

manufacturer contemplates making any changes the effects of which might be characterized as *de minimis*, it should consult the agency before preparing and submitting a petition to modify.

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. 33106; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

Issued on: January 27, 2009.

**Stephen R. Kratzke,**  
*Associate Administrator for Rulemaking.*  
[FR Doc. E9-2107 Filed 1-30-09; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE** 4910-59-P

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Ex Parte No. 664 (Sub-No. 1)]

#### Use of a Multi-Stage Discontinued Cash Flow Model in Determining the Railroad Industry's Cost of Capital

**AGENCY:** Surface Transportation Board, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of Final Decision.

**SUMMARY:** By a decision served on January 28, 2009, the Board modified its methodology for determining the cost of capital for the railroad industry by adopting the average of the estimates produced by its Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM) with the Morningstar/Ibbotson multi-stage Discontinued Cash Flow (DCF) model to estimate the railroad industry's cost of equity.

**DATES:** This action is effective on January 28, 2009.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Timothy J. Stafford, (202) 245-0356. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.]

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Board has been thoroughly reviewing its regulatory processes for determining the railroad industry's cost of capital. The overall cost of capital is determined through the use of two figures: The cost of debt and the cost of equity. The cost of debt is readily available and observable; however, the cost of equity is not and must be estimated using a finance model. The Board determined in a decision served on January 28, 2009, the combination of finance models that it found best depicts the cost of equity, and thereby the cost of capital. In that decision, the Board revised its methodology for determining the cost of capital for the railroad industry by adopting the average of CAPM and the Morningstar/Ibbotson multi-stage DCF model.

Additional information is contained in the Board's decision. A copy of the

Board's decision is available for inspection or copying at the Board's Public Docket Room, Room 131, 395 E Street, SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001, and is posted on the Board's Web site, <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 605(b), we conclude that our action in this proceeding will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. This action will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. 10101(14); 49 U.S.C. 10704(a)(2)-(3).

Decided: January 23, 2009.

By the Board, Chairman Nottingham, Vice Chairman Mulvey, and Commissioner Buttrey.

**Jeffrey Herzig,**  
*Clearance Clerk.*  
[FR Doc. E9-2185 Filed 1-30-09; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE** 4915-01-P

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

### Internal Revenue Service

#### Open Meeting of the Area 4 Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (Including the States of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin)

**AGENCY:** Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** An open meeting of the Area 4 Taxpayer Advocacy Panel will be conducted. The Taxpayer Advocacy Panel is soliciting public comment, ideas, and suggestions on improving customer service at the Internal Revenue Service.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held Tuesday, March 17, 2009.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ellen Smiley at 1-888-912-1227, or (414) 231-2360.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. (1988) that a meeting of the Area 4 Taxpayer Advocacy Panel will be held Tuesday, March 17, 2009, at 1 p.m. Central Time. For more information, please contact Ellen Smiley. Ms. Smiley may be reached at 1-888-912-1227, or (414) 231-2360, or you can submit written comments to the panel by faxing the comments to (414) 231-2363, or by mail to Taxpayer Advocacy Panel, Stop 1006MIL, 211 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53203-2221, or you can

post comments to the Web site at <http://www.improveirs.org>.

The agenda will include the following: Various IRS issues.

Dated: January 27, 2009.

**Shawn F. Collins,**  
*Acting Director, Taxpayer Advocacy Panel.*  
[FR Doc. E9-2101 Filed 1-30-09; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE** 4830-01-P

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## U.S.-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION

### Notice of Open Public Hearing

**AGENCY:** U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice of open public hearing—March 4, 2009, Washington, DC.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given of the following hearing of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

*Name:* Carolyn Bartholomew, Chairman of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

The Commission is mandated by Congress to investigate, assess, and report to Congress annually on “the national security implications of the economic relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China.”

Pursuant to this mandate, the Commission will hold a public hearing in Washington, DC on March 4, 2009 to address “China's Military and Security Activities Abroad.”

