



DIVISION OF
CORPORATION FINANCE

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

February 26, 2018

Blake Liggio
Goodwin Procter LLP
bliggio@goodwinlaw.com

Re: Assembly Biosciences, Inc.
Incoming letter dated January 29, 2018

Dear Mr. Liggio:

This letter is in response to your correspondence dated January 29, 2018 concerning the shareholder proposal (the "Proposal") submitted to Assembly Biosciences, Inc. (the "Company") by James McRitchie for inclusion in the Company's proxy materials for its upcoming annual meeting of security holders. Copies of all of the correspondence on which this response is based will be made available on our website at <http://www.sec.gov/divisions/corpfin/cf-noaction/14a-8.shtml>. For your reference, a brief discussion of the Division's informal procedures regarding shareholder proposals is also available at the same website address.

Sincerely,

Matt S. McNair
Senior Special Counsel

Enclosure

cc: John Chevedden

February 26, 2018

Response of the Office of Chief Counsel
Division of Corporation Finance

Re: Assembly Biosciences, Inc.
Incoming letter dated January 29, 2018

The Proposal asks the board to provide proxy access with the procedures and criteria set forth in the Proposal.

There appears to be some basis for your view that the Company may exclude the Proposal under rule 14a-8(i)(10). We note your representation that the board has adopted a proxy access bylaw that addresses the Proposal's essential objective. Accordingly, we will not recommend enforcement action to the Commission if the Company omits the Proposal from its proxy materials in reliance on rule 14a-8(i)(10).

Sincerely,

Evan S. Jacobson
Special Counsel

DIVISION OF CORPORATION FINANCE
INFORMAL PROCEDURES REGARDING SHAREHOLDER PROPOSALS

The Division of Corporation Finance believes that its responsibility with respect to matters arising under Rule 14a-8 [17 CFR 240.14a-8], as with other matters under the proxy rules, is to aid those who must comply with the rule by offering informal advice and suggestions and to determine, initially, whether or not it may be appropriate in a particular matter to recommend enforcement action to the Commission. In connection with a shareholder proposal under Rule 14a-8, the Division's staff considers the information furnished to it by the company in support of its intention to exclude the proposal from the company's proxy materials, as well as any information furnished by the proponent or the proponent's representative.

Although Rule 14a-8(k) does not require any communications from shareholders to the Commission's staff, the staff will always consider information concerning alleged violations of the statutes and rules administered by the Commission, including arguments as to whether or not activities proposed to be taken would violate the statute or rule involved. The receipt by the staff of such information, however, should not be construed as changing the staff's informal procedures and proxy review into a formal or adversarial procedure.

It is important to note that the staff's no-action responses to Rule 14a-8(j) submissions reflect only informal views. The determinations reached in these no-action letters do not and cannot adjudicate the merits of a company's position with respect to the proposal. Only a court such as a U.S. District Court can decide whether a company is obligated to include shareholder proposals in its proxy materials. Accordingly, a discretionary determination not to recommend or take Commission enforcement action does not preclude a proponent, or any shareholder of a company, from pursuing any rights he or she may have against the company in court, should the company's management omit the proposal from the company's proxy materials.

January 29, 2018

VIA E-MAIL (shareholderproposals@sec.gov)

Office of Chief Counsel
Division of Corporation Finance
U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
100 F Street, NE
Washington, DC 20549

Re: Assembly Biosciences, Inc. - Omission of Stockholder Proposal of James McRitchie (John Chevedden as proxy)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of our client, Assembly Biosciences, Inc., a Delaware corporation (the “**Company**”), we hereby respectfully request confirmation that the staff (the “**Staff**”) of the Division of Corporation Finance of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (the “**Commission**”) will not recommend enforcement action to the Commission if, in reliance on Rule 14a-8 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the Company omits from its proxy statement and form of proxy for the 2018 annual meeting of its stockholders (the “**2018 Proxy Materials**”) the stockholder proposal and supporting statement attached hereto as **Exhibit A** (the “**Stockholder Proposal**”) submitted by James McRitchie (the “**Proponent**”), with John Chevedden designated as proxy, for inclusion in the 2018 Proxy Materials, which was dated as of December 6, 2017 and received by the Company on December 7, 2017 via email. Copies of other correspondence with the Proponent regarding the Stockholder Proposal are attached hereto as **Exhibit B**. The Company has not received any other correspondence relating to the Stockholder Proposal.

In accordance with Rule 14a-8(j), we are:

- submitting this letter not later than 80 days prior to the date on which the Company intends to file definitive 2018 Proxy Materials; and
- simultaneously providing a copy of this letter and its exhibits to the Proponent, thereby notifying the Proponent of the Company’s intention to exclude the Stockholder Proposal from its 2018 Proxy Materials.

Pursuant to Staff Legal Bulletin No. 14D (“**SLB 14D**”), we are submitting this request for no-action relief under Rule 14a-8 by use of the Commission email address, shareholderproposals@sec.gov (in lieu of providing six additional copies of this letter pursuant to Rule 14a-8(j)), and the undersigned has included his name and telephone number both in this letter and the cover email accompanying this letter.



Rule 14a-8(k) and SLB 14D provide that stockholder proponents are required to send companies a copy of any correspondence that the proponents elect to submit to the Commission or the Staff. Accordingly, the Company is taking this opportunity to inform the Proponent that if the Proponent elects to submit additional correspondence to the Commission or the Staff with respect to the Stockholder Proposal, a copy of that correspondence should concurrently be furnished to the undersigned on behalf of the Company pursuant to Rule 14a-8(k) and SLB 14D.

Proposal

On December 7, 2017, the Company received the Stockholder Proposal from the Proponent. The Stockholder Proposal states, in relevant part:

“RESOLVED: Shareholders ask the board of directors to amend its bylaws or other documents, as necessary, to provide proxy access for shareholders as follows:

1. Nominating shareholders or shareholder groups must beneficially own 3% or more of the Company’s outstanding common stock continuously for at least three years and pledge to hold such stock through the annual meeting.
2. Nominators may submit a statement of 500 words or less in support of each nominee to be included in the Company proxy.
3. The number of shareholder-nominated candidates eligible to appear in proxy materials shall be one quarter of the directors then serving or two, whichever is greater.
4. No limitation shall be placed on the number of shareholders that can aggregate their shares to achieve the 3% of Required Stock.
5. No limitation shall be placed on the re-nomination of shareholder nominees by Nominators based on the number or percentage of votes received in any election.
6. The Company shall not require that Nominators pledge to hold stock after the annual meeting if their nominees fail to win election.
7. Loaned securities shall be counted as belonging to a nominating shareholder if the shareholder represents it has the legal right to recall those securities for voting purposes and will hold those securities through the date of the annual meeting.

A complete copy of the Stockholder Proposal is attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

Basis for Exclusion

On behalf of the Company, we respectfully request that the Staff concur in the Company’s view that it may exclude the Stockholder Proposal from its 2018 Proxy Materials pursuant to Rule 14a-8(i)(10) because the Company has substantially implemented the Stockholder Proposal.

On January 24, 2018, the Company filed a Current Report on Form 8-K with the Commission to disclose that its Board of Directors (the “**Board**”) adopted an amendment to its bylaws effective January 24, 2018 (the “**Bylaw Amendment**”) to implement proxy access. As detailed below, Section 16 of Article III was added to the Company’s bylaws to allow for one stockholder or a group of up to 20 stockholders, holding a minimum of 3% of the Company’s outstanding common stock continuously for three years, to nominate and include in the Company’s proxy

materials the greater of two directors or 20% of the directors then serving, provided that the requirements of the bylaws are satisfied. A copy of the Company's amended bylaws is attached hereto as **Exhibit C**.

The Company believes the proxy access provision included in the Company's bylaws satisfies the Stockholder Proposal's essential objective of providing the Company's stockholders a meaningful proxy access right. The Company, therefore, believes that it may exclude the Stockholder Proposal on the basis that the Bylaw Amendment substantially implemented the Stockholder Proposal.

Legal Analysis

A. The Stockholder Proposal May Be Omitted In Reliance on Rule 14a-8(i)(10), as the Bylaw Amendment Substantially Implemented the Essential Objective of the Stockholder Proposal by Offering Meaningful Proxy Access Right to Stockholders.

Pursuant to Rule 14a-8(i)(10), a company may exclude a stockholder proposal if the company has already substantially implemented the proposal. The Staff has stated that "substantial" implementation under the rule does not require implementation in full or exactly as presented by the proponent. *See Commission Release No. 34-40018* (May 21, 1998, n. 30). The Staff noted that a company need not fully effect a stockholder proposal; rather, a company will have substantially implemented a stockholder proposal if the company's "particular policies, practices and procedures compare favorably with the guidelines of the proposal." *Texaco, Inc.* (March 28, 1991). In fact, while the rule was originally interpreted to allow exclusion of a shareholder proposal only when the proposal was "fully effected" by the company, the Commission has revised its approach to the exclusion over time to allow for exclusion of proposals that have been "substantially implemented." *See Commission Release No. 34-19135* (October 14, 1982), *Commission Release No. 34-20091* (August 16, 1983) and *Commission Release No. 34-40018* (May 21, 1998). As such, it is evident that Rule 14a-8(i)(10) does not require a company to implement every detail of a proposal. Further, a company need not implement a proposal in exactly the same manner set forth by the proponent. In *General Motors Corporation*, for example, the company observed that the Staff has not required that a company implement the action requested in a proposal exactly in all details but has been willing to issue no-action letters under the predecessor of Rule 14a-8(i)(10) in situations where the "essential objective" of the proposal had been satisfied. *General Motors Corporation* (March 4, 1996).

Most recently, in *Northern Trust Corporation*, where a virtually identical shareholder proposal was submitted by the same Proponent, the Staff concurred with the subject company and determined that there was a basis for the company to exclude the Proponent's proposal under Rule 14a-8(i)(10), even though the bylaws adopted by the company included several provisions that differed from those included in the Proponent's proposal, including, among other differences, a 20% cap on shareholder nominees and a 20-shareholder limit on group nominations. In particular, the Staff noted that "the board has adopted a proxy access bylaw that addresses the Proposal's essential objective." *See Northern Trust Corporation* (December 28,

2017). Similarly, in *Comcast Corporation* and *JetBlue Airways Corporation*, the Staff concurred in the exclusion of a proxy access proposal in each case, which were both also nearly identical to the Stockholder Proposal and were submitted by the same Proponent, where the companies had already adopted a proxy access bylaw substantially similar to the Bylaw Amendment. See *Comcast Corporation* (February 15, 2017) and *JetBlue Airways Corporation* (January 23, 2018).

The Staff has allowed the exclusion under Rule 14a-8(i)(10) of proxy access proposals where the company adopted a proxy access bylaw that addressed the proposal's "essential objective" in various other instances. See, e.g., *OGE Energy Corp.* (February 24, 2017); *Lincoln National Corporation* (February 9, 2017); *Valley National Bancorp* (December 19, 2016); *Danaher Corporation* (December 19, 2016); *Berry Plastics Group* (December 14, 2016); *General Motors Company* (March 21, 2016).

B. The Bylaw Amendment Substantially Implements the Stockholder Proposal

The Company believes the Bylaw Amendment compares favorably to, and addresses the essential objective of, the Stockholder Proposal, as illustrated below.

1. Ownership Threshold; Holding Period

The Stockholder Proposal. The Stockholder Proposal would require nominating stockholders to beneficially own 3% or more of the Company's outstanding common stock continuously for at least three years before submitting their nomination and to hold such common stock through the Company's annual meeting.

The Bylaw Amendment. Article III, Section 16(c) of the Company's bylaws requires that an Eligible Stockholder (as defined below) must have continuously owned at least 3% or more of the Company's outstanding common stock (the "**Required Shares**") for a three-year period preceding (the "**Minimum Holding Period**") and including the date the notice of proxy access nomination is delivered to, or mailed to and received by, the Secretary of the Company and the record date for the meeting and must continue to own at least the Required Shares through the date of the annual meeting. Article III, Section 16(c)(i) of the Company's bylaws defines an "**Eligible Stockholder**" as a stockholder, or group of up to twenty stockholders, that satisfies the requirements of Article III, Section 16 of the Company's bylaws.

2. Supporting Statement

The Stockholder Proposal. The Stockholder Proposal would permit nominating stockholders to submit a statement of 500 words or less in support of each of their nominees.

The Bylaw Amendment. Article III, Section 16(a) of the Company's bylaws provides that an Eligible Stockholder may submit a written statement for inclusion in the Company's proxy statement in support of the Eligible Stockholder-nominated candidate's election, provided that such statement does not exceed 500 words.

3. *Number of Nominees*

The Stockholder Proposal. The Stockholder Proposal would set the number of stockholder-nominated candidates eligible to appear in the proxy materials to be the greater of one quarter of the directors then serving or two.

The Bylaw Amendment. Article III, Section 16(b) of the Company's bylaws provides that the number of nominees nominated by all Eligible Stockholders shall not exceed the greater of 2 directors or 20% of the total number of directors then serving on the last day on which a notice of proxy access nomination may be submitted (rounded down to the nearest whole number).

This provision is consistent with the essential objective of implementing a proxy access procedure that would ensure meaningful proxy access rights for the Company's shareholders. The provision operates solely to limit the number of proxy access candidates that may appear on the Company's ballot. The provision does not disqualify any shareholder or members of a nominating group from using proxy access and, in addition, does not interfere with state law nomination rights and does not introduce complexity to the nominating process.

This provision was specifically addressed in numerous proxy access proposal no-action requests that have already been considered, and favorably decided, by the Staff. Notably, in *Newell Rubbermaid Inc.*, the Staff considered a request under Rule 14a-8(i)(10) to exclude a proxy access shareholder proposal as substantially implemented, where the company had adopted proxy access with a 20% board limitation, and the proposal specifically requested that the "number of shareholder-nominated candidates appearing in proxy materials should not exceed one quarter of directors then serving or two, whichever is greater." *Newell Rubbermaid Inc.* (March 9, 2016). In that case, the Staff concurred that the company had substantially implemented the proposal under the standards of Rule 14a-8(i)(10) and noted that the company's proxy access bylaw addressed the proposal's "essential objective," notwithstanding the fact that the company's proxy access bylaw contained a limitation that proxy access candidates may not exceed 20% of board seats. *See also, JetBlue Airways Corporation* (January 23, 2018), *Northern Trust Corporation* (December 28, 2017); *OGE Energy Corp.* (February 24, 2017); *Comcast Corporation* (February 15, 2017); *Lincoln National Corporation* (February 9, 2017); *Leidos Holdings, Inc.* (May 4, 2016); *Equinix, Inc.* (April 7, 2016); *Omnicom Group Inc.* (March 22, 2016); *General Motors Company* (March 21, 2016); *Quest Diagnostics Inc.* (March 17, 2016); *General Dynamics Corp.* (February 12, 2016); *UnitedHealth Group, Inc.* (February 12, 2016); *Western Union Company* (February 12, 2016).

Furthermore, given the Company's current Board size of eight members, under both the 20% threshold in the Bylaw Amendment and the 25% threshold in the Stockholder Proposal, the maximum number of proxy access nominees would be two directors. Given the Company's Board size, there is no practical difference in outcome between the Bylaw Amendment and the Stockholder Proposal.

Therefore, the Company believes that it has already substantially implemented this aspect of the Stockholder Proposal.

4. *Aggregation of Stockholders to Satisfy Ownership Threshold*

The Stockholder Proposal. The Stockholder Proposal would not impose a limitation on the number of stockholders that can aggregate their shares for purpose of satisfying the 3% ownership threshold to submit a proxy access nomination.

The Bylaw Amendment. Article III, Section 16(a) of the Company's bylaws permits any Eligible Stockholder who meets the Minimum Holding Period and the Required Ownership Percentage, or a group of up to 20 Eligible Stockholders, to submit a notice of nomination to be included in the Company's proxy materials.

The Company understands that a 20 stockholder aggregation limit may impose some burdens on smaller stockholders seeking to form a group and aggregate share ownership. Recognizing that, the Company sought to strike an informed balance between providing stockholders with a fair and reasonable opportunity to nominate director candidates while at the same time avoiding a process that could impose an undue burden and expense on the Company in connection with administering an annual proxy solicitation. The Company's 20-stockholder aggregation limit took into account the demographics of its stockholder base. As of December 31, 2017, the Company had ten stockholders with holdings in excess of 3%, without aggregation, and five of these stockholders have held those securities continuously for three years. Together these ten stockholders own approximately 62.1% of the Company's outstanding shares of common stock.

After the ten largest stockholders, the Company's next ten largest stockholders own approximately 15.5%. Together, the Company's top 20 stockholders hold approximately 77.1% of the Company's outstanding shares of common stock. In addition, there is nothing to prevent stockholders owning a smaller number of shares from combining with other larger stockholders to form a stockholder nomination group. As a result, under the Company's bylaws, there are multiple ways in which stockholders can combine their share ownership to reach 3%. The 20-stockholder aggregation limit does not preclude this right.

