related to this topic.

For companies that have identified climate risk as material to their business, we expect the company to provide disclosure on climate-related risks and opportunities relevant to their businesses in line with applicable local regulatory requirements and any voluntary standards and frameworks adopted by the company.

- We encourage the disclosure of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions and related targets. However, State Street Global Advisors is not prescriptive in how a company sets its targets. We expect companies that have adopted net zero ambitions to disclose interim climate targets. In each case, if a company chooses not to disclose any climate targets, we expect the company to provide an explanation of how the company measures and monitors progress on managing climate-related risks and opportunities.
- We do not expect any company to set Scope 3 targets. We encourage companies to identify and disclose the most relevant categories of Scope 3 emissions. However, we recognize that Scope 3 emissions estimates have a high degree of uncertainty. Therefore, if a company determines that categories of Scope 3 emissions are impracticable to estimate, we encourage the company to explain the relevant limitations. We also encourage companies to explain any efforts to address Scope 3 emissions, such as engagement with suppliers, customers, or other stakeholders across the value chain, where relevant.

Say-on-Climate Proposals
While we generally believe in the importance of effective disclosure of climate-related risks a company has deemed material to its business, we do not endorse annual advisory climate votes. Where management chooses to include a Say-on-Climate vote, we assess the company's climate-related disclosure in accordance with the criteria listed in Appendix A.

Board and Workforce Demographics
We expect disclosure on the composition of both the board and workforce.

Section III. Shareholder Protection

Capital

Share Capital Structure

The ability to raise capital is critical for companies to carry out strategy, to grow, and to achieve returns above their cost of capital. The approval of capital raising activities is fundamental to a shareholder's ability to monitor the amounts of proceeds and to ensure capital is deployed efficiently. Altering the capital structure of a company is a critical decision for boards. When making such a decision, we believe the company should disclose a comprehensive business rationale that is consistent with corporate strategy and not overly dilutive to its shareholders.

Our approach to share capital structure matters may vary by local market and jurisdiction, due to regional nuances. Such proposals may include:

- Increase in Authorized Common Shares
- Increase in Authorized Preferred Shares
- Unequal Voting Rights
- Share Repurchase Programs

Dividend Payouts (Japan Only)

For Japanese issuers, we are generally supportive of dividend payouts that constitute 30 percent or more of net income; however we consider whether the payment may damage the company's long-term financial health.

Reorganization, Mergers and Acquisitions

The reorganization of the structure of a company or mergers often involve proposals relating to reincorporation, restructurings, liquidations, and other major changes to the corporation.

We expect proposals to be in the best interests of shareholders, demonstrated by enhancing share value or improving the effectiveness of the company's operations.

We evaluate mergers and structural reorganizations on a case-by-case basis and expect transactions to maximize shareholder value. Some of the considerations include the following:

- Offer premium
- Strategic rationale
- Board oversight of the process for the recommended transaction, including director and/or management conflicts of interest
- Offers made at a premium and where there are no other higher bidders
- Offers in which the secondary market price is substantially lower than the net asset value

We also consider the following:

- Offers with potentially damaging consequences for minority shareholders because of illiquid stock
- Offers where we believe there is a reasonable prospect for an enhanced bid or other bidders
- The current market price of the security exceeds the bid price at the time of voting

Related-Party Transactions

Some companies have a controlled ownership structure and complex cross- shareholdings between subsidiaries and parent companies ("related companies"). Such structures may result in the prevalence of related-party transactions between the company and its various stakeholders, such as directors and management, subsidiaries and shareholders. In markets where shareholders are required to approve such transactions, we expect companies to disclose details of the transaction, such as the nature, the value and the purpose of such a transaction. We also believe independent directors should ratify such transactions. Further, we believe companies should describe the level of independent board oversight and the approval process, including details of any independent valuations provided by financial advisors on related-party transactions.

Cross-Shareholdings (Japan Only)

"Cross-shareholdings" are a long-standing feature of the balance sheets of many Japanese companies, but, in our view, can be detrimental for corporate governance practices and ultimately shareholder returns.

Shareholder Rights

Proxy Access
In general, we believe that proxy access is a fundamental right and an accountability mechanism for all long-term shareholders. We consider proposals relating to proxy access on a case-by-case basis and consider a balance between providing long-term shareholders accountability while preserving flexibility for management to design a process that is appropriate for the company's circumstances.

Vote Standards

- **Annual Elections:** We believe the establishment of annual elections of the board of directors is appropriate. We also consider the overall level of board independence and the independence of the key committees, as well as the existence of a shareholder rights plan.
- **Majority Voting:** We believe a majority vote standard based on votes cast for the election of directors is appropriate.

Shareholder Meetings

- **Special Meetings and Written Consent:** We believe the ability for shareholders to call special meetings, as well as act by written consent is appropriate. We believe an appropriate threshold for both calling a special meeting and acting by written consent can be 25% of outstanding shares or less.
- **Notice Period to Convene a General Meeting:** We expect companies to give as much notice as is practicable when calling a general meeting, generally at least 14 days.
- **Virtual/Hybrid Shareholder Meetings:** We believe the right to hold shareholder meetings in a virtual or hybrid format is appropriate with the following best practices:
  - Afford virtual attendee shareholders the same rights as would normally be granted to in-person attendee shareholders
  - Commit to time-bound renewal (five years or less) of meeting format authorization by shareholders
  - Provide a written record of all questions posed during the meeting, and
  - Comply with local market laws and regulations relating to virtual and hybrid shareholder meeting practices

In evaluating these proposals we also consider the operating environment of the company, including local regulatory developments and specific market circumstances impacting virtual meeting practices.

Governance Documents & Miscellaneous Items

Article Amendments
We believe amendments to company bylaws that may negatively impact shareholder rights (such as fee-shifting, forum selection, and exclusion service bylaws) should be put to a shareholder vote.

We believe a majority voting standard is generally appropriate.

We generally believe companies should have a fixed board size, or designate a range for the board size.

Anti-Takeover Issues
Occasionally, companies add anti-takeover provisions that reduce the chances of a potential acquirer to make an offer, or to reduce the likelihood of a successful offer. We generally believe shareholders should have the right to vote on reasonable offers. Our approach to anti-takeover issues may vary by local market and jurisdiction, due to regional nuances.

Accounting and Audit-Related Issues
Companies should have robust internal audit and internal control systems designed for effective management of any potential and emerging risks to company operations and strategy. The responsibility of setting out an internal audit function lies with the audit committee, which should have independent non-executive directors designated as members.

We believe the disclosure and availability of reliable financial statements in a timely manner is imperative for investment analysis. As a result, board oversight of the internal controls and the independence of the audit process are essential if investors are to rely upon financial statements. It is important for the audit committee to appoint external auditors who are independent from management as we expect auditors to provide assurance of a company's financial condition.

State Street Global Advisors believes that a company's external auditor is an essential feature of an effective and transparent system of external independent assurance. Shareholders should be given the opportunity to vote on their (re-)appointment at the annual meeting. When appointing external auditors and approving audit fees, we will take into consideration the level of detail in company disclosures.

In circumstances where "other" fees include fees related to initial public offerings, bankruptcy emergence, and spin-offs, and the company makes public disclosure of the amount and nature of those fees which are determined to be an exception to the standard "non-audit fee" category, then such fees may be excluded from the non-audit fees considered in determining the ratio of non-audit to audit/audit-related fees/tax compliance and preparation for purposes of determining whether non-audit fees are excessive.

We believe a company should be able to discharge its auditors in the absence of pending litigation, governmental investigation, charges or fraud or other indication of significant concern. Further, we believe that auditors should attend the annual meeting of shareholders.

Indemnification and Liability
Generally, we believe directors should be able to limit their liability and/or expand indemnification and liability protection if a director has not acted in bad faith, gross negligence, or reckless disregard of the duties involved in the conduct of his or her office.

Section IV. Shareholder Proposals

We believe that company boards do right by investors and are responsible for overseeing strategy and company management. Towards that end, we generally do not support shareholder proposals that appear to impose changes to business strategy or operations, such as increasing or decreasing investment in certain products or businesses or phasing out a product or business line or if it is not a topic that the company has deemed to be material in their public disclosure documents.

When assessing shareholder proposals, we fundamentally consider whether the adoption of the resolution would promote long-term shareholder value in the context of our core governance principles:

1. Effective board oversight
2. Quality disclosure
3. Shareholder protection

We will consider supporting a shareholder proposal if:

- the request is focused on enhanced disclosure of the company's governance and/or risk oversight
- the adoption of the request would protect our clients' interests as minority shareholders; or
- for common proposal topics for which we have developed assessment criteria, the extent to which the request satisfies the criteria found in Appendix A.

Section V. Engagement

As a fiduciary, State Street Global Advisors takes a comprehensive approach to engaging with portfolio companies. Our stewardship prioritization process allows us to proactively identify companies for engagement and voting in order to mitigate risks in our client's portfolios. Through engagement, we aim to build long-term relationships with the issuers in which we invest on behalf of our clients and to address a broad range of topics relating to the promotion of long-term shareholder value creation. We do not seek to change or influence control of any portfolio company through engagement.

Equity Engagements

In general, there are three types of engagements that State Street Global Advisors may hold on behalf of equity holders:

1. **Engagements with Portfolio Companies in Connection with a Ballot Item or Other Topic In our Policy:** Engagements held with portfolio companies to discuss a ballot item, event or other established topic found in our Policy. Such engagements generally, but not necessarily, occur during "proxy season." They may be held at the request of State Street Global Advisors or the portfolio company.

2. **Off-Season Engagement at the Request of a Portfolio Company:** From time- to-time, portfolio companies may seek to engage with State Street Global Advisors in the 'off-season' to discuss a particular topic.

3. **Off-Season Proactive Engagement Campaigns:** Each year, State Street Global Advisors will identify thematic engagement campaigns on important topics for which we are seeking more information to potentially inform our future voting positions.

Fixed Income Engagements

From time-to-time, certain corporate action election events, reclassifications or other changes to the investment terms of debt holdings may occur or an issuer may seek to engage with State Street Global Advisors to discuss matters pertaining to the debt instruments that State Street Global Advisors holds on behalf of its clients. In such instances, State Street Global Advisors may engage with the issuer to obtain further information about the matter for purposes of its investment decision making. Such engagements are the responsibility of the Fixed Income portfolio management team, but may be supported by State Street Global Advisors' Asset Stewardship Team. All election decisions are the responsibility of the relevant portfolio management team.

In addition, State Street Global Advisors may identify themes for engagement campaigns with issuers on topics that it believes may affect value of its clients' debt investments. State Street Global Advisors may proactively engage with portfolio companies and other issuers on these topics to help inform our views on the subject.

Where such themes align with those relating to equities, such engagements may be carried out jointly on behalf of both equity and fixed income holdings where there is mutual benefit for both asset classes. Such engagements are led by the State Street Global Advisors Asset Stewardship Team, but may also be attended by the relevant portfolio management teams.

Engaging with Other Investors Soliciting State Street Global Advisors' Votes in Connection with Contested Shareholder Meetings, Vote-No Campaigns, or Shareholder Proposals

While it may be helpful to speak to other investors that are running proxy contests, putting forth vote-no campaigns, or proposing shareholder proposals at investee companies, we limit such discussions to investors who have filed necessary documentation with regulators and engage in these discussions at our own discretion.

Our primary purpose of engaging with investors is:

1. To gain a better understanding of their position or concerns at investee companies.

2. In proxy contest situations:
   - To assess possible director candidates where investors are seeking board representation in proxy contest situations
   - To understand the investor's proposed strategy for the company and investment time horizon to assess their alignment with State Street Global Advisors' views and interests as a long-term shareholder

Any information about our vote decisions are available in this document and on our website. All requests for engagement should be sent to GovernanceTeam@ssga.com.

Section VI. Other Matters

Securities on Loan

As a responsible investor and fiduciary, we recognize the importance of balancing the benefits of voting shares and the incremental lending revenue for the pooled funds that participate in State Street Global Advisors' securities lending program (the "Funds"). Our objective is to recall securities on loan and restrict future lending until after the record date for the respective vote in instances where we believe that a particular vote could have a material impact on the Funds' long-term financial performance and the benefit of voting shares will outweigh the forgone lending income.

Accordingly, we have set systematic recall and lending restriction criteria for shareholder meetings involving situations with the highest potential financial implications (such as proxy contests and strategic transactions including mergers and acquisitions, going dark transactions, change of corporate form, or bankruptcy and liquidation). Generally, these criteria for recall and restriction for lending only apply to certain large cap indices in developed markets.

State Street Global Advisors monitors the forgone lending revenue associated with each recall to determine if the impact on the Funds' long-term financial performance and the benefit of voting shares will outweigh the forgone lending income.

Although our objective is to systematically recall securities based on the aforementioned criteria, we must receive notice of the vote in sufficient time to recall the shares on or before the record date. When we do not receive timely notice, we may be unable to recall the shares on or before the record date.

Reporting

We provide transparency for our stewardship activities through our regular client reports and relevant information reported online. We publish an annual stewardship report that provides details of our stewardship approach, engagement and voting policies, and activities during the year. The annual stewardship report is complemented by quarterly stewardship activity reports as well as the publication of thought leadership on governance and sustainability on our website. Our voting record information is available on Vote View, an interactive platform that provides relevant company details, proposal types, resolution descriptions, and records of our votes cast.

Appendix A: Assessment Criteria for Common Disclosure Topics

As outlined above, the pillars of our Asset Stewardship Program rest on effective board oversight, quality disclosure and shareholder protection. We are frequently asked to evaluate proposals on various topics, including requests for enhanced disclosure.

Where a company receives a proposal on a topic that the company has determined is material to its business, we will assess the proposal in accordance with the below criteria that we believe represent quality disclosure on commonly requested disclosure topics. In each case, in assessing the proposal against the applicable criteria, we may review the company's relevant disclosures against industry and market practice (e.g., peer disclosure, relevant frameworks, relevant industry guidance).

Climate Disclosure Criteria

For companies that have identified climate-related risks or opportunities as material to their business, we expect the company to provide disclosure on climate-related risks and opportunities relevant to their businesses in line with applicable local regulatory requirements and any voluntary standards and frameworks adopted by the company, as described in the section related to Climate-Related Disclosures above.

Additionally, where a company is among the highest emitters, we consider whether the company discloses:

- Scenario-planning on relevant risk assessment and strategic planning processes;
- The company's plans to achieve stated climate-related targets, if any, including information on timelines and expected emissions reductions; and
- Incorporation of relevant climate considerations in financial planning and/or capital allocation decisions.

Climate Transition Plan Disclosure Criteria for Companies that have Adopted a Climate Transition Plan

We do not expect or require companies to adopt net zero ambitions or join relevant industry initiatives. For companies that have adopted a net zero ambition and/or climate transition plan and that receive a related proposal, we assess the proposal against the disclosure criteria set out below. Given that climate related risks present differently across industries, our assessment of the below criteria may vary to account for best practices in specific industries.

General Climate-related Disclosures

- Description of approach to identifying and assessing climate-related risks and opportunities
- Disclosure of resilience of the company's strategy taking into consideration a range of climate-related scenarios
- Disclosure of Scope 1, Scope 2, and relevant categories of Scope 3 emissions and any assurance

Ambition

- Disclosure of long-term climate ambitions

Targets

- Disclosure of short- and/or medium-term interim climate targets

- Disclosure of alignment of climate targets with relevant jurisdictional commitments, specific temperature pathways, and/or sectoral decarbonization approaches

Decarbonization Strategy

- Disclosure of plans and actions to support stated climate targets and ambitions
- Disclosure of emissions management efforts within the company's operations and, as applicable, across the value chain
- Disclosure of carbon offsets utilization, if any
- Disclosure of the role of climate solutions (e.g., carbon capture and storage)
- Disclosure of potential social risks and opportunities related to climate transition plan, if any

Capital Allocation

- Disclosure integration of relevant climate considerations in financial planning
- Disclosure of total actual and planned capital deployed toward climate transition plan
- Disclosure of approach to assessing and prioritizing investments toward climate transition plan (e.g. marginal abatement cost curves, internal carbon pricing, if any)

Climate Policy Engagement

- Disclosure of position on climate-related topics relevant to the company's decarbonization strategy
- Disclosure of assessment of stated positions on relevant climate-related topics versus those of associations and other relevant policy-influencing entities, such as trade associations, industry bodies, or coalitions, to which the company belongs, and any efforts taken as a result of this review to address potential misalignment.

Climate Governance

- Disclosure of the board's role in overseeing climate transition plan
- Disclosure of management's role in overseeing climate transition plan

Physical Risk

- Disclosure of assessment of climate-related physical risks
- Disclosure of approach to managing identified climate-related physical risks

Stakeholder Engagement

- Disclosure of engagement with relevant internal stakeholders related to climate transition plan (e.g., workforce training, cross-functional collaboration)
- Disclosure of engagement with relevant external stakeholders related to climate transition plan (e.g., industry collaboration, customer engagement)

Methane Disclosure Criteria

Where a company has determined that methane emissions-related risks or opportunities are material to its business and has received a related shareholder proposal, we will assess the proposal in accordance with the following disclosure criteria:

- Disclosure of methane emissions detection and monitoring efforts
- An explanation of efforts to enhance measurement, reporting, and verification
- A description of the company's strategy to manage methane emissions
- Disclosure of any methane-related metrics and targets utilized

Nature-Related Disclosures: Biodiversity, Deforestation and other Land-Use, Water Management, Pollution and Waste

Where a company has determined that one or more nature-related risks and opportunities are material to its business and has received a related shareholder proposal, we will assess the proposal in accordance with the following disclosure criteria:

- **Governance:** Board oversight of the material nature-related risks and opportunities
- **Risk Management:** Approach to identifying, assessing, monitoring, and mitigating the material nature-related risks and opportunities
- **Strategy:** Consideration of material nature-related risks and opportunities in business strategy, resiliency, and planning
- **Metrics and Targets (when relevant):** Metrics used to assess, monitor, and manage nature-related risks and opportunities

Human Capital Management Disclosure Criteria

Where a company has determined that human capital management-related risks or opportunities are material to its business and has received a related shareholder proposal, we will assess the proposal in accordance with the following disclosure criteria:

- **Board Oversight:** Methods outlining how the board oversees human capital- related risks and opportunities;
- **Strategy:** Approaches to human capital management and how these advance the long-term business strategy;
- **Compensation:** Strategies throughout the organization that aim to attract and retain employees, and incentivize contribution to an effective human capital strategy;
- **Voice:** Channels to ensure the concerns and ideas from workers are solicited and acted upon, and how the workforce is engaged and empowered in the organization; and
- **Workforce Demographics:** Role of the board in overseeing workforce demographics efforts

Diversity Equity and Inclusion Disclosure Criteria

Where a company has determined that diversity, equity and inclusion-related risks or opportunities are material to its business and has received a related shareholder proposal, we will assess the proposal in accordance with the following disclosure criteria:

- **Board Oversight:** Describe how the board executes its oversight role in risks and opportunities related to diversity, equity and inclusion
- **Strategy:** Articulate the role that diversity, equity, and inclusion plays in the company's broader human capital management practices and long-term strategy, as well as how the company intends to implement that strategy
- **Metrics:** Provide disclosure on the company's global employee base and board demographics, where permitted
- **Board Composition:** Articulate the role of diversity of skills, backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives in the board's nominating process

Pay Equity Disclosure Criteria (United States and United Kingdom Only)

Where a company has determined that pay equity-related risks or opportunities are material to its business and has received a related shareholder proposal, we will assess the proposal in accordance with the following disclosure criteria:

- Disclosure of adjusted pay gaps related to race and gender within the company (disclosure of the unadjusted pay gap is also encouraged, but not expected outside of the United Kingdom market at this time);
- Disclosure of strategy to achieve and maintain pay equity; and
- Disclosure of the role of the board in overseeing pay strategies as well as diversity-related efforts

Civil Rights Disclosure Criteria (United States Only)

Where a company has determined that civil rights-related risks or opportunities are material to its business and has received a related shareholder proposal, we will assess the proposal in accordance with the following disclosure criteria:

- Disclosure of risk related to civil rights, including risks associated with products, practices, and services;
- Disclosure of plans to manage and mitigate these risks; and
- Disclosure of processes at the board for overseeing such risks (e.g., committee responsible, frequency of discussions, etc.).

Human Rights Disclosure Criteria

Where a company has determined that human rights-related risks or opportunities are material to its business and has received a related shareholder proposal, we will assess the proposal in accordance with the following disclosure criteria:

- Human rights-related risks the company considers more relevant;
- Plans to manage and mitigate these risks;
- Board oversight of these risks; and
- Assessment of the effectiveness of the human rights risk management program.

