

concept of independence implies. In such difficult matters, for example, as the determination of the scope of audit necessary, existence of such an agreement may easily lead to the use of less extensive or thorough procedures than would otherwise be followed. In other cases it may result in a failure to appraise with professional acumen the information disclosed by the examination. Consequently, the accountant cannot be recognized as independent for the purpose of certifying the financial statements of the corporation. (Emphasis added.)

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission; Office of the Chief Accountant: Application of the Commission's Rules on Auditor Independence Frequently Asked Questions; Other Matters—Question 4 (Issued December 13, 2004):

Q: Has there been any change in the Commission's long standing view (Financial Reporting Policies—Section 600—602.02.f.i. "Indemnification by Client") that when an accountant enters into an indemnity agreement with the registrant, his or her independence would come into question?

A: No. When an accountant and his or her client, directly or through an affiliate, enter into an agreement of indemnity which seeks to provide the accountant immunity from liability for his or her own negligent acts, whether of omission or commission, the accountant is not independent. Further, including in engagement letters a clause that a registrant would release, indemnify or hold harmless from any liability and costs resulting from knowing misrepresentations by management would also impair the firm's independence. (Emphasis added.)

Dated: May 4, 2005.

Tamara J. Wiseman,

Executive Secretary, Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council.

[FR Doc. 05-9298 Filed 5-9-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6720-01-P, 6210-01,-P, 6714-01-P, 7535-01-P, 4810-33-P

FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION

Controlled Carriers Under The Shipping Act of 1984

AGENCY: Federal Maritime Commission.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Federal Maritime Commission is publishing an updated list of controlled carriers, *i.e.*, ocean common carriers operating in U.S.-foreign trades that are owned or controlled by foreign governments. Such carriers are subject to special regulatory oversight by the Commission under the Shipping Act of 1984.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy W. Larson, General Counsel, Federal Maritime Commission, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., Washington, DC 20573. (202) 523-5740.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Federal Maritime Commission is publishing an updated list of controlled carriers. Section 3(8) of the Shipping Act of 1984 ("Act"), 46 U.S.C. app. 1702(3), defines a "controlled carrier" as:

An ocean common carrier that is, or whose operating assets are, directly or indirectly, owned or controlled by a government; ownership or control by a government shall be deemed to exist with respect to any carrier if—

(A) a majority portion of the interest in the carrier is owned or controlled in any manner by that government, by any agency thereof, or by any public or private person controlled by that government; or

(B) that government has the right to appoint or disapprove the appointment of a majority of the directors, the chief operating officer, or the chief executive officer of the carrier.

As required by the Shipping Act, controlled carriers are subject to special oversight by the Commission. Section 9(a) of the Act, 46 U.S.C. app. 1708(a), states, in part:

No controlled carrier subject to this section may maintain rates or charges in its tariffs or service contracts, or charge or assess rates, that are below a level that is just and reasonable, nor may any such carrier establish, maintain, or enforce unjust or unreasonable classifications, rules, or regulations in those tariffs or service contracts. An unjust or unreasonable classification, rule, or regulation means one that results or is likely to result in the carriage or handling of cargo at rates or charges that are below a just and reasonable level. The Commission may, at any time after notice and hearing, prohibit the publication or use of any rates, charges, classifications, rules, or regulations that the controlled carrier has failed to demonstrate to be just and reasonable.

Congress enacted these protections to ensure that controlled carriers, whose marketplace decision making can be influenced by foreign governmental priorities or by their access to non-market sources of capital, do not engage in unreasonable below-market pricing practices which could disrupt trade or harm privately-owned shipping companies.

The controlled carrier list is not a comprehensive list of foreign-owned or -controlled ships or shipowners; rather, it is only a list of ocean common carriers (as defined in section 3(16) of the Act) that are owned or controlled by governments. Thus, tramp operators and other non-common carriers are not included, nor are non-vessel-operating common carriers, regardless of their ownership or control.