Furthermore, this type of provision was specifically addressed in numerous proxy access proposal no-action requests that have already been considered, and favorably decided, by the Staff. Specifically, the Staff has considered requests under Rule 14a-8(i)(10) to exclude proxy access shareholder proposals as substantially implemented where companies had adopted proxy access with a 20-shareholder nominating group limitation, and the proposals specifically requested proxy access for an unrestricted number of shareholders forming a group. In numerous cases, the Staff concurred that the company had substantially implemented the proposal under the standards of Rule 14a-8(i)(10) and noted that the company's proxy access bylaw addressed the proposal's "essential objective," notwithstanding that the company's proxy access bylaw contained a 20-shareholder group aggregation provision. *See, e.g., JetBlue Airways Corporation* (January 23, 2018), *Northern Trust Corporation* (December 28, 2017); *OGE Energy Corp.* (February 24, 2017); *Lincoln National Corporation* (February 9, 2017); *Lockheed Martin Corporation* (December 19, 2016); *Valley National Bancorp* (December 19, 2016); *Danaher Corporation* (December 19, 2016); *Berry Plastics Group* (December 14, 2016); *Cisco Systems, Inc.* (September 27, 2016); *WD-40 Company* (September 27, 2016); *Leidos*

Holdings, Inc. (May 4, 2016); *Equinix, Inc.* (April 7, 2016); *Omnicom Group Inc.* (March 22, 2016); *General Motors Company* (March 21, 2016); *Quest Diagnostics Inc.* (March 17, 2016); *Chemed Corporation* (March 9, 2016); *Amazon.com Inc.* (March 3, 2016); *McGraw Hill Financial, Inc.* (March 3, 2016); *Alaska Air Group, Inc.* (February 12, 2016); *Baxter International Inc.* (February 12, 2016); *Capital One Financial Corporation* (February 12, 2016); *The Dun & Bradstreet Corporation* (February 12, 2016); *General Dynamics Corporation* (February 12, 2016); *Huntington Ingalls Industries, Inc.* (February 12, 2016); *Illinois Tool Work Inc.* (February 12, 2016); *Northrop Grumman Corporation* (February 12, 2016); *PPG Industries, Inc.* (February 12, 2016); *Science Applications International Corporation* (February 12, 2016); *Target Corporation* (February 12, 2016); *Time Warner Inc.* (February 12, 2016); *UnitedHealth Group, Inc.* (February 12, 2016).

5. *Re-nominations*

The Stockholder Proposal. The Stockholder Proposal would not impose a limitation on the re-nomination of stockholder nominees based on the number or percentage of votes received in any election.

The Bylaw Amendment. Article III, Section 16(e) of the By-Law Amendment provides that the Company may omit from its proxy statement any proxy access nominee who, and that no vote on such shareholder nominee will occur if, such nominee was nominated for election to the Board pursuant to proxy access at one of the Company's two preceding annual meetings of shareholders and either withdrew from or became ineligible for election at such annual meeting, or received less than 25% of the votes that all shareholders are entitled to cast in favor of such nominee's election.

The Staff has previously permitted exclusion of a number of similar stockholder proposals providing for no restrictions on re-nomination on the grounds of substantial implementation where companies had adopted proxy access with a procedural limitation with respect to re-nomination, even though such procedural limitations and restrictions were not contemplated by the proponent's proposal. *See, e.g., JetBlue Airways Corporation* (January 23, 2018), *Northern Trust Corporation* (December 28, 2017); *Comcast Corporation* (February 15, 2017); *Lincoln National Corporation* (February 9, 2017); *Berry Plastics Group* (December 14, 2016); *WD-40 Company* (September 27, 2016); *Leidos Holdings, Inc.* (May 4, 2016); *International Paper Company* (March 3, 2016); *Sempra Energy* (March 3, 2016); *Fluor Corporation* (March 3, 2016); *Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co.* (February 26, 2016); *United Continental Holdings, Inc.* (February 26, 2016); *Alaska Air Group, Inc.* (February 12, 2016); *Baxter International Inc.* (February 12, 2016); *Capital One Financial Corporation* (February 12, 2016); *General Dynamics Corporation* (February 12, 2016); *Science Applications International Corporation* (February 12, 2016); *Target Corporation* (February 12, 2016); *The Dun & Bradstreet Corporation* (February 12, 2016); *Time Warner Inc.* (February 12, 2016); *UnitedHealth Group, Inc.* (February 12, 2016); *Western Union Company* (February 12, 2016).

6. *Stockholder Pledge to Hold Required Shares*

The Stockholder Proposal. The Stockholder Proposal would not require that Eligible Stockholders pledge to hold stock after the annual meeting if their nominees fail to win election.

The Bylaw Amendment. Article III, Section 16(d)(i)(B) of the Company's bylaws provides that an Eligible Stockholder must provide a statement as to the Eligible Stockholder's present intent to maintain qualifying ownership of the Required Shares through the date of the annual meeting and does not contain any post-annual meeting holding requirements. As such, this provision of the Bylaw Amendment compares favorably to the Stockholder Proposal as it does not require that the Eligible Stockholder specifically pledge to hold shares of common stock after the annual meeting.

7. *Loaned Shares*

The Stockholder Proposal. The Stockholder Proposal would provide that loaned securities are to be counted as belonging to an Eligible Stockholder if the Eligible Stockholder represents that it has the legal right to recall those securities for voting purposes and will hold those securities through the date of the annual meeting.

The Bylaw Amendment. Article III, Section 16(c)(iv) of the Company's bylaws states that ownership of shares shall be deemed to continue during any period in which the Eligible Stockholder has loaned such shares, provided that the Eligible Stockholder has the power to recall such loaned shares on not more than five business days' notice.

Conclusion

The Company believes that it has substantially implemented the Stockholder Proposal as the Bylaw Amendment provides for meaningful proxy access in a manner that meets the essential objective of the Stockholder Proposal. Accordingly, consistent with Rule 14a-8(i)(10), the minor differences between the Stockholder Proposal and the Bylaw Amendment should not preclude the Company from excluding the Stockholder Proposal from its 2018 Proxy Materials on the basis that the Stockholder Proposal has been substantially implemented.

For the reasons discussed above, the Company believes that it may properly omit the Stockholder Proposal from its 2018 Proxy Materials in reliance on Rule 14a-8(i)(10). As such, we respectfully request that the Staff concur with the Company's view and not recommend enforcement action to the Commission if the Company omits the Stockholder Proposal from its 2018 Proxy Materials.



If the Staff wishes to discuss the responses provided, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (617) 570-1622.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Blake Liggio'.

Blake Liggio

CC: John Chevedden (*via e-mail*, *** *and FedEx overnight*)
Elizabeth H. Lacy, General Counsel, Assembly Biosciences, Inc. (*via e-mail*)



Exhibit A

From: ***
To: [Elizabeth Lacy](#)
Subject: Rule 14a-8 Proposal (ASMB)``
Date: Thursday, December 07, 2017 11:31:03 PM
Attachments: [CCE07122017_6.pdf](#)

Dear Ms. Lacy,
Please see the attached rule 14a-8 proposal to improve corporate governance and enhance long-term shareholder value at de minimis up-front cost.
Sincerely,
John Chevedden

Elizabeth H. Lacy
Corporate Secretary
Assembly Biosciences, Inc.
11711 N. Meridian Street
Suite 310
Carmel, IN 46032
Phone: 1-855-971-4467
elizabeth@assemblybio.com

Dear Corporate Secretary,

I am pleased to be a shareholder in Assembly Biosciences, Inc., (ASMB) and appreciate the leadership our company has shown in many areas. However, I am disappointed that ASMB still lags in several areas of corporate governance, such as utilizing a plurality standard to elect uncontested directors, allowing no shareholder action to be taken by written consent or special meetings and not providing for proxy access. Reform in these areas could unlock additional unrealized potential.

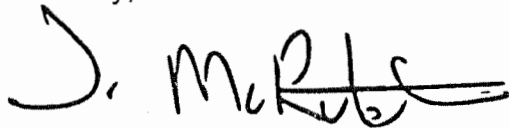
I am submitting a shareholder proposal to *provide for proxy access* for a vote at the next annual shareholder meeting. The proposal meets all Rule 14a-8 requirements, including the continuous ownership of the required stock value for over a year. I pledge to continue to hold the required amount of stock until after the date of the next shareholder meeting. My submitted format, with the shareholder-supplied emphasis, is intended to be used for definitive proxy publication.

This letter confirms that I am delegating John Chevedden to act as my agent regarding this Rule 14a-8 proposal, including its submission, negotiations and/or modification, and presentation at the forthcoming shareholder meeting. Please direct all future communications regarding my rule 14a-8 proposal to John Chevedden

to facilitate prompt communication. Please identify me as the proponent of the proposal exclusively.

Your consideration and the consideration of the Board of Directors is appreciated in responding to this proposal. Please acknowledge receipt of my proposal promptly by email to ***

Sincerely,



James McRitchie

December 6, 2017

Date

Proposal [4*] - Shareholder Proxy Access

RESOLVED: Shareholders of Assembly Biosciences, Inc. (“ASMB” or the “Company”) ask the board of directors (the “Board”) to amend its bylaws or other documents, as necessary, to provide proxy access for shareholders as follows:

1. *Nominating shareholders or shareholder groups (“Nominators”) must beneficially own 3% or more of the Company’s outstanding common stock (“Required Stock”) continuously for at least three years and pledge to hold such stock through the annual meeting.*
2. *Nominators may submit a statement not exceeding 500 words in support of each nominee to be included in the Company proxy.*
3. *The number of shareholder-nominated candidates eligible to appear in proxy materials shall be one quarter of the directors then serving or two, whichever is greater.*
4. *No limitation shall be placed on the number of shareholders that can aggregate their shares to achieve the 3% of Required Stock.*
5. *No limitation shall be placed on the re-nomination of shareholder nominees by Nominators based on the number or percentage of votes received in any election.*
6. *The Company shall not require that Nominators pledge to hold stock after the annual meeting if their nominees fail to win election.*
7. *Loaned securities shall be counted as belonging to a nominating shareholder if the shareholder represents it has the legal right to recall those securities for voting purposes and will hold those securities through the date of the annual meeting.*

Supporting Statement: The SEC’s universal proxy access Rule 14a-11 (<https://www.sec.gov/rules/final/2010/33-9136.pdf>) was vacated after a court decision regarding the SEC’s cost-benefit analysis. Therefore, proxy access rights must be established on a company-by-company basis. Subsequently, *Proxy Access in the United States: Revisiting the Proposed SEC Rule* (<http://www.cfapubs.org/doi/pdf/10.2469/ccb.v2014.n9.1>) a cost-benefit analysis by CFA Institute, found proxy access would “benefit both the markets and corporate boardrooms, with little cost or disruption,” raising US market capitalization by up to \$140.3 billion. *Public Versus Private Provision of Governance: The Case of Proxy Access* (<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2635695>) found a 0.5 percent average increase in shareholder value for proxy access targeted firms.

Proxy Access: Best Practices 2017 (http://www.cii.org/files/publications/misc/Proxy_Access_2017_FINAL.pdf) by CII, notes that “while proxy access has gained broad acceptance, some adopting companies have included, or are considering including, provisions that could significantly impair shareholders’ ability to use it.” The report “highlights the best practices CII recommends for implementing proxy access.”

Adoption of bylaws with *all* the requested elements outlined above would help ensure meaningful proxy access is available to shareholders. Similar proposals won an average of 82.5% For, 14.3% Against, and 0.8% Abstain from July 16, 2016 to June 30, 2017, according to Proxy Insight.

Increase Shareholder Value
Vote for Shareholder Proxy Access – Proposal [4*]
[This line and any below are *not* for publication]
Number 4* to be assigned by ASMB

James McRitchie,

sponsors this proposal.

Notes:

This proposal is believed to conform with Staff Legal Bulletin No. 14B (CF), September 15, 2004 including (emphasis added):

Accordingly, going forward, we believe that it would not be appropriate for companies to exclude supporting statement language and/or an entire proposal in reliance on rule 14a-8(l)(3) in the following circumstances:

- the company objects to factual assertions because they are not supported;
- the company objects to factual assertions that, while not materially false or misleading, may be disputed or countered;
- the company objects to factual assertions because those assertions may be interpreted by shareholders in a manner that is unfavorable to the company, its directors, or its officers; and/or
- the company objects to statements because they represent the opinion of the shareholder proponent or a referenced source, but the statements are not identified specifically as such.

We believe that it is appropriate under rule 14a-8 for companies to address these objections in their statements of opposition.

See also: Sun Microsystems, Inc. (July 21, 2005).

The stock supporting this proposal will be held until after the annual meeting and the proposal will be presented at the annual meeting. Please acknowledge this proposal promptly by email



Exhibit B

From: [Elizabeth Lacy](#)
To: ***
Cc: [Elizabeth Lacy](#)
Subject: RE: Rule 14a-8 Proposal (ASMB)``
Date: Thursday, December 14, 2017 8:57:26 PM
Attachments: [ASMB - Notice of Defect \(McRitchie\) -signed.pdf](#)
[SLB 14G.PDF](#)
[Rule 14a-8.pdf](#)
[SLB 14.pdf](#)
[SLB 14B.PDF](#)
[SLB 14F.PDF](#)

Dear Mr. Chevedden:

I have received the shareholder proposal submitted by you on behalf of James McRitchie. Please find attached a Notice of Defect and related information. Please confirm receipt of this email as promptly as possible.

Regards,
Elizabeth

Elizabeth H. Lacy
General Counsel, Vice President of Legal Operations
Assembly Biosciences, Inc.
(317) 975-2699 – direct
(317) 250-7750 - cell

From: ***
Sent: Thursday, December 07, 2017 11:31 PM
To: Elizabeth Lacy <elizabeth@assemblybio.com>
Subject: Rule 14a-8 Proposal (ASMB)``

Dear Ms. Lacy,
Please see the attached rule 14a-8 proposal to improve corporate governance and enhance long-term shareholder value at de minimis up-front cost.
Sincerely,
John Chevedden

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December 14, 2017

By Email ***

John Chevedden

Re: Notice of Defect – Stockholder Proposal

Dear Mr. Chevedden:

On December 7, 2017 (11:31 p.m. (Eastern Time)), we received your email, which transmitted a stockholder proposal (the “Proposal”) proposed by James McRitchie for inclusion in the proxy materials for the 2018 Annual Meeting of Stockholders (the “Annual Meeting”) of Assembly Biosciences, Inc. (the “Company”). Per Mr. McRitchie’s letter that accompanied the Proposal, Mr. McRitchie appointed you as his agent to submit, negotiate, modify and present at the Annual Meeting the Proposal on his behalf. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the submission does not comply with Rule 14a-8 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the “Exchange Act”), and therefore is not eligible for inclusion in our proxy statement for the Annual Meeting. SEC regulations require us to bring this deficiency to your attention.

Rule 14a-8(b) provides that, to be eligible to submit a stockholder proposal, a proponent must have continuously held a minimum of \$2,000 in market value, or 1 %, of the Company’s securities entitled to be voted on the proposal for at least one year prior to the date the proposal is submitted. Mr. McRitchie has not provided any proof that he has continuously held, for the one-year period preceding and including the date the Proposal was submitted to us (December 7, 2017), shares of our common stock having at least \$2,000 in market value or representing at least 1 % of the outstanding shares of our common stock. Furthermore, our records do not list Mr. McRitchie as a record holder of our common stock. Because Mr. McRitchie is not a record holder of our common stock, he may substantiate his ownership in either of two ways:

1. he may provide a written statement from the record holder of the shares of our common stock beneficially owned by him, verifying that, on December 7, 2017, when you submitted the Proposal on his behalf, he had continuously held, for at least one year, the requisite number or value of shares of our common stock; or
2. he may provide a copy of a filed Schedule 13D, Schedule 13G, Form 3, Form 4 or Form 5, or any amendment to any of those documents or updated forms, reflecting ownership of the requisite number or value of shares of our common stock as of or before the date on which the one-year eligibility period began, together with a written statement that he has continuously held the shares for the one-year period as of the date of the statement.

HQ: 11711 N. Meridian Street, Suite 310, Carmel, IN 46032
R&D: 409 Illinois St., San Francisco, CA 94158 and 93 Shennecossett Rd., Groton, CT 06340
www.assemblybio.com | info@assemblybio.com



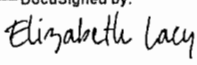
John Chevedden
December 14, 2017
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The staff of the SEC's Division of Corporation Finance has provided guidance to assist companies and stockholders with complying with Rule 14a-8(b)'s eligibility criteria. This guidance, contained in Staff Legal Bulletin No. 14F (October 18, 2011) and Staff Legal Bulletin No. 14G (October 16, 2012), clarifies that proof of ownership for Rule 14a-8(b) purposes must be provided by the "record holder" of the securities, which is either the person or entity listed on the Company's stock records as the owner of the securities or a Depository Trust Company ("DTC") participant (or an affiliate of a DTC participant). A proponent who is not a record owner must therefore obtain the required written statement from the DTC participant through which the proponent's securities are held. If a proponent is not certain whether its broker or bank is a DTC participant, the proponent may check the DTC's participant list, which is currently available on the Internet at <http://www.dtcc.com/~media/Files/Downloads/client-center/DTC/alpha.pdf>. If the broker or bank that holds the proponent's securities is not on DTC's participant list, the proponent will need to obtain proof of ownership from the DTC participant through which its securities are held. If the DTC participant knows the holdings of the proponent's broker or bank, but does not know the proponent's holdings, the proponent may satisfy the proof of ownership requirement by obtaining and submitting two proof of ownership statements verifying that, at the time the proposal was submitted, the required number or value of securities had been continuously held by the proponent for at least one year preceding and including the date of submission of the proposal, with one statement from the proponent's broker or bank confirming the required ownership, and the other statement from the DTC participant confirming the broker or bank's ownership.