Political Contributions Disclosure Criteria (United States Only)

For all companies that receive a shareholder proposal related to political contributions, we will assess the proposal in accordance with the following disclosure criteria:

- Disclosure of all contributions, no matter the dollar value, made by the company, its subsidiaries, and/ or affiliated Political Action Committees (PACs) to individual candidates, PACs, and other political organizations at the state and federal levels in the US; and
- Disclosure of the role of the board in oversight of political contributions.

Lobbying Disclosure Criteria (United States Only)

For all companies that receive a shareholder proposal related to lobbying disclosure, we will assess the proposal in accordance with the following disclosure criteria:

- Disclosure of membership in United States trade associations (to which payments are above $50,000 per year) and
- Disclosure of the role of the board in overseeing lobbying activities.

Trade Association Alignment Disclosure Criteria

For all companies that receive a shareholder proposal related to trade association alignment, we will assess the proposal in accordance with the following disclosure criteria:

- Disclosure of the board's role in overseeing the company's participation in the political process, including membership in trade associations or other policy- influencing entities; and
- Whether the company regularly performs a gap analysis of its stated positions on relevant issues versus those of the trade associations or other policy-influencing organizations of which it is a member, and
- Whether the company disclosed a list of its trade association memberships

Note: We believe that management is best suited to take positions on the matters related to their company and therefore we do not recommend any specific position. Our support of these types of shareholder proposals, if any, solely reflect our support for enhanced disclosure on assessing alignment between stated company positions and the positions of associations and other relevant policy-influencing entities to which the company belongs in line with market expectations and effective risk management.

About State Street Global Advisors

For over four decades, State Street Global Advisors has served the world's governments, institutions, and financial advisors. With a rigorous, risk-aware approach built on research, analysis, and market-tested experience, and as pioneers in index and ETF investing, we are always inventing new ways to invest. As a result, we have become the world's fourth-largest asset manager* with US $4.72 trillion† under our care.

* Pensions & Investments Research Center, as of December 31, 2023.

† This figure is presented as of December 31, 2024 and includes ETF AUM of $1,577.74 billion USD of which approximately $82.19 billion USD in gold assets with respect to SPDR products for which State Street Global Advisors Funds Distributors, LLC (SSGA FD) acts solely as the marketing agent. SSGA FD and State Street Global Advisors are affiliated. Please note all AUM is unaudited.

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UNITED STATES

Proxy Voting Guidelines
Benchmark Policy Recommendations

Effective for Meetings on or after February 1, 2025
Published January 9, 2025
Updated February 25, 2025

Effective for Meetings Published on or after February 25, 2025, Consideration of Certain Diversity Factors in Making Vote Recommendations Is Suspended (see pp. 12-13 for more information).

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Coverage

The U.S. research team provides proxy analyses and voting recommendations for the common shareholder meetings of U.S. - incorporated companies that are publicly-traded on U.S. exchanges, as well as certain OTC companies, if they are held in our institutional investor clients' portfolios. Coverage generally includes corporate actions for common equity holders, such as written consents and bankruptcies. ISS' U.S. coverage includes investment companies (including open-end funds, closed-end funds, exchange-traded funds, and unit investment trusts), limited partnerships ("LPs"), master limited partnerships ("MLPs"), limited liability companies ("LLCs"), and business development companies. ISS reviews its universe of coverage on an annual basis, and the coverage is subject to change based on client need and industry trends.

Foreign-incorporated companies

In addition to U.S.- incorporated, U.S.- listed companies, ISS' U.S. policies are applied to certain foreign-incorporated company analyses. Like the SEC, ISS distinguishes two types of companies that list but are not incorporated in the U.S.:

- U.S. Domestic Issuers – which have a majority of outstanding shares held in the U.S. and meet other criteria, as determined by the SEC, and are subject to the same disclosure and listing standards as U.S. incorporated companies (e.g. they are required to file DEF14A proxy statements) – are generally covered under standard U.S. policy guidelines.
- Foreign Private Issuers (FPIs) – which are allowed to take exemptions from most disclosure requirements (e.g., they are allowed to file 6-K for their proxy materials) and U.S. listing standards – are generally covered under a combination of policy guidelines:
  - FPI Guidelines (see the Americas Regional Proxy Voting Guidelines), may apply to companies incorporated in governance havens, and apply certain minimum independence and disclosure standards in the evaluation of key proxy ballot items, such as the election of directors; and/or
  - Guidelines for the market that is responsible for, or most relevant to, the item on the ballot.

U.S. incorporated companies listed only on non-U.S. exchanges are generally covered under the ISS guidelines for the market on which they are traded.

An FPI is generally covered under ISS' approach to FPIs outlined above, even if such FPI voluntarily files a proxy statement and/or other filing normally required of a U.S. Domestic Issuer, so long as the company retains its FPI status.

In all cases – including with respect to other companies with cross-market features that may lead to ballot items related to multiple markets – items that are on the ballot solely due to the requirements of another market (listing, incorporation, or national code) may be evaluated under the policy of the relevant market, regardless of the "assigned" primary market coverage.

1. Board of Directors

Voting on Director Nominees in Uncontested Elections

Four fundamental principles apply when determining votes on director nominees:

Independence: Boards should be sufficiently independent from management (and significant shareholders) to ensure that they are able and motivated to effectively supervise management's performance for the benefit of all shareholders, including in setting and monitoring the execution of corporate strategy, with appropriate use of shareholder capital, and in setting and monitoring executive compensation programs that support that strategy. The chair of the board should ideally be an independent director, and all boards should have an independent leadership position or a similar role in order to help provide appropriate counterbalance to executive management, as well as having sufficiently independent committees that focus on key governance concerns such as audit, compensation, and nomination of directors.

Composition: Companies should ensure that directors add value to the board through their specific skills and expertise and by having sufficient time and commitment to serve effectively. Boards should be of a size appropriate to accommodate diversity, expertise, and independence, while ensuring active and collaborative participation by all members. Boards should be sufficiently diverse to ensure consideration of a wide range of perspectives.

Responsiveness: Directors should respond to investor input, such as that expressed through significant opposition to management proposals, significant support for shareholder proposals (whether binding or non-binding), and tender offers where a majority of shares are tendered.

Accountability: Boards should be sufficiently accountable to shareholders, including through transparency of the company's governance practices and regular board elections, by the provision of sufficient information for shareholders to be able to assess directors and board composition, and through the ability of shareholders to remove directors.

General Recommendation: Generally vote for director nominees, except under the following circumstances (with new nominees[1] considered on case-by-case basis):

Independence

Vote against[2] or withhold from non-independent directors (Executive Directors and Non-Independent Non-Executive Directors per ISS' Classification of Directors) when:

- Independent directors comprise 50 percent or less of the board;
- The non-independent director serves on the audit, compensation, or nominating committee;
- The company lacks an audit, compensation, or nominating committee so that the full board functions as that committee; or

[1] A "new nominee" is a director who is being presented for election by shareholders for the first time. Recommendations on new nominees who have served for less than one year are made on a case-by-case basis depending on the timing of their appointment and the problematic governance issue in question.

[2] In general, companies with a plurality vote standard use "Withhold" as the contrary vote option in director elections; companies with a majority vote standard use "Against". However, it will vary by company and the proxy must be checked to determine the valid contrary vote option for the particular company.
The company lacks a formal nominating committee, even if the board attests that the independent directors fulfill the functions of such a committee.

ISS Classification of Directors – U.S.

1. Executive Director

1.1. Current officer[1] of the company or one of its affiliates[2].

2. Non-Independent Non-Executive Director

Board Identification

2.1. Director identified as not independent by the board.

Controlling/Significant Shareholder

2.2. Beneficial owner of more than 50 percent of the company's voting power (this may be aggregated if voting power is distributed among more than one member of a group).

Current Employment at Company or Related Company

2.3. Non-officer employee of the firm (including employee representatives).

2.4. Officer[1], former officer, or general or limited partner of a joint venture or partnership with the company.

Former Employment

2.5. Former CEO of the company.[3, 4]

2.6. Former non-CEO officer[1] of the company or an affiliate[2] within the past five years.

2.7. Former officer[1] of an acquired company within the past five years.[4]

2.8. Officer[1] of a former parent or predecessor firm at the time the company was sold or split off within the past five years.

2.9. Former interim officer if the service was longer than 18 months. If the service was between 12 and 18 months an assessment of the interim officer's employment agreement will be made.[5]

Family Members

2.10. Immediate family member[6] of a current or former officer[1] of the company or its affiliates[2] within the last five years.

2.11. Immediate family member[6] of a current employee of company or its affiliates[2] where additional factors raise concern (which may include, but are not limited to, the following: a director related to numerous employees; the company or its affiliates employ relatives of numerous board members; or a non-Section 16 officer in a key strategic role).

Professional, Transactional, and Charitable Relationships

2.12. Director who (or whose immediate family member[6]) currently provides professional services[7] in excess of $10,000 per year to: the company, an affiliate[2], or an individual officer of the company or an affiliate; or who is (or whose immediate family member[6] is) a partner, employee, or controlling shareholder of an organization which provides the services.

2.13. Director who (or whose immediate family member[6]) currently has any material transactional relationship[8] with the company or its affiliates[2]; or who is (or whose immediate family member[6] is) a partner in, or a controlling shareholder or an executive officer of, an organization which has the material transactional relationship[8] (excluding investments in the company through a private placement).

2.14. Director who (or whose immediate family member[6]) is a trustee, director, or employee of a charitable or non-profit organization that receives material grants or endowments[8] from the company or its affiliates[2].

Other Relationships

2.15. Party to a voting agreement[9] to vote in line with management on proposals being brought to shareholder vote.

2.16. Has (or an immediate family member[6] has) an interlocking relationship as defined by the SEC involving members of the board of directors or its Compensation Committee.[10]

2.17. Founder[11] of the company but not currently an employee.

2.18. Director with pay comparable to Named Executive Officers.

2.19. Any material[12] relationship with the company.

3. Independent Director

3.1. No material[12] connection to the company other than a board seat.

Footnotes:

1. The definition of officer will generally follow that of a "Section 16 officer" (officers subject to Section 16 of the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934) and includes the chief executive, operating, financial, legal, technology, and accounting officers of a company (including the president, treasurer, secretary, controller, or any vice president in charge of a principal business unit, division, or policy function). Current interim officers are included in this category. For private companies, the equivalent positions are applicable. A non-employee director serving as an officer due to statutory requirements (e.g. corporate secretary) will generally be classified as a Non-Independent Non-Executive Director under "Any material relationship with the company." However, if the company provides explicit disclosure that the director is not receiving additional compensation exceeding $10,000 per year for serving in that capacity, then the director will be classified as an Independent Director.

2. "Affiliate" includes a subsidiary, sibling company, or parent company. ISS uses 50 percent control ownership by the parent company as the standard for applying its affiliate designation. The manager/advisor of an externally managed issuer (EMI) is considered an affiliate.

3. Includes any former CEO of the company prior to the company's initial public offering (IPO).

4. When there is a former CEO of a special purpose acquisition company (SPAC) serving on the board of an acquired company, ISS will generally classify such directors as independent unless determined otherwise taking into account the following factors: the applicable listing standards determination of such director's independence; any operating ties to the firm; and the existence of any other conflicting relationships or related party transactions.

5. ISS will look at the terms of the interim officer's employment contract to determine if it contains severance pay, long-term health and pension benefits, or other such standard provisions typically contained in contracts of permanent, non-temporary CEOs. ISS will also consider if a formal search process was under way for a full-time officer at the time.

6. "Immediate family member" follows the SEC's definition of such and covers spouses, parents, children, step-parents, step-children, siblings, in-laws, and any person (other than a tenant or employee) sharing the household of any director, nominee for director, executive officer, or significant shareholder of the company.

7. Professional services can be characterized as advisory in nature, generally involve access to sensitive company information or to strategic decision-making, and typically have a commission- or fee-based payment structure. Professional services generally include but are not limited to the following: investment banking/financial advisory services, commercial banking (beyond deposit services), investment services, insurance services, accounting/audit services, consulting services, marketing services, legal services, property management services, realtor services, lobbying services, executive search services, and IT consulting services. The following would generally be considered transactional relationships and not professional services: deposit services, IT tech support services, educational services, and construction services. The case of participation in a banking syndicate by a non-lead bank should be considered a transactional (and hence subject to the associated materiality test) rather than a professional relationship. "Of Counsel" relationships are only considered immaterial if the individual does not receive any form of compensation (in excess of $10,000 per year) from, or is a retired partner of, the firm providing the professional service. The case of a company providing a professional service to one of its directors or to an entity with which one of its directors is affiliated, will be considered a transactional rather than a professional relationship. Insurance services and marketing services are assumed to be professional services unless the company explains why such services are not advisory.

8. A material transactional relationship, including grants to non-profit organizations, exists if the company makes annual payments to, or receives annual payments from, another entity, exceeding the greater of: $200,000 or 5 percent of the recipient's gross revenues, for a company that follows NASDAQ listing standards; or the greater of $1,000,000 or 2 percent of the recipient's gross revenues, for a company that follows NYSE listing standards. For a company that follows neither of the preceding standards, ISS will apply the NASDAQ-based materiality test. (The recipient is the party receiving the financial proceeds from the transaction).

9. Dissident directors who are parties to a voting agreement pursuant to a settlement or similar arrangement may be classified as Independent Directors if an analysis of the following factors indicates that the voting agreement does not compromise their alignment with all shareholders' interests: the terms of the agreement; the duration of the standstill provision in the agreement; the limitations and requirements of actions that are agreed upon; if the dissident director nominee(s) is subject to the standstill; and if there any conflicting relationships or related party transactions.

10. Interlocks include: executive officers serving as directors on each other's compensation or similar committees (or, in the absence of such a committee, on the board); or executive officers sitting on each other's boards and at least one serves on the other's compensation or similar committees (or, in the absence of such a committee, on the board).

11. The operating involvement of the founder with the company will be considered; if the founder was never employed by the company, ISS may deem him or her an Independent Director.

12. For purposes of ISS's director independence classification, "material" will be defined as a standard of relationship (financial, personal, or otherwise) that a reasonable person might conclude could potentially influence one's objectivity in the boardroom in a manner that would have a meaningful impact on an individual's ability to satisfy requisite fiduciary standards on behalf of shareholders.

Composition

Attendance at Board and Committee Meetings: Generally vote against or withhold from directors (except nominees who served only part of the fiscal year[3]) who attend less than 75 percent of the aggregate of their board and committee meetings for the period for which they served, unless an acceptable reason for absences is disclosed in the proxy or another SEC filing. Acceptable reasons for director absences are generally limited to the following:

- Medical issues/illness;
- Family emergencies; and
- Missing only one meeting (when the total of all meetings is three or fewer).

In cases of chronic poor attendance without reasonable justification, in addition to voting against the director(s) with poor attendance, generally vote against or withhold from appropriate members of the nominating/governance committees or the full board.

If the proxy disclosure is unclear and insufficient to determine whether a director attended at least 75 percent of the aggregate of his/her board and committee meetings during his/her period of service, vote against or withhold from the director(s) in question.

Overboarded Directors: Generally vote against or withhold from individual directors who:

- Sit on more than five public company boards; or
- Are CEOs of public companies who sit on the boards of more than two public companies besides their own—withhold only at their outside boards[4].

NOTE: For shareholder meeting reports published on or after February 25th, 2025, Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS) has indefinitely halted the consideration of the gender diversity of a company's board when making vote recommendations with respect to the election or re-election of directors at U.S. companies covered by these guidelines under its proprietary ISS U.S. Benchmark policy.

[3] Nominees who served for only part of the fiscal year are generally exempted from the attendance policy.
[4] Although all of a CEO's subsidiary boards with publicly-traded common stock will be counted as separate boards, ISS will not recommend a withhold vote for the CEO of a parent company board or any of the controlled (>50 percent ownership) subsidiaries of that parent but may do so at subsidiaries that are less than 50 percent controlled and boards outside the parent/subsidiary relationships.

Gender Diversity: Generally vote against or withhold from the chair of the nominating committee (or other directors on a case-by-case basis) at companies where there are no women on the company's board. An exception will be made if there was at least one woman on the board at the preceding annual meeting and the board makes a firm commitment to return to a gender-diverse status within a year.

NOTE: For shareholder meeting reports published on or after February 25th, 2025, Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS) has indefinitely halted the consideration of the racial and/or ethnic diversity of a company's board when making vote recommendations with respect to the election or re-election of directors at U.S. companies covered under these guidelines under its proprietary ISS U.S. Benchmark policy.

Racial and/or Ethnic Diversity: For companies in the Russell 3000 or S&P 1500 indices, generally vote against or withhold from the chair of the nominating committee (or other directors on a case-by-case basis) where the board has no apparent racially or ethnically diverse members[5]. An exception will be made if there was racial and/or ethnic diversity on the board at the preceding annual meeting and the board makes a firm commitment to appoint at least one racial and/or ethnic diverse member within a year.

Responsiveness

Vote case-by-case on individual directors, committee members, or the entire board of directors as appropriate if:

- The board failed to act on a shareholder proposal that received the support of a majority of the shares cast in the previous year or failed to act on a management proposal seeking to ratify an existing charter/bylaw provision that received opposition of a majority of the shares cast in the previous year. Factors that will be considered are:
  - Disclosed outreach efforts by the board to shareholders in the wake of the vote;
  - Rationale provided in the proxy statement for the level of implementation;
  - The subject matter of the proposal;
  - The level of support for and opposition to the resolution in past meetings;
  - Actions taken by the board in response to the majority vote and its engagement with shareholders;
  - The continuation of the underlying issue as a voting item on the ballot (as either shareholder or management proposals); and
  - Other factors as appropriate.
- The board failed to act on takeover offers where the majority of shares are tendered; or
- At the previous board election, any director received more than 50 percent withhold/against votes of the shares cast and the company has failed to address the issue(s) that caused the high withhold/against vote.

Vote case-by-case on Compensation Committee members (or, in exceptional cases, the full board) and the Say on Pay proposal if:

- The company's previous say-on-pay received the support of less than 70 percent of votes cast. Factors that will be considered are:
  - The company's response, including:
    - Disclosure of engagement efforts with major institutional investors, including the frequency and timing of engagements and the company participants (including whether independent directors participated);
    - Disclosure of the specific concerns voiced by dissenting shareholders that led to the say-on-pay opposition; and
    - Disclosure of specific and meaningful actions taken to address shareholders' concerns;
  - Other recent compensation actions taken by the company;
  - Whether the issues raised are recurring or isolated;
  - The company's ownership structure; and

[5] Aggregate diversity statistics provided by the board will only be considered if specific to racial and/or ethnic diversity.

- Whether the support level was less than 50 percent, which would warrant the highest degree of responsiveness.

- The board implements an advisory vote on executive compensation on a less frequent basis than the frequency that received the plurality of votes cast.

Accountability

Problematic Takeover Defenses, Capital Structure, and Governance Structure

Poison Pills: Generally vote against or withhold from all nominees (except new nominees [1], **who** should be considered case-by-case) if:

- The company has a poison pill with a deadhand or slowhand feature[6];
- The board makes a material adverse modification to an existing pill, including, but not limited to, extension, renewal, or lowering the trigger, without shareholder approval; or
- The company has a long-term poison pill (with a term of over one year) that was not approved by the public shareholders[7].

Vote case-by-case on nominees if the board adopts an initial short-term pill[6] (with a term of one year or less) without shareholder approval, taking into consideration:

- The trigger threshold and other terms of the pill;
- The disclosed rationale for the adoption;
- The context in which the pill was adopted, (e.g., factors such as the company's size and stage of development, sudden changes in its market capitalization, and extraordinary industry-wide or macroeconomic events);
- A commitment to put any renewal to a shareholder vote;
- The company's overall track record on corporate governance and responsiveness to shareholders; and
- Other factors as relevant.

Unequal Voting Rights: Generally vote withhold or against directors individually, committee members, or the entire board (except new nominees [1], who should be considered case-by-case), if the company employs a common stock structure with unequal voting rights[8].

Exceptions to this policy will generally be limited to:

- Newly-public companies[9] with a sunset provision of no more than seven years from the date of going public;
- Limited Partnerships and the Operating Partnership (OP) unit structure of REITs;
- Situations where the super-voting shares represent less than 5% of total voting power and therefore considered to be *de minimis*; or
- The company provides sufficient protections for minority shareholders, such as allowing minority shareholders a regular binding vote on whether the capital structure should be maintained.