### Background

This event is the second in a series of public hearings the Commission will hold during its 2009 report cycle to collect input from leading academic, industry, and government experts on national security implications of the U.S. bilateral trade and economic relationship with China. The March 4 hearing will examine the People's Liberation Army's domestic and foreign activities and orientation, China's expanding military and security influence, China's military operations abroad, and China's conventional arm sales.

The March 4 hearing will be Co-chaired by Commission Chairman Carolyn Bartholomew and Vice Chairman Larry M. Wortzel.

Information on hearings, as well as transcripts of past Commission hearings, can be obtained from the USCC Web site <http://www.uscc.gov>.

Copies of the hearing agenda will be made available on the Commission's Web site <http://www.uscc.gov> as soon as available. Any interested party may file

a written statement by March 4, 2009, by mailing to the contact below. On March 4, the hearing will be held in two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. A portion of each panel will include a question and answer period between the Commissioners and the witnesses.

*Date and Time:* Wednesday, March 4, 2009, 9 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. A detailed agenda for the hearing will be posted to the Commission's Web site at <http://www.uscc.gov> in the near future.

**ADDRESSES:** The hearing will be held on Capitol Hill in Room 562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building located at First Street and Constitution Avenue, NE., Washington, DC 20510. Public seating is limited to about 50 people on a first come, first served basis. Advance reservations are not required.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Any member of the public wishing further information concerning the hearing should contact Kathy Michels, Associate Director for the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 444 North Capitol Street, NW., Suite 602, Washington, DC 20001; phone: 202-624-1409, or via e-mail at [kmichels@uscc.gov](mailto:kmichels@uscc.gov).

**Authority:** Congress created the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission in 2000 in the National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 106-398), as amended by Division P of the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003 (Pub. L. 108-7), as amended by Public Law 109-108 (November 22, 2005).

Dated: January 27, 2009.

**Kathleen J. Michels,**

*Associate Director, U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.*

[FR Doc. E9-2103 Filed 1-30-09; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 1137-00-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

[OMB Control No. 2900-0110]

**Proposed Information Collection (Application for Assumption Approval and/or Release From Personal Liability to the Government on a Home Loan) Activity: Comment Request**

**AGENCY:** Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed extension of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments for information needed to approve a claimant's request to be released from personal liability on a Government home loan.

**DATES:** Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before April 3, 2009.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit written comments on the collection of information through the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) at <http://www.Regulations.gov> or to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20M35), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420 or e-mail to [nancy.kessinger@va.gov](mailto:nancy.kessinger@va.gov). Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0110" in any correspondence. During the comment period, comments may be viewed online through at FDMS.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Nancy J. Kessinger at (202) 461-9769 or FAX (202) 275-5947.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Under the PRA of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13; 44 U.S.C. 3501-21), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management

and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, VBA invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VBA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VBA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

*Title:* Application for Assumption Approval and/or Release from Personal Liability to the Government on a Home Loan, VA Form 26-6381.

*OMB Control Number:* 2900-0110.

*Type of Review:* Extension of a currently approved collection.

*Abstract:* Veteran-borrowers complete VA Form 26-6381 to sell their home by assumption rather than requiring the purchaser to obtain their own financing to pay off the VA guaranteed home loan. In order for the veteran-borrower to be released from personal liability, the loan must be current and the purchaser must assume all of the veteran's liability to the Government and to the mortgage holder and meet the credit and income requirements.

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households, Business or other for profit.

*Estimated Annual Burden:* 42 hours.

*Estimated Average Burden per Respondent:* 10 minutes.

*Frequency of Response:* On occasion.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 250.

Dated: January 22, 2009.

By direction of the Secretary.

**Denise McLamb,**

*Program Analyst, Enterprise Records Service.*

[FR Doc. E9-2069 Filed 1-30-09; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 8320-01-P**