For the Proposal to be eligible for inclusion in our proxy materials for the Annual Meeting, the information requested above must be furnished to us electronically or be postmarked no later than 14 calendar days from the date you receive this letter. If the information is not provided, we may exclude the Proposal from our proxy materials pursuant to Rule 14a-8(f). Please address any response to me at Elizabeth H. Lacy, General Counsel, Vice President of Legal Operations and Corporate Secretary, Assembly Biosciences, Inc., 11711 North Meridian St., Suite 310, Carmel, Indiana 46032 or elizabeth@assemblybio.com.

In accordance with SEC Staff Legal Bulletin Nos. 14 and 14B, a copy of Rule 14a-8, including Rule 14a-8(b), is enclosed for your reference. Also enclosed for your reference is a copy of Staff Legal Bulletin Nos. 14F and 14G. Please acknowledge receipt of this letter promptly by email to elizabeth@assemblybio.com.

Very truly yours,

DocuSigned by:

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Elizabeth H. Lacy
General Counsel, Vice President of Legal Operations and Corporate Secretary

Enclosures

**Division of Corporation Finance
Securities and Exchange Commission**

Shareholder Proposals

Staff Legal Bulletin No. 14 (CF)

Action: Publication of CF Staff Legal Bulletin

Date: July 13, 2001

Summary: This staff legal bulletin provides information for companies and shareholders on rule 14a-8 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Supplementary Information: The statements in this legal bulletin represent the views of the Division of Corporation Finance. This bulletin is not a rule, regulation or statement of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Further, the Commission has neither approved nor disapproved its content.

Contact Person: For further information, please contact Jonathan Ingram, Michael Coco, Lillian Cummins or Keir Gumbs at (202) 942-2900.

A. What is the purpose of this bulletin?

The Division of Corporation Finance processes hundreds of rule 14a-8 no-action requests each year. We believe that companies and shareholders may benefit from information that we can provide based on our experience in processing these requests. Therefore, we prepared this bulletin in order to

- explain the rule 14a-8 no-action process, as well as our role in this process;
- provide guidance to companies and shareholders by expressing our views on some issues and questions that commonly arise under rule 14a-8; and
- suggest ways in which both companies and shareholders can facilitate our review of no-action requests.

Because the substance of each proposal and no-action request differs, this bulletin primarily addresses procedural matters that are common to companies and shareholders. However, we also discuss some substantive matters that are of interest to companies and shareholders alike.

We structured this bulletin in a question and answer format so that it is easier to understand and we can more easily respond to inquiries regarding its contents. The references to “we,” “our” and “us” are to the Division of Corporation Finance. You can find a copy of rule 14a-8 in Release No. 34-40018, dated May 21, 1998, which is located on the Commission’s website at www.sec.gov/rules/final/34-40018.htm.

B. Rule 14a-8 and the no-action process.

1. What is rule 14a-8?

Rule 14a-8 provides an opportunity for a shareholder owning a relatively small amount of a company’s securities to have his or her proposal placed alongside management’s proposals in that company’s proxy materials for presentation to a vote at an annual or special meeting of shareholders. It has become increasingly popular because it provides an avenue for communication between shareholders and companies, as well as among shareholders themselves. The rule generally requires the company to include the proposal unless the shareholder has not complied with the rule’s procedural requirements or the proposal falls within one of the 13 substantive bases for exclusion described in the table below.

Substantive Basis	Description
Rule 14a-8(i)(1)	The proposal is not a proper subject for action by shareholders under the laws of the jurisdiction of the company’s organization.
Rule 14a-8(i)(2)	The proposal would, if implemented, cause the company to violate any state, federal or foreign law to which it is subject.
Rule 14a-8(i)(3)	The proposal or supporting statement is contrary to any of the Commission's proxy rules, including rule 14a-9, which prohibits materially false or misleading statements in proxy soliciting materials.
Rule 14a-8(i)(4)	The proposal relates to the redress of a personal claim or grievance against the company or any other person, or is designed to result in a benefit to the shareholder, or to further a personal interest, which is not shared by the other shareholders at large.

Rule 14a-8(i)(5)	The proposal relates to operations that account for less than 5% of the company's total assets at the end of its most recent fiscal year, and for less than 5% of its net earnings and gross sales for its most recent fiscal year, and is not otherwise significantly related to the company's business.
Rule 14a-8(i)(6)	The company would lack the power or authority to implement the proposal.
Rule 14a-8(i)(7)	The proposal deals with a matter relating to the company's ordinary business operations.
Rule 14a-8(i)(8)	The proposal relates to an election for membership on the company's board of directors or analogous governing body.
Rule 14a-8(i)(9)	The proposal directly conflicts with one of the company's own proposals to be submitted to shareholders at the same meeting.
Rule 14a-8(i)(10)	The company has already substantially implemented the proposal.
Rule 14a-8(i)(11)	The proposal substantially duplicates another proposal previously submitted to the company by another shareholder that will be included in the company's proxy materials for the same meeting.
Rule 14a-8(i)(12)	The proposal deals with substantially the same subject matter as another proposal or proposals that previously has or have been included in the company's proxy materials within a specified time frame and did not receive a specified percentage of the vote. Please refer to questions and answers F.2, F.3 and F.4 for more complete descriptions of this basis.
Rule 14a-8(i)(13)	The proposal relates to specific amounts of cash or stock dividends.

2. How does rule 14a-8 operate?

The rule operates as follows:

- the shareholder must provide a copy of his or her proposal to the company by the deadline imposed by the rule;
- if the company intends to exclude the proposal from its proxy materials, it must submit its reason(s) for doing so to the Commission and simultaneously provide the shareholder with a copy of that submission. This submission to the Commission of reasons for excluding the proposal is commonly referred to as a no-action request;
- the shareholder may, but is not required to, submit a reply to us with a copy to the company; and
- we issue a no-action response that either concurs or does not concur in the company's view regarding exclusion of the proposal.

3. What are the deadlines contained in rule 14a-8?

Rule 14a-8 establishes specific deadlines for the shareholder proposal process. The following table briefly describes those deadlines.

120 days before the release date disclosed in the previous year's proxy statement	Proposals for a regularly scheduled annual meeting must be received at the company's principal executive offices not less than 120 calendar days before the release date of the previous year's annual meeting proxy statement. Both the release date and the deadline for receiving rule 14a-8 proposals for the next annual meeting should be identified in that proxy statement.
14-day notice of defect(s)/ response to notice of defect(s)	If a company seeks to exclude a proposal because the shareholder has not complied with an eligibility or procedural requirement of rule 14a-8, generally, it must notify the shareholder of the alleged defect(s) within 14 calendar days of receiving the proposal. The shareholder then has 14 calendar days after receiving the notification to respond. Failure to cure the defect(s) or respond in a timely manner may result in exclusion of the proposal.

80 days before the company files its definitive proxy statement and form of proxy	If a company intends to exclude a proposal from its proxy materials, it must submit its no-action request to the Commission no later than 80 calendar days before it files its definitive proxy statement and form of proxy with the Commission unless it demonstrates “good cause” for missing the deadline. In addition, a company must simultaneously provide the shareholder with a copy of its no-action request.
30 days before the company files its definitive proxy statement and form of proxy	If a proposal appears in a company’s proxy materials, the company may elect to include its reasons as to why shareholders should vote against the proposal. This statement of reasons for voting against the proposal is commonly referred to as a statement in opposition. Except as explained in the box immediately below, the company is required to provide the shareholder with a copy of its statement in opposition no later than 30 calendar days before it files its definitive proxy statement and form of proxy.
Five days after the company has received a revised proposal	If our no-action response provides for shareholder revision to the proposal or supporting statement as a condition to requiring the company to include it in its proxy materials, the company must provide the shareholder with a copy of its statement in opposition no later than five calendar days after it receives a copy of the revised proposal.

In addition to the specific deadlines in rule 14a-8, our informal procedures often rely on timely action. For example, if our no-action response requires that the shareholder revise the proposal or supporting statement, our response will afford the shareholder seven calendar days from the date of receiving our response to provide the company with the revisions. In this regard, please refer to questions and answers B.12.a and B.12.b.

4. What is our role in the no-action process?

Our role begins when we receive a no-action request from a company. In these no-action requests, companies often assert that a proposal is excludable under one or more parts of rule 14a-8. We analyze each of the bases for exclusion that a company asserts, as well as any arguments that the shareholder chooses to set forth, and determine whether we concur in the company’s view.

The Division of Investment Management processes rule 14a-8 no-action requests submitted by registered investment companies and business development companies.

Rule 14a-8 no-action requests submitted by registered investment companies and business development companies, as well as shareholder responses to those requests, should be sent to

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
Division of Investment Management
Office of Chief Counsel
450 Fifth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20549

All other rule 14a-8 no-action requests and shareholder responses to those requests should be sent to

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
Division of Corporation Finance
Office of Chief Counsel
450 Fifth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20549

5. What factors do we consider in determining whether to concur in a company's view regarding exclusion of a proposal from the proxy statement?

The company has the burden of demonstrating that it is entitled to exclude a proposal, and we will not consider any basis for exclusion that is not advanced by the company. We analyze the prior no-action letters that a company and a shareholder cite in support of their arguments and, where appropriate, any applicable case law. We also may conduct our own research to determine whether we have issued additional letters that support or do not support the company's and shareholder's positions. Unless a company has demonstrated that it is entitled to exclude a proposal, we will not concur in its view that it may exclude that proposal from its proxy materials.

6. Do we base our determinations solely on the subject matter of the proposal?

No. We consider the specific arguments asserted by the company and the shareholder, the way in which the proposal is drafted and how the arguments and our prior no-action responses apply to the specific proposal and company at issue. Based on these considerations, we may determine that company X may exclude a proposal but company Y cannot exclude a proposal that addresses the same or similar subject matter. The following chart illustrates this point by showing that variations in the language of a proposal, or different bases cited by a company, may result in different responses. As shown below, the first and second examples deal with virtually identical proposals,

but the different company arguments resulted in different responses. In the second and third examples, the companies made similar arguments, but differing language in the proposals resulted in different responses.

Company	Proposal	Bases for exclusion that the company cited	Date of our response	Our response
PG&E Corp.	Adopt a policy that independent directors are appointed to the audit, compensation and nomination committees.	Rule 14a-8(b) only	Feb. 21, 2000	We did not concur in PG&E's view that it could exclude the proposal. PG&E did not demonstrate that the shareholder failed to satisfy the rule's minimum ownership requirements. PG&E included the proposal in its proxy materials.
PG&E Corp.	Adopt a bylaw that independent directors are appointed for all future openings on the audit, compensation and nomination committees.	Rule 14a-8(i)(6) only	Jan. 22, 2001	We concurred in PG&E's view that it could exclude the proposal. PG&E demonstrated that it lacked the power or authority to implement the proposal. PG&E did not include the proposal in its proxy materials.
General Motors Corp.	Adopt a bylaw requiring a <i>transition to</i> independent directors for each seat on the audit, compensation and nominating committees as openings occur (emphasis added).	Rules 14a-8(i)(6) and 14a-8(i)(10)	Mar. 22, 2001	We did not concur in GM's view that it could exclude the proposal. GM did not demonstrate that it lacked the power or authority to implement the proposal or that it had substantially implemented the proposal. GM included the proposal in its proxy materials.

7. Do we judge the merits of proposals?

No. We have no interest in the merits of a particular proposal. Our concern is that shareholders receive full and accurate information about all proposals that are, or should be, submitted to them under rule 14a-8.

8. Are we required to respond to no-action requests?

No. Although we are not required to respond, we have, as a convenience to both companies and shareholders, engaged in the informal practice of expressing our enforcement position on these submissions through the issuance of no-action responses. We do this to assist both companies and shareholders in complying with the proxy rules.

9. Will we comment on the subject matter of pending litigation?

No. Where the arguments raised in the company's no-action request are before a court of law, our policy is not to comment on those arguments. Accordingly, our no-action response will express no view with respect to the company's intention to exclude the proposal from its proxy materials.

10. How do we respond to no-action requests?

We indicate either that there appears to be some basis for the company's view that it may exclude the proposal or that we are unable to concur in the company's view that it may exclude the proposal. Because the company submits the no-action request, our response is addressed to the company. However, at the time we respond to a no-action request, we provide all related correspondence to both the company and the shareholder. These materials are available in the Commission's Public Reference Room and on commercially available, external databases.

11. What is the effect of our no-action response?

Our no-action responses only reflect our informal views regarding the application of rule 14a-8. We do not claim to issue "rulings" or "decisions" on proposals that companies indicate they intend to exclude, and our determinations do not and cannot adjudicate the merits of a company's position with respect to a proposal. For example, our decision not to recommend enforcement action does not prohibit a shareholder from pursuing rights that he or she may have against the company in court should management exclude a proposal from the company's proxy materials.

12. What is our role after we issue our no-action response?

Under rule 14a-8, we have a limited role after we issue our no-action response. In addition, due to the large number of no-action requests that we receive between the months of December and February, the no-action process must be efficient. As described in answer B.2, above, rule 14a-8 envisions a structured process under which the company submits the request, the shareholder may reply and we issue our response. When shareholders and companies deviate from this structure or are unable to resolve differences, our time and resources are diverted and the process breaks down. Based on our experience, this most often occurs as a result of friction between companies and shareholders and their inability to compromise. While we are always available to facilitate the fair and efficient application of the rule, the operation of the rule, as well as the no-action process, suffers when our role changes from an issuer of responses to an arbiter of disputes. The following questions and answers are examples of how we view our limited role after issuance of our no-action response.

- a. If our no-action response affords the shareholder additional time to provide documentation of ownership or revise the proposal, but the company does not believe that the documentation or revisions comply with our no-action response, should the company submit a new no-action request?**

No. For example, our no-action response may afford the shareholder seven days to provide documentation demonstrating that he or she satisfies the minimum ownership requirements contained in rule 14a-8(b). If the shareholder provides the required documentation eight days after receiving our no-action response, the company should not submit a new no-action request in order to exclude the proposal. Similarly, if we indicate in our response that the shareholder must provide factual support for a sentence in the supporting statement, the company and the shareholder should work together to determine whether the revised sentence contains appropriate factual support.

- b. If our no-action response affords the shareholder an additional seven days to provide documentation of ownership or revise the proposal, who should keep track of when the seven-day period begins to run?**

When our no-action response gives a shareholder time, it is measured from the date the shareholder receives our response. As previously noted in answer B.10, we send our response to both the company and the shareholder. However, the company is responsible for determining when the seven-day period begins to run. In order to avoid controversy, the company should forward a copy of our response to the shareholder by a means that permits the company to prove the date of receipt.

13. Does rule 14a-8 contemplate any other involvement by us after we issue a no-action response?

Yes. If a shareholder believes that a company's statement in opposition is materially false or misleading, the shareholder may promptly send a letter to us and the company explaining the reasons for his or her view, as well as a copy of the proposal and statement in opposition. Just as a company has the burden of demonstrating that it is entitled to exclude a proposal, a shareholder should, to the extent possible, provide us with specific factual information that demonstrates the inaccuracy of the company's statement in opposition. We encourage shareholders and companies to work out these differences before contacting us.

14. What must a company do if, before we have issued a no-action response, the shareholder withdraws the proposal or the company decides to include the proposal in its proxy materials?

If the company no longer wishes to pursue its no-action request, the company should provide us with a letter as soon as possible withdrawing its no-action request. This allows us to allocate our resources to other pending requests. The company should also provide the shareholder with a copy of the withdrawal letter.

15. If a company wishes to withdraw a no-action request, what information should its withdrawal letter contain?

In order for us to process withdrawals efficiently, the company's letter should contain

- a statement that either the shareholder has withdrawn the proposal or the company has decided to include the proposal in its proxy materials;
- if the shareholder has withdrawn the proposal, a copy of the shareholder's signed letter of withdrawal, or some other indication that the shareholder has withdrawn the proposal;
- if there is more than one eligible shareholder, the company must provide documentation that all of the eligible shareholders have agreed to withdraw the proposal;
- if the company has agreed to include a revised version of the proposal in its proxy materials, a statement from the shareholder that he or she accepts the revisions; and
- an affirmative statement that the company is withdrawing its no-action request.

C. Questions regarding the eligibility and procedural requirements of the rule.

Rule 14a-8 contains eligibility and procedural requirements for shareholders who wish to include a proposal in a company's proxy materials. Below, we address some of the common questions that arise regarding these requirements.

- 1. To be eligible to submit a proposal, rule 14a-8(b) requires the shareholder to have continuously held at least \$2,000 in market value, or 1%, of the company's securities entitled to be voted on the proposal at the meeting for at least one year by the date of submitting the proposal. Also, the shareholder must continue to hold those securities through the date of the meeting. The following questions and answers address issues regarding shareholder eligibility.**

- a. How do you calculate the market value of the shareholder's securities?**

Due to market fluctuations, the value of a shareholder's investment in the company may vary throughout the year before he or she submits the proposal. In order to determine whether the shareholder satisfies the \$2,000 threshold, we look at whether, on any date within the 60 calendar days before the date the shareholder submits the proposal, the shareholder's investment is valued at \$2,000 or greater, based on the average of the bid and ask prices. Depending on where the company is listed, bid and ask prices may not always be available. For example, bid and ask prices are not provided for companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Under these circumstances, companies and shareholders should determine the market value by multiplying the number of securities the shareholder held for the one-year period by the highest *selling* price during the 60 calendar days before the shareholder submitted the proposal. For purposes of this calculation, it is important to note that a security's highest selling price is not necessarily the same as its highest closing price.

- b. What type of security must a shareholder own to be eligible to submit a proposal?**

A shareholder must own company securities entitled to be voted on the proposal at the meeting.

Example

A company receives a proposal relating to executive compensation from a shareholder who owns only shares of the company's class B common stock. The company's class B common stock is entitled to vote only on the election of directors. Does the shareholder's ownership of only class B stock provide a basis for the company to exclude the proposal?