[6] If a short-term pill with a deadhand or slowhand feature is enacted but expires before the next shareholder vote, ISS will generally still recommend withhold/against nominees at the next shareholder meeting following its adoption.
[7] Approval prior to, or in connection, with a company's becoming publicly-traded, or in connection with a de-SPAC transaction, is insufficient.
[8] This generally includes classes of common stock that have additional votes per share than other shares; classes of shares that are not entitled to vote on all the same ballot items or nominees; or stock with time-phased voting rights ("loyalty shares").
[9] Includes companies that emerge from bankruptcy, SPAC transactions, spin-offs, direct listings, and those who complete a traditional initial public offering.

Classified Board Structure: The board is classified, and a continuing director responsible for a problematic governance issue at the board/committee level that would warrant a withhold/against vote recommendation is not up for election. All appropriate nominees (except new) may be held accountable.

Removal of Shareholder Discretion on Classified Boards: The company has opted into, or failed to opt out of, state laws requiring a classified board structure.

Problematic Governance Structure: For companies that hold or held their first annual meeting [9] of public shareholders after Feb. 1, 2015, generally vote against or withhold from directors individually, committee members, or the entire board (except new nominees [1], who should be considered case-by-case) if, prior to or in connection with the company's public offering, the company or its board adopted the following bylaw or charter provisions that are considered to be materially adverse to shareholder rights:

- Supermajority vote requirements to amend the bylaws or charter;
- A classified board structure; or
- Other egregious provisions.

A provision which specifies that the problematic structure(s) will be sunset within seven years of the date of going public will be considered a mitigating factor.

Unless the adverse provision is reversed or removed, vote case-by-case on director nominees in subsequent years.

Unilateral Bylaw/Charter Amendments: Generally vote against or withhold from directors individually, committee members, or the entire board (except new nominees [1], who should be considered case-by-case) if the board amends the company's bylaws or charter without shareholder approval in a manner that materially diminishes shareholders' rights or that could adversely impact shareholders, considering the following factors:

- The board's rationale for adopting the bylaw/charter amendment without shareholder ratification;
- Disclosure by the company of any significant engagement with shareholders regarding the amendment;
- The level of impairment of shareholders' rights caused by the board's unilateral amendment to the bylaws/charter;
- The board's track record with regard to unilateral board action on bylaw/charter amendments or other entrenchment provisions;
- The company's ownership structure;
- The company's existing governance provisions;
- The timing of the board's amendment to the bylaws/charter in connection with a significant business development; and
- Other factors, as deemed appropriate, that may be relevant to determine the impact of the amendment on shareholders.

Unless the adverse amendment is reversed or submitted to a binding shareholder vote, in subsequent years vote case-by-case on director nominees. Generally vote against (except new nominees [1], who should be considered case-by-case) if the directors:

- Classified the board;
- Adopted supermajority vote requirements to amend the bylaws or charter;
- Eliminated shareholders' ability to amend bylaws;
- Adopted a fee-shifting provision; or
- Adopted another provision deemed egregious.

Restricting Binding Shareholder Proposals: Generally vote against or withhold from the members of the governance committee if:

- The company's governing documents impose undue restrictions on shareholders' ability to amend the bylaws. Such restrictions include but are not limited to: outright prohibition on the submission of binding shareholder proposals or share ownership requirements, subject matter restrictions, or time holding requirements in excess of SEC Rule 14a-8. Vote against or withhold on an ongoing basis.

Submission of management proposals to approve or ratify requirements in excess of SEC Rule 14a-8 for the submission of binding bylaw amendments will generally be viewed as an insufficient restoration of shareholders' rights. Generally continue to vote against or withhold on an ongoing basis until shareholders are provided with an unfettered ability to amend the bylaws or a proposal providing for such unfettered right is submitted for shareholder approval.

Director Performance Evaluation: The board lacks mechanisms to promote accountability and oversight, coupled with sustained poor performance relative to peers. Sustained poor performance is measured by one-, three-, and five-year total shareholder returns in the bottom half of a company's four-digit GICS industry group (Russell 3000 companies only). Take into consideration the company's operational metrics and other factors as warranted. Problematic provisions include but are not limited to:

- A classified board structure;
- A supermajority vote requirement;
- Either a plurality vote standard in uncontested director elections, or a majority vote standard in contested elections;
- The inability of shareholders to call special meetings;
- The inability of shareholders to act by written consent;
- A multi-class capital structure; and/or
- A non-shareholder-approved poison pill.

Management Proposals to Ratify Existing Charter or Bylaw Provisions: Vote against/withhold from individual directors, members of the governance committee, or the full board, where boards ask shareholders to ratify existing charter or bylaw provisions considering the following factors:

- The presence of a shareholder proposal addressing the same issue on the same ballot;
- The board's rationale for seeking ratification;
- Disclosure of actions to be taken by the board should the ratification proposal fail;
- Disclosure of shareholder engagement regarding the board's ratification request;
- The level of impairment to shareholders' rights caused by the existing provision;
- The history of management and shareholder proposals on the provision at the company's past meetings;
- Whether the current provision was adopted in response to the shareholder proposal;
- The company's ownership structure; and
- Previous use of ratification proposals to exclude shareholder proposals.

Problematic Audit-Related Practices

Generally vote against or withhold from the members of the Audit Committee if:

- The non-audit fees paid to the auditor are excessive;
- The company receives an adverse opinion on the company's financial statements from its auditor; or
- There is persuasive evidence that the Audit Committee entered into an inappropriate indemnification agreement with its auditor that limits the ability of the company, or its shareholders, to pursue legitimate legal recourse against the audit firm.

Vote case-by-case on members of the Audit Committee and potentially the full board if:

- Poor accounting practices are identified that rise to a level of serious concern, such as: fraud; misapplication of GAAP; and material weaknesses identified in Section 404 disclosures. Examine the severity, breadth, chronological sequence, and duration, as well as the company's efforts at remediation or corrective actions, in determining whether withhold/against votes are warranted.

Problematic Compensation Practices

In the absence of an Advisory Vote on Executive Compensation (Say on Pay) ballot item or in egregious situations, vote against or withhold from the members of the Compensation Committee and potentially the full board if:

- There is an unmitigated misalignment between CEO pay and company performance (pay for performance);
- The company maintains significant problematic pay practices; or
- The board exhibits a significant level of poor communication and responsiveness to shareholders.

Generally vote against or withhold from the Compensation Committee chair, other committee members, or potentially the full board if:

- The company fails to include a Say on Pay ballot item when required under SEC provisions, or under the company's declared frequency of say on pay; or
- The company fails to include a Frequency of Say on Pay ballot item when required under SEC provisions.

Generally vote against members of the board committee responsible for approving/setting non-employee director compensation if there is a pattern (i.e. two or more years) of awarding excessive non-employee director compensation without disclosing a compelling rationale or other mitigating factors.

Problematic Pledging of Company Stock: Vote against the members of the committee that oversees risks related to pledging, or the full board, where a significant level of pledged company stock by executives or directors raises concerns. The following factors will be considered:

- The presence of an anti-pledging policy, disclosed in the proxy statement, that prohibits future pledging activity;
- The magnitude of aggregate pledged shares in terms of total common shares outstanding, market value, and trading volume;
- Disclosure of progress or lack thereof in reducing the magnitude of aggregate pledged shares over time;
- Disclosure in the proxy statement that shares subject to stock ownership and holding requirements do not include pledged company stock; and
- Any other relevant factors.

Climate Accountability

For companies that are significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters, through their operations or value chain[10], generally vote against or withhold from the incumbent chair of the responsible committee (or other directors on a case-by-case basis) in cases where ISS determines that the company is not taking the minimum steps needed to understand, assess, and mitigate risks related to climate change to the company and the larger economy.

Minimum steps to understand and mitigate those risks are considered to be the following. Both minimum criteria will be required to be in alignment with the policy :

[10] Companies defined as "significant GHG emitters" will be those on the current Climate Action 100+ Focus Group list.

- Detailed disclosure of climate-related risks, such as according to the framework established by the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), including:
  - Board governance measures;
  - Corporate strategy;
  - Risk management analyses; and
  - Metrics and targets.
- Appropriate GHG emissions reduction targets.

At this time, "appropriate GHG emissions reductions targets" will be medium-term GHG reduction targets or Net Zero-by-2050 GHG reduction targets for a company's operations (Scope 1) and electricity use (Scope 2). Targets should cover the vast majority of the company's direct emissions.

Governance Failures

Under extraordinary circumstances, vote against or withhold from directors individually, committee members, or the entire board, due to:

- Material failures of governance, stewardship, risk oversight[11], or fiduciary responsibilities at the company;
- Failure to replace management as appropriate; or
- Egregious actions related to a director's service on other boards that raise substantial doubt about his or her ability to effectively oversee management and serve the best interests of shareholders at any company.

Voting on Director Nominees in Contested Elections

Vote-No Campaigns

General Recommendation: In cases where companies are targeted in connection with public "vote-no" campaigns, evaluate director nominees under the existing governance policies for voting on director nominees in uncontested elections. Take into consideration the arguments submitted by shareholders and other publicly available information.

Proxy Contests/Proxy Access

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on the election of directors in contested elections, considering the following factors:

- Long-term financial performance of the company relative to its industry;
- Management's track record;
- Background to the contested election;
- Nominee qualifications and any compensatory arrangements;
- Strategic plan of dissident slate and quality of the critique against management;
- Likelihood that the proposed goals and objectives can be achieved (both slates); and
- Stock ownership positions.

In the case of candidates nominated pursuant to proxy access, vote case-by-case considering any applicable factors listed above or additional factors which may be relevant, including those that are specific to the company, to the nominee(s) and/or to the nature of the election (such as whether there are more candidates than board seats).

[11] Examples of failure of risk oversight include but are not limited to: bribery; large or serial fines or sanctions from regulatory bodies; demonstrably poor risk oversight of environmental and social issues, including climate change; significant adverse legal judgments or settlement; or hedging of company stock.

Other Board-Related Proposals

Adopt Anti-Hedging/Pledging/Speculative Investments Policy

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals seeking a policy that prohibits named executive officers from engaging in derivative or speculative transactions involving company stock, including hedging, holding stock in a margin account, or pledging stock as collateral for a loan. However, the company's existing policies regarding responsible use of company stock will be considered.

Board Refreshment

Board refreshment is best implemented through an ongoing program of individual director evaluations, conducted annually, to ensure the evolving needs of the board are met and to bring in fresh perspectives, skills, and diversity as needed.

Term/Tenure Limits

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on management proposals regarding director term/tenure limits, considering:

- The rationale provided for adoption of the term/tenure limit;
- The robustness of the company's board evaluation process;
- Whether the limit is of sufficient length to allow for a broad range of director tenures;
- Whether the limit would disadvantage independent directors compared to non-independent directors; and
- Whether the board will impose the limit evenly, and not have the ability to waive it in a discriminatory manner.
- Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals asking for the company to adopt director term/tenure limits, considering:
- The scope of the shareholder proposal; and
- Evidence of problematic issues at the company combined with, or exacerbated by, a lack of board refreshment.

Age Limits

General Recommendation: Generally vote against management and shareholder proposals to limit the tenure of independent directors through mandatory retirement ages. Vote for proposals to remove mandatory age limits.

Board Size

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals seeking to fix the board size or designate a range for the board size.

Vote against proposals that give management the ability to alter the size of the board outside of a specified range without shareholder approval.

Classification/Declassification of the Board

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals to classify (stagger) the board.

Vote for proposals to repeal classified boards and to elect all directors annually.

CEO Succession Planning

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals seeking disclosure on a CEO succession planning policy, considering, at a minimum, the following factors:

- The reasonableness/scope of the request; and
- The company's existing disclosure on its current CEO succession planning process.

Cumulative Voting

General Recommendation: Generally vote against management proposals to eliminate cumulate voting, and for shareholder proposals to restore or provide for cumulative voting, unless:

- The company has proxy access[12], thereby allowing shareholders to nominate directors to the company's ballot; and
- The company has adopted a majority vote standard, with a carve-out for plurality voting in situations where there are more nominees than seats, and a director resignation policy to address failed elections.

Vote for proposals for cumulative voting at controlled companies (insider voting power > 50%).

Director and Officer Indemnification, Liability Protection, and Exculpation

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals on director and officer indemnification, liability protection, and exculpation[13].

Consider the stated rationale for the proposed change. Also consider, among other factors, the extent to which the proposal would:

- Eliminate directors' and officers' liability for monetary damages for violating the duty of care;
- Eliminate directors' and officers' liability for monetary damages for violating the duty of loyalt;
- Expand coverage beyond just legal expenses to liability for acts that are more serious violations of fiduciary obligation than mere carelessness; and
- Expand the scope of indemnification to provide for mandatory indemnification of company officials in connection with acts that previously the company was permitted to provide indemnification for, at the discretion of the company's board (*i.e.*, "permissive indemnification"), but that previously the company was not required to indemnify.

Vote for those proposals providing such expanded coverage in cases when a director's or officer's legal defense was unsuccessful if both of the following apply:

- If the individual was found to have acted in good faith and in a manner that the individual reasonably believed was in the best interests of the company; and
- If only the individual's legal expenses would be covered.

[12] A proxy access right that meets the recommended guidelines.
[13] **Indemnification**: the condition of being secured against loss or damage.
Limited liability: a person's financial liability is limited to a fixed sum, or personal financial assets are not at risk if the individual loses a lawsuit that results in financial award/damages to the plaintiff.
Exculpation: to eliminate or limit the personal liability of a director or officer to the corporation or its shareholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director or officer.

Establish/Amend Nominee Qualifications

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals that establish or amend director qualifications. Votes should be based on the reasonableness of the criteria and the degree to which they may preclude dissident nominees from joining the board.

Vote case-by-case on shareholder resolutions seeking a director nominee who possesses a particular subject matter expertise, considering:

- The company's board committee structure, existing subject matter expertise, and board nomination provisions relative to that of its peers;
- The company's existing board and management oversight mechanisms regarding the issue for which board oversight is sought;
- The company's disclosure and performance relating to the issue for which board oversight is sought and any significant related controversies; and
- The scope and structure of the proposal.

Establish Other Board Committee Proposals

General Recommendation: Generally vote against shareholder proposals to establish a new board committee, as such proposals seek a specific oversight mechanism/structure that potentially limits a company's flexibility to determine an appropriate oversight mechanism for itself. However, the following factors will be considered:

- Existing oversight mechanisms (including current committee structure) regarding the issue for which board oversight is sought;
- Level of disclosure regarding the issue for which board oversight is sought;
- Company performance related to the issue for which board oversight is sought;
- Board committee structure compared to that of other companies in its industry sector; and
- The scope and structure of the proposal.

Filling Vacancies/Removal of Directors

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals that provide that directors may be removed only for cause. Vote for proposals to restore shareholders' ability to remove directors with or without cause.

Vote against proposals that provide that only continuing directors may elect replacements to fill board vacancies.

Vote for proposals that permit shareholders to elect directors to fill board vacancies.

Independent Board Chair

General Recommendation: Generally vote for shareholder proposals requiring that the board chair position be filled by an independent director, taking into consideration the following:

- The scope and rationale of the proposal;
- The company's current board leadership structure;
- The company's governance structure and practices;
- Company performance; and
- Any other relevant factors that may be applicable.

The following factors will increase the likelihood of a "for" recommendation:

- A majority non-independent board and/or the presence of non-independent directors on key board committees;
- A weak or poorly-defined lead independent director role that fails to serve as an appropriate counterbalance to a combined CEO/chair role;
- The presence of an executive or non-independent chair in addition to the CEO, a recent recombination of the role of CEO and chair, and/or departure from a structure with an independent chair;
- Evidence that the board has failed to oversee and address material risks facing the company;
- A material governance failure, particularly if the board has failed to adequately respond to shareholder concerns or if the board has materially diminished shareholder rights; or
- Evidence that the board has failed to intervene when management's interests are contrary to shareholders' interests.

Majority of Independent Directors/Establishment of Independent Committees

General Recommendation: Vote for shareholder proposals asking that a majority or more of directors be independent unless the board composition already meets the proposed threshold by ISS' definition of Independent Director (See ISS' Classification of Directors.)

Vote for shareholder proposals asking that board audit, compensation, and/or nominating committees be composed exclusively of independent directors unless they currently meet that standard.

Majority Vote Standard for the Election of Directors

General Recommendation: Generally vote for management proposals to adopt a majority of votes cast standard for directors in uncontested elections. Vote against if no carve-out for a plurality vote standard in contested elections is included.

Generally vote for precatory and binding shareholder resolutions requesting that the board change the company's bylaws to stipulate that directors need to be elected with an affirmative majority of votes cast, provided it does not conflict with the state law where the company is incorporated. Binding resolutions need to allow for a carve-out for a plurality vote standard when there are more nominees than board seats.

Companies are strongly encouraged to also adopt a post-election policy (also known as a director resignation policy) that will provide guidelines so that the company will promptly address the situation of a holdover director.

Proxy Access

General Recommendation: Generally vote for management and shareholder proposals for proxy access with the following provisions:

- **Ownership threshold:** maximum requirement not more than three percent (3%) of the voting power;
- **Ownership duration:** maximum requirement not longer than three (3) years of continuous ownership for each member of the nominating group;
- **Aggregation:** minimal or no limits on the number of shareholders permitted to form a nominating group; and
- **Cap:** cap on nominees of generally twenty-five percent (25%) of the board.

Review for reasonableness any other restrictions on the right of proxy access. Generally vote against proposals that are more restrictive than these guidelines.

Require More Nominees than Open Seats

General Recommendation: Vote against shareholder proposals that would require a company to nominate more candidates than the number of open board seats.

Shareholder Engagement Policy (Shareholder Advisory Committee)

General Recommendation: Generally vote for shareholder proposals requesting that the board establish an internal mechanism/process, which may include a committee, in order to improve communications between directors and shareholders, unless the company has the following features, as appropriate:

- Established a communication structure that goes beyond the exchange requirements to facilitate the exchange of information between shareholders and members of the board;
- Effectively disclosed information with respect to this structure to its shareholders;
- Company has not ignored majority-supported shareholder proposals, or a majority withhold vote on a director nominee; and
- The company has an independent chair or a lead director, according to ISS' definition. This individual must be made available for periodic consultation and direct communication with major shareholders.

2. Audit-Related

Auditor Indemnification and Limitation of Liability

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on the issue of auditor indemnification and limitation of liability. Factors to be assessed include, but are not limited to:

- The terms of the auditor agreement—the degree to which these agreements impact shareholders' rights;
- The motivation and rationale for establishing the agreements;
- The quality of the company's disclosure; and
- The company's historical practices in the audit area.

Vote against or withhold from members of an audit committee in situations where there is persuasive evidence that the audit committee entered into an inappropriate indemnification agreement with its auditor that limits the ability of the company, or its shareholders, to pursue legitimate legal recourse against the audit firm.

Auditor Ratification

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals to ratify auditors unless any of the following apply:

- An auditor has a financial interest in or association with the company, and is therefore not independent;
- There is reason to believe that the independent auditor has rendered an opinion that is neither accurate nor indicative of the company's financial position;
- Poor accounting practices are identified that rise to a serious level of concern, such as fraud or misapplication of GAAP; or
- Fees for non-audit services ("Other" fees) are excessive.

Non-audit fees are excessive if:

- Non-audit ("other") fees > audit fees + audit-related fees + tax compliance/preparation fees

Tax compliance and preparation include the preparation of original and amended tax returns and refund claims, and tax payment planning. All other services in the tax category, such as tax advice, planning, or consulting, should be added to "Other" fees. If the breakout of tax fees cannot be determined, add all tax fees to "Other" fees.

In circumstances where "Other" fees include fees related to significant one-time capital structure events (such as initial public offerings, bankruptcy emergence, and spin-offs) and the company makes public disclosure of the amount and nature of those fees that are an exception to the standard "non-audit fee" category, then such fees may be excluded from the non-audit fees considered in determining the ratio of non-audit to audit/audit-related fees/tax compliance and preparation for purposes of determining whether non-audit fees are excessive.

Shareholder Proposals Limiting Non-Audit Services

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals asking companies to prohibit or limit their auditors from engaging in non-audit services.

Shareholder Proposals on Audit Firm Rotation

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals asking for audit firm rotation, taking into account:

- The tenure of the audit firm;

- The length of rotation specified in the proposal;
- Any significant audit-related issues at the company;
- The number of Audit Committee meetings held each year;
- The number of financial experts serving on the committee; and
- Whether the company has a periodic renewal process where the auditor is evaluated for both audit quality and competitive price.

3. Shareholder Rights & Defenses

Advance Notice Requirements for Shareholder Proposals/Nominations

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on advance notice proposals, giving support to those proposals which allow shareholders to submit proposals/nominations as close to the meeting date as reasonably possible and within the broadest window possible, recognizing the need to allow sufficient notice for company, regulatory, and shareholder review.

