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OCC Agreements with State Insurance Departments
will Benefit Consumers

The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) and state insurance regulators today expanded their efforts to share information concerning customer complaints that may arise in connection with sales of insurance by banks. The OCC and the insurance departments of eight states agreed to share information about consumer complaints relating to sales of insurance products in these eight states by national banking companies. The eight agreements between the OCC and the individual state insurance departments also call for the agencies to communicate with each other on matters of common interest, such as regulatory and policy initiatives.

The OCC signed separate agreements with the insurance departments of Delaware, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, North Dakota, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. The "Agreements in Principle" result from discussions between the OCC and the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC). Earlier today, at its 1999 Summer National Meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, the NAIC approved the model agreement on which these eight agreements are based.

"The OCC and state insurance departments share a common interest in insurance sales activities by national banks," said Comptroller John D. Hawke, Jr. "We welcome the agreements to further cooperative efforts and communication between the OCC and these state insurance officials to enhance consumer protection and assure compliance with appropriate insurance sales standards."

The agreement calls for the OCC to forward to the insurance departments a copy of any complaint that it receives relating to the sale of insurance products in the state by a national banking company. The insurance departments will forward a copy of any complaint they receive involving a national banking company to the OCC. The complaints will be forwarded to the other agency as soon as practicable after receipt of the complaint. Except for a legitimate regulatory or supervisory purpose, confidentiality of all shared information will be maintained.

"We are pleased that eight additional states have entered into these cooperative agreements with the OCC," said Julie L. Williams, OCC Chief Counsel. "We look forward to continuing and expanding cooperative efforts with the NAIC and to entering into similar agreements with other states."

Samuel P. Golden, OCC Ombudsman, signed the agreements on behalf of the OCC. The Customer Assistance Group, headed by Mr. Golden, will administer the implementation of the agreements with

the insurance departments.

The OCC now has agreements with nine states. The OCC and the Oklahoma Insurance Department signed a similar agreement in December 1998.

These agreements do not restrict, enlarge, or otherwise modify any of the respective agency's jurisdictions.

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The OCC charters, regulates and examines approximately 2,600 national banks and 66 federal branches and agencies of foreign banks in the United States, accounting for 58 percent of the nation's banking assets. Its mission is to ensure a safe, sound and competitive national banking system that supports the citizens, communities and economy of the United States.