

program that receives an exemption (see paragraph c. below).

For purposes of this policy, the applicant is the entity that meets the agency's or program's eligibility criteria and has the legal authority to apply. For example, a consortium formed to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement must obtain a DUNS number for that consortium. If a consortium is eligible, and the agency's policy is to make the award to a lead entity for the consortium, the DUNS number of the lead entity will be used.

b. *Effect.* Every application for a new award or renewal of an award, including applications or plans under mandatory grant programs, submitted on or after October 1, 2003 must include a DUNS number for the applicant. Unless an exemption is granted, an application will not be considered complete until a valid DUNS number is provided by the applicant.

For Federal purposes, the applicant is not required at this time to submit DUNS numbers for entities with which it may enter into subawards.

The DUNS number does not replace existing numbers, such as the Employer Identification Number (EIN), the Tax Identification Number (TIN), and State Application Identifier (SAI) numbers that are required by statute, Executive Order, or regulation.

c. *Exemptions.* Agencies may not grant exemptions from this policy. Requests for exemptions must be directed to OMB.

5. *Agency Responsibilities.* Agencies that award grants or cooperative agreements shall:

a. Issue any needed implementing direction to component offices to meet the requirements of this policy directive.

b. Provide outreach and education appropriate to their applicant communities regarding the requirement for a DUNS number. Agencies should encourage entities that anticipate applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements to obtain a DUNS number in advance of a specific application. Agencies should inform entities that it is their responsibility to obtain a DUNS number.

c. Include this requirement in all funding opportunity announcements issued on or after the effective date of this policy directive with application due dates or acceptance dates on or after October 1, 2003. For all other funding opportunity announcements with due dates or acceptance dates on or after October 1, 2003, agencies must amend their announcements or take other appropriate measures to inform potential applicants of this requirement.

These requirements apply equally to other types of notifications if funding opportunity announcements are not used.

d. Revise their grant and cooperative agreement applications and plans to include a DUNS number. OMB approval is not required to add a DUNS number field to previously approved forms.

e. Ensure that their grant-related processing systems, and other systems as appropriate, are able to accept the DUNS number.

6. *Information Contact.* Direct any requests for exemption or questions about this policy directive to Sandra Swab, Office of Federal Financial Management, 202-395-5642 (direct) or 202-395-3993 (main office), or via e-mail (sswab@omb.eop.gov)

7. *Effective Date.* This policy directive is effective 30 days after issuance.

Dated: June 23, 2003.

Linda M. Springer,

Controller.

[FR Doc. 03-16356 Filed 6-26-03; 8:45 am]

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OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

Final Report of the Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force

AGENCY: Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Office of Management is publishing the Final Report of the Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force on June 28, 2003. The Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force recommends options regarding the feasibility of consolidating information collections, organizing a list of information collections, and creating interactive electronic systems. A Draft Report was released for public comment May 9, 2003 and the response to comments is included in Appendix 8 of the Final Report. The Final Report of the Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force is posted on OMB's Web site, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg/sbpr2003.pdf>, and on the Small Business Administration's Web site for business laws, <http://www.businesslaw.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Shivani Desai, Office of E-Government and Information Technology, Office of Management and Budget, E-mail: shivani_desai@omb.eop.gov, Telephone: (202) 395-3092.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Congress directed the Director of OMB to convene and have a representative chair a Task Force "to study the feasibility of streamlining requirements with respect to small business concerns regarding collection of information and strengthening dissemination of information" (44 U.S.C. 3520, Pub. L. 107-198). More specifically, this Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force is charged with examining five ways to reduce the information collection burden placed by government on small business concerns. They are:

1. Examine the feasibility and desirability of requiring the consolidation of information collection requirements within and across Federal agencies and programs, and identify ways of doing so.

2. Examine the feasibility and benefits to small businesses of having OMB publish a list of data collections organized in a manner by which they can more easily identify requirements with which they are expected to comply.

3. Examine the savings and develop recommendations for implementing electronic submissions of information to the Federal government with immediate feedback to the submitter.

4. Make recommendations to improve the electronic dissemination of information collected under Federal requirements.

5. Recommend a plan to develop an interactive Government-wide Internet program to identify applicable collections and facilitate compliance.

The Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force is required to submit a report of its findings on the first three issues no later than one year after enactment, or June 28, 2003. A second report on the final two issues is required no later than two years after enactment, or June 28, 2004. Both reports must be submitted to the Director of OMB; the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman; and the Senate Committees on Governmental Affairs and Small Business and Entrepreneurship; and, the House Committees on Government Reform and Small Business.

The Director of OMB appointed Dr. John D. Graham, Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, and Mr. Mark A. Forman, Administrator for the Office of E-Government and Information Technology, to co-chair the Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force.

The Act specifies the following agencies to be represented on the SBPRA Task Force: Department of Labor (including the Bureau of Labor

Statistics, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration); Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Transportation; Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration; Internal Revenue Service; Department of Health and Human Services (including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services); Department of Agriculture; Department of the Interior; the General Services Administration; and two other participants to be selected by the Director of OMB (who are the Department of Commerce and additional representatives from the Small Business Administration).

The Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force solicited public comments on the Draft Report from May 9, 2003 to June 4, 2003. All comments received by OMB were considered and resulted in modifications to the final report. A summary of the public comments with responses of the Task Force is attached in Appendix 8 of the Final Report.

Donald R. Arbuckle,

Administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

Mark Forman,

Administrator, Office of E-Government and Information Technology.

[FR Doc. 03-16223 Filed 6-26-03; 8:45 am]

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-48075; File No. PCAOB-2003-02]

Public Company Accounting Oversight Board; Notice of Filing of Proposed Rule on Funding

June 23, 2003.

Pursuant to section 107(b) of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (the "Sarbanes-Oxley Act" or "Act"), notice is hereby given that on April 16, 2003, the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (the "Board" or the "PCAOB") filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission") the proposed rules as described in Items I, II, and III below, which items have been prepared by the Board. The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rules from interested persons.

I. Board's Statement of the Terms of Substance of the Proposed Rule

On April 16, 2003, the Board adopted five proposed rules relating to public company funding of the Board's operations (PCAOB Rules 7100 through 7104), plus certain definitions that

would appear in PCAOB Rule 1001, to implement section 109 of the Act. Section 109 provides that funds to cover the Board's annual budget (less registration and annual fees paid by public accounting firms) are to be collected from public companies (*i.e.*, "issuers," as defined in the Sarbanes-Oxley Act). The amount due from such companies is referred to in the Sarbanes-Oxley Act as the Board's "accounting support fee." The five proposed rules provide for equitable allocation, assessment and collection of the Board's accounting support fee.

II. Board's Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule

In its filing with the Commission, the Board included statements concerning the purpose of, and basis for, its proposed rules on funding and discussed comments it received on them. The text of these statements may be examined at the places specified in Item IV below. The Board has prepared summaries, set forth in sections A, B and C below, of the most significant aspects of such statements.

A. Board's Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule

(a) Purpose

The Act established the Board as a nonprofit corporation, subject to and with all the powers conferred upon a nonprofit corporation by the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act, to oversee the audits of public companies that are subject to the securities laws, and related matters, in order to protect the interests of investors and further the public interest in the preparation of informative, accurate, and independent audit reports for companies the securities of which are sold to, and held by and for, public investors.

Section 109 of the Act provides that funds to cover the Board's annual budget (less registration and annual fees paid by public accounting firms) are to be collected from public companies (*i.e.*, "issuers," as defined in the Act). The amount due from such companies is referred to in the Act as the Board's "accounting support fee." The Board has adopted five proposed rules relating to public company funding of the Board's operations (PCAOB Rules 7100 through 7104), plus certain definitions that would appear in Rule 1001, to implement section 109 of the Act.

The Board's proposed rules provide for the accounting support fee to be allocated to, and payable by, two classes of issuers: (1) Publicly-traded

companies with average, monthly U.S. equity market capitalizations during the preceding year, based on all classes of common stock, of greater than \$25 million,¹ and (2) investment companies with average, monthly U.S. equity market capitalizations (or net asset values) of greater than \$250 million.² In recognition of the structure of investment companies and the relatively less-complex nature of investment company audits (as compared to operating company audits), investment companies would be assessed at a lower rate. All other issuers, including (1) those that are not required to file audited financial statements with the Commission, (2) employee stock purchase, savings and similar plans, and (3) bankrupt issuers that file modified reports, would be allocated shares of zero.³

(i) *Computation of Accounting Support Fee and Allocation to Issuers.* Once each year, the Board will compute the accounting support fee.⁴ The accounting support fee will be equal to the Board's budget for that year, as approved by the Commission, less the amount of registration and annual fees received during the prior year from public accounting firms.⁵

In establishing rules on the allocation of the accounting support fee, the Board was guided by two overarching principles that emanate from section 109 of the Act: that, generally, the accounting support fee must be allocated in a manner that reflects the proportionate sizes of issuers, and that, within that framework, the accounting support fee must be allocated in an

¹ The definition of "issuer market capitalization" in Rule 1001(i)(i) defines that term to include only the aggregate market value of securities traded in the United States, whether those securities are issued by entities based in the United States or elsewhere. The definition excludes the market value of securities traded outside the United States.

² This class would include both registered investment companies and issuers that have elected to be regulated as business development companies pursuant to section 54 of the Investment Company Act of 1940 ("Investment Company Act"). In the case of an investment company with multiple series, the average, monthly U.S. equity market capitalization, or net asset value, of each series would be measured against the \$250 million threshold separately.

³ In addition, issuers with average, monthly U.S. equity market capitalizations during the preceding year of less than \$25 million (or, in the case of investment companies, of less than \$250 million), issuers whose only outstanding public securities are debt securities would be allocated shares of zero, and issuers whose share price (or net asset value) on a monthly, or more frequent, basis is not publicly available.

⁴ Rule 7100. The Board anticipates that the accounting support fee will normally be computed during the first 30 days of each calendar year.

⁵ *Id.* The term "accounting support fee" is defined in Rule 1001(a)(i) by reference to Rule 7100.