To be reasonable, the company's deadline for shareholder notice of a proposal/nominations must be no earlier than 120 days prior to the anniversary of the previous year's meeting and have a submittal window of no shorter than 30 days from the beginning of the notice period (also known as a 90-120-day window). The submittal window is the period under which shareholders must file their proposals/nominations prior to the deadline.

In general, support additional efforts by companies to ensure full disclosure in regard to a proponent's economic and voting position in the company so long as the informational requirements are reasonable and aimed at providing shareholders with the necessary information to review such proposals.

Amend Bylaws without Shareholder Consent

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals giving the board exclusive authority to amend the bylaws.

Vote case-by-case on proposals giving the board the ability to amend the bylaws in addition to shareholders, taking into account the following:

- Any impediments to shareholders' ability to amend the bylaws (i.e. supermajority voting requirements);
- The company's ownership structure and historical voting turnout;
- Whether the board could amend bylaws adopted by shareholders; and
- Whether shareholders would retain the ability to ratify any board-initiated amendments.

Control Share Acquisition Provisions

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals to opt out of control share acquisition statutes unless doing so would enable the completion of a takeover that would be detrimental to shareholders.

Vote against proposals to amend the charter to include control share acquisition provisions.

Vote for proposals to restore voting rights to the control shares.

Control share acquisition statutes function by denying shares their voting rights when they contribute to ownership in excess of certain thresholds. Voting rights for those shares exceeding ownership limits may only be restored by approval of either a majority or supermajority of disinterested shares. Thus, control share acquisition statutes effectively require a hostile bidder to put its offer to a shareholder vote or risk voting disenfranchisement if the bidder continues buying up a large block of shares.

Control Share Cash-Out Provisions

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals to opt out of control share cash-out statutes.

Control share cash-out statutes give dissident shareholders the right to "cash-out" of their position in a company at the expense of the shareholder who has taken a control position. In other words, when an investor crosses a preset threshold level, remaining shareholders are given the right to sell their shares to the acquirer, who must buy them at the highest acquiring price.

Disgorgement Provisions

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals to opt out of state disgorgement provisions.

Disgorgement provisions require an acquirer or potential acquirer of more than a certain percentage of a company's stock to disgorge, or pay back, to the company any profits realized from the sale of that company's stock purchased 24 months before achieving control status. All sales of company stock by the acquirer occurring within a certain period of time (between 18 months and 24 months) prior to the investor's gaining control status are subject to these recapture-of-profits provisions.

Fair Price Provisions

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to adopt fair price provisions (provisions that stipulate that an acquirer must pay the same price to acquire all shares as it paid to acquire the control shares), evaluating factors such as the vote required to approve the proposed acquisition, the vote required to repeal the fair price provision, and the mechanism for determining the fair price.

Generally vote against fair price provisions with shareholder vote requirements greater than a majority of disinterested shares.

Freeze-Out Provisions

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals to opt out of state freeze-out provisions. Freeze-out provisions force an investor who surpasses a certain ownership threshold in a company to wait a specified period of time before gaining control of the company.

Greenmail

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals to adopt anti-greenmail charter or bylaw amendments or otherwise restrict a company's ability to make greenmail payments.

Vote case-by-case on anti-greenmail proposals when they are bundled with other charter or bylaw amendments.

Greenmail payments are targeted share repurchases by management of company stock from individuals or groups seeking control of the company. Since only the hostile party receives payment, usually at a substantial premium over the market value of its shares, the practice discriminates against all other shareholders.

Shareholder Litigation Rights

Federal Forum Selection Provisions

Federal forum selection provisions require that U.S. federal courts be the sole forum for shareholders to litigate claims arising under federal securities law.

General Recommendation: Generally vote for federal forum selection provisions in the charter or bylaws that specify "the district courts of the United States" as the exclusive forum for federal securities law matters, in the absence of serious concerns about corporate governance or board responsiveness to shareholders.

Vote against provisions that restrict the forum to a particular federal district court; unilateral adoption (without a shareholder vote) of such a provision will generally be considered a one-time failure under the Unilateral Bylaw/ Charter Amendments policy.

Exclusive Forum Provisions for State Law Matters

Exclusive forum provisions in the charter or bylaws restrict shareholders' ability to bring derivative lawsuits against the company, for claims arising out of state corporate law, to the courts of a particular state (generally the state of incorporation).

General Recommendation: Generally vote for charter or bylaw provisions that specify courts located within the state of Delaware as the exclusive forum for corporate law matters for Delaware corporations, in the absence of serious concerns about corporate governance or board responsiveness to shareholders.

For states other than Delaware, vote case-by-case on exclusive forum provisions, taking into consideration:

- The company's stated rationale for adopting such a provision;
- Disclosure of past harm from duplicative shareholder lawsuits in more than one forum;
- The breadth of application of the charter or bylaw provision, including the types of lawsuits to which it would apply and the definition of key terms; and
- Governance features such as shareholders' ability to repeal the provision at a later date (including the vote standard applied when shareholders attempt to amend the charter or bylaws) and their ability to hold directors accountable through annual director elections and a majority vote standard in uncontested elections.

Generally vote against provisions that specify a state other than the state of incorporation as the exclusive forum for corporate law matters, or that specify a particular local court within the state; unilateral adoption of such a provision will generally be considered a one-time failure under the Unilateral Bylaw/Charter Amendments policy.

Fee shifting

Fee-shifting provisions in the charter or bylaws require that a shareholder who sues a company unsuccessfully pay all litigation expenses of the defendant corporation and its directors and officers.

General Recommendation: Generally vote against provisions that mandate fee-shifting whenever plaintiffs are not completely successful on the merits (i.e., including cases where the plaintiffs are partially successful).

Unilateral adoption of a fee-shifting provision will generally be considered an ongoing failure under the Unilateral Bylaw/Charter Amendments policy.

Net Operating Loss (NOL) Protective Amendments

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals to adopt a protective amendment for the stated purpose of protecting a company's net operating losses (NOL) if the effective term of the protective amendment would exceed the shorter of three years and the exhaustion of the NOL.

Vote case-by-case, considering the following factors, for management proposals to adopt an NOL protective amendment that would remain in effect for the shorter of three years (or less) and the exhaustion of the NOL:

- The ownership threshold (NOL protective amendments generally prohibit stock ownership transfers that would result in a new 5-percent holder or increase the stock ownership percentage of an existing 5-percent holder);
- The value of the NOLs;
- Shareholder protection mechanisms (sunset provision or commitment to cause expiration of the protective amendment upon exhaustion or expiration of the NOL);
- The company's existing governance structure including: board independence, existing takeover defenses, track record of responsiveness to shareholders, and any other problematic governance concerns; and
- Any other factors that may be applicable.

Poison Pills (Shareholder Rights Plans)

Shareholder Proposals to Put Pill to a Vote and/or Adopt a Pill Policy

General Recommendation: Vote for shareholder proposals requesting that the company submit its poison pill to a shareholder vote or redeem it unless the company has: (1) A shareholder-approved poison pill in place; or (2) The company has adopted a policy concerning the adoption of a pill in the future specifying that the board will only adopt a shareholder rights plan if either:

- Shareholders have approved the adoption of the plan; or
- The board, in its exercise of its fiduciary responsibilities, determines that it is in the best interest of shareholders under the circumstances to adopt a pill without the delay in adoption that would result from seeking stockholder approval (i.e., the "fiduciary out" provision). A poison pill adopted under this fiduciary out will be put to a shareholder ratification vote within 12 months of adoption or expire. If the pill is not approved by a majority of the votes cast on this issue, the plan will immediately terminate.

If the shareholder proposal calls for a time period of less than 12 months for shareholder ratification after adoption, vote for the proposal, but add the caveat that a vote within 12 months would be considered sufficient implementation.

Management Proposals to Ratify a Poison Pill

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on management proposals on poison pill ratification, focusing on the features of the shareholder rights plan. Rights plans should contain the following attributes:

- No lower than a 20 percent trigger, flip-in or flip-over;
- A term of no more than three years;
- No deadhand, slowhand, no-hand, or similar feature that limits the ability of a future board to redeem the pill; and
- Shareholder redemption feature (qualifying offer clause); if the board refuses to redeem the pill 90 days after a qualifying offer is announced, 10 percent of the shares may call a special meeting or seek a written consent to vote on rescinding the pill.

In addition, the rationale for adopting the pill should be thoroughly explained by the company. In examining the request for the pill, take into consideration the company's existing governance structure, including: board independence, existing takeover defenses, and any problematic governance concerns.

Management Proposals to Ratify a Pill to Preserve Net Operating Losses (NOLs)

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals to adopt a poison pill for the stated purpose of protecting a company's net operating losses (NOL) if the term of the pill would exceed the shorter of three years and the exhaustion of the NOL.

Vote case-by-case on management proposals for poison pill ratification, considering the following factors, if the term of the pill would be the shorter of three years (or less) and the exhaustion of the NOL:

- The ownership threshold to transfer (NOL pills generally have a trigger slightly below 5 percent);
- The value of the NOLs;
- Shareholder protection mechanisms (sunset provision, or commitment to cause expiration of the pill upon exhaustion or expiration of NOLs);
- The company's existing governance structure, including: board independence, existing takeover defenses, track record of responsiveness to shareholders, and any other problematic governance concerns; and
- Any other factors that may be applicable.

Proxy Voting Disclosure, Confidentiality, and Tabulation

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals regarding proxy voting mechanics, taking into consideration whether implementation of the proposal is likely to enhance or protect shareholder rights. Specific issues covered under the policy include, but are not limited to, confidential voting of individual proxies and ballots, confidentiality of running vote tallies, and the treatment of abstentions and/or broker non-votes in the company's vote-counting methodology.

While a variety of factors may be considered in each analysis, the guiding principles are: transparency, consistency, and fairness in the proxy voting process. The factors considered, as applicable to the proposal, may include:

- The scope and structure of the proposal;
- The company's stated confidential voting policy (or other relevant policies) and whether it ensures a "level playing field" by providing shareholder proponents with equal access to vote information prior to the annual meeting;
- The company's vote standard for management and shareholder proposals and whether it ensures consistency and fairness in the proxy voting process and maintains the integrity of vote results;
- Whether the company's disclosure regarding its vote counting method and other relevant voting policies with respect to management and shareholder proposals are consistent and clear;
- Any recent controversies or concerns related to the company's proxy voting mechanics;
- Any unintended consequences resulting from implementation of the proposal; and
- Any other factors that may be relevant.

Ratification Proposals: Management Proposals to Ratify Existing Charter or Bylaw Provisions

General Recommendation: Generally vote against management proposals to ratify provisions of the company's existing charter or bylaws, unless these governance provisions align with best practice.

In addition, voting against/withhold from individual directors, members of the governance committee, or the full board may be warranted, considering:

- The presence of a shareholder proposal addressing the same issue on the same ballot;
- The board's rationale for seeking ratification;
- Disclosure of actions to be taken by the board should the ratification proposal fail;
- Disclosure of shareholder engagement regarding the board's ratification request;
- The level of impairment to shareholders' rights caused by the existing provision;
- The history of management and shareholder proposals on the provision at the company's past meetings;
- Whether the current provision was adopted in response to the shareholder proposal;

- The company's ownership structure; and
- Previous use of ratification proposals to exclude shareholder proposals.

Reimbursing Proxy Solicitation Expenses

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to reimburse proxy solicitation expenses.

When voting in conjunction with support of a dissident slate, vote for the reimbursement of all appropriate proxy solicitation expenses associated with the election.

Generally vote for shareholder proposals calling for the reimbursement of reasonable costs incurred in connection with nominating one or more candidates in a contested election where the following apply:

- The election of fewer than 50 percent of the directors to be elected is contested in the election;
- One or more of the dissident's candidates is elected;
- Shareholders are not permitted to cumulate their votes for directors; and
- The election occurred, and the expenses were incurred, after the adoption of this bylaw.

Reincorporation Proposals

General Recommendation: Management or shareholder proposals to change a company's state of incorporation should be evaluated case-by-case, giving consideration to both financial and corporate governance concerns including the following:

- Reasons for reincorporation;
- Comparison of company's governance practices and provisions prior to and following the reincorporation; and
- Comparison of corporation laws of original state and destination state.

Vote for reincorporation when the economic factors outweigh any neutral or negative governance changes.

Shareholder Ability to Act by Written Consent

General Recommendation: Generally vote against management and shareholder proposals to restrict or prohibit shareholders' ability to act by written consent.

Generally vote for management and shareholder proposals that provide shareholders with the ability to act by written consent, taking into account the following factors:

- Shareholders' current right to act by written consent;
- The consent threshold;
- The inclusion of exclusionary or prohibitive language;
- Investor ownership structure; and
- Shareholder support of, and management's response to, previous shareholder proposals.

Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals if, in addition to the considerations above, the company has the following governance and antitakeover provisions:

- An unfettered[14] right for shareholders to call special meetings at a 10 percent threshold;
- A majority vote standard in uncontested director elections;

[14] quality of the company's disclosure; and "Unfettered" means no restrictions on agenda items, no restrictions on the number of shareholders who can group together to reach the 10 percent threshold, and only reasonable limits on when a meeting can be called: no greater than 30 days after the last annual meeting and no greater than 90 prior to the next annual meeting.

- No non-shareholder-approved pill; and
- An annually elected board.

Shareholder Ability to Call Special Meetings

General Recommendation: Vote against management or shareholder proposals to restrict or prohibit shareholders' ability to call special meetings.

Generally vote for management or shareholder proposals that provide shareholders with the ability to call special meetings taking into account the following factors:

- Shareholders' current right to call special meetings;
- Minimum ownership threshold necessary to call special meetings (10 percent preferred);
- The inclusion of exclusionary or prohibitive language;
- Investor ownership structure; and
- Shareholder support of, and management's response to, previous shareholder proposals.

Stakeholder Provisions

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals that ask the board to consider non-shareholder constituencies or other non-financial effects when evaluating a merger or business combination.

State Antitakeover Statutes

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to opt in or out of state takeover statutes (including fair price provisions, stakeholder laws, poison pill endorsements, severance pay and labor contract provisions, and anti-greenmail provisions).

Supermajority Vote Requirements

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals to require a supermajority shareholder vote.

Vote for management or shareholder proposals to reduce supermajority vote requirements. However, for companies with shareholder(s) who have significant ownership levels, vote case-by-case, taking into account:

- Ownership structure;
- Quorum requirements; and
- Vote requirements.

Virtual Shareholder Meetings

General Recommendation: Generally vote for management proposals allowing for the convening of shareholder meetings by electronic means, so long as they do not preclude in-person meetings. Companies are encouraged to disclose the circumstances under which virtual-only[15] meetings would be held, and to allow for comparable rights and opportunities for shareholders to participate electronically as they would have during an in-person meeting.

[15] Virtual-only shareholder meeting" refers to a meeting of shareholders that is held exclusively using technology without a corresponding in-person meeting.

Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals concerning virtual-only meetings, considering:

- Scope and rationale of the proposal; and
- Concerns identified with the company's prior meeting practices.

4. Capital/Restructuring

Capital

Adjustments to Par Value of Common Stock

General Recommendation: Vote for management proposals to reduce the par value of common stock unless the action is being taken to facilitate an anti-takeover device or some other negative corporate governance action.

Vote for management proposals to eliminate par value.

Common Stock Authorization

General Authorization Requests

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to increase the number of authorized shares of common stock that are to be used for general corporate purposes:

- If share usage (outstanding plus reserved) is less than 50% of the current authorized shares, vote for an increase of up to **50**% of current authorized share;
- If share usage is 50% to 100% of the current authorized, vote for an increase of up to **100**% of current authorized shares;
- If share usage is greater than current authorized shares, vote for an increase of up to the current share usage; or
- In the case of a stock split, the allowable increase is calculated (per above) based on the post-split adjusted authorization.

Generally vote against proposed increases, even if within the above ratios, if the proposal or the company's prior or ongoing use of authorized shares is problematic, including, but not limited to:

- The proposal seeks to increase the number of authorized shares of the class of common stock that has superior voting rights to other share classes;
- On the same ballot is a proposal for a reverse split for which support is warranted despite the fact that it would result in an excessive increase in the share authorization;
- The company has a non-shareholder approved poison pill (including an NOL pill); or
- The company has previous sizeable placements (within the past 3 years) of stock with insiders at prices substantially below market value, or with problematic voting rights, without shareholder approval.

However, generally vote for proposed increases beyond the above ratios or problematic situations when there is disclosure of specific and severe risks to shareholders of not approving the request, such as:

- In, or subsequent to, the company's most recent 10-K filing, the company discloses that there is substantial doubt about its ability to continue as a going concern;
- The company states that there is a risk of imminent bankruptcy or imminent liquidation if shareholders do not approve the increase in authorized capital; or
- A government body has in the past year required the company to increase its capital ratios.

For companies incorporated in states that allow increases in authorized capital without shareholder approval, generally vote withhold or against all nominees if a unilateral capital authorization increase does not conform to the above policies.

Specific Authorization Requests

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals to increase the number of authorized common shares where the primary purpose of the increase is to issue shares in connection with transaction(s) (such as acquisitions, SPAC transactions, private placements, or similar transactions) on the same ballot, or disclosed in the proxy statement, that warrant support. For such transactions, the allowable increase will be the greater of:

- twice the amount needed to support the transactions on the ballot, and
- the allowable increase as calculated for general issuances above.

Dual Class Structure

General Recommendation: Generally vote against proposals to create a new class of common stock unless:

- The company discloses a compelling rationale for the dual-class capital structure, such as:
- The company's auditor has concluded that there is substantial doubt about the company's ability to continue as a going concern; or
- The new class of shares will be transitory;
- The new class is intended for financing purposes with minimal or no dilution to current shareholders in both the short term and long term; and
- The new class is not designed to preserve or increase the voting power of an insider or significant shareholder.

Issue Stock for Use with Rights Plan

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals that increase authorized common stock for the explicit purpose of implementing a non-shareholder-approved shareholder rights plan (poison pill).

Preemptive Rights

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals that seek preemptive rights, taking into consideration:

- The size of the company;
- The shareholder base; and
- The liquidity of the stock.

Preferred Stock Authorization

General Authorization Requests

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to increase the number of authorized shares of preferred stock that are to be used for general corporate purposes:

- If share usage (outstanding plus reserved) is less than 50% of the current authorized shares, vote for an increase of up to **50**% of current authorized shares;

- If share usage is 50% to 100% of the current authorized, vote for an increase of up to **100**% of current authorized shares;
- If share usage is greater than current authorized shares, vote for an increase of up to the current share usage.
- In the case of a stock split, the allowable increase is calculated (per above) based on the post-split adjusted authorization; or
- If no preferred shares are currently issued and outstanding, vote against the request, unless the company discloses a specific use for the shares.

Generally vote against proposed increases, even if within the above ratios, if the proposal or the company's prior or ongoing use of authorized shares is problematic, including, but not limited to:

- If the shares requested are blank check preferred shares that can be used for antitakeover purposes;[16]
- The company seeks to increase a class of non-convertible preferred shares entitled to more than one vote per share on matters that do not solely affect the rights of preferred stockholders "supervoting shares");
- The company seeks to increase a class of convertible preferred shares entitled to a number of votes greater than the number of common shares into which they are convertible ("supervoting shares") on matters that do not solely affect the rights of preferred stockholders;
- The stated intent of the increase in the general authorization is to allow the company to increase an existing designated class of supervoting preferred shares;
- On the same ballot is a proposal for a reverse split for which support is warranted despite the fact that it would result in an excessive increase in the share authorization;
- The company has a non-shareholder approved poison pill (including an NOL pill); and
- The company has previous sizeable placements (within the past 3 years) of stock with insiders at prices substantially below market value, or with problematic voting rights, without shareholder approval.

However, generally vote for proposed increases beyond the above ratios or problematic situations when there is disclosure of specific and severe risks to shareholders of not approving the request, such as:

- In, or subsequent to, the company's most recent 10-K filing, the company discloses that there is substantial doubt about its ability to continue as a going concern;
- The company states that there is a risk of imminent bankruptcy or imminent liquidation if shareholders do not approve the increase in authorized capital; or
- A government body has in the past year required the company to increase its capital ratios.

For companies incorporated in states that allow increases in authorized capital without shareholder approval, generally vote withhold or against all nominees if a unilateral capital authorization increase does not conform to the above policies.

Specific Authorization Requests

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals to increase the number of authorized preferred shares where the primary purpose of the increase is to issue shares in connection with transaction(s) (such as acquisitions, SPAC transactions, private placements, or similar transactions) on the same ballot, or disclosed in the proxy statement, that warrant support. For such transactions, the allowable increase will be the greater of:

- twice the amount needed to support the transactions on the ballot, and
- the allowable increase as calculated for general issuances above.

