

Written comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Consideration will be given to comments and suggestions submitted in writing within 60 days of this publication.

Please direct your written comments to R. Corey Booth, Director/Chief Information Officer, Office of Information Technology, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 5th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20549.

Dated: March 31, 2005.

**Margaret H. McFarland,**

*Deputy Secretary.*

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## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

### Proposed Extension of Existing Collection; Comment Request

Upon Written Request, Copies Available From: Securities and Exchange Commission, Office of Filings and Information Services, Washington, DC 20549.

Extension:

Rule 17a-13; SEC File No. 270-27; OMB Control No. 3235-0035.

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") is soliciting comments on the collection of information summarized below. The Commission plans to submit this existing collection of information to the Office of Management and Budget for extension and approval. The Code of Federal Regulations citation to this collection of information is the following rule: 17 CFR 240.17a-13 Quarterly Security Counts to be Made by Certain Exchange Members, Brokers, and Dealers.

Rule 17a-13(b) generally requires that at least once each calendar quarter, all registered brokers and dealers physically examine and count all securities held and account for all other securities not in their possession, but

subject to the broker-dealer's control or direction. Any discrepancies between the broker-dealer's securities count and the firm's records must be noted and, within seven days, the unaccounted for difference must be recorded in the firm's records. Rule 17a-13(c) provides that under specified conditions, the securities counts, examination and verification of the broker-dealer's entire list of securities may be conducted on a cyclical basis rather than on a certain date. Although Rule 17a-13 does not require filing a report with the Commission, security count discrepancies must be reported on Form X-17a-5 as required by Rule 17a-5. Rule 17a-13 exempts broker-dealers that limit their business to the sale and redemption of securities of registered investment companies and interests or participation in an insurance company separate account and those who solicit accounts for federally insured savings and loan associations, provided that such persons promptly transmit all funds and securities and hold no customer funds and securities.

The information obtained from Rule 17a-13 is used as an inventory control device to monitor a broker-dealer's ability to account for all securities held, in transfer, in transit, pledged, loaned, borrowed, deposited or otherwise subject to the firm's control or direction. Discrepancies between the securities counts and the broker-dealer's records alert the Commission and the Self Regulatory Organizations ("SROs") to those firms having problems in their back offices.

Currently, there are approximately 5,907 respondents that must comply with Rule 17a-13. However, given the variability in their businesses, it is difficult to quantify how many hours per year each respondent spends on the rule. As noted, the rule requires a respondent to account for all securities in its possession. Many respondents hold few, if any, securities; while others hold large quantities. Therefore, the time burden of complying with the rule will depend on respondent-specific factors, including size, number of customers, and proprietary trading activity. The staff estimates that the average time spent per respondent on the rule is 100 hours per year. This estimate takes into account the fact that more than half the 5,907 respondents—according to financial reports filed with the SEC—may spend little or no time in complying with the rule, given that they do not do a public securities business or do not hold inventories of securities. For these reasons, the staff estimates that the total compliance burden per year is 590,700 hours (5,907

respondents × 100 hours/respondent). It should be noted that most broker-dealers would engage in the activities required by Rule 17a-13 even if they were not required to do so.

Written comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Consideration will be given to comments and suggestions submitted in writing within 60 days of this publication.

Please direct your written comments to R. Corey Booth, Director/CIO, Office of Information Technology, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 5th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20549.

Dated: March 30, 2005.

**Margaret H. McFarland,**

*Deputy Secretary.*

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## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

### Proposed Collection; Comment Request

Upon written request, copies available from: Securities and Exchange Commission, Office of Filings and Information Services, Washington, DC 20549.

Extension:

Rule 17Ac3-1(a), SEC File No. 270-96, OMB Control No. 3235-0151; Form TA-W(1669), SEC File No. 270-96, OMB Control No. 3235-0151.

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

Subsection (c)(4)(B) of Section 17A of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Exchange Act") authorizes transfer agents registered with an appropriate regulatory agency ("ARA") to withdraw