

(iii) Information, the disclosure of which could seriously affect the financial condition of any depository institution.

(2) If an applicant requests confidential treatment for information that the FDIC does not consider to be confidential, the FDIC may include that information in the public file after notifying the applicant. On its own initiative, the FDIC may determine that certain information should be treated as confidential and withhold that information from the public file.

(c) *FOIA requests.* A written request for information withheld from the public file, or copies of the public file following closure of the file 180 days after final disposition, should be submitted pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and part 309 of this chapter to the FDIC, Attn: FOIA/Privacy Group, Legal Division, 550 17th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20429.

§ 303.9 Comments.

(a) *Submission of comments.* For filings subject to a public notice requirement, any person may submit comments to the appropriate FDIC regional director during the comment period.

(b) *Comment period—(1) General.* Consult appropriate subparts of this part for the comment period applicable to a particular filing.

(2) *Extension.* The FDIC may extend or reopen the comment period if:

(i) The applicant fails to file all required information on a timely basis to permit review by the public or makes a request for confidential treatment not granted by the FDIC that delays the public availability of that information;

(ii) Any person requesting an extension of time satisfactorily demonstrates to the FDIC that additional time is necessary to develop factual information that the FDIC determines may materially affect the application; or

(iii) The FDIC determines that other good cause exists.

(3) *Solicitation of comments.* Whenever appropriate, the appropriate regional director may solicit comments from any person or institution which might have an interest in or be affected by the pending filing.

(4) *Applicant response.* The FDIC will provide copies of all comments received to the applicant and may give the applicant an opportunity to respond.

§ 303.10 Hearings and other meetings.

(a) *Matters covered.* This section covers hearings and other proceedings in connection with filings and determinations for or by:

(1) Deposit insurance by a proposed new depository institution or operating non-insured institution;

(2) An insured state nonmember bank to establish a domestic branch or to relocate a main office or domestic branch;

(3) Relocation of an insured branch of a foreign bank;

(4)(i) Merger transaction which requires the FDIC's prior approval under the Bank Merger Act (12 U.S.C. 1828(c));

(ii) Except as otherwise expressly provided, the provisions of this § 303.10 shall not be applicable to any proposed merger transaction which the FDIC Board of Directors determines must be acted upon immediately to prevent the probable failure of one of the institutions involved, or must be handled with expeditious action due to an existing emergency condition, as permitted by the Bank Merger Act (12 U.S.C. 1828(c)(6));

(5) Nullification of a decision on a filing; and

(6) Any other purpose or matter which the FDIC Board of Directors in its sole discretion deems appropriate.

(b) *Hearing requests.* (1) Any person may submit a written request for a hearing on a filing:

(i) To the appropriate regional director before the end of the comment period; or

(ii) To the appropriate regional director, pursuant to a notice to nullify a decision on a filing issued pursuant to § 303.11(g)(2)(i) or (ii).

(2) The request must describe the nature of the issues or facts to be presented and the reasons why written submissions would be insufficient to make an adequate presentation of those issues or facts to the FDIC. A person requesting a hearing shall simultaneously submit a copy of the request to the applicant.

(c) *Action on a hearing request.* The appropriate regional director, after consultation with the Legal Division, may grant or deny a request for a hearing and may limit the issues that he or she deems relevant or material. The FDIC generally grants a hearing request only if it determines that written submissions would be insufficient or that a hearing otherwise would be in the public interest.

(d) *Denial of a hearing request.* If the appropriate regional director, after consultation with the Legal Division, denies a hearing request, he or she shall notify the person requesting the hearing of the reason for the denial. A decision to deny a hearing request shall be a final agency determination and is not appealable.

(e) *FDIC procedures prior to the hearing—(1) Notice of hearing.* The FDIC shall issue a notice of hearing if it grants a request for a hearing or orders a hearing because it is in the public interest. The notice of hearing shall state the subject and date of the filing, the time and place of the hearing, and the issues to be addressed. The FDIC shall send a copy of the notice of hearing to the applicant, to the person requesting the hearing, and to anyone else requesting a copy.

(2) The presiding officer shall be the regional director or designee or such other person as may be named by the Board or the Director. The presiding officer is responsible for conducting the hearing and determining all procedural questions not governed by this section.

(f) *Participation in the hearing.* Any person who wishes to appear (participant) shall notify the appropriate regional director of his or her intent to participate in the hearing no later than 10 days from the date that the FDIC issues the Notice of Hearing. At least 5 days before the hearing, each participant shall submit to the appropriate regional director, as well as to the applicant and any other person as required by the FDIC, the names of witnesses, a statement describing the proposed testimony of each witness, and one copy of each exhibit the participant intends to present.

(g) *Transcripts.* The FDIC shall arrange for a hearing transcript. The per-

son requesting the hearing and the applicant each shall bear the cost of one copy of the transcript for his or her use unless such cost is waived by the presiding officer and incurred by the FDIC.