[16] To be acceptable, appropriate disclosure would be needed that the shares are "declawed": i.e., representation by the board that it will not, without prior stockholder approval, issue or use the preferred stock for any defensive or anti-takeover purpose or for the purpose of implementing any stockholder rights plan.

Recapitalization Plans

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on recapitalizations (reclassifications of securities), taking into account the following:

- More simplified capital structure;
- Enhanced liquidity;
- Fairness of conversion terms;
- Impact on voting power and dividends;
- Reasons for the reclassification;
- Conflicts of interest; and
- Other alternatives considered.

Reverse Stock Splits

General Recommendation: Vote for management proposals to implement a reverse stock split if:

- The number of authorized shares will be proportionately reduced; or
- The effective increase in authorized shares is equal to or less than the allowable increase calculated in accordance with ISS' Common Stock Authorization policy.

Vote case-by-case on proposals that do not meet either of the above conditions, taking into consideration the following factors:

- Stock exchange notification to the company of a potential delisting;
- Disclosure of substantial doubt about the company's ability to continue as a going concern without additional financing;
- The company's rationale; or
- Other factors as applicable.

Share Issuance Mandates at U.S. Domestic Issuers Incorporated Outside the U.S.

General Recommendation: For U.S. domestic issuers incorporated outside the U.S. and listed solely on a U.S. exchange, generally vote for resolutions to authorize the issuance of common shares up to 20 percent of currently issued common share capital, where not tied to a specific transaction or financing proposal.

For pre-revenue or other early-stage companies that are heavily reliant on periodic equity financing, generally vote for resolutions to authorize the issuance of common shares up to 50 percent of currently issued common share capital. The burden of proof will be on the company to establish that it has a need for the higher limit.

Renewal of such mandates should be sought at each year's annual meeting.

Vote case-by-case on share issuances for a specific transaction or financing proposal.

Share Repurchase Programs

General Recommendation: For U.S.-incorporated companies, and foreign-incorporated U.S. Domestic Issuers that are traded solely on U.S. exchanges, vote for management proposals to institute open-market share repurchase plans in which all shareholders may participate on equal terms, or to grant the board authority to conduct open-market repurchases, in the absence of company-specific concerns regarding:

- Greenmail;

- The use of buybacks to inappropriately manipulate incentive compensation metrics;
- Threats to the company's long-term viability; or
- Other company-specific factors as warranted.

Vote case-by-case on proposals to repurchase shares directly from specified shareholders, balancing the stated rationale against the possibility for the repurchase authority to be misused, such as to repurchase shares from insiders at a premium to market price.

Share Repurchase Programs Shareholder Proposals

General Recommendation: Generally vote against shareholder proposals prohibiting executives from selling shares of company stock during periods in which the company has announced that it may or will be repurchasing shares of its stock. Vote for the proposal when there is a pattern of abuse by executives exercising options or selling shares during periods of share buybacks.

Stock Distributions: Splits and Dividends

General Recommendation: Generally vote for management proposals to increase the common share authorization for stock split or stock dividend, provided that the effective increase in authorized shares is equal to or is less than the allowable increase calculated in accordance with ISS' Common Stock Authorization policy.

Tracking Stock

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on the creation of tracking stock, weighing the strategic value of the transaction against such factors as:

- Adverse governance changes;
- Excessive increases in authorized capital stock;
- Unfair method of distribution;
- Diminution of voting rights;
- Adverse conversion features;
- Negative impact on stock option plans; and
- Alternatives such as spin-off.

Restructuring

Appraisal Rights

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals to restore or provide shareholders with rights of appraisal.

Asset Purchases

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on asset purchase proposals, considering the following factors:

- Purchase price;
- Fairness opinion;
- Financial and strategic benefits;
- How the deal was negotiated;

- Conflicts of interest;
- Other alternatives for the business; and
- Non-completion risk.

Asset Sales

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on asset sales, considering the following factors:

- Impact on the balance sheet/working capital;
- Potential elimination of diseconomies;
- Anticipated financial and operating benefits;
- Anticipated use of funds;
- Value received for the asset;
- Fairness opinion;
- How the deal was negotiated; and
- Conflicts of interest.

Bundled Proposals

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on bundled or "conditional" proxy proposals. In the case of items that are conditioned upon each other, examine the benefits and costs of the packaged items. In instances when the joint effect of the conditioned items is not in shareholders' best interests, vote against the proposals. If the combined effect is positive, support such proposals.

Conversion of Securities

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals regarding conversion of securities. When evaluating these proposals, the investor should review the dilution to existing shareholders, the conversion price relative to market value, financial issues, control issues, termination penalties, and conflicts of interest.

Vote for the conversion if it is expected that the company will be subject to onerous penalties or will be forced to file for bankruptcy if the transaction is not approved.

Corporate Reorganization/Debt Restructuring/Prepackaged Bankruptcy Plans/Reverse Leveraged Buyouts/Wrap Plans

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to increase common and/or preferred shares and to issue shares as part of a debt restructuring plan, after evaluating:

- Dilution to existing shareholders' positions;
- Terms of the offer - discount/premium in purchase price to investor, including any fairness opinion; termination penalties; exit strategy;
- Financial issues - company's financial situation; degree of need for capital; use of proceeds; effect of the financing on the company's cost of capital;
- Management's efforts to pursue other alternatives;
- Control issues - change in management; change in control, guaranteed board and committee seats; standstill provisions; voting agreements; veto power over certain corporate actions; and
- Conflict of interest - arm's length transaction, managerial incentives.

Vote for the debt restructuring if it is expected that the company will file for bankruptcy if the transaction is not approved.

Formation of Holding Company

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals regarding the formation of a holding company, taking into consideration the following:

- The reasons for the change;
- Any financial or tax benefits;
- Regulatory benefits;
- Increases in capital structure; and
- Changes to the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the company.

Absent compelling financial reasons to recommend for the transaction, vote against the formation of a holding company if the transaction would include either of the following:

- Increases in common or preferred stock in excess of the allowable maximum (see discussion under "Capital"); or
- Adverse changes in shareholder rights.

Going Private and Going Dark Transactions (LBOs and Minority Squeeze-outs)

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on going private transactions, taking into account the following:

- Offer price/premium;
- Fairness opinion;
- How the deal was negotiated;
- Conflicts of interest;
- Other alternatives/offers considered; and
- Non-completion risk.

Vote case-by-case on going dark transactions, determining whether the transaction enhances shareholder value by taking into consideration:

- Whether the company has attained benefits from being publicly-traded (examination of trading volume, liquidity, and market research of the stock); and
- Balanced interests of continuing vs. cashed-out shareholders, taking into account the following:
  - Are all shareholders able to participate in the transaction?
  - Will there be a liquid market for remaining shareholders following the transaction?
  - Does the company have strong corporate governance?
  - Will insiders reap the gains of control following the proposed transaction? and
  - Does the state of incorporation have laws requiring continued reporting that may benefit shareholders?

Joint Ventures

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to form joint ventures, taking into account the following:

- Percentage of assets/business contributed;
- Percentage ownership;

- Financial and strategic benefits;
- Governance structure;
- Conflicts of interest;
- Other alternatives; and
- Non-completion risk.

Liquidations

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on liquidations, taking into account the following:

- Management's efforts to pursue other alternatives;
- Appraisal value of assets; and
- The compensation plan for executives managing the liquidation.

Vote for the liquidation if the company will file for bankruptcy if the proposal is not approved.

Mergers and Acquisitions

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on mergers and acquisitions. Review and evaluate the merits and drawbacks of the proposed transaction, balancing various and sometimes countervailing factors including:

- *Valuation* - Is the value to be received by the target shareholders (or paid by the acquirer) reasonable? While the fairness opinion may provide an initial starting point for assessing valuation reasonableness, emphasis is placed on the offer premium, market reaction, and strategic rationale.
- *Market reaction* - How has the market responded to the proposed deal? A negative market reaction should cause closer scrutiny of a deal.
- *Strategic rationale* - Does the deal make sense strategically? From where is the value derived? Cost and revenue synergies should not be overly aggressive or optimistic, but reasonably achievable. Management should also have a favorable track record of successful integration of historical acquisitions.
- *Negotiations and process* - Were the terms of the transaction negotiated at arm's-length? Was the process fair and equitable? A fair process helps to ensure the best price for shareholders. Significant negotiation "wins" can also signify the deal makers' competency. The comprehensiveness of the sales process (e.g., full auction, partial auction, no auction) can also affect shareholder value.
- *Conflicts of interest* - Are insiders benefiting from the transaction disproportionately and inappropriately as compared to non-insider shareholders? As the result of potential conflicts, the directors and officers of the company may be more likely to vote to approve a merger than if they did not hold these interests. Consider whether these interests may have influenced these directors and officers to support or recommend the merger. The CIC figure presented in the "ISS Transaction Summary" section of this report is an aggregate figure that can in certain cases be a misleading indicator of the true value transfer from shareholders to insiders. Where such figure appears to be excessive, analyze the underlying assumptions to determine whether a potential conflict exists.
- *Governance* - Will the combined company have a better or worse governance profile than the current governance profiles of the respective parties to the transaction? If the governance profile is to change for the worse, the burden is on the company to prove that other issues (such as valuation) outweigh any deterioration in governance.

Private Placements/Warrants/Convertible Debentures

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals regarding private placements, warrants, and convertible debentures taking into consideration:

- Dilution to existing shareholders' position: The amount and timing of shareholder ownership dilution should be weighed against the needs and proposed shareholder benefits of the capital infusion. Although newly issued common stock, absent preemptive rights, is typically dilutive to existing shareholders, share price appreciation is often the necessary event to trigger the exercise of "out of the money" warrants and convertible debt. In these instances from a value standpoint, the negative impact of dilution is mitigated by the increase in the company's stock price that must occur to trigger the dilutive event.
- Terms of the offer (discount/premium in purchase price to investor, including any fairness opinion, conversion features, termination penalties, exit strategy):
    - The terms of the offer should be weighed against the alternatives of the company and in light of company's financial condition. Ideally, the conversion price for convertible debt and the exercise price for warrants should be at a premium to the then prevailing stock price at the time of private placement.
    - When evaluating the magnitude of a private placement discount or premium, consider factors that influence the discount or premium, such as, liquidity, due diligence costs, control and monitoring costs, capital scarcity, information asymmetry, and anticipation of future performance.
- Financial issues:
    - The company's financial condition;
    - Degree of need for capital;
    - Use of proceeds;
    - Effect of the financing on the company's cost of capital;
    - Current and proposed cash burn rate; and
    - Going concern viability and the state of the capital and credit markets.
- Management's efforts to pursue alternatives and whether the company engaged in a process to evaluate alternatives: A fair, unconstrained process helps to ensure the best price for shareholders. Financing alternatives can include joint ventures, partnership, merger, or sale of part or all of the company.
- Control issues:
    - Change in management;
    - Change in control;
    - Guaranteed board and committee seats;
    - Standstill provisions;
    - Voting agreements;
    - Veto power over certain corporate actions; and
    - Minority versus majority ownership and corresponding minority discount or majority control premium.
- Conflicts of interest:
    - Conflicts of interest should be viewed from the perspective of the company and the investor; and
    - Were the terms of the transaction negotiated at arm's length? Are managerial incentives aligned with shareholder interests?
- Market reaction:
    - The market's response to the proposed deal. A negative market reaction is a cause for concern. Market reaction may be addressed by analyzing the one-day impact on the unaffected stock price.

Vote for the private placement, or for the issuance of warrants and/or convertible debentures in a private placement, if it is expected that the company will file for bankruptcy if the transaction is not approved.

Reorganization/Restructuring Plan (Bankruptcy)

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to common shareholders on bankruptcy plans of reorganization, considering the following factors including, but not limited to:

- Estimated value and financial prospects of the reorganized company;
- Percentage ownership of current shareholders in the reorganized company;
- Whether shareholders are adequately represented in the reorganization process (particularly through the existence of an Official Equity Committee);
- The cause(s) of the bankruptcy filing, and the extent to which the plan of reorganization addresses the cause(s);
- Existence of a superior alternative to the plan of reorganization; and
- Governance of the reorganized company.

Special Purpose Acquisition Corporations (SPACs)

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on SPAC mergers and acquisitions taking into account the following:

- *Valuation* - Is the value being paid by the SPAC reasonable? SPACs generally lack an independent fairness opinion and the financials on the target may be limited. Compare the conversion price with the intrinsic value of the target company provided in the fairness opinion. Also, evaluate the proportionate value of the combined entity attributable to the SPAC IPO shareholders versus the pre-merger value of SPAC. Additionally, a private company discount may be applied to the target if it is a private entity.
- *Market reaction* - How has the market responded to the proposed deal? A negative market reaction may be a cause for concern. Market reaction may be addressed by analyzing the one-day impact on the unaffected stock price.
- *Deal timing* - A main driver for most transactions is that the SPAC charter typically requires the deal to be complete within 18 to 24 months, or the SPAC is to be liquidated. Evaluate the valuation, market reaction, and potential conflicts of interest for deals that are announced close to the liquidation date.
- *Negotiations and process* - What was the process undertaken to identify potential target companies within specified industry or location specified in charter? Consider the background of the sponsors.
- *Conflicts of interest* - How are sponsors benefiting from the transaction compared to IPO shareholders? Potential conflicts could arise if a fairness opinion is issued by the insiders to qualify the deal rather than a third party or if management is encouraged to pay a higher price for the target because of an 80 percent rule (the charter requires that the fair market value of the target is at least equal to 80 percent of net assets of the SPAC). Also, there may be sense of urgency by the management team of the SPAC to close the deal since its charter typically requires a transaction to be completed within the 18-24-month timeframe.
- *Voting agreements* - Are the sponsors entering into enter into any voting agreements/tender offers with shareholders who are likely to vote against the proposed merger or exercise conversion rights?
- *Governance* - What is the impact of having the SPAC CEO or founder on key committees following the proposed merger?

Special Purpose Acquisition Corporations (SPACs) - Proposals for Extensions

The main purpose of SPACs is to identify and acquire a viable target within a specified timeframe, and failure to achieve this objective within the allotted time calls into question management's ability to execute its primary objective. The end of that timeframe is generally referred to as the termination date.

General Recommendation: Generally support requests to extend the termination date by up to one year from the SPAC's original termination date (inclusive of any built-in extension options, and accounting for prior extension requests).

Other factors that may be considered include: any added incentives, business combination status, other amendment terms, and, if applicable, use of money in the trust fund to pay excise taxes on redeemed shares.

Spin-offs

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on spin-offs, considering:

- Tax and regulatory advantages;
- Planned use of the sale proceeds;
- Valuation of spinoff;
- Fairness opinion;
- Benefits to the parent company;
- Conflicts of interest;
- Managerial incentives;
- Corporate governance changes; and
- Changes in the capital structure.

Value Maximization Shareholder Proposals

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals seeking to maximize shareholder value by:

- Hiring a financial advisor to explore strategic alternatives;
- Selling the company; or
- Liquidating the company and distributing the proceeds to shareholders.

These proposals should be evaluated based on the following factors:

- Prolonged poor performance with no turnaround in sight;
- Signs of entrenched board and management (such as the adoption of takeover defenses);
- Strategic plan in place for improving value;
- Likelihood of receiving reasonable value in a sale or dissolution; and
- The company actively exploring its strategic options, including retaining a financial advisor.

5. Compensation

Executive Pay Evaluation

Underlying all evaluations are five global principles that most investors expect corporations to adhere to in designing and administering executive and director compensation programs:

1. Maintain appropriate pay-for-performance alignment, with emphasis on long-term shareholder value: This principle encompasses overall executive pay practices, which must be designed to attract, retain, and appropriately motivate the key employees who drive shareholder value creation over the long term. It will take into consideration, among other factors, the link between pay and performance; the mix between fixed and variable pay; performance goals; and equity-based plan costs;
2. Avoid arrangements that risk "pay for failure": This principle addresses the appropriateness of long or indefinite contracts, excessive severance packages, and guaranteed compensation;
3. Maintain an independent and effective compensation committee: This principle promotes oversight of executive pay programs by directors with appropriate skills, knowledge, experience, and a sound process for compensation decision-making (*e.g.*, including access to independent expertise and advice when needed);
4. Provide shareholders with clear, comprehensive compensation disclosures: This principle underscores the importance of informative and timely disclosures that enable shareholders to evaluate executive pay practices fully and fairly; and
5. Avoid inappropriate pay to non-executive directors: This principle recognizes the interests of shareholders in ensuring that compensation to outside directors is reasonable and does not compromise their independence and ability to make appropriate judgments in overseeing managers' pay and performance. At the market level, it may incorporate a variety of generally accepted best practices.

Advisory Votes on Executive Compensation—Management Proposals (Say-on-Pay)

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on ballot items related to executive pay and practices, as well as certain aspects of outside director compensation.

Vote against Advisory Votes on Executive Compensation (Say-on-Pay or "SOP") if:

- There is an unmitigated misalignment between CEO pay and company performance (pay for performance);
- The company maintains significant problematic pay practices; or
- The board exhibits a significant level of poor communication and responsiveness to shareholders.

Vote against or withhold from the members of the Compensation Committee and potentially the full board if:

- There is no SOP on the ballot, and an against vote on an SOP would otherwise be warranted due to pay-for-performance misalignment, problematic pay practices, or the lack of adequate responsiveness on compensation issues raised previously, or a combination thereof;
- The board fails to respond adequately to a previous SOP proposal that received less than 70 percent support of votes cast;
- The company has recently practiced or approved problematic pay practices, such as option repricing or option backdating; or
- The situation is egregious.

Primary Evaluation Factors for Executive Pay

Pay-for-Performance Evaluation

ISS annually conducts a pay-for-performance analysis to identify strong or satisfactory alignment between pay and performance over a sustained period. With respect to companies in the S&P1500, Russell 3000, or Russell 3000E Indices[17], this analysis considers the following:

1. Peer Group[18] Alignment:

- The degree of alignment between the company's annualized TSR rank and the CEO's annualized total pay rank within a peer group, each measured over a three-year period.
- The rankings of CEO total pay and company financial performance within a peer group, each measured over a three-year period.
- The multiple of the CEO's total pay relative to the peer group median in the most recent fiscal year.

2. Absolute Alignment[19] – the absolute alignment between the trend in CEO pay and company TSR over the prior five fiscal years – i.e., the difference between the trend in annual pay changes and the trend in annualized TSR during the period.

If the above analysis demonstrates significant unsatisfactory long-term pay-for-performance alignment or, in the case of companies outside the Russell indices, a misalignment between pay and performance is otherwise suggested, our analysis may include any of the following qualitative factors, as relevant to an evaluation of how various pay elements may work to encourage or to undermine long-term value creation and alignment with shareholder interests:

- The ratio of performance- to time-based incentive awards;
- The overall ratio of performance-based compensation to fixed or discretionary pay;
- The rigor of performance goals;
- The complexity and risks around pay program design;
- The transparency and clarity of disclosure;
- The company's peer group benchmarking practices;
- Financial/operational results, both absolute and relative to peers;
- Special circumstances related to, for example, a new CEO in the prior FY or anomalous equity grant practices (e.g., bi-annual awards);
- Realizable pay[20] compared to grant pay; and
- Any other factors deemed relevant.

[17] The Russell 3000E Index includes approximately 4,000 of the largest U.S. equity securities.
[18] The revised peer group is generally comprised of 14-24 companies that are selected using market cap, revenue (or assets for certain financial firms), GICS industry group, and company's selected peers' GICS industry group, with size constraints, via a process designed to select peers that are comparable to the subject company in terms of revenue/assets and industry, and also within a market-cap bucket that is reflective of the company's market cap. For Oil, Gas & Consumable Fuels companies, market cap is the only size determinant.
[19] Only Russell 3000 Index companies are subject to the Absolute Alignment analysis.
[20] ISS research reports include realizable pay for S&P1500 companies.

Problematic Pay Practices

Problematic pay elements are generally evaluated case-by-case considering the context of a company's overall pay program and demonstrated pay-for-performance philosophy. The focus is on executive compensation practices that contravene the global pay principles, including:

- Problematic practices related to non-performance-based compensation elements;
- Incentives that may motivate excessive risk-taking or present a windfall risk; and
- Pay decisions that circumvent pay-for-performance, such as options backdating or waiving performance requirements.