Yes. This would provide a basis for the company to exclude the proposal because the shareholder does not own securities entitled to be voted on the proposal at the meeting.

c. How should a shareholder's ownership be substantiated?

Under rule 14a-8(b), there are several ways to determine whether a shareholder has owned the minimum amount of company securities entitled to be voted on the proposal at the meeting for the required time period. If the shareholder appears in the company's records as a registered holder, the company can verify the shareholder's eligibility independently. However, many shareholders hold their securities indirectly through a broker or bank. In the event that the shareholder is not the registered holder, the shareholder is responsible for proving his or her eligibility to submit a proposal to the company. To do so, the shareholder must do one of two things. He or she can submit a written statement from the record holder of the securities verifying that the shareholder has owned the securities continuously for one year as of the time the shareholder submits the proposal. Alternatively, a shareholder who has filed a Schedule 13D, Schedule 13G, Form 4 or Form 5 reflecting ownership of the securities as of or before the date on which the one-year eligibility period begins may submit copies of these forms and any subsequent amendments reporting a change in ownership level, along with a written statement that he or she has owned the required number of securities continuously for one year as of the time the shareholder submits the proposal.

- (1) Does a written statement from the shareholder's investment adviser verifying that the shareholder held the securities continuously for at least one year before submitting the proposal demonstrate sufficiently continuous ownership of the securities?**

The written statement must be from the record holder of the shareholder's securities, which is usually a broker or bank. Therefore, unless the investment adviser is also the record holder, the statement would be insufficient under the rule.

(2) Do a shareholder's monthly, quarterly or other periodic investment statements demonstrate sufficiently continuous ownership of the securities?

No. A shareholder must submit an affirmative written statement from the record holder of his or her securities that specifically verifies that the shareholder owned the securities *continuously* for a period of one year as of the time of submitting the proposal.

(3) If a shareholder submits his or her proposal to the company on June 1, does a statement from the record holder verifying that the shareholder owned the securities continuously for one year as of May 30 of the same year demonstrate sufficiently continuous ownership of the securities as of the time he or she submitted the proposal?

No. A shareholder must submit proof from the record holder that the shareholder continuously owned the securities for a period of one year as of the time the shareholder submits the proposal.

d. Should a shareholder provide the company with a written statement that he or she intends to continue holding the securities through the date of the shareholder meeting?

Yes. The shareholder must provide this written statement regardless of the method the shareholder uses to prove that he or she continuously owned the securities for a period of one year as of the time the shareholder submits the proposal.

2. In order for a proposal to be eligible for inclusion in a company's proxy materials, rule 14a-8(d) requires that the proposal, including any accompanying supporting statement, not exceed 500 words. The following questions and answers address issues regarding the 500-word limitation.

a. May a company count the words in a proposal's "title" or "heading" in determining whether the proposal exceeds the 500-word limitation?

Any statements that are, in effect, arguments in support of the proposal constitute part of the supporting statement. Therefore, any "title" or "heading" that meets this test may be counted toward the 500-word limitation.

b. Does referencing a website address in the proposal or supporting statement violate the 500-word limitation of rule 14a-8(d)?

No. Because we count a website address as one word for purposes of the 500-word limitation, we do not believe that a website address raises the concern that rule 14a-8(d) is intended to address. However, a website address could be subject to exclusion if it refers readers to information that may be materially false or misleading, irrelevant to the subject matter of the proposal or otherwise in contravention of the proxy rules. In this regard, please refer to question and answer F.1.

3. Rule 14a-8(e)(2) requires that proposals for a regularly scheduled annual meeting be received at the company's principal executive offices by a date not less than 120 calendar days before the date of the company's proxy statement released to shareholders in connection with the previous year's annual meeting. The following questions and answers address a number of issues that come up in applying this provision.

a. How do we interpret the phrase "before the date of the company's proxy statement released to shareholders?"

We interpret this phrase as meaning the approximate date on which the proxy statement and form of proxy were first sent or given to shareholders. For example, if a company having a regularly scheduled annual meeting files its definitive proxy statement and form of proxy with the Commission dated April 1, 2001, but first sends or gives the proxy statement to shareholders on April 15, 2001, as disclosed in its proxy statement, we will refer to the April 15, 2001 date as the release date. The company and shareholders should use April 15, 2001 for purposes of calculating the 120-day deadline in rule 14a-8(e)(2).

b. How should a company that is planning to have a regularly scheduled annual meeting calculate the deadline for submitting proposals?

The company should calculate the deadline for submitting proposals as follows:

- start with the release date disclosed in the previous year's proxy statement;
- increase the year by one; and
- count back 120 calendar days.

Examples

If a company is planning to have a regularly scheduled annual meeting in May of 2003 and the company disclosed that the release date for its 2002 proxy statement was April 14, 2002, how should the company calculate the deadline for submitting rule 14a-8 proposals for the company's 2003 annual meeting?

- The release date disclosed in the company's 2002 proxy statement was April 14, 2002.
- Increasing the year by one, the day to begin the calculation is April 14, 2003.
- "Day one" for purposes of the calculation is April 13, 2003.
- "Day 120" is December 15, 2002.
- The 120-day deadline for the 2003 annual meeting is December 15, 2002.
- A rule 14a-8 proposal received after December 15, 2002 would be untimely.

If the 120th calendar day before the release date disclosed in the previous year's proxy statement is a Saturday, Sunday or federal holiday, does this change the deadline for receiving rule 14a-8 proposals?

No. The deadline for receiving rule 14a-8 proposals is always the 120th calendar day before the release date disclosed in the previous year's proxy statement. Therefore, if the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday or federal holiday, the company must disclose this date in its proxy statement, and rule 14a-8 proposals received after business reopens would be untimely.

c. How does a shareholder know where to send his or her proposal?

The proposal must be received at the company's principal executive offices. Shareholders can find this address in the company's proxy statement. If a shareholder sends a proposal to any other location, even if it is to an agent of the company or to another company location, this would not satisfy the requirement.

d. How does a shareholder know if his or her proposal has been received by the deadline?

A shareholder should submit a proposal by a means that allows him or her to determine when the proposal was received at the company's principal executive offices.

- 4. Rule 14a-8(h)(1) requires that the shareholder or his or her qualified representative attend the shareholders' meeting to present the proposal. Rule 14a-8(h)(3) provides that a company may exclude a shareholder's proposals for two calendar years if the company**

included one of the shareholder's proposals in its proxy materials for a shareholder meeting, neither the shareholder nor the shareholder's qualified representative appeared and presented the proposal and the shareholder did not demonstrate "good cause" for failing to attend the meeting or present the proposal. The following questions and answers address issues regarding these provisions.

- a. Does rule 14a-8 require a shareholder to represent in writing before the meeting that he or she, or a qualified representative, will attend the shareholders' meeting to present the proposal?**

No. The Commission stated in Release No. 34-20091 that shareholders are no longer required to provide the company with a written statement of intent to appear and present a shareholder proposal. The Commission eliminated this requirement because it "serve[d] little purpose" and only encumbered shareholders. We, therefore, view it as inappropriate for companies to solicit this type of written statement from shareholders for purposes of rule 14a-8. In particular, we note that shareholders who are unfamiliar with the proxy rules may be misled, even unintentionally, into believing that a written statement of intent is required.

- b. What if a shareholder provides an unsolicited, written statement that neither the shareholder nor his or her qualified representative will attend the meeting to present the proposal? May the company exclude the proposal under this circumstance?**

Yes. Rule 14a-8(i)(3) allows companies to exclude proposals that are contrary to the proxy rules, including rule 14a-8(h)(1). If a shareholder voluntarily provides a written statement evidencing his or her intent to act contrary to rule 14a-8(h)(1), rule 14a-8(i)(3) may serve as a basis for the company to exclude the proposal.

- c. If a company demonstrates that it is entitled to exclude a proposal under rule 14a-8(h)(3), can the company request that we issue a no-action response that covers both calendar years?**

Yes. For example, assume that, without "good cause," neither the shareholder nor the shareholder's representative attended the company's 2001 annual meeting to present the shareholder's proposal, and the shareholder then submits a proposal for inclusion in the company's 2002 proxy materials. If the company seeks to exclude the 2002 proposal under rule 14a-8(h)(3), it may concurrently request forward-looking relief for any proposal(s) that the shareholder may submit for inclusion in the company's 2003 proxy materials. If we grant the company's request and the company receives a proposal from the shareholder in connection with the 2003 annual meeting, the company still has an

obligation under rule 14a-8(j) to notify us and the shareholder of its intention to exclude the shareholder's proposal from its proxy materials for that meeting. Although we will retain that notice in our records, we will not issue a no-action response.

5. In addition to rule 14a-8(h)(3), are there any other circumstances in which we will grant forward-looking relief to a company under rule 14a-8?

Yes. Rule 14a-8(i)(4) allows companies to exclude a proposal if it relates to the redress of a personal claim or grievance against the company or any other person or is designed to result in a benefit to the shareholder, or to further a personal interest, that is not shared by the other shareholders at large. In rare circumstances, we may grant forward-looking relief if a company satisfies its burden of demonstrating that the shareholder is abusing rule 14a-8 by continually submitting similar proposals that relate to a particular personal claim or grievance. As in answer C.4.c, above, if we grant this relief, the company still has an obligation under rule 14a-8(j) to notify us and the shareholder of its intention to exclude the shareholder's proposal(s) from its proxy materials. Although will retain that notice in our records, we will not issue a no-action response.

6. What must a company do in order to exclude a proposal that fails to comply with the eligibility or procedural requirements of the rule?

If a shareholder fails to follow the eligibility or procedural requirements of rule 14a-8, the rule provides procedures for the company to follow if it wishes to exclude the proposal. For example, rule 14a-8(f) provides that a company may exclude a proposal from its proxy materials due to eligibility or procedural defects if

- within 14 calendar days of receiving the proposal, it provides the shareholder with written notice of the defect(s), including the time frame for responding; and
- the shareholder fails to respond to this notice within 14 calendar days of receiving the notice of the defect(s) or the shareholder timely responds but does not cure the eligibility or procedural defect(s).

Section G.3 – Eligibility and Procedural Issues, below, contains information that companies may want to consider in drafting these notices. If the shareholder does not timely respond or remedy the defect(s) and the company intends to exclude the proposal, the company still must submit, to us and to the shareholder, a copy of the proposal and its reasons for excluding the proposal.

- a. Should a company's notices of defect(s) give different levels of information to different shareholders depending on the company's perception of the shareholder's sophistication in rule 14a-8?**

No. Companies should not assume that any shareholder is familiar with the proxy rules or give different levels of information to different shareholders based on the fact that the shareholder may or may not be a frequent or "experienced" shareholder proponent.

- b. Should companies instruct shareholders to respond to the notice of defect(s) by a specified date rather than indicating that shareholders have 14 calendar days after receiving the notice to respond?**

No. Rule 14a-8(f) provides that shareholders must respond within 14 calendar days of receiving notice of the alleged eligibility or procedural defect(s). If the company provides a specific date by which the shareholder must submit his or her response, it is possible that the deadline set by the company will be shorter than the 14-day period required by rule 14a-8(f). For example, events could delay the shareholder's receipt of the notice. As such, if a company sets a specific date for the shareholder to respond and that date does not result in the shareholder having 14 calendar days after receiving the notice to respond, we do not believe that the company may rely on rule 14a-8(f) to exclude the proposal.

- c. Are there any circumstances under which a company does not have to provide the shareholder with a notice of defect(s)? For example, what should the company do if the shareholder indicates that he or she does not own at least \$2,000 in market value, or 1%, of the company's securities?**

The company does not need to provide the shareholder with a notice of defect(s) if the defect(s) cannot be remedied. In the example provided in the question, because the shareholder cannot remedy this defect after the fact, no notice of the defect would be required. The same would apply, for example, if

- the shareholder indicated that he or she had owned securities entitled to be voted on the proposal for a period of less than one year before submitting the proposal;
- the shareholder indicated that he or she did not own securities entitled to be voted on the proposal at the meeting;
- the shareholder failed to submit a proposal by the company's properly determined deadline; or

- the shareholder, or his or her qualified representative, failed to attend the meeting or present one of the shareholder's proposals that was included in the company's proxy materials during the past two calendar years.

In all of these circumstances, the company must still submit its reasons regarding exclusion of the proposal to us and the shareholder. The shareholder may, but is not required to, submit a reply to us with a copy to the company.

D. Questions regarding the inclusion of shareholder names in proxy statements.

- 1. If the shareholder's proposal will appear in the company's proxy statement, is the company required to disclose the shareholder's name?**

No. A company is not required to disclose the identity of a shareholder proponent in its proxy statement. Rather, a company can indicate that it will provide the information to shareholders promptly upon receiving an oral or written request.

- 2. May a shareholder request that the company not disclose his or her name in the proxy statement?**

Yes. However, the company has the discretion not to honor the request. In this regard, if the company chooses to include the shareholder proponent's name in the proxy statement, rule 14a-8(l)(1) requires that the company also include that shareholder proponent's address and the number of the company's voting securities that the shareholder proponent holds.

- 3. If a shareholder includes his or her e-mail address in the proposal or supporting statement, may the company exclude the e-mail address?**

Yes. We view an e-mail address as equivalent to the shareholder proponent's name and address and, under rule 14a-8(l)(1), a company may exclude the shareholder's name and address from the proxy statement.

E. Questions regarding revisions to proposals and supporting statements.

In this section, we first discuss the purpose for allowing shareholders to revise portions of a proposal and supporting statement. Second, we express our views with regard to revisions that a shareholder makes to his or her proposal before we receive a company's no-action request, as well as during the course of our review of a no-action

request. Finally, we address the circumstances under which our responses may allow shareholders to make revisions to their proposals and supporting statements.

1. Why do our no-action responses sometimes permit shareholders to make revisions to their proposals and supporting statements?

There is no provision in rule 14a-8 that allows a shareholder to revise his or her proposal and supporting statement. However, we have a long-standing practice of issuing no-action responses that permit shareholders to make revisions that are minor in nature and do not alter the substance of the proposal. We adopted this practice to deal with proposals that generally comply with the substantive requirements of the rule, but contain some relatively minor defects that are easily corrected. In these circumstances, we believe that the concepts underlying Exchange Act section 14(a) are best served by affording an opportunity to correct these kinds of defects.

Despite the intentions underlying our revisions practice, we spend an increasingly large portion of our time and resources each proxy season responding to no-action requests regarding proposals or supporting statements that have obvious deficiencies in terms of accuracy, clarity or relevance. This is not beneficial to all participants in the process and diverts resources away from analyzing core issues arising under rule 14a-8 that are matters of interest to companies and shareholders alike. Therefore, when a proposal and supporting statement will require detailed and extensive editing in order to bring them into compliance with the proxy rules, we may find it appropriate for companies to exclude the entire proposal, supporting statement, or both, as materially false or misleading.

2. If a company has received a timely proposal and the shareholder makes revisions to the proposal before the company submits its no-action request, must the company accept those revisions?

No, but it *may* accept the shareholder's revisions. If the changes are such that the revised proposal is actually a different proposal from the original, the revised proposal could be subject to exclusion under

- rule 14a-8(c), which provides that a shareholder may submit no more than one proposal to a company for a particular shareholders' meeting; and
- rule 14a-8(e), which imposes a deadline for submitting shareholder proposals.

3. If the shareholder decides to make revisions to his or her proposal after the company has submitted its no-action request, must the company address those revisions?

No, but it *may* address the shareholder's revisions. We base our no-action response on the proposal included in the company's no-action request. Therefore, if the company indicates in a letter to us and the shareholder that it acknowledges and accepts the shareholder's changes, we will base our response on the revised proposal. Otherwise, we will base our response on the proposal contained in the company's original no-action request. Again, it is important for shareholders to note that, depending on the nature and timing of the changes, a revised proposal could be subject to exclusion under rule 14a-8(c), rule 14a-8(e), or both.

4. If the shareholder decides to make revisions to his or her proposal after the company has submitted its no-action request, should the shareholder provide a copy of the revisions to us?

Yes. All shareholder correspondence relating to the no-action request should be sent to us and the company. However, under rule 14a-8, no-action requests and shareholder responses to those requests are submitted to us. The proposals themselves are not submitted to us. Because proposals are submitted to companies for inclusion in their proxy materials, we will not address revised proposals unless the company chooses to acknowledge the changes.

5. When do our responses afford shareholders an opportunity to revise their proposals and supporting statements?

We may, under limited circumstances, permit shareholders to revise their proposals and supporting statements. The following table provides examples of the rule 14a-8 bases under which we typically allow revisions, as well as the types of permissible changes:

Basis	Type of revision that we may permit
Rule 14a-8(i)(1)	When a proposal would be binding on the company if approved by shareholders, we may permit the shareholder to revise the proposal to a recommendation or request that the board of directors take the action specified in the proposal.

Rule 14a-8(i)(2)	If implementing the proposal would require the company to breach existing contractual obligations, we may permit the shareholder to revise the proposal so that it applies only to the company's future contractual obligations.
Rule 14a-8(i)(3)	If the proposal contains specific statements that may be materially false or misleading or irrelevant to the subject matter of the proposal, we may permit the shareholder to revise or delete these statements. Also, if the proposal or supporting statement contains vague terms, we may, in rare circumstances, permit the shareholder to clarify these terms.
Rule 14a-8(i)(6)	Same as rule 14a-8(i)(2), above.
Rule 14a-8(i)(7)	If it is unclear whether the proposal focuses on senior executive compensation or director compensation, as opposed to general employee compensation, we may permit the shareholder to make this clarification.
Rule 14a-8(i)(8)	If implementing the proposal would disqualify directors previously elected from completing their terms on the board or disqualify nominees for directors at the upcoming shareholder meeting, we may permit the shareholder to revise the proposal so that it will not affect the unexpired terms of directors elected to the board at or prior to the upcoming shareholder meeting.
Rule 14a-8(i)(9)	Same as rule 14a-8(i)(8), above.