Since the last publication of this list on June 9, 2003 (68 FR 34388), the Commission has newly classified two

ocean common carriers as controlled carriers. On September 27, 2004, American President Lines, Ltd. and APL Co. Pte, Ltd. (one ocean common carrier designated "APL") was classified as a carrier controlled by the Government of the Republic of Singapore ("GOS"). The majority ownership of APL's parent company, Neptune Orient Lines ("NOL") had been purchased by a GOS controlled holding company. On November 29, 2004, the Commission classified China Shipping (Hong Kong), Ltd. ("CSHK") as a carrier controlled by the Government of the People's Republic of China. CSHK was a new entrant in the U.S.-foreign trades. Neither APL nor CSHK raised any objections to these classifications.

It is requested that any other information regarding possible omissions or inaccuracies in this list be provided to the Commission's Office of the General Counsel. See 46 CFR 501.23. The amended list of currently classified controlled carriers and their corresponding Commission-issued Registered Persons Index numbers is set forth below:

- (1) American President Lines, Ltd and APL Co., Pte. (RPI No. 000240)—Republic of Singapore;
- (2) Ceylon Shipping Corporation (RPI No. 016589)—Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka;
- (3) COSCO Container Lines Company, Limited (RPI No. 015614)—People's Republic of China;
- (4) China Shipping Container Lines Co., Ltd. (RPI No. 016435)—People's Republic of China;
- (5) China Shipping Container Lines (Hong Kong) Company, Ltd. (RPI No. 019269)—People's Republic of China;
- (6) Compagnie Nationale Algerienne de Navigation (RPI No. 000787)—People's Democratic Republic of Algeria;
- (7) Sinotrans Container Lines Co., Ltd. (d/b/a Sinolines)(RPI No. 017703)—People's Republic of China;
- (8) Shipping Corporation of India Ltd., The (RPI No. 001141)—Republic of India.

By the Commission.

Bryant L. VanBrakle,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 05-9322 Filed 5-9-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6730-01-P

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

SUMMARY:**Background**

On June 15, 1984, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) delegated to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (Board) its authority under the Paperwork Reduction Act, as per 5 CFR 1320.16, to approve of and assign OMB control numbers to collection of information requests and requirements conducted or sponsored by the Board under conditions set forth in 5 CFR part 1320 Appendix A.1. Board-approved collections of information are incorporated into the official OMB inventory of currently approved collections of information. Copies of the OMB 83-Is and supporting statements and approved collection of information instruments are placed into OMB's public docket files. The Federal Reserve may not conduct or sponsor, and the respondent is not required to respond to, an information collection that has been extended, revised, or implemented on or after October 1, 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Request for Comment on Information Collection Proposal

The following information collection, which is being handled under this delegated authority, has received initial Board approval and is hereby published for comment. At the end of the comment period, the proposed information collection, along with an analysis of comments and recommendations received, will be submitted to the Board for final approval under OMB delegated authority. Comments are invited on the following:

- a. Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the Federal Reserve's functions; including whether the information has practical utility;
- b. The accuracy of the Federal Reserve's estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- c. Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- d. Ways to minimize the burden of information collection on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before July 11, 2005.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by FR 3080, by any of the following methods:

- *Agency Web site:* <http://www.federalreserve.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments at <http://www.federalreserve.gov/generalinfo/foia/ProposedRegs.cfm>.

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- *E-mail:* regs.comments@federalreserve.gov. Include docket number in the subject line of the message.

- *FAX:* 202/452-3819 or 202/452-3102.

- *Mail:* Jennifer J. Johnson, Secretary, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 20th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20551.

All public comments are available from the Board's Web site at <http://www.federalreserve.gov/generalinfo/foia/ProposedRegs.cfm> as submitted, except as necessary for technical reasons. Accordingly, your comments will not be edited to remove any identifying or contact information. Public comments may also be viewed electronically or in paper in Room MP-500 of the Board's Martin Building (20th and C Streets, NW.) between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekdays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: A copy of the proposed form and instructions, the Paperwork Reduction Act Submission (OMB 83-I), supporting statement, and other documents that will be placed into OMB's public docket files once approved may be requested from the agency clearance officer, whose name appears below.