The list of examples below highlights certain problematic practices that carry significant weight in this overall consideration and may result in adverse vote recommendations:

- Repricing or replacing of underwater stock options/SARs without prior shareholder approval (including cash buyouts and voluntary surrender of underwater options);
- Extraordinary perquisites or tax gross-ups;
- New or materially amended agreements that provide for:
  - Excessive termination or CIC severance payments (generally exceeding 3 times base salary and average/target/most recent bonus);
  - CIC severance payments without involuntary job loss or substantial diminution of duties ("single" or "modified single" triggers) or in connection with a problematic Good Reason definition;
  - CIC excise tax gross-up entitlements (including "modified" gross-ups); and/or
  - Multi-year guaranteed awards that are not at risk due to rigorous performance conditions;
- Liberal CIC definition combined with any single-trigger CIC benefits;
- Insufficient executive compensation disclosure by externally-managed issuers (EMIs) such that a reasonable assessment of pay programs and practices applicable to the EMI's executives is not possible;
- Severance payments made when the termination is not clearly disclosed as involuntary (for example, a termination without cause or resignation for good reason); and/or
- Any other provision or practice deemed to be egregious and present a significant risk to investors.

The above examples are not an exhaustive list. Please refer to ISS' U.S. Compensation Policies FAQ document for additional detail on specific pay practices that have been identified as problematic and may lead to negative vote recommendations.

Options Backdating

The following factors should be examined case-by-case to allow for distinctions to be made between "sloppy" plan administration versus deliberate action or fraud:

- Reason and motive for the options backdating issue, such as inadvertent vs. deliberate grant date changes;
- Duration of options backdating;
- Size of restatement due to options backdating;
- Corrective actions taken by the board or compensation committee, such as canceling or re-pricing backdated options, the recouping of option gains on backdated grants; and
- Adoption of a grant policy that prohibits backdating and creates a fixed grant schedule or window period for equity grants in the future.

Compensation Committee Communications and Responsiveness

Consider the following factors case-by-case when evaluating ballot items related to executive pay on the board's responsiveness to investor input and engagement on compensation issues:

- Failure to respond to majority-supported shareholder proposals on executive pay topics; or
- Failure to adequately respond to the company's previous say-on-pay proposal that received the support of less than 70 percent of votes cast, taking into account:
  - Disclosure of engagement efforts with major institutional investors, including the frequency and timing of engagements and the company participants (including whether independent directors participated);
  - Disclosure of the specific concerns voiced by dissenting shareholders that led to the say-on-pay opposition;
  - Disclosure of specific and meaningful actions taken to address shareholders' concerns;
  - Other recent compensation actions taken by the company;
  - Whether the issues raised are recurring or isolated;
  - The company's ownership structure; and
  - Whether the support level was less than 50 percent, which would warrant the highest degree of responsiveness.

Frequency of Advisory Vote on Executive Compensation ("Say When on Pay")

General Recommendation: Vote for annual advisory votes on compensation, which provide the most consistent and clear communication channel for shareholder concerns about companies' executive pay programs.

Voting on Golden Parachutes in an Acquisition, Merger, Consolidation, or Proposed Sale

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on say on Golden Parachute proposals, including consideration of existing change-in-control arrangements maintained with named executive officers but also considering new or extended arrangements.

Features that may result in an "against" recommendation include one or more of the following, depending on the number, magnitude, and/or timing of issue(s):

- Single- or modified-single-trigger cash severance;
- Single-trigger acceleration of unvested equity awards;
- Full acceleration of equity awards granted shortly before the change in control;
- Acceleration of performance awards above the target level of performance without compelling rationale;
- Excessive cash severance (generally >3x base salary and bonus);
- Excise tax gross-ups triggered and payable;
- Excessive golden parachute payments (on an absolute basis or as a percentage of transaction equity value); or
- Recent amendments that incorporate any problematic features (such as those above) or recent actions (such as extraordinary equity grants) that may make packages so attractive as to influence merger agreements that may not be in the best interests of shareholders; or
- The company's assertion that a proposed transaction is conditioned on shareholder approval of the golden parachute advisory vote.

Recent amendment(s) that incorporate problematic features will tend to carry more weight on the overall analysis. However, the presence of multiple legacy problematic features will also be closely scrutinized.

In cases where the golden parachute vote is incorporated into a company's advisory vote on compensation (management say-on-pay), ISS will evaluate the say-on-pay proposal in accordance with these guidelines, which may give higher weight to that component of the overall evaluation.

Equity-Based and Other Incentive Plans

Please refer to ISS' U.S. Equity Compensation Plans FAQ document for additional details on the Equity Plan Scorecard policy.

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on certain equity-based compensation plans[21] depending on a combination of certain plan features and equity grant practices, where positive factors may counterbalance negative factors, and vice versa, as evaluated using an "Equity Plan Scorecard" (EPSC) approach with three pillars:

- **Plan Cost:** The total estimated cost of the company's equity plans relative to industry/market cap peers, measured by the company's estimated Shareholder Value Transfer (SVT) in relation to peers and considering both:
  - SVT based on new shares requested plus shares remaining for future grants, plus outstanding unvested/ unexercised grants; and
  - SVT based only on new shares requested plus shares remaining for future grants.

- **Plan Features:**
  - Quality of disclosure around vesting upon a change in control (CIC);
  - Discretionary vesting authority;
  - Liberal share recycling on various award types;
  - Lack of minimum vesting period for grants made under the plan; and
  - Dividends payable prior to award vesting.

- **Grant Practices:**
  - The company's three-year burn rate relative to its industry/market cap peers;
  - Vesting requirements in CEO's recent equity grants (3-year look-back);
  - The estimated duration of the plan (based on the sum of shares remaining available and the new shares requested, divided by the average annual shares granted in the prior three years);
  - The proportion of the CEO's most recent equity grants/awards subject to performance conditions;
  - Whether the company maintains a sufficient claw-back policy; and
  - Whether the company maintains sufficient post-exercise/vesting share-holding requirements.

Generally vote against the plan proposal if the combination of above factors indicates that the plan is not, overall, in shareholders' interests, or if any of the following egregious factors ("overriding factors") apply:

- Awards may vest in connection with a liberal change-of-control definition;
- The plan would permit repricing or cash buyout of underwater options without shareholder approval (either by expressly permitting it – for NYSE and Nasdaq listed companies – or by not prohibiting it when the company has a history of repricing – for non-listed companies);
- The plan is a vehicle for problematic pay practices or a significant pay-for-performance disconnect under certain circumstances;
- The plan is excessively dilutive to shareholders' holdings;
- The plan contains an evergreen (automatic share replenishment) feature; or
- Any other plan features are determined to have a significant negative impact on shareholder interests.

[21] Proposals evaluated under the EPSC policy generally include those to approve or amend (1) stock option plans for employees and/or employees and directors, (2) restricted stock plans for employees and/or employees and directors, and (3) omnibus stock incentive plans for employees and/or employees and directors; amended plans will be further evaluated case-by-case.

Further Information on certain EPSC Factors:

Shareholder Value Transfer (SVT)

The cost of the equity plans is expressed as Shareholder Value Transfer (SVT), which is measured using a binomial option pricing model that assesses the amount of shareholders' equity flowing out of the company to employees and directors. SVT is expressed as both a dollar amount and as a percentage of market value, and includes the new shares proposed, shares available under existing plans, and shares granted but unexercised (using two measures, in the case of plans subject to the Equity Plan Scorecard evaluation, as noted above). All award types are valued. For omnibus plans, unless limitations are placed on the most expensive types of awards (for example, full-value awards), the assumption is made that all awards to be granted will be the most expensive types.

For proposals that are not subject to the Equity Plan Scorecard evaluation, Shareholder Value Transfer is reasonable if it falls below a company-specific benchmark. The benchmark is determined as follows: The top quartile performers in each industry group (using the Global Industry Classification Standard: GICS) are identified. Benchmark SVT levels for each industry are established based on these top performers' historic SVT. Regression analyses are run on each industry group to identify the variables most strongly correlated to SVT. The benchmark industry SVT level is then adjusted upwards or downwards for the specific company by plugging the company-specific performance measures, size, and cash compensation into the industry cap equations to arrive at the company's benchmark.[22]

Three-Year Value-Adjusted Burn Rate

A "Value-Adjusted Burn Rate" is used for stock plan evaluations. Value-Adjusted Burn Rate benchmarks are calculated as the greater of: (1) an industry-specific threshold based on three-year burn rates within the company's GICS group segmented by S&P 500, Russell 3000 index (less the S&P 500) and non-Russell 3000 index; and (2) a *de minimis* threshold established separately for each of the S&P 500, the Russell 3000 index less the S&P 500, and the non-Russell 3000 index. Year-over-year burn-rate benchmark changes will be limited to a predetermined range above or below the prior year's burn-rate benchmark.

The Value-Adjusted Burn Rate is calculated as follows:

Value-Adjusted Burn Rate = ((# of options * option's dollar value using a Black-Scholes model) + (# of full-value awards * stock price)) / (Weighted average common shares * stock price).

Egregious Factors

Liberal Change in Control Definition

Generally vote against equity plans if the plan has a liberal definition of change in control and the equity awards could vest upon such liberal definition of change in control, even though an actual change in control may not occur. Examples of such a definition include, but are not limited to, announcement or commencement of a tender offer, provisions for acceleration upon a "potential" takeover, shareholder approval of a merger or other transactions, or similar language.

[22] For plans evaluated under the Equity Plan Scorecard policy, the company's SVT benchmark is considered along with other factors.

Repricing Provisions

Vote against plans that expressly permit the repricing or exchange of underwater stock options/stock appreciate rights (SARs) without prior shareholder approval. "Repricing" typically includes the ability to do any of the following:

- Amend the terms of outstanding options or SARs to reduce the exercise price of such outstanding options or SARs;
- Cancel outstanding options or SARs in exchange for options or SARs with an exercise price that is less than the exercise price of the original options or SARs;
- Cancel underwater options in exchange for stock awards; or
- Provide cash buyouts of underwater options.

While the above cover most types of repricing, ISS may view other provisions as akin to repricing depending on the facts and circumstances.

Also, vote against or withhold from members of the Compensation Committee who approved repricing (as defined above or otherwise determined by ISS), without prior shareholder approval, even if such repricings are allowed in their equity plan.

Vote against plans that do not expressly prohibit repricing or cash buyout of underwater options without shareholder approval if the company has a history of repricing/buyouts without shareholder approval, and the applicable listing standards would not preclude them from doing so.

Problematic Pay Practices or Significant Pay-for-Performance Disconnect

If the equity plan on the ballot is a vehicle for problematic pay practices, vote against the plan.

ISS may recommend a vote against the equity plan if the plan is determined to be a vehicle for pay-for-performance misalignment. Considerations in voting against the equity plan may include, but are not limited to:

- Severity of the pay-for-performance misalignment;
- Whether problematic equity grant practices are driving the misalignment; and/or
- Whether equity plan awards have been heavily concentrated to the CEO and/or the other NEOs.

Amending Cash and Equity Plans (including Approval for Tax Deductibility (162(m))

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on amendments to cash and equity incentive plans.

Generally vote for proposals to amend executive cash, stock, or cash and stock incentive plans if the proposal:

- Addresses administrative features only; or
- Seeks approval for Section 162(m) purposes only, and the plan administering committee consists entirely of independent directors, per ISS' Classification of Directors. Note that if the company is presenting the plan to shareholders for the first time for any reason (including after the company's initial public offering), or if the proposal is bundled with other material plan amendments, then the recommendation will be case-by-case (see below).

Vote against proposals to amend executive cash, stock, or cash and stock incentive plans if the proposal:

- Seeks approval for Section 162(m) purposes only, and the plan administering committee does not consist entirely of independent directors, per ISS' Classification of Directors.

Vote case-by-case on all other proposals to amend cash incentive plans. This includes plans presented to shareholders for the first time after the company's IPO and/or proposals that bundle material amendment(s) other than those for Section 162(m) purposes.

Vote case-by-case on all other proposals to amend equity incentive plans, considering the following:

- If the proposal requests additional shares and/or the amendments include a term extension or addition of full value awards as an award type, the recommendation will be based on the Equity Plan Scorecard evaluation as well as an analysis of the overall impact of the amendments;
- If the plan is being presented to shareholders for the first time (including after the company's IPO), whether or not additional shares are being requested, the recommendation will be based on the Equity Plan Scorecard evaluation as well as an analysis of the overall impact of any amendments; and
- If there is no request for additional shares and the amendments do not include a term extension or addition of full value awards as an award type, then the recommendation will be based entirely on an analysis of the overall impact of the amendments, and the EPSC evaluation will be shown only for informational purposes.

In the first two case-by-case evaluation scenarios, the EPSC evaluation/score is the more heavily weighted consideration.

Specific Treatment of Certain Award Types in Equity Plan Evaluations

Dividend Equivalent Rights

Options that have Dividend Equivalent Rights (DERs) associated with them will have a higher calculated award value than those without DERs under the binomial model, based on the value of these dividend streams. The higher value will be applied to new shares, shares available under existing plans, and shares awarded but not exercised per the plan specifications. DERS transfer more shareholder equity to employees and non-employee directors and this cost should be captured.

Operating Partnership (OP) Units in Equity Plan Analysis of Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)

For Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITS), include the common shares issuable upon conversion of outstanding Operating Partnership (OP) units in the share count for the purposes of determining: (1) market capitalization in the Shareholder Value Transfer (SVT) analysis and (2) shares outstanding in the burn rate analysis.

Other Compensation Plans

401(k) Employee Benefit Plans

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals to implement a 401(k) savings plan for employees.

Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs)

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals to implement an ESOP or increase authorized shares for existing ESOPs, unless the number of shares allocated to the ESOP is excessive (more than five percent of outstanding shares).

Employee Stock Purchase Plans—Qualified Plans

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on qualified employee stock purchase plans. Vote for employee stock purchase plans where all of the following apply:

- Purchase price is at least 85 percent of fair market value;
- Offering period is 27 months or less; and
- The number of shares allocated to the plan is 10 percent or less of the outstanding shares.

Vote against qualified employee stock purchase plans where when the plan features do not meet all of the above criteria.

Employee Stock Purchase Plans—Non-Qualified Plans

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on nonqualified employee stock purchase plans. Vote for nonqualified employee stock purchase plans with all the following features:

- Broad-based participation;
- Limits on employee contribution, which may be a fixed dollar amount or expressed as a percent of base salary;
- Company matching contribution up to 25 percent of employee's contribution, which is effectively a discount of 20 percent from market value; and
- No discount on the stock price on the date of purchase when there is a company matching contribution.

Vote against nonqualified employee stock purchase plans when the plan features do not meet all of the above criteria. If the matching contribution or effective discount exceeds the above, ISS may evaluate the SVT cost of the plan as part of the assessment.

Option Exchange Programs/Repricing Options

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on management proposals seeking approval to exchange/reprice options taking into consideration:

- Historic trading patterns--the stock price should not be so volatile that the options are likely to be back "in-the-money" over the near term;
- Rationale for the re-pricing--was the stock price decline beyond management's control?;
- Is this a value-for-value exchange?;
- Are surrendered stock options added back to the plan reserve?;
- Timing—repricing should occur at least one year out from any precipitous drop in company's stock price;
- Option vesting—does the new option vest immediately or is there a black-out period?;
- Term of the option--the term should remain the same as that of the replaced option;
- Exercise price—should be set at fair market or a premium to market; and
- Participants—executive officers and directors must be excluded.

If the surrendered options are added back to the equity plans for re-issuance, then also take into consideration the company's total cost of equity plans and its three-year average burn rate.

In addition to the above considerations, evaluate the intent, rationale, and timing of the repricing proposal. The proposal should clearly articulate why the board is choosing to conduct an exchange program at this point in time. Repricing underwater options after a recent precipitous drop in the company's stock price demonstrates poor timing

and warrants additional scrutiny. Also, consider the terms of the surrendered options, such as the grant date, exercise price and vesting schedule. Grant dates of surrendered options should be far enough back (two to three years) so as not to suggest that repricings are being done to take advantage of short-term downward price movements. Similarly, the exercise price of surrendered options should be above the 52-week high for the stock price.

Vote for shareholder proposals to put option repricings to a shareholder vote.

Stock Plans in Lieu of Cash

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on plans that provide participants with the option of taking all or a portion of their cash compensation in the form of stock.

Vote for non-employee director-only equity plans that provide a dollar-for-dollar cash-for-stock exchange.

Vote case-by-case on plans which do not provide a dollar-for-dollar cash for stock exchange. In cases where the exchange is not dollar-for-dollar, the request for new or additional shares for such equity program will be considered using the binomial option pricing model. In an effort to capture the total cost of total compensation, ISS will not make any adjustments to carve out the in-lieu-of cash compensation.

Transfer Stock Option (TSO) Programs

General Recommendation: One-time Transfers: Vote against or withhold from compensation committee members if they fail to submit one-time transfers to shareholders for approval.

Vote case-by-case on one-time transfers. Vote for if:

- Executive officers and non-employee directors are excluded from participating;
- Stock options are purchased by third-party financial institutions at a discount to their fair value using option pricing models such as Black-Scholes or a Binomial Option Valuation or other appropriate financial models; and
- There is a two-year minimum holding period for sale proceeds (cash or stock) for all participants.

Additionally, management should provide a clear explanation of why options are being transferred to a third-party institution and whether the events leading up to a decline in stock price were beyond management's control. A review of the company's historic stock price volatility should indicate if the options are likely to be back "in-the-money" over the near term.

Ongoing TSO program: Vote against equity plan proposals if the details of ongoing TSO programs are not provided to shareholders. Since TSOs will be one of the award types under a stock plan, the ongoing TSO program, structure, and mechanics must be disclosed to shareholders. The specific criteria to be considered in evaluating these proposals include, but not limited, to the following:

- Eligibility;
- Vesting;
- Bid-price;
- Term of options;
- Cost of the program and impact of the TSOs on company's total option expense; and
- Option repricing policy.

Amendments to existing plans that allow for introduction of transferability of stock options should make clear that only options granted post-amendment shall be transferable.

Director Compensation

Shareholder Ratification of Director Pay Programs

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on management proposals seeking ratification of non-employee director compensation, based on the following factors:

- If the equity plan under which non-employee director grants are made is on the ballot, whether or not it warrants support; and
- An assessment of the following qualitative factors:
  - The relative magnitude of director compensation as compared to companies of a similar profile;
  - The presence of problematic pay practices relating to director compensation;
  - Director stock ownership guidelines and holding requirements;
  - Equity award vesting schedules;
  - The mix of cash and equity-based compensation;
  - Meaningful limits on director compensation;
  - The availability of retirement benefits or perquisites; and
  - The quality of disclosure surrounding director compensation.

Equity Plans for Non-Employee Directors

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on compensation plans for non-employee directors, based on:

- The total estimated cost of the company's equity plans relative to industry/market cap peers, measured by the company's estimated Shareholder Value Transfer (SVT) based on new shares requested plus shares remaining for future grants, plus outstanding unvested/unexercised grants;
- The company's three-year burn rate relative to its industry/market cap peers (in certain circumstances); and
- The presence of any egregious plan features (such as an option repricing provision or liberal CIC vesting risk).

On occasion, non-employee director stock plans will exceed the plan cost or burn-rate benchmarks when combined with employee or executive stock plans. In such cases, vote case-by-case on the plan taking into consideration the following qualitative factors:

- The relative magnitude of director compensation as compared to companies of a similar profile;
- The presence of problematic pay practices relating to director compensation;
- Director stock ownership guidelines and holding requirements;
- Equity award vesting schedules;
- The mix of cash and equity-based compensation;
- Meaningful limits on director compensation;
- The availability of retirement benefits or perquisites; and
- The quality of disclosure surrounding director compensation.

Non-Employee Director Retirement Plans

General Recommendation: Vote against retirement plans for non-employee directors. Vote for shareholder proposals to eliminate retirement plans for non-employee directors.

Shareholder Proposals on Compensation

Bonus Banking/Bonus Banking "Plus"

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals seeking deferral of a portion of annual bonus pay, with ultimate payout linked to sustained results for the performance metrics on which the bonus was earned (whether for the named executive officers or a wider group of employees), taking into account the following factors:

- The company's past practices regarding equity and cash compensation;
- Whether the company has a holding period or stock ownership requirements in place, such as a meaningful retention ratio (at least 50 percent for full tenure); and
- Whether the company has a rigorous claw-back policy in place.

Compensation Consultants—Disclosure of Board or Company's Utilization

General Recommendation: Generally vote for shareholder proposals seeking disclosure regarding the company, board, or compensation committee's use of compensation consultants, such as company name, business relationship(s), and fees paid.

Disclosure/Setting Levels or Types of Compensation for Executives and Directors

General Recommendation: Generally vote for shareholder proposals seeking additional disclosure of executive and director pay information, provided the information requested is relevant to shareholders' needs, would not put the company at a competitive disadvantage relative to its industry, and is not unduly burdensome to the company.

Generally vote against shareholder proposals seeking to set absolute levels on compensation or otherwise dictate the amount or form of compensation (such as types of compensation elements or specific metrics) to be used for executive or directors.