F. Other questions that arise under rule 14a-8.

1. May a reference to a website address in the proposal or supporting statement be subject to exclusion under the rule?

Yes. In some circumstances, we may concur in a company's view that it may exclude a website address under rule 14a-8(i)(3) because information contained on the website may be materially false or misleading, irrelevant to the subject matter of the proposal or otherwise in contravention of the proxy rules. Companies seeking to exclude a website address under rule 14a-8(i)(3) should specifically indicate why they believe information contained on the particular website is materially false or misleading,

irrelevant to the subject matter of the proposal or otherwise in contravention of the proxy rules.

2. Rule 14a-8(i)(12) provides a basis for a company to exclude a proposal dealing with substantially the same subject matter as another proposal or proposals that previously has or have been included in the company's proxy materials. How does rule 14a-8(i)(12) operate?

Rule 14a-8(i)(12) operates as follows:

- a. First, the company should look back three calendar years to see if it previously included a proposal or proposals dealing with substantially the same subject matter. If it has not, rule 14a-8(i)(12) is not available as a basis to exclude a proposal from this year's proxy materials.
- b. If it has, the company should then count the number of times that a proposal or proposals dealing with substantially the same subject matter was or were included over the preceding five calendar years.
- c. Finally, the company should look at the percentage of the shareholder vote that a proposal dealing with substantially the same subject matter received the last time it was included.
 - If the company included a proposal dealing with substantially the same subject matter only once in the preceding five calendar years, the company may exclude a proposal from this year's proxy materials under rule 14a-8(i)(12)(i) if it received less than 3% of the vote the last time that it was voted on.
 - If the company included a proposal or proposals dealing with substantially the same subject matter twice in the preceding five calendar years, the company may exclude a proposal from this year's proxy materials under rule 14a-8(i)(12)(ii) if it received less than 6% of the vote the last time that it was voted on.
 - If the company included a proposal or proposals dealing with substantially the same subject matter three or more times in the preceding five calendar years, the company may exclude a proposal from this year's proxy materials under rule 14a-8(i)(12)(iii) if it received less than 10% of the vote the last time that it was voted on.

3. Rule 14a-8(i)(12) refers to calendar years. How do we interpret calendar years for this purpose?

Because a calendar year runs from January 1 through December 31, we do not look at the specific dates of company meetings. Instead, we look at the calendar year in which a meeting was held. For example, a company scheduled a meeting for April 25, 2002. In looking back three calendar years to determine if it previously had included a proposal or proposals dealing with substantially the same subject matter, any meeting held in calendar years 1999, 2000 or 2001 – which would include any meetings held between January 1, 1999 and December 31, 2001 – would be relevant under rule 14a-8(i)(12).

Examples

A company receives a proposal for inclusion in its 2002 proxy materials dealing with substantially the same subject matter as proposals that were voted on at the following shareholder meetings:

Calendar Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Voted on?	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	-	-
Percentage	4%	N/A	N/A	4%	N/A	-	-

May the company exclude the proposal from its 2002 proxy materials in reliance on rule 14a-8(i)(12)?

Yes. The company would be entitled to exclude the proposal under rule 14a-8(i)(12)(ii). First, calendar year 2000, the last time the company included a proposal dealing with substantially the same subject matter, is within the prescribed three calendar years. Second, the company included proposals dealing with substantially the same subject matter twice within the preceding five calendar years, specifically, in 1997 and 2000. Finally, the proposal received less than 6% of the vote on its last submission to shareholders in 2000. Therefore, rule 14a-8(i)(12)(ii), which permits exclusion when a company has included a proposal or proposals dealing with substantially the same subject matter twice in the preceding five calendar years and that proposal received less than 6% of the shareholder vote the last time it was voted on, would serve as a basis for excluding the proposal.

If the company excluded the proposal from its 2002 proxy materials and then received an identical proposal for inclusion in its 2003 proxy materials, may the company exclude the proposal from its 2003 proxy materials in reliance on rule 14a-8(i)(12)?

No. Calendar year 2000, the last time the company included a proposal dealing with substantially the same subject matter, is still within the prescribed three calendar years. However, 2000 was the only time within the preceding five calendar years that the company included a proposal dealing with substantially the same subject matter, and it received more than 3% of the vote at the 2000 meeting. Therefore, the company would not be entitled to exclude the proposal under rule 14a-8(i)(12)(i).

4. How do we count votes under rule 14a-8(i)(12)?

Only votes for and against a proposal are included in the calculation of the shareholder vote of that proposal. Abstentions and broker non-votes are not included in this calculation.

Example

A proposal received the following votes at the company's last annual meeting:

- 5,000 votes for the proposal;
- 3,000 votes against the proposal;
- 1,000 broker non-votes; and
- 1,000 abstentions.

How is the shareholder vote of this proposal calculated for purposes of rule 14a-8(i)(12)?

This percentage is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Votes For the Proposal}}{\text{(Votes Against the Proposal + Votes For the Proposal)}} = \text{Voting Percentage}$$

Applying this formula to the facts above, the proposal received 62.5% of the vote.

$$\frac{5,000}{3,000 + 5,000} = .625$$

G. How can companies and shareholders facilitate our processing of no-action requests or take steps to avoid the submission of no-action requests?

Eligibility and Procedural Issues

1. Before submitting a proposal to a company, a shareholder should look in the company's most recent proxy statement to find the deadline for submitting rule 14a-8 proposals. To avoid exclusion on the basis of untimeliness, a shareholder should submit his or her proposal well in advance of the deadline and by a means that allows the shareholder to demonstrate the date the proposal was received at the company's principal executive offices.
2. A shareholder who intends to submit a written statement from the record holder of the shareholder's securities to verify continuous ownership of the securities should contact the record holder before submitting a proposal to ensure that the record holder will provide the written statement and knows how to provide a written statement that will satisfy the requirements of rule 14a-8(b).
3. Companies should consider the following guidelines when drafting a letter to notify a shareholder of perceived eligibility or procedural defects:
 - provide adequate detail about what the shareholder must do to remedy all eligibility or procedural defects;
 - although not required, consider including a copy of rule 14a-8 with the notice of defect(s);
 - explicitly state that the shareholder must respond to the company's notice within 14 calendar days of receiving the notice of defect(s); and
 - send the notification by a means that allows the company to determine when the shareholder received the letter.
4. Rule 14a-8(f) provides that a shareholder's response to a company's notice of defect(s) must be postmarked, or transmitted electronically, no later than 14 days from the date the shareholder received the notice of defect(s). Therefore, a shareholder should respond to the company's notice of defect(s) by a means that allows the shareholder to demonstrate when he or she responded to the notice.
5. Rather than waiting until the deadline for submitting a no-action request, a company should submit a no-action request as soon as possible after it receives a proposal and determines that it will seek a no-action response.
6. Companies that will be submitting multiple no-action requests should submit their requests individually or in small groups rather than waiting and

sending them all at once. We receive the heaviest volume of no-action requests between December and February of each year. Therefore, we are not able to process no-action requests as quickly during this period. Our experience shows that we often receive 70 to 80 no-action requests a week during our peak period and, at most, we can respond to 30 to 40 requests in any given week. Therefore, companies that wait until December through February to submit all of their requests will have to wait longer for a response.

7. Companies should provide us with all relevant correspondence when submitting the no-action request, including the shareholder proposal, any cover letter that the shareholder provided with the proposal, the shareholder's address and any other correspondence the company has exchanged with the shareholder relating to the proposal. If the company provided the shareholder with notice of a perceived eligibility or procedural defect, the company should include a copy of the notice, documentation demonstrating when the company notified the shareholder, documentation demonstrating when the shareholder received the notice and any shareholder response to the notice.
8. If a shareholder intends to reply to the company's no-action request, he or she should try to send the reply as soon as possible after the company submits its no-action request.
9. Both companies and shareholders should promptly forward to each other copies of all correspondence that is provided to us in connection with no-action requests.
10. Due to the significant volume of no-action requests and phone calls we receive during the proxy season, companies should limit their calls to us regarding the status of their no-action request.
11. Shareholders who write to us to object to a company's statement in opposition to the shareholder's proposal also should provide us with copies of the proposal as it will be printed in the company's proxy statement and the company's proposed statement in opposition.

Substantive Issues

1. When drafting a proposal, shareholders should consider whether the proposal, if approved by shareholders, would be binding on the company. In our experience, we have found that proposals that are binding on the company face a much greater likelihood of being improper under state law and, therefore, excludable under rule 14a-8(i)(1).

2. When drafting a proposal, shareholders should consider what actions are within a company's power or authority. Proposals often request or require action by the company that would violate law or would not be within the power or authority of the company to implement.
3. When drafting a proposal, shareholders should consider whether the proposal would require the company to breach existing contracts. In our experience, we have found that proposals that would result in the company breaching existing contractual obligations face a much greater likelihood of being excludable under rule 14a-8(i)(2), rule 14a-8(i)(6), or both. This is because implementing the proposals may require the company to violate law or may not be within the power or authority of the company to implement.
4. In drafting a proposal and supporting statement, shareholders should avoid making unsupported assertions of fact. To this end, shareholders should provide factual support for statements in the proposal and supporting statement or phrase statements as their opinion where appropriate.
5. Companies should provide a supporting opinion of counsel when the reasons for exclusion are based on matters of state or foreign law. In determining how much weight to afford these opinions, one factor we consider is whether counsel is licensed to practice law in the jurisdiction where the law is at issue. Shareholders who wish to contest a company's reliance on a legal opinion as to matters of state or foreign law should, but are not required to, submit an opinion of counsel supporting their position.

H. Conclusion

Whether or not you are familiar with rule 14a-8, we hope that this bulletin helps you gain a better understanding of the rule, the no-action request process and our views on some issues and questions that commonly arise during our review of no-action requests. While not exhaustive, we believe that the bulletin contains information that will assist both companies and shareholders in ensuring that the rule operates more effectively. Please contact us with any questions that you may have regarding information contained in the bulletin.



U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission

Division of Corporation Finance Securities and Exchange Commission

Shareholder Proposals

Staff Legal Bulletin No. 14B (CF)

Action: Publication of CF Staff Legal Bulletin

Date: September 15, 2004

Summary: This staff legal bulletin provides information for companies and shareholders regarding rule 14a-8 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Supplementary Information: The statements in this legal bulletin represent the views of the Division of Corporation Finance. This bulletin is not a rule, regulation, or statement of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Further, the Commission has neither approved nor disapproved its content.

Contacts: For further information, please contact the Office of Chief Counsel in the Division of Corporation Finance at (202) 942-2900.

A. What is the purpose of this bulletin?

On July 13, 2001, the Division of Corporation Finance published [SLB No. 14](#) in order to:

- explain the rule 14a-8 no-action process, as well as our role in this process;
- provide guidance to companies and shareholders by expressing our views on some issues and questions that arise commonly under rule 14a-8; and
- suggest ways in which both companies and shareholder proponents can facilitate our review of no-action requests.

SLB No. 14 addressed primarily those procedural matters that are common to companies and shareholder proponents and discussed some substantive matters that are of interest to companies and shareholder proponents alike.

On July 12, 2002, the Division of Corporation Finance published [SLB No. 14A](#). SLB No. 14A clarified our position on shareholder proposals related to equity compensation plans.

The purpose of this bulletin is to clarify and update some of the guidance that is included in SLB No. 14 and to provide additional guidance on issues that arise commonly under rule 14a-8. Specifically, this bulletin contains our views regarding:

- the application of rule 14a-8(i)(3);
- common issues regarding a company's notice of defect(s) to a shareholder proponent under rule 14a-8(f);

- the application of the 80-day requirement in rule 14a-8(j);
- opinions of counsel under rule 14a-8(j)(2)(iii); and
- processing matters relating to the availability of submitted materials and the mailing and public availability of our responses.

This bulletin includes a discussion of rule 14a-9 and its interaction with the operation of rule 14a-8. This discussion applies to our review of rule 14a-8 no-action requests only; it does not apply to other contexts, such as our review of disclosure contained in proxy statement filings and additional soliciting materials that may be considered materially false or misleading under rule 14a-9.

The references to "we," "our," and "us" are to the Division of Corporation Finance. You can find a copy of rule 14a-8 in Exchange Act Release No. 34-40018 (May 21, 1998), which is located on the Commission's website at www.sec.gov/rules/final/34-40018.htm. You can find a copy of SLB No. 14 on the Commission's website at www.sec.gov/interps/legal/cfs1b14.htm. You can find a copy of SLB No. 14A on the Commission's website at www.sec.gov/interps/legal/cfs1b14a.htm.

B. Under rule 14a-8(i)(3), when will the staff grant requests to exclude either all or part of a proposal or supporting statement based on false or misleading statements?

1. Rule 14a-8(i)(3)

Question 9 in rule 14a-8 reads, "If I have complied with the procedural requirements, on what other bases may a company rely to exclude my proposal?" Thirteen bases are then listed as answers to Question 9. The third basis, which is cited as rule 14a-8(i)(3), provides:

Violation of proxy rules: If the proposal or supporting statement is contrary to any of the Commission's proxy rules, including § 240.14a-9, which prohibits materially false or misleading statements in proxy materials.

It is important to note that rule 14a-8(i)(3), unlike the other bases for exclusion under rule 14a-8, refers explicitly to the supporting statement as well as the proposal as a whole. Accordingly, companies have relied on rule 14a-8(i)(3) to exclude portions of the supporting statement, even if the balance of the proposal and the supporting statement may not be excluded. Companies have requested that the staff concur in the appropriateness of excluding statements in reliance on rule 14a-8(i)(3) for a number of reasons, including the following:

- *Vagueness* — Companies have argued that the proposal may be excluded in its entirety if the language of the proposal or the supporting statement render the proposal so vague and indefinite that neither the stockholders voting on the proposal, nor the company in implementing the proposal (if adopted), would be able to determine with any reasonable certainty exactly what actions or measures the proposal requires.
- *Impugning Statements* — Companies have argued that they may exclude statements in a supporting statement because they fall within Note (b) to rule 14a-9, which states that "[m]aterial which directly or indirectly impugns character, integrity or personal reputation or directly or indirectly makes charges concerning improper, illegal or immoral conduct or associations, without factual foundation" is an example of "what, depending upon particular facts and

circumstances, may be misleading within the meaning of [rule 14a-9]."

- *Irrelevant Statements* — Companies have argued that they may exclude statements in a supporting statement because they are irrelevant to the subject matter of the proposal being presented. It is argued that it is appropriate to exclude these statements because they mislead shareholders by making unclear the nature of the matter on which they are being asked to vote.
- *Opinions Presented as Fact* — Companies have argued that they may exclude statements in a supporting statement because they are presented as fact when they are the opinion of the shareholder proponent. It is argued that it is appropriate to exclude these statements because they are contrary to rule 14a-9 in that they may mislead shareholders into believing that the statements are fact and not opinion.
- *Statements Without Factual Support* — Companies have argued that they may exclude statements in a supporting statement because they are presented as fact, but do not cite to a source that proves that statement. It is argued that it is appropriate to exclude these statements because they are contrary to rule 14a-9 in that they may be false and misleading and should be accompanied by a citation to permit shareholders to assess the context in which the source presented the information.

As we noted in SLB No. 14, we spend an increasingly large portion of our time and resources each proxy season responding to no-action requests regarding asserted deficiencies in terms of clarity, relevance, or accuracy in proposals and supporting statements.

2. Our approach to rule 14a-8(i)(3) no-action requests

As we noted in SLB No. 14, there is no provision in rule 14a-8 that allows a shareholder to revise his or her proposal and supporting statement. We have had, however, a long-standing practice of issuing no-action responses that permit shareholders to make revisions that are minor in nature and do not alter the substance of the proposal. We adopted this practice to deal with proposals that comply generally with the substantive requirements of rule 14a-8, but contain some minor defects that could be corrected easily. Our intent to limit this practice to minor defects was evidenced by our statement in SLB No. 14 that we may find it appropriate for companies to exclude the entire proposal, supporting statement, or both as materially false or misleading if a proposal or supporting statement would require detailed and extensive editing in order to bring it into compliance with the proxy rules.

3. The need to clarify our views under rule 14a-8(i)(3)

Unfortunately, our discussion of rule 14a-8(i)(3) in SLB No. 14 has caused the process for company objections and the staff's consideration of those objections to evolve well beyond its original intent. The discussion in SLB No. 14 has resulted in an unintended and unwarranted extension of rule 14a-8(i)(3), as many companies have begun to assert deficiencies in virtually every line of a proposal's supporting statement as a means to justify exclusion of the proposal in its entirety. Our consideration of those requests requires the staff to devote significant resources to editing the specific wording of proposals and, especially, supporting statements. During the last proxy season, nearly half the no-action requests we received asserted that the proposal or supporting statement was wholly or partially excludable under rule 14a-8(i)(3).

We believe that the staff's process of becoming involved in evaluating wording changes to proposals and/or supporting statements has evolved well beyond its original intent and resulted in an inappropriate extension of rule 14a-8(i)(3). In addition, we believe the process is neither appropriate under nor consistent with rule 14a-8(l)(2), which reads, "The company is not responsible for the contents of [the shareholder proponent's] proposal or supporting statement." Finally, we believe that current practice is not beneficial to participants in the process and diverts resources away from analyzing core issues arising under rule 14a-8.