Michelle Long, Federal Reserve Board Clearance Officer (202-452-3829), Division of Research and Statistics, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Washington, DC 20551. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) users may contact (202-263-4869), Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Washington, DC 20551.

For further information regarding the purpose and content of the proposed survey contact Jack Walton, Associate Director (202-452-2660), Jeffrey Yeganeh, Manager (202-728-5801), or Susan Foley, Project Leader (202-452-3596), Retail Payments Section, Division of Reserve Bank Operations and Payment Systems.

Proposal to conduct under OMB delegated authority the following survey:

Report title: Check 21 Act Survey.

Agency form number: FR 3080.

OMB control number: 7100-0279.

Frequency: Once.

Reporters: Depository institutions.

Annual reporting hours: 15,000 hours.

Estimated average hours per response: 10 hours.

Number of respondents: 1,500.

General description of report: This information collection is voluntary (12 U.S.C. 5015) and may be accorded confidential treatment under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552 (b)(4)).

Abstract: Section 16 of the Check 21 Act requires the Federal Reserve to study the implementation of the law and its effect on various aspects of check processing, including funds availability, and to report the results of the study to Congress by April 28, 2007.¹ Specifically, Congress directed the Federal Reserve to study and report to Congress on:

(1) The percentage of total checks cleared in which the paper check is not returned to the paying bank;

(2) The extent to which banks make funds available to consumers for local and nonlocal checks prior to the expiration of maximum hold periods;

(3) The length of time within which depository banks learn of the nonpayment of local and nonlocal checks;

(4) The increase or decrease in check-related losses over the study period; and

(5) The appropriateness of the time periods and amount limits applicable under sections 603 and 604 of the Expedited Funds Availability Act, as in effect on the date of enactment of the Check 21 Act.

To fully address the issues raised by Congress, the Federal Reserve believes it is necessary to conduct a broad-based survey to ensure the accurate characterization of the nation's evolving check processing system, and the Federal Reserve is hereby publishing for comment a draft survey to gather data from a nationally representative sample of depository institutions, including commercial banks, savings institutions, and credit unions.

Further, the availability for withdrawal of funds deposited by check is governed by the Federal Reserve's Regulation CC, which implements the Expedited Funds Availability Act (EFAA). EFAA and Regulation CC set maximum permissible hold periods for checks deposited into transaction accounts at depository institutions. EFAA directs the Federal Reserve to reduce the statutory funds availability schedules as the check clearing system improves, while also ensuring that the reduced schedules provide depository banks a reasonable opportunity to learn

¹ The Check 21 Act also directs the Board to include in its report to Congress any recommendations for legislative action.

of the nonpayment of most checks in each category (such as “nonlocal” checks and “local” checks). The results of the proposed survey would be used to determine whether reducing the hold periods in Regulation CC is warranted.

The proposed survey would consist of five sections. Section I would collect general information on the depository institution, such as name, address, and contact person.

Section II consists of seven questions on respondents’ losses and recoveries related to check fraud. In its role as bank of first deposit and as paying bank, an institution would be asked to provide the value and number of check losses incurred in 2005, as well as the value and number of cases associated with recoveries received in 2005 from check losses. As bank of first deposit, institutions would be asked to provide information on their losses by category, such as the origin of the check (e.g., local or non-local), whether the check was dishonored versus subject to a warranty claim, and the age of the account. As paying bank, institutions would be asked to provide their losses by presentment method (original checks, substitute checks, or checks presented electronically). Both the dollar value and the number of cases would be reported. The respondent also would be asked to compare its check losses in 2005 with its check losses in 2004. Section II questions are in response to study requirements 4 and 5.

Section III consists of two questions on the volume of checks, for cases where the institution was the paying bank and for cases where the institution was the bank of first deposit. The institution would be asked to provide the total number and value of checks presented to it in a calendar month, categorized by presentment method (original checks, substitute checks, or checks presented electronically). The institution also would be asked to provide the total number and value of checks deposited at the institution as the bank of first deposit during the same calendar month, categorized by origin of the check. Section III questions are in response to study requirement 1.