(h) *Conduct of the hearing—(1) Presentations.* Subject to the rulings of the presiding officer, the applicant and participants may make opening and closing statements and present and examine witnesses, material, and data.

(2) *Information submitted.* Any person presenting material shall furnish one copy to the FDIC, one copy to the applicant, and one copy to each participant.

(3) *Laws not applicable to hearings.* The Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 551 *et seq.*), the Federal Rules of Evidence (28 U.S.C. Appendix), the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (28 U.S.C. Rule 1 *et seq.*), and the FDIC's Rules of Practice and Procedure (12 CFR part 308) do not govern hearings under this §303.10.

(i) *Closing the hearing record.* At the applicant's or any participant's request, or at the FDIC's discretion, the FDIC may keep the hearing record open for up to 10 days following the FDIC's receipt of the transcript. The FDIC shall resume processing the filing after the record closes.

(j) *Disposition and notice thereof.* The presiding officer shall make a recommendation to the FDIC within 20 days following the date the hearing and record on the proceeding are closed. The FDIC shall notify the applicant and all participants of the final disposition of a filing and shall provide a statement of the reasons for the final disposition.

(k) *Computation of time.* In computing periods of time under this section, the provisions of §308.12 of the FDIC's Rules of Practice and Procedure (12 CFR 308.12) shall apply.

(l) *Informal proceedings.* The FDIC may arrange for an informal proceeding with an applicant and other interested parties in connection with a filing, either upon receipt of a written request for such a meeting made during the comment period, or upon the FDIC's own initiative. No later than 10 days prior to an informal proceeding, the appropriate regional director shall

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notify the applicant and each person who requested a hearing or oral presentation of the date, time, and place of the proceeding. The proceeding may assume any form, including a meeting with FDIC representatives at which participants will be asked to present their views orally. The regional director may hold separate meetings with each of the participants.

(m) *Authority retained by FDIC Board of Directors to modify procedures.* The FDIC Board of Directors may delegate authority by resolution on a case-by-case basis to the presiding officer to adopt different procedures in individual matters and on such terms and conditions as the Board of Directors determines in its discretion. The resolution shall be made available for public inspection and copying in the Office of the General Counsel, Executive Secretary Section under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2)).

§ 303.11 Decisions.

(a) *General procedures.* The FDIC may approve, conditionally approve, deny, or not object to a filing after appropriate review and consideration of the record. The FDIC will promptly notify the applicant and any person who makes a written request of the final disposition of a filing. If the FDIC denies a filing, the FDIC will immediately notify the applicant in writing of the reasons for the denial.

(b) *Authority retained by FDIC Board of Directors to modify procedures.* In acting on any filing under this part, the FDIC Board of Directors may by resolution adopt procedures which differ from those contained in this part when it deems it necessary or in the public interest to do so. The resolution shall be made available for public inspection and copying in the Office of the General Counsel, Executive Secretary Section under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2)).

(c) *Expedited processing.* (1) A filing submitted by an eligible depository institution as defined in §303.2(r) will receive expedited processing as specified in the appropriate subparts of this part unless the FDIC determines to remove the filing from expedited processing for any of the reasons set forth in paragraph (c)(2) of this section. Except for

filings made pursuant to subpart J (International Banking), expedited processing will not be available for any filing that the appropriate regional director does not have delegated authority to approve.

(2) *Removal of filing from expedited processing.* The FDIC may remove a filing from expedited processing at any time prior to final disposition if:

(i) For filings subject to public notice under §303.7, an adverse comment is received that warrants additional investigation or review;

(ii) For filings subject to evaluation of CRA performance under §303.5, a CRA protest is received that warrants additional investigation or review, or the appropriate regional director determines that the filing presents a significant CRA or compliance concern;

(iii) For any filing, the appropriate regional director determines that the filing presents a significant supervisory concern, or raises a significant legal or policy issue; or

(iv) For any filing, the appropriate regional director determines that other good cause exists for removal.

(3) For purposes of this section, a significant CRA concern includes, but is not limited to, a determination by the appropriate regional director that, although a depository institution may have an institution-wide rating of satisfactory or better, a depository institution's CRA rating is less than satisfactory in a state or multi-state metropolitan statistical area, or a depository institution's CRA performance is less than satisfactory in a metropolitan statistical area as defined in 12 CFR 345.12 (MSA) or in the non-MSA portion of a state in which it seeks to expand through approval of an application for a deposit facility as defined in 12 U.S.C. 2902(3).

(4) If the FDIC determines that it is necessary to remove a filing from expedited processing pursuant to paragraph (c)(2) of this section, the FDIC promptly will provide the applicant with a written explanation

(d) *Multiple transactions.* If the FDIC is considering related transactions, some or all of which have been granted expedited processing, then the longest processing time for any of the related