4. Clarification of our views regarding the application of rule 14a-8(i)(3)

Accordingly, we are clarifying our views with regard to the application of rule 14a-8(i)(3). Specifically, because the shareholder proponent, and not the company, is responsible for the content of a proposal and its supporting statement, we do not believe that exclusion or modification under rule 14a-8(i)(3) is appropriate for much of the language in supporting statements to which companies have objected. Accordingly, going forward, we believe that it would not be appropriate for companies to exclude supporting statement language and/or an entire proposal in reliance on rule 14a-8(i)(3) in the following circumstances:

- the company objects to factual assertions because they are not supported;
- the company objects to factual assertions that, while not materially false or misleading, may be disputed or countered;
- the company objects to factual assertions because those assertions may be interpreted by shareholders in a manner that is unfavorable to the company, its directors, or its officers; and/or
- the company objects to statements because they represent the opinion of the shareholder proponent or a referenced source, but the statements are not identified specifically as such.

We believe that it is appropriate under rule 14a-8 for companies to address these objections in their statements of opposition.

There continue to be certain situations where we believe modification or exclusion may be consistent with our intended application of rule 14a-8(i)(3). In those situations, it may be appropriate for a company to determine to exclude a statement in reliance on rule 14a-8(i)(3) and seek our concurrence with that determination. Specifically, reliance on rule 14a-8(i)(3) to exclude or modify a statement may be appropriate where:

- statements directly or indirectly impugn character, integrity, or personal reputation, or directly or indirectly make charges concerning improper, illegal, or immoral conduct or association, without factual foundation;
- the company demonstrates objectively that a factual statement is materially false or misleading;
- the resolution contained in the proposal is so inherently vague or indefinite that neither the stockholders voting on the proposal, nor the company in implementing the proposal (if adopted), would be able to determine with any reasonable certainty exactly what actions or measures the proposal requires — this objection also may be appropriate where the proposal and the supporting statement, when

read together, have the same result; and

- substantial portions of the supporting statement are irrelevant to a consideration of the subject matter of the proposal, such that there is a strong likelihood that a reasonable shareholder would be uncertain as to the matter on which she is being asked to vote.

In this regard, rule 14a-8(i)(3) permits the company to exclude a proposal or a statement that is contrary to any of the proxy rules, including rule 14a-9, which prohibits *materially* false or misleading statements. Further, rule 14a-8(g) makes clear that the company bears the burden of demonstrating that a proposal or statement may be excluded. As such, the staff will concur in the company's reliance on rule 14a-8(i)(3) to exclude or modify a proposal or statement only where that company has demonstrated objectively that the proposal or statement is *materially* false or misleading.

C. What are common issues regarding companies' notices of defect(s)?

1. How should companies draft notices of defect(s)?

We put forth the following guidance in SLB No. 14 for companies to consider when drafting letters to notify shareholder proponents of eligibility or procedural defects:

- provide adequate detail about what the shareholder proponent must do to remedy the eligibility or procedural defect(s);
- although not required, consider including a copy of rule 14a-8 with the notice of defect(s);
- explicitly state that the shareholder proponent must transmit his or her response to the company's notice within 14 calendar days of receiving the notice of defect(s); and
- send the notification by a means that allows the company to determine when the shareholder proponent received the letter.

We believe that this guidance continues to be of significant benefit to companies, and we urge all companies to consider it when drafting notices of defect(s) under rule 14a-8.

2. Is there any further guidance to companies with regard to what their notices of defect(s) should state about demonstrating proof of the shareholder proponent's ownership?

Yes. If the company cannot determine whether the shareholder satisfies the rule 14a-8 minimum ownership requirements, the company should request that the shareholder provide proof of ownership that satisfies the requirements of rule 14a-8. The company should use language that tracks rule 14a-8(b), which states that the shareholder proponent "must" prove its eligibility by submitting:

- the shareholder proponent's written statement that he or she intends to continue holding the shares through the date of the company's annual or special meeting; and
- either:
 - a written statement from the "record" holder of the securities (usually a broker or bank) verifying that, at the time the shareholder proponent submitted the proposal, the shareholder

proponent continuously held the securities for at least one year;
or

- a copy of a filed Schedule 13D, Schedule 13G, Form 3, Form 4, Form 5, or amendments to those documents or updated forms, reflecting the shareholder proponent's ownership of shares as of or before the date on which the one-year eligibility period begins and the shareholder proponent's written statement that he or she continuously held the required number of shares for the one-year period as of the date of the statement.

We have expressed the view consistently that a company does not meet its obligation to provide appropriate notice of defects in a shareholder proponent's proof of ownership where the company refers the shareholder proponent to rule 14a-8(b) but does not either:

- address the specific requirements of that rule in the notice; or
- attach a copy of rule 14a-8(b) to the notice.

D. What are the consequences if the staff denies a company's request for a waiver of rule 14a-8(j)'s 80-day requirement? Will the company have to wait 80 days to file its definitive proxy materials?

No, the company is not required to wait 80 days to file its definitive proxy materials. Rule 14a-8(j) provides that if the company intends to exclude a proposal from its proxy materials, it must file its reasons with the Commission no later than 80 calendar days before it files its definitive proxy statement and form of proxy with the Commission. Rule 14a-8(j) also requires the company to simultaneously provide the shareholder proponent with a copy of its submission. The staff may permit the company to make its submission later than 80 days before the company files its definitive proxy statement and form of proxy if the company demonstrates "good cause" for missing the deadline. In that instance, the failure to comply with rule 14a-8(j) would not require the company to delay its filing date until the expiration of 80 days from the date that it submits its no-action request. The most common basis for the company's showing of good cause is that the proposal was not submitted timely and the company did not receive the proposal until after the 80-day deadline had passed.

There are instances in which the staff will not agree that a company has demonstrated good cause for failing to make its rule 14a-8 submission at least 80 days before the intended filing of its definitive proxy materials. In those instances, we generally will consider the bases upon which the company intends to exclude a proposal, as we believe that is an appropriate exercise of our responsibilities under rule 14a-8. When we advise such a company and the shareholder proponent of our views regarding the application of rule 14a-8 to the proposal, we also will advise them of our view that the company has not followed the appropriate procedure under rule 14a-8. As noted above, our response in that situation would not require the company to wait to file its proxy materials until 80 days after its rule 14a-8 submission. Companies that have not demonstrated good cause for failing to make a timely rule 14a-8 submission should be aware that, despite our expression of a view with regard to the application of the eligibility or substantive requirements of rule 14a-8 to a proposal, the filing of their definitive proxy materials before the expiration of the 80-day time period in that situation may not be in accordance with the procedural requirements of rule 14a-8. Further, companies should note that, in issuing such a response, we are making no determination as to the appropriateness of filing definitive proxy materials less than 80 days after the date of the rule 14a-8(j) submission.

We will consider the timeliness of a rule 14a-8 no-action request in determining whether to respond. We reserve the right to decline to respond to rule 14a-8 no-action requests if the company does not comply with the time frame in rule 14a-8(j).

E. When should companies and shareholder proponents provide a supporting opinion of counsel and what should counsel to companies and shareholder proponents consider in drafting such an opinion?

Rule 14a-8(i)(1) and rule 14a-8(i)(2) permit the company to exclude a proposal if it meets its burden of demonstrating that the proposal is improper under state law or that the proposal, if implemented, would cause the company to violate any state, federal, or foreign law to which it is subject. Rule 14a-8(i)(6) permits the company to exclude a proposal if it meets its burden of demonstrating that the company would lack the power or authority to implement the proposal. Rule 14a-8(j)(2)(iii) requires the company to provide the Commission with a supporting opinion of counsel when the asserted reasons for exclusion are based on matters of state or foreign law. In submitting such an opinion of counsel, the company and its counsel should consider whether the law underlying the opinion of counsel is unsettled or unresolved and, whenever possible, the opinion of counsel should cite relevant legislative authority or judicial precedents regarding the opinion of counsel.

Proposals that would result in the company breaching existing contractual obligations may be excludable under rule 14a-8(i)(2), rule 14a-8(i)(6), or both, because implementing the proposal would require the company to violate applicable law or would not be within the power or authority of the company to implement. If a company asserts either of these bases for exclusion in its rule 14a-8 submission, it expedites the staff's review and often assists the company in meeting its burden of demonstrating that it may exclude the proposal when the company provides a copy of the relevant contract, cites specific provisions of the contract that would be violated, and explains how implementation of the proposal would cause the company to breach its obligations under that contract. The submission also should provide a supporting opinion of counsel or indicate that the arguments advanced under state or foreign law constitute the opinion of counsel.

In analyzing an opinion of counsel that is submitted under rule 14a-8(j)(2)(iii), we consider whether counsel is licensed to practice law in the jurisdiction where the law is at issue. We also consider the extent to which the opinion makes assumptions about the operation of the proposal that are not called for by the language of the proposal. Shareholder proponents who wish to contest a company's reliance on an opinion of counsel as to matters of state or foreign law may, but are not required to, submit an opinion of counsel supporting their position.

F. What should companies and shareholder proponents know about how we process no-action requests?

1. Availability of materials provided to us

Commission rule 82, which can be found at 17 CFR § 200.82, reads as follows (citations are omitted):

Materials filed with the Commission pursuant to rule 14a-8(d) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 [the predecessor of current rule 14a-8(j)], written communications related thereto received from any person, and each related no-action letter or other written

communication issued by the staff of the Commission, shall be made available to any person upon request for inspection or copying.

In adopting rule 82, the Commission stated, "all materials required to be filed with the Commission pursuant to proxy rule 14a-8[j] will be considered public records of the Commission. [Rule 82] also provides for the public availability of written communications related to the materials filed pursuant to rule 14a-8[(j)] which may be voluntarily submitted by shareholder-proponents or other persons." See Exchange Act Release No. 9785 (September 22, 1972). As such, when a company submits a no-action request, we forward a copy of the request to the Commission's Public Reference Room immediately.

In order to ensure that the staff's process is fair to all parties, we base our determinations on the written materials provided to us. While we will respond to telephone questions from the company or the shareholder proponent regarding the status of a request, we do not discuss the substantive nature of any specific no-action request with either the company or the shareholder proponent. Therefore, we request that any additional information that the company or the shareholder proponent would like to provide be submitted to us and the other party in writing.

2. Availability of responses

After we have completed our review of a no-action request, we generally send our response to the request by mail to both the shareholder proponent who submitted the proposal and the company that submitted the request. In addition, we forward a copy of our response, along with the relevant correspondence, to the Commission's Public Reference Room at the time that we issue the response. Commercial databases that check the Public Reference Room routinely for new no-action responses issued by the Division often upload the responses to their systems. As a result, the company or the shareholder proponent often may find our response in the Public Reference Room or on a commercial database prior to their receipt of that response.

3. Facilitating prompt, consistent delivery of responses to companies and shareholder proponents

During the highest volume periods of the rule 14a-8 season, the mailing of our no-action responses may be delayed and the company and the shareholder proponent may not receive the copies that are sent by mail immediately after the issuance of our no-action response. As such, we may fax copies of our responses in order to ensure that shareholder proponents and companies are given timely responses and to avoid prejudicing either party unnecessarily in resolving disputes that may arise in connection with the rule 14a-8 no-action requests. When we have a fax number for both the company and the shareholder proponent, we will fax our response to each if we are unable to mail the response promptly; when we have a fax number for the company but not for the shareholder proponent, we will fax the response to the company where the company agrees to forward promptly our response to the shareholder proponent. It is important to note that the practice of faxing copies of our no-action responses is a courtesy and is not required by Commission rules.

In order to facilitate the prompt delivery of our responses by providing us as much contact information regarding the shareholder proponent as possible, companies should provide us with all relevant correspondence when submitting a no-action request. In this regard, our review is facilitated best when a company's correspondence with us includes the shareholder proposal, any cover letter that the shareholder proponent provided with the proposal, the shareholder's address and fax number, and

any other correspondence the company has exchanged with the shareholder relating to the proposal.

G. Conclusion

We hope that this bulletin, along with SLB No. 14 and SLB No. 14A, helps you gain a better understanding of rule 14a-8, the no-action request process, and our views on some significant issues and questions that arise commonly during our review of rule 14a-8 no-action requests. We believe that these bulletins contain information that will assist in the efficient operation of the rule 14a-8 process for both companies and shareholders.

<http://www.sec.gov/interps/legal/cfs1b14b.htm>

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U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission

Division of Corporation Finance Securities and Exchange Commission

Shareholder Proposals

Staff Legal Bulletin No. 14F (CF)

Action: Publication of CF Staff Legal Bulletin

Date: October 18, 2011

Summary: This staff legal bulletin provides information for companies and shareholders regarding Rule 14a-8 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Supplementary Information: The statements in this bulletin represent the views of the Division of Corporation Finance (the "Division"). This bulletin is not a rule, regulation or statement of the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission"). Further, the Commission has neither approved nor disapproved its content.

Contacts: For further information, please contact the Division's Office of Chief Counsel by calling (202) 551-3500 or by submitting a web-based request form at https://www.sec.gov/forms/corp_fin_interpretive.

A. The purpose of this bulletin

This bulletin is part of a continuing effort by the Division to provide guidance on important issues arising under Exchange Act Rule 14a-8. Specifically, this bulletin contains information regarding:

- Brokers and banks that constitute "record" holders under Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i) for purposes of verifying whether a beneficial owner is eligible to submit a proposal under Rule 14a-8;
- Common errors shareholders can avoid when submitting proof of ownership to companies;
- The submission of revised proposals;
- Procedures for withdrawing no-action requests regarding proposals submitted by multiple proponents; and
- The Division's new process for transmitting Rule 14a-8 no-action responses by email.

You can find additional guidance regarding Rule 14a-8 in the following bulletins that are available on the Commission's website: [SLB No. 14](#), [SLB No. 14A](#), [SLB No. 14B](#), [SLB No. 14C](#), [SLB No. 14D](#) and [SLB No. 14E](#).

B. The types of brokers and banks that constitute "record" holders under Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i) for purposes of verifying whether a beneficial owner is eligible to submit a proposal under Rule 14a-8

1. Eligibility to submit a proposal under Rule 14a-8

To be eligible to submit a shareholder proposal, a shareholder must have continuously held at least \$2,000 in market value, or 1%, of the company's securities entitled to be voted on the proposal at the shareholder meeting for at least one year as of the date the shareholder submits the proposal. The shareholder must also continue to hold the required amount of securities through the date of the meeting and must provide the company with a written statement of intent to do so.¹

The steps that a shareholder must take to verify his or her eligibility to submit a proposal depend on how the shareholder owns the securities. There are two types of security holders in the U.S.: registered owners and beneficial owners.² Registered owners have a direct relationship with the issuer because their ownership of shares is listed on the records maintained by the issuer or its transfer agent. If a shareholder is a registered owner, the company can independently confirm that the shareholder's holdings satisfy Rule 14a-8(b)'s eligibility requirement.

The vast majority of investors in shares issued by U.S. companies, however, are beneficial owners, which means that they hold their securities in book-entry form through a securities intermediary, such as a broker or a bank. Beneficial owners are sometimes referred to as "street name" holders. Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i) provides that a beneficial owner can provide proof of ownership to support his or her eligibility to submit a proposal by submitting a written statement "from the 'record' holder of [the] securities (usually a broker or bank)," verifying that, at the time the proposal was submitted, the shareholder held the required amount of securities continuously for at least one year.³

2. The role of the Depository Trust Company

Most large U.S. brokers and banks deposit their customers' securities with, and hold those securities through, the Depository Trust Company ("DTC"), a registered clearing agency acting as a securities depository. Such brokers and banks are often referred to as "participants" in DTC.⁴ The names of these DTC participants, however, do not appear as the registered owners of the securities deposited with DTC on the list of shareholders maintained by the company or, more typically, by its transfer agent. Rather, DTC's nominee, Cede & Co., appears on the shareholder list as the sole registered owner of securities deposited with DTC by the DTC participants. A company can request from DTC a "securities position listing" as of a specified date, which identifies the DTC participants having a position in the company's securities and the number of securities held by each DTC participant on that date.⁵

3. Brokers and banks that constitute "record" holders under Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i) for purposes of verifying whether a beneficial owner is eligible to submit a proposal under Rule 14a-8

In *The Hain Celestial Group, Inc.* (Oct. 1, 2008), we took the position that an introducing broker could be considered a "record" holder for purposes of Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i). An introducing broker is a broker that engages in sales and other activities involving customer contact, such as opening customer accounts and accepting customer orders, but is not permitted to maintain custody of customer funds and securities.⁶ Instead, an introducing broker engages another broker, known as a "clearing broker," to hold custody of client funds and securities, to clear and execute customer trades, and to handle other functions such as issuing confirmations of customer trades and customer account statements. Clearing brokers generally are DTC participants; introducing brokers generally are not. As introducing brokers generally are not DTC participants, and therefore typically do not appear on DTC's securities position listing, *Hain Celestial* has required companies to

accept proof of ownership letters from brokers in cases where, unlike the positions of registered owners and brokers and banks that are DTC participants, the company is unable to verify the positions against its own or its transfer agent's records or against DTC's securities position listing.

In light of questions we have received following two recent court cases relating to proof of ownership under Rule 14a-8⁷ and in light of the Commission's discussion of registered and beneficial owners in the Proxy Mechanics Concept Release, we have reconsidered our views as to what types of brokers and banks should be considered "record" holders under Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i). Because of the transparency of DTC participants' positions in a company's securities, we will take the view going forward that, for Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i) purposes, only DTC participants should be viewed as "record" holders of securities that are deposited at DTC. As a result, we will no longer follow *Hain Celestial*.