Section IV consists of five questions on the institution’s funds availability policies and practices for next-day availability, local, and nonlocal checks. The institution would be asked to provide its number of transaction accounts and the percentage of these accounts held by consumers. The institution would also be asked to indicate its published funds availability policy, including the percentage of consumer transaction accounts for which the policy permits hold

extensions on a case-by-case basis, and to specify what changes (if any) it has made to its policy in the past two years. The institution would be asked to indicate its funds availability practices for deposits that do not qualify as exception holds under Regulation CC. Finally, institutions would be asked for the percentage of check deposits subject to Regulation CC exception holds that receive later availability than the Regulation CC permitted holds for next-day availability, local, and nonlocal checks. Section IV questions are in response to study requirement 2.

Section V consists of three questions addressing the institution’s experiences with returned checks. The institution would be asked to specify the number of business days within which it receives local and nonlocal checks that have been returned unpaid by the paying bank. Two questions request data on notifications and procedures regarding large-dollar returned checks. Section V questions are in response to study requirement 3.

The Federal Reserve will accept comments on all aspects of the proposed survey. In general, the Federal Reserve requests comment on how the survey might be modified to improve its responsiveness to the requirements of section 16 of the Check 21 Act, while also enabling depository institutions to respond to the survey with reasonable burden. More specifically, the Federal Reserve requests comments on the following. To what extent are institutions, in their role as banks of first deposit, able to categorize check losses by local and non-local checks (proposed question 2.2)? To what extent are institutions, in their role as paying banks, able to categorize check losses by presentment method (proposed question 2.6)? How might questions 4.2 and 4.4 be restructured to better capture the frequency with which institutions make funds available sooner than Regulation CC requires? Do the options listed under question 4.3(d) capture the reasons why institutions might have changed their funds availability policies in the past two years? And, finally, do institutions typically track check losses by check or by case (which may involve one or more checks)? The proposed survey is available electronically at <http://www.federalreserve.gov/boarddocs/reportforms/review.cfm>.

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, May 5, 2005.

Jennifer J. Johnson,
Secretary of the Board.

[FR Doc. 05–9318 Filed 5–9–05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6210-01-P

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Notice of Agency Information Collection Activities Regarding a Pilot Study Pursuant to Section 319 of the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003

AGENCY: Federal Trade Commission.

ACTION: Notice and request for comment.

SUMMARY: The information collection requirements described below have been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”) for review, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (“PRA”). The Federal Trade Commission (the “Commission” or “FTC”) is seeking public comments on its proposal to conduct a pilot study in connection with Section 319 of the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003 (“FACT Act” or the “Act”).

DATES: Public comments must be received on or before June 9, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to the “Accuracy Pilot Study: Paperwork Comment (FTC file no. P044804)” to facilitate the organization of the comments. A comment filed in paper form should include this reference both in the text and on the envelope, and should be mailed or delivered to the following address: Federal Trade Commission/Office of the Secretary, Room H–159 (Annex Y), 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20580. Comments containing confidential material must be filed in paper (rather than electronic) form, and the first page of the document must be clearly labeled “Confidential.”¹ The FTC is requesting that any comment filed in paper form be sent by courier or overnight service, if possible, because U.S. postal mail in the Washington area and at the Commission is subject to delay due to heightened security precautions. Comments filed in electronic form (except comments containing any confidential material) should be sent to the following e-mail box: AccuracyPilotStudy@ftc.gov.

All comments should additionally be submitted to: Office of Management and Budget, Attention: Desk Officer for the Federal Trade Commission. Comments should be submitted via facsimile to (202) 395–6974 because U.S. Postal Mail

¹ Commission Rule 4.2(d), 16 CFR 4.2(d). The comment must be accompanied by an explicit request for confidential treatment, including the factual and legal basis for the request, and must identify the specific portions of the comment to be withheld from the public record. The request will be granted or denied by the Commission’s General Counsel, consistent with applicable law and the public interest. See Commission Rule 4.9(c), 16 CFR 4.9(c).