Generally vote against shareholder proposals that mandate a minimum amount of stock that directors must own in order to qualify as a director or to remain on the board.

Vote case-by-case on all other shareholder proposals regarding executive and director pay, taking into account relevant factors, including but not limited to: company performance, pay level and design versus peers, history of compensation concerns or pay-for-performance disconnect, and/or the scope and prescriptive nature of the proposal.

Golden Coffins/Executive Death Benefits

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals calling for companies to adopt a policy of obtaining shareholder approval for any future agreements and corporate policies that could oblige the company to make payments or awards following the death of a senior executive in the form of unearned salary or bonuses, accelerated vesting or the continuation in force of unvested equity grants, perquisites and other payments or awards made in lieu of compensation. This would not apply to any benefit programs or equity plan proposals for which the broad-based employee population is eligible.

Hold Equity Past Retirement or for a Significant Period of Time

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals asking companies to adopt policies requiring senior executive officers to retain a portion of net shares acquired through compensation plans. The following factors will be taken into account:

- The percentage/ratio of net shares required to be retained;

- The time period required to retain the shares;
- Whether the company has equity retention, holding period, and/or stock ownership requirements in place and the robustness of such requirements;
- Whether the company has any other policies aimed at mitigating risk taking by executives;
- Executives' actual stock ownership and the degree to which it meets or exceeds the proponent's suggested holding period/retention ratio or the company's existing requirements; and
- Problematic pay practices, current and past, which may demonstrate a short-term versus long-term focus.

Pay Disparity

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals calling for an analysis of the pay disparity between corporate executives and other non-executive employees. The following factors will be considered:

- The company's current level of disclosure of its executive compensation setting process, including how the company considers pay disparity;
- If any problematic pay practices or pay-for-performance concerns have been identified at the company; and
- The level of shareholder support for the company's pay programs.

Generally vote against proposals calling for the company to use the pay disparity analysis or pay ratio in a specific way to set or limit executive pay.

Pay for Performance/Performance-Based Awards

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals requesting that a significant amount of future long-term incentive compensation awarded to senior executives shall be performance-based and requesting that the board adopt and disclose challenging performance metrics to shareholders, based on the following analytical steps:

- First, vote for shareholder proposals advocating the use of performance-based equity awards, such as performance contingent options or restricted stock, indexed options, or premium-priced options, unless the proposal is overly restrictive or if the company has demonstrated that it is using a "substantial" portion of performance-based awards for its top executives. Standard stock options and performance-accelerated awards do not meet the criteria to be considered as performance-based awards. Further, premium-priced options should have a meaningful premium to be considered performance-based awards; and
- Second, assess the rigor of the company's performance-based equity program. If the bar set for the performance-based program is too low based on the company's historical or peer group comparison, generally vote for the proposal. Furthermore, if target performance results in an above target payout, vote for the shareholder proposal due to program's poor design. If the company does not disclose the performance metric of the performance-based equity program, vote for the shareholder proposal regardless of the outcome of the first step to the test.

In general, vote for the shareholder proposal if the company does not meet both of the above two steps.

Pay for Superior Performance

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals that request the board establish a pay-for-superior performance standard in the company's executive compensation plan for senior executives. These proposals generally include the following principles:

- Set compensation targets for the plan's annual and long-term incentive pay components at or below the peer group median;

- Deliver a majority of the plan's target long-term compensation through performance-vested, not simply time-vested, equity awards;
- Provide the strategic rationale and relative weightings of the financial and non-financial performance metrics or criteria used in the annual and performance-vested long-term incentive components of the plan;
- Establish performance targets for each plan financial metric relative to the performance of the company's peer companies; and
- Limit payment under the annual and performance-vested long-term incentive components of the plan to when the company's performance on its selected financial performance metrics exceeds peer group median performance.

Consider the following factors in evaluating this proposal:

- What aspects of the company's annual and long-term equity incentive programs are performance driven?
- If the annual and long-term equity incentive programs are performance driven, are the performance criteria and hurdle rates disclosed to shareholders or are they benchmarked against a disclosed peer group?
- Can shareholders assess the correlation between pay and performance based on the current disclosure? and
- What type of industry and stage of business cycle does the company belong to?

Pre-Arranged Trading Plans (10b5-1 Plans)

General Recommendation: Generally vote for shareholder proposals calling for the addition of certain safeguards in prearranged trading plans (10b5-1 plans) for executives. Safeguards may include:

- Adoption, amendment, or termination of a 10b5-1 Plan must be disclosed in a Form 8-K;
- Amendment or early termination of a 10b5-1 Plan allowed only under extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the board;
- Request that a certain number of days that must elapse between adoption or amendment of a 10b5-1 Plan and initial trading under the plan;
- Reports on Form 4 must identify transactions made pursuant to a 10b5-1 Plan;
- An executive may not trade in company stock outside the 10b5-1 Plan; and
- Trades under a 10b5-1 Plan must be handled by a broker who does not handle other securities transactions for the executive.

Prohibit Outside CEOs from Serving on Compensation Committees

General Recommendation: Generally vote against proposals seeking a policy to prohibit any outside CEO from serving on a company's compensation committee, unless the company has demonstrated problematic pay practices that raise concerns about the performance and composition of the committee.

Recoupment of Incentive or Stock Compensation in Specified Circumstances

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to recoup incentive cash or stock compensation made to senior executives if it is later determined that the figures upon which incentive compensation is earned turn out to have been in error, or if the senior executive has breached company policy or has engaged in misconduct that may be significantly detrimental to the company's financial position or reputation, or if the senior executive failed to manage or monitor risks that subsequently led to significant financial or reputational harm to the company. Many companies have adopted policies that permit recoupment in cases where an executive's fraud, misconduct, or negligence significantly contributed to a restatement of financial results that led to the awarding of unearned incentive compensation. However, such policies may be narrow given that not all misconduct or negligence may result in significant financial restatements. Misconduct, negligence, or lack of sufficient oversight by senior executives may lead to significant financial loss or reputational damage that may have long-lasting impact.

In considering whether to support such shareholder proposals, ISS will take into consideration the following factors:

- If the company has adopted a formal recoupment policy;
- The rigor of the recoupment policy focusing on how and under what circumstances the company may recoup incentive or stock compensation;
- Whether the company has chronic restatement history or material financial problems;
- Whether the company's policy substantially addresses the concerns raised by the proponent;
- Disclosure of recoupment of incentive or stock compensation from senior executives or lack thereof; and
- Any other relevant factors.

Severance and Golden Parachute Agreements

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals requiring that executive severance (including change-in-control related) arrangements or payments be submitted for shareholder ratification.

Factors that will be considered include, but are not limited to:

- The company's severance or change-in-control agreements in place, and the presence of problematic features (such as excessive severance entitlements, single triggers, excise tax gross-ups, etc.);
- Any existing limits on cash severance payouts or policies which require shareholder ratification of severance payments exceeding a certain level;
- Any recent severance-related controversies; and
- Whether the proposal is overly prescriptive, such as requiring shareholder approval of severance that does not exceed market norms.

Share Buyback Impact on Incentive Program Metrics

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals requesting the company exclude the impact of share buybacks from the calculation of incentive program metrics, considering the following factors:

- The frequency and timing of the company's share buybacks;
- The use of per-share metrics in incentive plans;
- The effect of recent buybacks on incentive metric results and payouts; and
- Whether there is any indication of metric result manipulation.

Supplemental Executive Retirement Plans (SERPs)

General Recommendation: Generally vote for shareholder proposals requesting to put extraordinary benefits contained in SERP agreements to a shareholder vote unless the company's executive pension plans do not contain excessive benefits beyond what is offered under employee-wide plans.

Generally vote for shareholder proposals requesting to limit the executive benefits provided under the company's supplemental executive retirement plan (SERP) by limiting covered compensation to a senior executive's annual salary or those pay elements covered for the general employee population.

Tax Gross-Up Proposals

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals calling for companies to adopt a policy of not providing tax gross-up payments to executives, except in situations where gross-ups are provided pursuant to a plan, policy, or arrangement applicable to management employees of the company, such as a relocation or expatriate tax equalization policy.

Termination of Employment Prior to Severance Payment/Eliminating Accelerated Vesting of Unvested Equity

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals seeking a policy requiring termination of employment prior to severance payment and/or eliminating accelerated vesting of unvested equity.

The following factors will be considered:

- The company's current treatment of equity upon employment termination and/or in change-in-control situations (i.e., vesting is double triggered and/or pro rata, does it allow for the assumption of equity by acquiring company, the treatment of performance shares, etc.); and
- Current employment agreements, including potential poor pay practices such as gross-ups embedded in those agreements.

Generally vote for proposals seeking a policy that prohibits automatic acceleration of the vesting of equity awards to senior executives upon a voluntary termination of employment or in the event of a change in control (except for pro rata vesting considering the time elapsed and attainment of any related performance goals between the award date and the change in control).

6. Routine/Miscellaneous

Adjourn Meeting

General Recommendation: Generally vote against proposals to provide management with the authority to adjourn an annual or special meeting absent compelling reasons to support the proposal.

Vote for proposals that relate specifically to soliciting votes for a merger or transaction if supporting that merger or transaction. Vote against proposals if the wording is too vague or if the proposal includes "other business."

Amend Quorum Requirements

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to reduce quorum requirements for shareholder meetings below a majority of the shares outstanding, taking into consideration:

- The new quorum threshold requested;
- The rationale presented for the reduction;
- The market capitalization of the company (size, inclusion in indices);
- The company's ownership structure;
- Previous voter turnout or attempts to achieve quorum;
- Any provisions or commitments to restore quorum to a majority of shares outstanding, should voter turnout improve sufficiently; and
- Other factors as appropriate.

In general, a quorum threshold kept as close to a majority of shares outstanding as is achievable is preferred.

Vote case-by-case on directors who unilaterally lower the quorum requirements below a majority of the shares outstanding, taking into consideration the factors listed above.

Amend Minor Bylaws

General Recommendation: Vote for bylaw or charter changes that are of a housekeeping nature (updates or corrections).

Change Company Name

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals to change the corporate name unless there is compelling evidence that the change would adversely impact shareholder value.

Change Date, Time, or Location of Annual Meeting

General Recommendation: Vote for management proposals to change the date, time, or location of the annual meeting unless the proposed change is unreasonable.

Vote against shareholder proposals to change the date, time, or location of the annual meeting unless the current scheduling or location is unreasonable.

Other Business

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals to approve other business when it appears as a voting item.

7. Social and Environmental Issues

Global Approach – E&S Shareholder Proposals

ISS applies a common approach globally to evaluating social and environmental proposals which cover a wide range of topics, including consumer and product safety, environment and energy, labor standards and human rights, workplace and board diversity, and corporate political issues. While a variety of factors goes into each analysis, the overall principle guiding all vote recommendations focuses on how the proposal may enhance or protect shareholder value in either the short or long term.

General Recommendation: Generally vote case-by-case, examining primarily whether implementation of the proposal is likely to enhance or protect shareholder value. The following factors will be considered:

- If the issues presented in the proposal are being appropriately or effectively dealt with through legislation or government regulation;
- If the company has already responded in an appropriate and sufficient manner to the issue(s) raised in the proposal;
- Whether the proposal's request is unduly burdensome (scope or timeframe) or overly prescriptive;
- The company's approach compared with any industry standard practices for addressing the issue(s) raised by the proposal;
- Whether there are significant controversies, fines, penalties, or litigation associated with the company's practices related to the issue(s) raised in the proposal;
- If the proposal requests increased disclosure or greater transparency, whether reasonable and sufficient information is currently available to shareholders from the company or from other publicly available sources; and
- If the proposal requests increased disclosure or greater transparency, whether implementation would reveal proprietary or confidential information that could place the company at a competitive disadvantage.

Endorsement of Principles

General Recommendation: Generally vote against proposals seeking a company's endorsement of principles that support a particular public policy position. Endorsing a set of principles may require a company to take a stand on an issue that is beyond its own control and may limit its flexibility with respect to future developments. Management and the board should be afforded the flexibility to make decisions on specific public policy positions based on their own assessment of the most beneficial strategies for the company.

Animal Welfare

Animal Welfare Policies

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals seeking a report on a company's animal welfare standards, or animal welfare-related risks, unless:

- The company has already published a set of animal welfare standards and monitors compliance;
- The company's standards are comparable to industry peers; and
- There are no recent significant fines, litigation, or controversies related to the company's and/or its suppliers' treatment of animals.

Animal Testing

General Recommendation: Generally vote against proposals to phase out the use of animals in product testing, unless:

- The company is conducting animal testing programs that are unnecessary or not required by regulation;
- The company is conducting animal testing when suitable alternatives are commonly accepted and used by industry peers; or
- There are recent, significant fines or litigation related to the company's treatment of animals.

Animal Slaughter

General Recommendation: Generally vote against proposals requesting the implementation of Controlled Atmosphere Killing (CAK) methods at company and/or supplier operations unless such methods are required by legislation or generally accepted as the industry standard.

Vote case-by-case on proposals requesting a report on the feasibility of implementing CAK methods at company and/or supplier operations considering the availability of existing research conducted by the company or industry groups on this topic and any fines or litigation related to current animal processing procedures at the company.

Consumer Issues

Genetically Modified Ingredients

General Recommendation: Generally vote against proposals requesting that a company voluntarily label genetically engineered (GE) ingredients in its products. The labeling of products with GE ingredients is best left to the appropriate regulatory authorities.

Vote case-by-case on proposals asking for a report on the feasibility of labeling products containing GE ingredients, taking into account:

- The potential impact of such labeling on the company's business;
- The quality of the company's disclosure on GE product labeling, related voluntary initiatives, and how this disclosure compares with industry peer disclosure; and
- Company's current disclosure on the feasibility of GE product labeling.

Generally vote against proposals seeking a report on the social, health, and environmental effects of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Studies of this sort are better undertaken by regulators and the scientific community.

Generally vote against proposals to eliminate GE ingredients from the company's products, or proposals asking for reports outlining the steps necessary to eliminate GE ingredients from the company's products. Such decisions are more appropriately made by management with consideration of current regulations.

Reports on Potentially Controversial Business/Financial Practices

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on requests for reports on a company's potentially controversial business or financial practices or products, taking into account:

- Whether the company has adequately disclosed mechanisms in place to prevent abuses;
- Whether the company has adequately disclosed the financial risks of the products/practices in question;
- Whether the company has been subject to violations of related laws or serious controversies; and
- Peer companies' policies/practices in this area.

Pharmaceutical Pricing, Access to Medicines, and Prescription Drug Reimportation

General Recommendation: Generally vote against proposals requesting that companies implement specific price restraints on pharmaceutical products unless the company fails to adhere to legislative guidelines or industry norms in its product pricing practices.

Vote case-by-case on proposals requesting that a company report on its product pricing or access to medicine policies, considering:

- The potential for reputational, market, and regulatory risk exposure;
- Existing disclosure of relevant policies;
- Deviation from established industry norms;
- Relevant company initiatives to provide research and/or products to disadvantaged consumers;
- Whether the proposal focuses on specific products or geographic regions;
- The potential burden and scope of the requested report; and
- Recent significant controversies, litigation, or fines at the company.

Generally vote for proposals requesting that a company report on the financial and legal impact of its prescription drug reimportation policies unless such information is already publicly disclosed.

Generally vote against proposals requesting that companies adopt specific policies to encourage or constrain prescription drug reimportation. Such matters are more appropriately the province of legislative activity and may place the company at a competitive disadvantage relative to its peers.

Product Safety and Toxic/Hazardous Materials

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals requesting that a company report on its policies, initiatives/procedures, and oversight mechanisms related to toxic/hazardous materials or product safety in its supply chain, unless:

- The company already discloses similar information through existing reports such as a supplier code of conduct and/or a sustainability report;
- The company has formally committed to the implementation of a toxic/hazardous materials and/or product safety and supply chain reporting and monitoring program based on industry norms or similar standards within a specified time frame; or
- The company has not been recently involved in relevant significant controversies, fines, or litigation.

Vote case-by-case on resolutions requesting that companies develop a feasibility assessment to phase-out of certain toxic/hazardous materials, or evaluate and disclose the potential financial and legal risks associated with utilizing certain materials, considering:

- The company's current level of disclosure regarding its product safety policies, initiatives, and oversight mechanisms;
- Current regulations in the markets in which the company operates; and
- Recent significant controversies, litigation, or fines stemming from toxic/hazardous materials at the company.

Generally vote against resolutions requiring that a company reformulate its products.

Tobacco-Related Proposals

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on resolutions regarding the advertisement of tobacco products, considering:

- Recent related fines, controversies, or significant litigation;
- Whether the company complies with relevant laws and regulations on the marketing of tobacco;
- Whether the company's advertising restrictions deviate from those of industry peers;
- Whether the company entered into the Master Settlement Agreement, which restricts marketing of tobacco to youth; and
- Whether restrictions on marketing to youth extend to foreign countries.

Vote case-by-case on proposals regarding second-hand smoke, considering;

- Whether the company complies with all laws and regulations;
- The degree that voluntary restrictions beyond those mandated by law might hurt the company's competitiveness; and
- The risk of any health-related liabilities.

Generally vote against resolutions to cease production of tobacco-related products, to avoid selling products to tobacco companies, to spin-off tobacco-related businesses, or prohibit investment in tobacco equities. Such business decisions are better left to company management or portfolio managers.

Generally vote against proposals regarding tobacco product warnings. Such decisions are better left to public health authorities.

Climate Change

Say on Climate (SoC) Management Proposals

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on management proposals that request shareholders to approve the company's climate transition action plan[23], taking into account the completeness and rigor of the plan. Information that will be considered where available includes the following:

- The extent to which the company's climate related disclosures are in line with TCFD recommendations and meet other market standards;

[23] Variations of this request also include climate transition related ambitions, or commitment to reporting on the implementation of a climate plan.

- Disclosure of its operational and supply chain GHG emissions (Scopes 1, 2, and 3);
- The completeness and rigor of company's short-, medium-, and long-term targets for reducing operational and supply chain GHG emissions (Scopes 1, 2, and 3 if relevant);
- Whether the company has sought and received third-party approval that its targets are science-based;
- Whether the company has made a commitment to be "net zero" for operational and supply chain emissions (Scopes 1, 2, and 3) by 2050;
- Whether the company discloses a commitment to report on the implementation of its plan in subsequent years;
- Whether the company's climate data has received third-party assurance;
- Disclosure of how the company's lobbying activities and its capital expenditures align with company strategy;
- Whether there are specific industry decarbonization challenges; and
- The company's related commitment, disclosure, and performance compared to its industry peers.

Say on Climate (SoC) Shareholder Proposals

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals that request the company to disclose a report providing its GHG emissions levels and reduction targets and/or its upcoming/approved climate transition action plan and provide shareholders the opportunity to express approval or disapproval of its GHG emissions reduction plan, taking into account information such as the following:

- The completeness and rigor of the company's climate-related disclosure;
- The company's actual GHG emissions performance;
- Whether the company has been the subject of recent, significant violations, fines, litigation, or controversy related to its GHG emissions; and
- Whether the proposal's request is unduly burdensome (scope or timeframe) or overly prescriptive.

Climate Change/Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

General Recommendation: Generally vote for resolutions requesting that a company disclose information on the financial, physical, or regulatory risks it faces related to climate change on its operations and investments or on how the company identifies, measures, and manages such risks, considering:

- Whether the company already provides current, publicly-available information on the impact that climate change may have on the company as well as associated company policies and procedures to address related risks and/or opportunities;
- The company's level of disclosure compared to industry peers; and
- Whether there are significant controversies, fines, penalties, or litigation associated with the company's climate change-related performance.

Generally vote for proposals requesting a report on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from company operations and/or products and operations, unless:

- The company already discloses current, publicly-available information on the impacts that GHG emissions may have on the company as well as associated company policies and procedures to address related risks and/or opportunities;
- The company's level of disclosure is comparable to that of industry peers; or
- There are no significant, controversies, fines, penalties, or litigation associated with the company's GHG emissions.

Vote case-by-case on proposals that call for the adoption of GHG reduction goals from products and operations, taking into account:

- Whether the company provides disclosure of year-over-year GHG emissions performance data;
- Whether company disclosure lags behind industry peers;
- The company's actual GHG emissions performance;
- The company's current GHG emission policies, oversight mechanisms, and related initiatives; and
- Whether the company has been the subject of recent, significant violations, fines, litigation, or controversy related to GHG emissions.

Energy Efficiency

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals requesting that a company report on its energy efficiency policies, unless:

- The company complies with applicable energy efficiency regulations and laws, and discloses its participation in energy efficiency policies and programs, including disclosure of benchmark data, targets, and performance measures; or
- The proponent requests adoption of specific energy efficiency goals within specific timelines.