We believe that taking this approach as to who constitutes a "record" holder for purposes of Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i) will provide greater certainty to beneficial owners and companies. We also note that this approach is consistent with Exchange Act Rule 12g5-1 and a 1988 staff no-action letter addressing that rule,⁸ under which brokers and banks that are DTC participants are considered to be the record holders of securities on deposit with DTC when calculating the number of record holders for purposes of Sections 12(g) and 15(d) of the Exchange Act.

Companies have occasionally expressed the view that, because DTC's nominee, Cede & Co., appears on the shareholder list as the sole registered owner of securities deposited with DTC by the DTC participants, only DTC or Cede & Co. should be viewed as the "record" holder of the securities held on deposit at DTC for purposes of Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i). We have never interpreted the rule to require a shareholder to obtain a proof of ownership letter from DTC or Cede & Co., and nothing in this guidance should be construed as changing that view.

How can a shareholder determine whether his or her broker or bank is a DTC participant?

Shareholders and companies can confirm whether a particular broker or bank is a DTC participant by checking DTC's participant list, which is currently available on the Internet at <http://www.dtcc.com/~media/Files/Downloads/client-center/DTC/alpha.ashx>.

What if a shareholder's broker or bank is not on DTC's participant list?

The shareholder will need to obtain proof of ownership from the DTC participant through which the securities are held. The shareholder should be able to find out who this DTC participant is by asking the shareholder's broker or bank.⁹

If the DTC participant knows the shareholder's broker or bank's holdings, but does not know the shareholder's holdings, a shareholder could satisfy Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i) by obtaining and submitting two proof of ownership statements verifying that, at the time the proposal was submitted, the required amount of securities were continuously held for at least one year – one from the shareholder's broker or bank confirming the shareholder's ownership, and the other from the DTC participant confirming the broker or bank's ownership.

How will the staff process no-action requests that argue for exclusion on the basis that the shareholder's proof of ownership is not from a DTC

participant?

The staff will grant no-action relief to a company on the basis that the shareholder's proof of ownership is not from a DTC participant only if the company's notice of defect describes the required proof of ownership in a manner that is consistent with the guidance contained in this bulletin. Under Rule 14a-8(f)(1), the shareholder will have an opportunity to obtain the requisite proof of ownership after receiving the notice of defect.

C. Common errors shareholders can avoid when submitting proof of ownership to companies

In this section, we describe two common errors shareholders make when submitting proof of ownership for purposes of Rule 14a-8(b)(2), and we provide guidance on how to avoid these errors.

First, Rule 14a-8(b) requires a shareholder to provide proof of ownership that he or she has "continuously held at least \$2,000 in market value, or 1%, of the company's securities entitled to be voted on the proposal at the meeting for at least one year by the date you submit the proposal" (emphasis added).¹⁰ We note that many proof of ownership letters do not satisfy this requirement because they do not verify the shareholder's beneficial ownership for the entire one-year period preceding and including the date the proposal is submitted. In some cases, the letter speaks as of a date *before* the date the proposal is submitted, thereby leaving a gap between the date of the verification and the date the proposal is submitted. In other cases, the letter speaks as of a date *after* the date the proposal was submitted but covers a period of only one year, thus failing to verify the shareholder's beneficial ownership over the required full one-year period preceding the date of the proposal's submission.

Second, many letters fail to confirm continuous ownership of the securities. This can occur when a broker or bank submits a letter that confirms the shareholder's beneficial ownership only as of a specified date but omits any reference to continuous ownership for a one-year period.

We recognize that the requirements of Rule 14a-8(b) are highly prescriptive and can cause inconvenience for shareholders when submitting proposals. Although our administration of Rule 14a-8(b) is constrained by the terms of the rule, we believe that shareholders can avoid the two errors highlighted above by arranging to have their broker or bank provide the required verification of ownership as of the date they plan to submit the proposal using the following format:

"As of [date the proposal is submitted], [name of shareholder] held, and has held continuously for at least one year, [number of securities] shares of [company name] [class of securities]."¹¹

As discussed above, a shareholder may also need to provide a separate written statement from the DTC participant through which the shareholder's securities are held if the shareholder's broker or bank is not a DTC participant.

D. The submission of revised proposals

On occasion, a shareholder will revise a proposal after submitting it to a company. This section addresses questions we have received regarding revisions to a proposal or supporting statement.

1. A shareholder submits a timely proposal. The shareholder then submits a revised proposal before the company's deadline for receiving proposals. Must the company accept the revisions?

Yes. In this situation, we believe the revised proposal serves as a replacement of the initial proposal. By submitting a revised proposal, the shareholder has effectively withdrawn the initial proposal. Therefore, the shareholder is not in violation of the one-proposal limitation in Rule 14a-8(c).¹² If the company intends to submit a no-action request, it must do so with respect to the revised proposal.

We recognize that in Question and Answer E.2 of SLB No. 14, we indicated that if a shareholder makes revisions to a proposal before the company submits its no-action request, the company can choose whether to accept the revisions. However, this guidance has led some companies to believe that, in cases where shareholders attempt to make changes to an initial proposal, the company is free to ignore such revisions even if the revised proposal is submitted before the company's deadline for receiving shareholder proposals. We are revising our guidance on this issue to make clear that a company may not ignore a revised proposal in this situation.¹³

2. A shareholder submits a timely proposal. After the deadline for receiving proposals, the shareholder submits a revised proposal. Must the company accept the revisions?

No. If a shareholder submits revisions to a proposal after the deadline for receiving proposals under Rule 14a-8(e), the company is not required to accept the revisions. However, if the company does not accept the revisions, it must treat the revised proposal as a second proposal and submit a notice stating its intention to exclude the revised proposal, as required by Rule 14a-8(j). The company's notice may cite Rule 14a-8(e) as the reason for excluding the revised proposal. If the company does not accept the revisions and intends to exclude the initial proposal, it would also need to submit its reasons for excluding the initial proposal.

3. If a shareholder submits a revised proposal, as of which date must the shareholder prove his or her share ownership?

A shareholder must prove ownership as of the date the original proposal is submitted. When the Commission has discussed revisions to proposals,¹⁴ it has not suggested that a revision triggers a requirement to provide proof of ownership a second time. As outlined in Rule 14a-8(b), proving ownership includes providing a written statement that the shareholder intends to continue to hold the securities through the date of the shareholder meeting. Rule 14a-8(f)(2) provides that if the shareholder "fails in [his or her] promise to hold the required number of securities through the date of the meeting of shareholders, then the company will be permitted to exclude all of [the same shareholder's] proposals from its proxy materials for any meeting held in the following two calendar years." With these provisions in mind, we do not interpret Rule 14a-8 as requiring additional proof of ownership when a shareholder submits a revised proposal.¹⁵

E. Procedures for withdrawing no-action requests for proposals submitted by multiple proponents

We have previously addressed the requirements for withdrawing a Rule 14a-8 no-action request in SLB Nos. 14 and 14C. SLB No. 14 notes that a company should include with a withdrawal letter documentation demonstrating that a shareholder has withdrawn the proposal. In cases where a proposal submitted by multiple shareholders is withdrawn, SLB No. 14C states that, if each shareholder has designated a lead individual to act

on its behalf and the company is able to demonstrate that the individual is authorized to act on behalf of all of the proponents, the company need only provide a letter from that lead individual indicating that the lead individual is withdrawing the proposal on behalf of all of the proponents.

Because there is no relief granted by the staff in cases where a no-action request is withdrawn following the withdrawal of the related proposal, we recognize that the threshold for withdrawing a no-action request need not be overly burdensome. Going forward, we will process a withdrawal request if the company provides a letter from the lead filer that includes a representation that the lead filer is authorized to withdraw the proposal on behalf of each proponent identified in the company's no-action request.¹⁶

F. Use of email to transmit our Rule 14a-8 no-action responses to companies and proponents

To date, the Division has transmitted copies of our Rule 14a-8 no-action responses, including copies of the correspondence we have received in connection with such requests, by U.S. mail to companies and proponents. We also post our response and the related correspondence to the Commission's website shortly after issuance of our response.

In order to accelerate delivery of staff responses to companies and proponents, and to reduce our copying and postage costs, going forward, we intend to transmit our Rule 14a-8 no-action responses by email to companies and proponents. We therefore encourage both companies and proponents to include email contact information in any correspondence to each other and to us. We will use U.S. mail to transmit our no-action response to any company or proponent for which we do not have email contact information.

Given the availability of our responses and the related correspondence on the Commission's website and the requirement under Rule 14a-8 for companies and proponents to copy each other on correspondence submitted to the Commission, we believe it is unnecessary to transmit copies of the related correspondence along with our no-action response. Therefore, we intend to transmit only our staff response and not the correspondence we receive from the parties. We will continue to post to the Commission's website copies of this correspondence at the same time that we post our staff no-action response.

¹ See Rule 14a-8(b).

² For an explanation of the types of share ownership in the U.S., see Concept Release on U.S. Proxy System, Release No. 34-62495 (July 14, 2010) [75 FR 42982] ("Proxy Mechanics Concept Release"), at Section II.A. The term "beneficial owner" does not have a uniform meaning under the federal securities laws. It has a different meaning in this bulletin as compared to "beneficial owner" and "beneficial ownership" in Sections 13 and 16 of the Exchange Act. Our use of the term in this bulletin is not intended to suggest that registered owners are not beneficial owners for purposes of those Exchange Act provisions. See Proposed Amendments to Rule 14a-8 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 Relating to Proposals by Security Holders, Release No. 34-12598 (July 7, 1976) [41 FR 29982], at n.2 ("The term 'beneficial owner' when used in the context of the proxy rules, and in light of the purposes of those rules, may be interpreted to have a broader meaning than it would for certain other purpose[s] under the federal securities laws, such as reporting pursuant to the Williams Act.").

³ If a shareholder has filed a Schedule 13D, Schedule 13G, Form 3, Form 4 or Form 5 reflecting ownership of the required amount of shares, the shareholder may instead prove ownership by submitting a copy of such filings and providing the additional information that is described in Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(ii).

⁴ DTC holds the deposited securities in “fungible bulk,” meaning that there are no specifically identifiable shares directly owned by the DTC participants. Rather, each DTC participant holds a pro rata interest or position in the aggregate number of shares of a particular issuer held at DTC. Correspondingly, each customer of a DTC participant – such as an individual investor – owns a pro rata interest in the shares in which the DTC participant has a pro rata interest. See Proxy Mechanics Concept Release, at Section II.B.2.a.

⁵ See Exchange Act Rule 17Ad-8.

⁶ See Net Capital Rule, Release No. 34-31511 (Nov. 24, 1992) [57 FR 56973] (“Net Capital Rule Release”), at Section II.C.

⁷ See *KBR Inc. v. Chevedden*, Civil Action No. H-11-0196, 2011 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 36431, 2011 WL 1463611 (S.D. Tex. Apr. 4, 2011); *Apache Corp. v. Chevedden*, 696 F. Supp. 2d 723 (S.D. Tex. 2010). In both cases, the court concluded that a securities intermediary was not a record holder for purposes of Rule 14a-8(b) because it did not appear on a list of the company’s non-objecting beneficial owners or on any DTC securities position listing, nor was the intermediary a DTC participant.

⁸ *Techne Corp.* (Sept. 20, 1988).

⁹ In addition, if the shareholder’s broker is an introducing broker, the shareholder’s account statements should include the clearing broker’s identity and telephone number. See Net Capital Rule Release, at Section II.C.(iii). The clearing broker will generally be a DTC participant.

¹⁰ For purposes of Rule 14a-8(b), the submission date of a proposal will generally precede the company’s receipt date of the proposal, absent the use of electronic or other means of same-day delivery.

¹¹ This format is acceptable for purposes of Rule 14a-8(b), but it is not mandatory or exclusive.

¹² As such, it is not appropriate for a company to send a notice of defect for multiple proposals under Rule 14a-8(c) upon receiving a revised proposal.

¹³ This position will apply to all proposals submitted after an initial proposal but before the company’s deadline for receiving proposals, regardless of whether they are explicitly labeled as “revisions” to an initial proposal, unless the shareholder affirmatively indicates an intent to submit a second, *additional* proposal for inclusion in the company’s proxy materials. In that case, the company must send the shareholder a notice of defect pursuant to Rule 14a-8(f)(1) if it intends to exclude either proposal from its proxy materials in reliance on Rule 14a-8(c). In light of this guidance, with respect to proposals or revisions received before a company’s deadline for submission, we will no longer follow *Layne Christensen Co.* (Mar. 21, 2011) and other prior staff no-action letters in which we took the view that a proposal would violate the Rule 14a-8(c) one-proposal limitation if such proposal is submitted to a company after the company has either submitted a Rule 14a-8 no-action request to exclude an earlier proposal submitted by

the same proponent or notified the proponent that the earlier proposal was excludable under the rule.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Adoption of Amendments Relating to Proposals by Security Holders, Release No. 34-12999 (Nov. 22, 1976) [41 FR 52994].

¹⁵ Because the relevant date for proving ownership under Rule 14a-8(b) is the date the proposal is submitted, a proponent who does not adequately prove ownership in connection with a proposal is not permitted to submit another proposal for the same meeting on a later date.

¹⁶ Nothing in this staff position has any effect on the status of any shareholder proposal that is not withdrawn by the proponent or its authorized representative.

<http://www.sec.gov/interps/legal/cfs1b14f.htm>

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Modified: 10/18/2011

ELECTRONIC CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS**e-CFR data is current as of December 7, 2017**

Title 17 → Chapter II → Part 240 → §240.14a-8

Title 17: Commodity and Securities Exchanges
PART 240—GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS, SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**§240.14a-8 Shareholder proposals.**

This section addresses when a company must include a shareholder's proposal in its proxy statement and identify the proposal in its form of proxy when the company holds an annual or special meeting of shareholders. In summary, in order to have your shareholder proposal included on a company's proxy card, and included along with any supporting statement in its proxy statement, you must be eligible and follow certain procedures. Under a few specific circumstances, the company is permitted to exclude your proposal, but only after submitting its reasons to the Commission. We structured this section in a question-and-answer format so that it is easier to understand. The references to "you" are to a shareholder seeking to submit the proposal.

(a) *Question 1: What is a proposal?* A shareholder proposal is your recommendation or requirement that the company and/or its board of directors take action, which you intend to present at a meeting of the company's shareholders. Your proposal should state as clearly as possible the course of action that you believe the company should follow. If your proposal is placed on the company's proxy card, the company must also provide in the form of proxy means for shareholders to specify by boxes a choice between approval or disapproval, or abstention. Unless otherwise indicated, the word "proposal" as used in this section refers both to your proposal, and to your corresponding statement in support of your proposal (if any).

(b) *Question 2: Who is eligible to submit a proposal, and how do I demonstrate to the company that I am eligible?* (1) In order to be eligible to submit a proposal, you must have continuously held at least \$2,000 in market value, or 1%, of the company's securities entitled to be voted on the proposal at the meeting for at least one year by the date you submit the proposal. You must continue to hold those securities through the date of the meeting.

(2) If you are the registered holder of your securities, which means that your name appears in the company's records as a shareholder, the company can verify your eligibility on its own, although you will still have to provide the company with a written statement that you intend to continue to hold the securities through the date of the meeting of shareholders. However, if like many shareholders you are not a registered holder, the company likely does not know that you are a shareholder, or how many shares you own. In this case, at the time you submit your proposal, you must prove your eligibility to the company in one of two ways:

(i) The first way is to submit to the company a written statement from the "record" holder of your securities (usually a broker or bank) verifying that, at the time you submitted your proposal, you continuously held the securities for at least one year. You must also include your own written statement that you intend to continue to hold the securities through the date of the meeting of shareholders; or

(ii) The second way to prove ownership applies only if you have filed a Schedule 13D (§240.13d-101), Schedule 13G (§240.13d-102), Form 3 (§249.103 of this chapter), Form 4 (§249.104 of this chapter) and/or Form 5 (§249.105 of this chapter), or amendments to those documents or updated forms, reflecting your ownership of the shares as of or before the date on which the one-year eligibility period begins. If you have filed one of these documents with the SEC, you may demonstrate your eligibility by submitting to the company:

(A) A copy of the schedule and/or form, and any subsequent amendments reporting a change in your ownership level;

(B) Your written statement that you continuously held the required number of shares for the one-year period as of the date of the statement; and

(C) Your written statement that you intend to continue ownership of the shares through the date of the company's annual or special meeting.

(c) *Question 3: How many proposals may I submit?* Each shareholder may submit no more than one proposal to a company for a particular shareholders' meeting.

(d) *Question 4:* How long can my proposal be? The proposal, including any accompanying supporting statement, may not exceed 500 words.

(e) *Question 5:* What is the deadline for submitting a proposal? (1) If you are submitting your proposal for the company's annual meeting, you can in most cases find the deadline in last year's proxy statement. However, if the company did not hold an annual meeting last year, or has changed the date of its meeting for this year more than 30 days from last year's meeting, you can usually find the deadline in one of the company's quarterly reports on Form 10-Q (§249.308a of this chapter), or in shareholder reports of investment companies under §270.30d-1 of this chapter of the Investment Company Act of 1940. In order to avoid controversy, shareholders should submit their proposals by means, including electronic means, that permit them to prove the date of delivery.