Renewable Energy

General Recommendation: Generally vote for requests for reports on the feasibility of developing renewable energy resources unless the report would be duplicative of existing disclosure or irrelevant to the company's line of business.

Generally vote against proposals requesting that the company invest in renewable energy resources. Such decisions are best left to management's evaluation of the feasibility and financial impact that such programs may have on the company.

Generally vote against proposals that call for the adoption of renewable energy goals, taking into account:

- The scope and structure of the proposal;
- The company's current level of disclosure on renewable energy use and GHG emissions; and
- The company's disclosure of policies, practices, and oversight implemented to manage GHG emissions and mitigate climate change risks.

Diversity

Board Diversity

General Recommendation: Generally vote for requests for reports on a company's efforts to diversify the board, unless:

- The gender and racial minority representation of the company's board is reasonably inclusive in relation to companies of similar size and business; or
- The board already reports on its nominating procedures and gender and racial minority initiatives on the board and within the company.

Vote case-by-case on proposals asking a company to increase the gender and racial minority representation on its board, taking into account:

- The degree of existing gender and racial minority diversity on the company's board and among its executive officers;
- The level of gender and racial minority representation that exists at the company's industry peers;
- The company's established process for addressing gender and racial minority board representation;
- Whether the proposal includes an overly prescriptive request to amend nominating committee charter language;
- The independence of the company's nominating committee;
- Whether the company uses an outside search firm to identify potential director nominees; and
- Whether the company has had recent controversies, fines, or litigation regarding equal employment practices.

Equality of Opportunity

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals requesting a company disclose its diversity policies or initiatives, or proposals requesting disclosure of a company's comprehensive workforce diversity data, including requests for EEO-1 data, unless:

- The company publicly discloses equal opportunity policies and initiatives in a comprehensive manner;
- The company already publicly discloses comprehensive workforce diversity data; or
- The company has no recent significant EEO-related violations or litigation.

Generally vote against proposals seeking information on the diversity efforts of suppliers and service providers. Such requests may pose a significant burden on the company.

Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, and Domestic Partner Benefits

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals seeking to amend a company's EEO statement or diversity policies to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity, unless the change would be unduly burdensome.

Generally vote against proposals to extend company benefits to, or eliminate benefits from, domestic partners. Decisions regarding benefits should be left to the discretion of the company.

Gender, Race/Ethnicity Pay Gap

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on requests for reports on a company's pay data by gender or race/ethnicity, or a report on a company's policies and goals to reduce any gender or race/ethnicity pay gaps, taking into account:

- The company's current policies and disclosure related to both its diversity and inclusion policies and practices and its compensation philosophy on fair and equitable compensation practices;
- Whether the company has been the subject of recent controversy, litigation, or regulatory actions related to gender, race, or ethnicity pay gap issues;
- The company's disclosure regarding gender, race, or ethnicity pay gap policies or initiatives compared to its industry peers; and
- Local laws regarding categorization of race and/or ethnicity and definitions of ethnic and/or racial minorities.

Racial Equity and/or Civil Rights Audit Guidelines

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals asking a company to conduct an independent racial equity and/or civil rights audit, taking into account:

- The company's established process or framework for addressing racial inequity and discrimination internally;
- Whether the company adequately discloses workforce diversity and inclusion metrics and goals;
- Whether the company has issued a public statement related to its racial justice efforts in recent years, or has committed to internal policy review;
- Whether the company has engaged with impacted communities, stakeholders, and civil rights experts;
- The company's track record in recent years of racial justice measures and outreach externally; and
- Whether the company has been the subject of recent controversy, litigation, or regulatory actions related to racial inequity or discrimination.

Environment and Sustainability

Facility and Workplace Safety

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on requests for workplace safety reports, including reports on accident risk reduction efforts, taking into account:

- The company's current level of disclosure of its workplace health and safety performance data, health and safety management policies, initiatives, and oversight mechanisms;
- The nature of the company's business, specifically regarding company and employee exposure to health and safety risks;
- Recent significant controversies, fines, or violations related to workplace health and safety; and
- The company's workplace health and safety performance relative to industry peers.

Vote case-by-case on resolutions requesting that a company report on safety and/or security risks associated with its operations and/or facilities, considering:

- The company's compliance with applicable regulations and guidelines;
- The company's current level of disclosure regarding its security and safety policies, procedures, and compliance monitoring; and
- The existence of recent, significant violations, fines, or controversy regarding the safety and security of the company's operations and/or facilities.

Natural Capital- Related and/or Community Impact Assessment Proposals

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on requests for reports on policies and/or the potential (community) social and/or environmental impact of company operations, considering:

- Alignment of current disclosure of applicable company policies, metrics, risk assessment report(s) and risk management procedures with any relevant, broadly accepted reporting frameworks;
- The impact of regulatory non-compliance, litigation, remediation, or reputational loss that may be associated with failure to manage the company's operations in question, including the management of relevant community and stakeholder relations;
- The nature, purpose, and scope of the company's operations in the specific region(s);

- The degree to which company policies and procedures are consistent with industry norms; and
- The scope of the resolution.

Hydraulic Fracturing

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals requesting greater disclosure of a company's (natural gas) hydraulic fracturing operations, including measures the company has taken to manage and mitigate the potential community and environmental impacts of those operations, considering:

- The company's current level of disclosure of relevant policies and oversight mechanisms;
- The company's current level of such disclosure relative to its industry peers;
- Potential relevant local, state, or national regulatory developments; and
- Controversies, fines, or litigation related to the company's hydraulic fracturing operations.

Operations in Protected Areas

General Recommendation: Generally vote for requests for reports on potential environmental damage as a result of company operations in protected regions, unless:

- Operations in the specified regions are not permitted by current laws or regulations;
- The company does not currently have operations or plans to develop operations in these protected regions; or
- The company's disclosure of its operations and environmental policies in these regions is comparable to industry peers.

Recycling

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to report on an existing recycling program, or adopt a new recycling program, taking into account:

- The nature of the company's business;
- The current level of disclosure of the company's existing related programs;
- The timetable and methods of program implementation prescribed by the proposal;
- The company's ability to address the issues raised in the proposal; and
- How the company's recycling programs compare to similar programs of its industry peers.

Sustainability Reporting

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals requesting that a company report on its policies, initiatives, and oversight mechanisms related to social, economic, and environmental sustainability, unless:

- The company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies such as an environment, health, and safety (EHS) report; a comprehensive code of corporate conduct; and/or a diversity report; or
- The company has formally committed to the implementation of a reporting program based on Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidelines or a similar standard within a specified time frame.

Water Issues

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals requesting a company report on, or adopt a new policy on, water-related risks and concerns, taking into account:

- The company's current disclosure of relevant policies, initiatives, oversight mechanisms, and water usage metrics;

- Whether or not the company's existing water-related policies and practices are consistent with relevant internationally recognized standards and national/local regulations;
- The potential financial impact or risk to the company associated with water-related concerns or issues; and
- Recent, significant company controversies, fines, or litigation regarding water use by the company and its suppliers.

General Corporate Issues

Charitable Contributions

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals restricting a company from making charitable contributions. Charitable contributions are generally useful for assisting worthwhile causes and for creating goodwill in the community. In the absence of bad faith, self-dealing, or gross negligence, management should determine which, and if, contributions are in the best interests of the company.

Data Security, Privacy, and Internet Issues

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals requesting the disclosure or implementation of data security, privacy, or information access and management policies and procedures, considering:

- The level of disclosure of company policies and procedures relating to data security, privacy, freedom of speech, information access and management, and Internet censorship;
- Engagement in dialogue with governments or relevant groups with respect to data security, privacy, or the free flow of information on the Internet;
- The scope of business involvement and of investment in countries whose governments censor or monitor the Internet and other telecommunications;
- Applicable market-specific laws or regulations that may be imposed on the company; and
- Controversies, fines, or litigation related to data security, privacy, freedom of speech, or Internet censorship.

ESG Compensation-Related Proposals

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals seeking a report or additional disclosure on the company's approach, policies, and practices on incorporating environmental and social criteria into its executive compensation strategy, considering:

- The scope and prescriptive nature of the proposal;
- The company's current level of disclosure regarding its environmental and social performance and governance;
- The degree to which the board or compensation committee already discloses information on whether it has considered related E&S criteria; and
- Whether the company has significant controversies or regulatory violations regarding social or environmental issues.

Human Rights, Human Capital Management, and International Operations

Human Rights Proposals

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals requesting a report on company or company supplier labor and/or human rights standards and policies unless such information is already publicly disclosed.

Vote case-by-case on proposals to implement company or company supplier labor and/or human rights standards and policies, considering:

- The degree to which existing relevant policies and practices are disclosed;
- Whether or not existing relevant policies are consistent with internationally recognized standards;
- Whether company facilities and those of its suppliers are monitored and how;
- Company participation in fair labor organizations or other internationally recognized human rights initiatives;
- Scope and nature of business conducted in markets known to have higher risk of workplace labor/human rights abuse;
- Recent, significant company controversies, fines, or litigation regarding human rights at the company or its suppliers;
- The scope of the request; and
- Deviation from industry sector peer company standards and practices.

Vote case-by-case on proposals requesting that a company conduct an assessment of the human rights risks in its operations or in its supply chain, or report on its human rights risk assessment process, considering:

- The degree to which existing relevant policies and practices are disclosed, including information on the implementation of these policies and any related oversight mechanisms;
- The company's industry and whether the company or its suppliers operate in countries or areas where there is a history of human rights concerns;
- Recent significant controversies, fines, or litigation regarding human rights involving the company or its suppliers, and whether the company has taken remedial steps; and
- Whether the proposal is unduly burdensome or overly prescriptive.

Mandatory Arbitration

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on requests for a report on a company's use of mandatory arbitration on employment-related claims, taking into account:

- The company's current policies and practices related to the use of mandatory arbitration agreements on workplace claims;
- Whether the company has been the subject of recent controversy, litigation, or regulatory actions related to the use of mandatory arbitration agreements on workplace claims; and
- The company's disclosure of its policies and practices related to the use of mandatory arbitration agreements compared to its peers.

Operations in High-Risk Markets

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on requests for a report on a company's potential financial and reputational risks associated with operations in "high-risk" markets, such as a terrorism-sponsoring state or politically/socially unstable region, taking into account:

- The nature, purpose, and scope of the operations and business involved that could be affected by social or political disruption;
- Current disclosure of applicable risk assessment(s) and risk management procedures;
- Compliance with U.S. sanctions and laws;
- Consideration of other international policies, standards, and laws; and
- Whether the company has been recently involved in recent, significant controversies, fines, or litigation related to its operations in "high-risk" markets.

Outsourcing/Offshoring

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals calling for companies to report on the risks associated with outsourcing/plant closures, considering:

- Controversies surrounding operations in the relevant market(s);
- The value of the requested report to shareholders;
- The company's current level of disclosure of relevant information on outsourcing and plant closure procedures; and
- The company's existing human rights standards relative to industry peers.

Sexual Harassment

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on requests for a report on company actions taken to strengthen policies and oversight to prevent workplace sexual harassment, or a report on risks posed by a company's failure to prevent workplace sexual harassment, taking into account:

- The company's current policies, practices, oversight mechanisms related to preventing workplace sexual harassment;
- Whether the company has been the subject of recent controversy, litigation, or regulatory actions related to workplace sexual harassment issues; and
- The company's disclosure regarding workplace sexual harassment policies or initiatives compared to its industry peers.

Weapons and Military Sales

General Recommendation: Vote against reports on foreign military sales or offsets. Such disclosures may involve sensitive and confidential information. Moreover, companies must comply with government controls and reporting on foreign military sales.

Generally vote against proposals asking a company to cease production or report on the risks associated with the use of depleted uranium munitions or nuclear weapons components and delivery systems, including disengaging from current and proposed contracts. Such contracts are monitored by government agencies, serve multiple military and non-military uses, and withdrawal from these contracts could have a negative impact on the company's business.

Political Activities

Lobbying

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals requesting information on a company's lobbying (including direct, indirect, and grassroots lobbying) activities, policies, or procedures, considering:

- The company's current disclosure of relevant lobbying policies, and management and board oversight;
- The company's disclosure regarding trade associations or other groups that it supports, or is a member of, that engage in lobbying activities; and
- Recent significant controversies, fines, or litigation regarding the company's lobbying-related activities.

Political Contributions

General Recommendation: Generally vote for proposals requesting greater disclosure of a company's political contributions and trade association spending policies and activities, considering:

- The company's policies, and management and board oversight related to its direct political contributions and payments to trade associations or other groups that may be used for political purposes;
- The company's disclosure regarding its support of, and participation in, trade associations or other groups that may make political contributions; and
- Recent significant controversies, fines, or litigation related to the company's political contributions or political activities.

Vote against proposals barring a company from making political contributions. Businesses are affected by legislation at the federal, state, and local level; barring political contributions can put the company at a competitive disadvantage.

Vote against proposals to publish in newspapers and other media a company's political contributions. Such publications could present significant cost to the company without providing commensurate value to shareholders.

Political Expenditures and Lobbying Congruency

General Recommendation: Generally vote case-by-case on proposals requesting greater disclosure of a company's alignment of political contributions, lobbying, and electioneering spending with a company's publicly stated values and policies, considering:

- The company's policies, management, board oversight, governance processes, and level of disclosure related to direct political contributions, lobbying activities, and payments to trade associations, political action committees, or other groups that may be used for political purposes;
- The company's disclosure regarding: the reasons for its support of candidates for public offices; the reasons for support of and participation in trade associations or other groups that may make political contributions; and other political activities;
- Any incongruencies identified between a company's direct and indirect political expenditures and its publicly stated values and priorities; and
- Recent significant controversies related to the company's direct and indirect lobbying, political contributions, or political activities.

Generally vote case-by-case on proposals requesting comparison of a company's political spending to objectives that can mitigate material risks for the company, such as limiting global warming.

Political Ties

General Recommendation: Generally vote against proposals asking a company to affirm political nonpartisanship in the workplace, so long as:

- There are no recent, significant controversies, fines, or litigation regarding the company's political contributions or trade association spending; and
- The company has procedures in place to ensure that employee contributions to company-sponsored political action committees (PACs) are strictly voluntary and prohibit coercion.

Vote against proposals asking for a list of company executives, directors, consultants, legal counsels, lobbyists, or investment bankers that have prior government service and whether such service had a bearing on the business of the company. Such a list would be burdensome to prepare without providing any meaningful information to shareholders.

8. Mutual Fund Proxies

Election of Directors

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on the election of directors and trustees, following the same guidelines for uncontested directors for public company shareholder meetings. However, mutual fund boards do not usually have compensation committees, so do not withhold for the lack of this committee.

Closed End Funds- Unilateral Opt-In to Control Share Acquisition Statutes

General Recommendation: For closed-end management investment companies (CEFs), vote against or withhold from nominating/governance committee members (or other directors on a case-by-case basis) at CEFs that have not provided a compelling rationale for opting-in to a Control Share Acquisition statute, nor submitted a by-law amendment to a shareholder vote.

Converting Closed-end Fund to Open-end Fund

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on conversion proposals, considering the following factors:

- Past performance as a closed-end fund;
- Market in which the fund invests;
- Measures taken by the board to address the discount; and
- Past shareholder activism, board activity, and votes on related proposals.

Proxy Contests

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proxy contests, considering the following factors:

- Past performance relative to its peers;
- Market in which the fund invests;
- Measures taken by the board to address the issues;
- Past shareholder activism, board activity, and votes on related proposals;
- Strategy of the incumbents versus the dissidents;
- Independence of directors;
- Experience and skills of director candidates;
- Governance profile of the company; and
- Evidence of management entrenchment.

Investment Advisory Agreements

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on investment advisory agreements, considering the following factors:

- Proposed and current fee schedules;
- Fund category/investment objective;
- Performance benchmarks;
- Share price performance as compared with peers;
- Resulting fees relative to peers; and
- Assignments (where the advisor undergoes a change of control).

Approving New Classes or Series of Shares

General Recommendation: Vote for the establishment of new classes or series of shares.

Preferred Stock Proposals

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on the authorization for or increase in preferred shares, considering the following factors:

- Stated specific financing purpose;
- Possible dilution for common shares; and
- Whether the shares can be used for antitakeover purposes.

1940 Act Policies

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on policies under the Investment Advisor Act of 1940, considering the following factors:

- Potential competitiveness;
- Regulatory developments;
- Current and potential returns; and
- Current and potential risk.

Generally vote for these amendments as long as the proposed changes do not fundamentally alter the investment focus of the fund and do comply with the current SEC interpretation.

Changing a Fundamental Restriction to a Nonfundamental Restriction

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to change a fundamental restriction to a non-fundamental restriction, considering the following factors:

- The fund's target investments;
- The reasons given by the fund for the change; and
- The projected impact of the change on the portfolio.

Change Fundamental Investment Objective to Nonfundamental

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals to change a fund's fundamental investment objective to non-fundamental.

Name Change Proposals

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on name change proposals, considering the following factors:

- Political/economic changes in the target market;
- Consolidation in the target market; and
- Current asset composition.

Change in Fund's Subclassification

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on changes in a fund's sub-classification, considering the following factors:

- Potential competitiveness;
- Current and potential returns;
- Risk of concentration; and
- Consolidation in target industry.

Business Development Companies—Authorization to Sell Shares of Common Stock at a Price below Net Asset Value

General Recommendation: Vote for proposals authorizing the board to issue shares below Net Asset Value (NAV) if:

- The proposal to allow share issuances below NAV has an expiration date no more than one year from the date shareholders approve the underlying proposal, as required under the Investment Company Act of 1940;
- The sale is deemed to be in the best interests of shareholders by (1) a majority of the company's independent directors and (2) a majority of the company's directors who have no financial interest in the issuance; and
- The company has demonstrated responsible past use of share issuances by either:
- Outperforming peers in its 8-digit GICS group as measured by one- and three-year median TSRs; or
- Providing disclosure that its past share issuances were priced at levels that resulted in only small or moderate discounts to NAV and economic dilution to existing non-participating shareholders.

Disposition of Assets/Termination/Liquidation

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to dispose of assets, to terminate or liquidate, considering the following factors:

- Strategies employed to salvage the company;
- The fund's past performance; and
- The terms of the liquidation.

Changes to the Charter Document

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on changes to the charter document, considering the following factors:

- The degree of change implied by the proposal;
- The efficiencies that could result;
- The state of incorporation; and
- Regulatory standards and implications.

Vote against any of the following changes:

- Removal of shareholder approval requirement to reorganize or terminate the trust or any of its series;
- Removal of shareholder approval requirement for amendments to the new declaration of trust;
- Removal of shareholder approval requirement to amend the fund's management contract, allowing the contract to be modified by the investment manager and the trust management, as permitted by the 1940 Act;

- Allow the trustees to impose other fees in addition to sales charges on investment in a fund, such as deferred sales charges and redemption fees that may be imposed upon redemption of a fund's shares;
- Removal of shareholder approval requirement to engage in and terminate subadvisory arrangements; or
- Removal of shareholder approval requirement to change the domicile of the fund.

Changing the Domicile of a Fund

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on re-incorporations, considering the following factors:

- Regulations of both states;
- Required fundamental policies of both states; and
- The increased flexibility available.

Authorizing the Board to Hire and Terminate Subadvisers Without Shareholder Approval

General Recommendation: Vote against proposals authorizing the board to hire or terminate subadvisers without shareholder approval if the investment adviser currently employs only one subadviser.

Distribution Agreements

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on distribution agreement proposals, considering the following factors:

- Fees charged to comparably sized funds with similar objectives;
- The proposed distributor's reputation and past performance;
- The competitiveness of the fund in the industry; and
- The terms of the agreement.

Master-Feeder Structure

General Recommendation: Vote for the establishment of a master-feeder structure.

Mergers

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on merger proposals, considering the following factors:

- Resulting fee structure;
- Performance of both funds;
- Continuity of management personnel; and
- Changes in corporate governance and their impact on shareholder rights.

Shareholder Proposals for Mutual Funds

Establish Director Ownership Requirement

General Recommendation: Generally vote against shareholder proposals that mandate a specific minimum amount of stock that directors must own in order to qualify as a director or to remain on the board.

Reimburse Shareholder for Expenses Incurred

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on shareholder proposals to reimburse proxy solicitation expenses. When supporting the dissidents, vote for the reimbursement of the proxy solicitation expenses.

Terminate the Investment Advisor

General Recommendation: Vote case-by-case on proposals to terminate the investment advisor, considering the following factors:

- Performance of the fund's Net Asset Value (NAV);
- The fund's history of shareholder relations; and
- The performance of other funds under the advisor's management.

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