(2) The deadline is calculated in the following manner if the proposal is submitted for a regularly scheduled annual meeting. The proposal must be received at the company's principal executive offices not less than 120 calendar days before the date of the company's proxy statement released to shareholders in connection with the previous year's annual meeting. However, if the company did not hold an annual meeting the previous year, or if the date of this year's annual meeting has been changed by more than 30 days from the date of the previous year's meeting, then the deadline is a reasonable time before the company begins to print and send its proxy materials.

(3) If you are submitting your proposal for a meeting of shareholders other than a regularly scheduled annual meeting, the deadline is a reasonable time before the company begins to print and send its proxy materials.

(f) *Question 6:* What if I fail to follow one of the eligibility or procedural requirements explained in answers to Questions 1 through 4 of this section? (1) The company may exclude your proposal, but only after it has notified you of the problem, and you have failed adequately to correct it. Within 14 calendar days of receiving your proposal, the company must notify you in writing of any procedural or eligibility deficiencies, as well as of the time frame for your response. Your response must be postmarked, or transmitted electronically, no later than 14 days from the date you received the company's notification. A company need not provide you such notice of a deficiency if the deficiency cannot be remedied, such as if you fail to submit a proposal by the company's properly determined deadline. If the company intends to exclude the proposal, it will later have to make a submission under §240.14a-8 and provide you with a copy under Question 10 below, §240.14a-8(j).

(2) If you fail in your promise to hold the required number of securities through the date of the meeting of shareholders, then the company will be permitted to exclude all of your proposals from its proxy materials for any meeting held in the following two calendar years.

(g) *Question 7:* Who has the burden of persuading the Commission or its staff that my proposal can be excluded? Except as otherwise noted, the burden is on the company to demonstrate that it is entitled to exclude a proposal.

(h) *Question 8:* Must I appear personally at the shareholders' meeting to present the proposal? (1) Either you, or your representative who is qualified under state law to present the proposal on your behalf, must attend the meeting to present the proposal. Whether you attend the meeting yourself or send a qualified representative to the meeting in your place, you should make sure that you, or your representative, follow the proper state law procedures for attending the meeting and/or presenting your proposal.

(2) If the company holds its shareholder meeting in whole or in part via electronic media, and the company permits you or your representative to present your proposal via such media, then you may appear through electronic media rather than traveling to the meeting to appear in person.

(3) If you or your qualified representative fail to appear and present the proposal, without good cause, the company will be permitted to exclude all of your proposals from its proxy materials for any meetings held in the following two calendar years.

(i) *Question 9:* If I have complied with the procedural requirements, on what other bases may a company rely to exclude my proposal? (1) Improper under state law: If the proposal is not a proper subject for action by shareholders under the laws of the jurisdiction of the company's organization;

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (i)(1): Depending on the subject matter, some proposals are not considered proper under state law if they would be binding on the company if approved by shareholders. In our experience, most proposals that are cast as recommendations or requests that the board of directors take specified action are proper under state law. Accordingly, we will assume that a proposal drafted as a recommendation or suggestion is proper unless the company demonstrates otherwise.

(2) *Violation of law:* If the proposal would, if implemented, cause the company to violate any state, federal, or foreign law to which it is subject;

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (i)(2): We will not apply this basis for exclusion to permit exclusion of a proposal on grounds that it would violate foreign law if compliance with the foreign law would result in a violation of any state or federal law.

(3) *Violation of proxy rules:* If the proposal or supporting statement is contrary to any of the Commission's proxy rules, including §240.14a-9, which prohibits materially false or misleading statements in proxy soliciting materials;

(4) *Personal grievance; special interest:* If the proposal relates to the redress of a personal claim or grievance against the company or any other person, or if it is designed to result in a benefit to you, or to further a personal interest, which is not shared by the other shareholders at large;

(5) *Relevance:* If the proposal relates to operations which account for less than 5 percent of the company's total assets at the end of its most recent fiscal year, and for less than 5 percent of its net earnings and gross sales for its most recent fiscal year, and is not otherwise significantly related to the company's business;

(6) *Absence of power/authority:* If the company would lack the power or authority to implement the proposal;

(7) *Management functions:* If the proposal deals with a matter relating to the company's ordinary business operations;

(8) *Director elections:* If the proposal:

(i) Would disqualify a nominee who is standing for election;

(ii) Would remove a director from office before his or her term expired;

(iii) Questions the competence, business judgment, or character of one or more nominees or directors;

(iv) Seeks to include a specific individual in the company's proxy materials for election to the board of directors; or

(v) Otherwise could affect the outcome of the upcoming election of directors.

(9) *Conflicts with company's proposal:* If the proposal directly conflicts with one of the company's own proposals to be submitted to shareholders at the same meeting;

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (i)(9): A company's submission to the Commission under this section should specify the points of conflict with the company's proposal.

(10) *Substantially implemented:* If the company has already substantially implemented the proposal;

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (i)(10): A company may exclude a shareholder proposal that would provide an advisory vote or seek future advisory votes to approve the compensation of executives as disclosed pursuant to Item 402 of Regulation S-K (§229.402 of this chapter) or any successor to Item 402 (a "say-on-pay vote") or that relates to the frequency of say-on-pay votes, provided that in the most recent shareholder vote required by §240.14a-21(b) of this chapter a single year (*i.e.*, one, two, or three years) received approval of a majority of votes cast on the matter and the company has adopted a policy on the frequency of say-on-pay votes that is consistent with the choice of the majority of votes cast in the most recent shareholder vote required by §240.14a-21(b) of this chapter.

(11) *Duplication:* If the proposal substantially duplicates another proposal previously submitted to the company by another proponent that will be included in the company's proxy materials for the same meeting;

(12) *Resubmissions:* If the proposal deals with substantially the same subject matter as another proposal or proposals that has or have been previously included in the company's proxy materials within the preceding 5 calendar years, a company may exclude it from its proxy materials for any meeting held within 3 calendar years of the last time it was included if the proposal received:

(i) Less than 3% of the vote if proposed once within the preceding 5 calendar years;

(ii) Less than 6% of the vote on its last submission to shareholders if proposed twice previously within the preceding 5 calendar years; or

(iii) Less than 10% of the vote on its last submission to shareholders if proposed three times or more previously within the preceding 5 calendar years; and

(13) *Specific amount of dividends:* If the proposal relates to specific amounts of cash or stock dividends.

(j) *Question 10:* What procedures must the company follow if it intends to exclude my proposal? (1) If the company intends to exclude a proposal from its proxy materials, it must file its reasons with the Commission no later than 80 calendar days before it files its definitive proxy statement and form of proxy with the Commission. The company must simultaneously provide you with a copy of its submission. The Commission staff may permit the company to make its submission later than 80 days before the company files its definitive proxy statement and form of proxy, if the company demonstrates good cause for missing the deadline.

(2) The company must file six paper copies of the following:

(i) The proposal;

(ii) An explanation of why the company believes that it may exclude the proposal, which should, if possible, refer to the most recent applicable authority, such as prior Division letters issued under the rule; and

(iii) A supporting opinion of counsel when such reasons are based on matters of state or foreign law.

(k) *Question 11:* May I submit my own statement to the Commission responding to the company's arguments?

Yes, you may submit a response, but it is not required. You should try to submit any response to us, with a copy to the company, as soon as possible after the company makes its submission. This way, the Commission staff will have time to consider fully your submission before it issues its response. You should submit six paper copies of your response.

(l) *Question 12:* If the company includes my shareholder proposal in its proxy materials, what information about me must it include along with the proposal itself?

(1) The company's proxy statement must include your name and address, as well as the number of the company's voting securities that you hold. However, instead of providing that information, the company may instead include a statement that it will provide the information to shareholders promptly upon receiving an oral or written request.

(2) The company is not responsible for the contents of your proposal or supporting statement.

(m) *Question 13:* What can I do if the company includes in its proxy statement reasons why it believes shareholders should not vote in favor of my proposal, and I disagree with some of its statements?

(1) The company may elect to include in its proxy statement reasons why it believes shareholders should vote against your proposal. The company is allowed to make arguments reflecting its own point of view, just as you may express your own point of view in your proposal's supporting statement.

(2) However, if you believe that the company's opposition to your proposal contains materially false or misleading statements that may violate our anti-fraud rule, §240.14a-9, you should promptly send to the Commission staff and the company a letter explaining the reasons for your view, along with a copy of the company's statements opposing your proposal. To the extent possible, your letter should include specific factual information demonstrating the inaccuracy of the company's claims. Time permitting, you may wish to try to work out your differences with the company by yourself before contacting the Commission staff.

(3) We require the company to send you a copy of its statements opposing your proposal before it sends its proxy materials, so that you may bring to our attention any materially false or misleading statements, under the following timeframes:

(i) If our no-action response requires that you make revisions to your proposal or supporting statement as a condition to requiring the company to include it in its proxy materials, then the company must provide you with a copy of its opposition statements no later than 5 calendar days after the company receives a copy of your revised proposal; or

(ii) In all other cases, the company must provide you with a copy of its opposition statements no later than 30 calendar days before its files definitive copies of its proxy statement and form of proxy under §240.14a-6.

[63 FR 29119, May 28, 1998; 63 FR 50622, 50623, Sept. 22, 1998, as amended at 72 FR 4168, Jan. 29, 2007; 72 FR 70456, Dec. 11, 2007; 73 FR 977, Jan. 4, 2008; 76 FR 6045, Feb. 2, 2011; 75 FR 56782, Sept. 16, 2010]

Need assistance?



U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission

Division of Corporation Finance Securities and Exchange Commission

Shareholder Proposals

Staff Legal Bulletin No. 14G (CF)

Action: Publication of CF Staff Legal Bulletin

Date: October 16, 2012

Summary: This staff legal bulletin provides information for companies and shareholders regarding Rule 14a-8 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Supplementary Information: The statements in this bulletin represent the views of the Division of Corporation Finance (the "Division"). This bulletin is not a rule, regulation or statement of the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission"). Further, the Commission has neither approved nor disapproved its content.

Contacts: For further information, please contact the Division's Office of Chief Counsel by calling (202) 551-3500 or by submitting a web-based request form at https://www.sec.gov/forms/corp_fin_interpretive.

A. The purpose of this bulletin

This bulletin is part of a continuing effort by the Division to provide guidance on important issues arising under Exchange Act Rule 14a-8. Specifically, this bulletin contains information regarding:

- the parties that can provide proof of ownership under Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i) for purposes of verifying whether a beneficial owner is eligible to submit a proposal under Rule 14a-8;
- the manner in which companies should notify proponents of a failure to provide proof of ownership for the one-year period required under Rule 14a-8(b)(1); and
- the use of website references in proposals and supporting statements.

You can find additional guidance regarding Rule 14a-8 in the following bulletins that are available on the Commission's website: [SLB No. 14](#), [SLB No. 14A](#), [SLB No. 14B](#), [SLB No. 14C](#), [SLB No. 14D](#), [SLB No. 14E](#) and [SLB No. 14F](#).

B. Parties that can provide proof of ownership under Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i) for purposes of verifying whether a beneficial owner is eligible to submit a proposal under Rule 14a-8

1. Sufficiency of proof of ownership letters provided by affiliates of DTC participants for purposes of Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i)

To be eligible to submit a proposal under Rule 14a-8, a shareholder must, among other things, provide documentation evidencing that the shareholder has continuously held at least \$2,000 in market value, or 1%, of the company's securities entitled to be voted on the proposal at the shareholder meeting for at least one year as of the date the shareholder submits the proposal. If the shareholder is a beneficial owner of the securities, which means that the securities are held in book-entry form through a securities intermediary, Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i) provides that this documentation can be in the form of a "written statement from the 'record' holder of your securities (usually a broker or bank)...."

In SLB No. 14F, the Division described its view that only securities intermediaries that are participants in the Depository Trust Company ("DTC") should be viewed as "record" holders of securities that are deposited at DTC for purposes of Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i). Therefore, a beneficial owner must obtain a proof of ownership letter from the DTC participant through which its securities are held at DTC in order to satisfy the proof of ownership requirements in Rule 14a-8.

During the most recent proxy season, some companies questioned the sufficiency of proof of ownership letters from entities that were not themselves DTC participants, but were affiliates of DTC participants.¹ By virtue of the affiliate relationship, we believe that a securities intermediary holding shares through its affiliated DTC participant should be in a position to verify its customers' ownership of securities. Accordingly, we are of the view that, for purposes of Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i), a proof of ownership letter from an affiliate of a DTC participant satisfies the requirement to provide a proof of ownership letter from a DTC participant.

2. Adequacy of proof of ownership letters from securities intermediaries that are not brokers or banks

We understand that there are circumstances in which securities intermediaries that are not brokers or banks maintain securities accounts in the ordinary course of their business. A shareholder who holds securities through a securities intermediary that is not a broker or bank can satisfy Rule 14a-8's documentation requirement by submitting a proof of ownership letter from that securities intermediary.² If the securities intermediary is not a DTC participant or an affiliate of a DTC participant, then the shareholder will also need to obtain a proof of ownership letter from the DTC participant or an affiliate of a DTC participant that can verify the holdings of the securities intermediary.

C. Manner in which companies should notify proponents of a failure to provide proof of ownership for the one-year period required under Rule 14a-8(b)(1)

As discussed in Section C of SLB No. 14F, a common error in proof of ownership letters is that they do not verify a proponent's beneficial ownership for the entire one-year period preceding and including the date the proposal was submitted, as required by Rule 14a-8(b)(1). In some cases, the letter speaks as of a date *before* the date the proposal was submitted, thereby leaving a gap between the date of verification and the date the proposal was submitted. In other cases, the letter speaks as of a date *after* the date the proposal was submitted but covers a period of only one year, thus failing to verify the proponent's beneficial ownership over the required full one-year period preceding the date of the proposal's submission.

Under Rule 14a-8(f), if a proponent fails to follow one of the eligibility or procedural requirements of the rule, a company may exclude the proposal only if it notifies the proponent of the defect and the proponent fails to

correct it. In SLB No. 14 and SLB No. 14B, we explained that companies should provide adequate detail about what a proponent must do to remedy all eligibility or procedural defects.

We are concerned that companies' notices of defect are not adequately describing the defects or explaining what a proponent must do to remedy defects in proof of ownership letters. For example, some companies' notices of defect make no mention of the gap in the period of ownership covered by the proponent's proof of ownership letter or other specific deficiencies that the company has identified. We do not believe that such notices of defect serve the purpose of Rule 14a-8(f).

Accordingly, going forward, we will not concur in the exclusion of a proposal under Rules 14a-8(b) and 14a-8(f) on the basis that a proponent's proof of ownership does not cover the one-year period preceding and including the date the proposal is submitted unless the company provides a notice of defect that identifies the specific date on which the proposal was submitted and explains that the proponent must obtain a new proof of ownership letter verifying continuous ownership of the requisite amount of securities for the one-year period preceding and including such date to cure the defect. We view the proposal's date of submission as the date the proposal is postmarked or transmitted electronically. Identifying in the notice of defect the specific date on which the proposal was submitted will help a proponent better understand how to remedy the defects described above and will be particularly helpful in those instances in which it may be difficult for a proponent to determine the date of submission, such as when the proposal is not postmarked on the same day it is placed in the mail. In addition, companies should include copies of the postmark or evidence of electronic transmission with their no-action requests.

D. Use of website addresses in proposals and supporting statements

Recently, a number of proponents have included in their proposals or in their supporting statements the addresses to websites that provide more information about their proposals. In some cases, companies have sought to exclude either the website address or the entire proposal due to the reference to the website address.

In SLB No. 14, we explained that a reference to a website address in a proposal does not raise the concerns addressed by the 500-word limitation in Rule 14a-8(d). We continue to be of this view and, accordingly, we will continue to count a website address as one word for purposes of Rule 14a-8(d). To the extent that the company seeks the exclusion of a website reference in a proposal, but not the proposal itself, we will continue to follow the guidance stated in SLB No. 14, which provides that references to website addresses in proposals or supporting statements could be subject to exclusion under Rule 14a-8(i)(3) if the information contained on the website is materially false or misleading, irrelevant to the subject matter of the proposal or otherwise in contravention of the proxy rules, including Rule 14a-9.³

In light of the growing interest in including references to website addresses in proposals and supporting statements, we are providing additional guidance on the appropriate use of website addresses in proposals and supporting statements.⁴

1. References to website addresses in a proposal or supporting statement and Rule 14a-8(i)(3)

References to websites in a proposal or supporting statement may raise concerns under Rule 14a-8(i)(3). In SLB No. 14B, we stated that the

exclusion of a proposal under Rule 14a-8(i)(3) as vague and indefinite may be appropriate if neither the shareholders voting on the proposal, nor the company in implementing the proposal (if adopted), would be able to determine with any reasonable certainty exactly what actions or measures the proposal requires. In evaluating whether a proposal may be excluded on this basis, we consider only the information contained in the proposal and supporting statement and determine whether, based on that information, shareholders and the company can determine what actions the proposal seeks.

If a proposal or supporting statement refers to a website that provides information necessary for shareholders and the company to understand with reasonable certainty exactly what actions or measures the proposal requires, and such information is not also contained in the proposal or in the supporting statement, then we believe the proposal would raise concerns under Rule 14a-9 and would be subject to exclusion under Rule 14a-8(i)(3) as vague and indefinite. By contrast, if shareholders and the company can understand with reasonable certainty exactly what actions or measures the proposal requires without reviewing the information provided on the website, then we believe that the proposal would not be subject to exclusion under Rule 14a-8(i)(3) on the basis of the reference to the website address. In this case, the information on the website only supplements the information contained in the proposal and in the supporting statement.

2. Providing the company with the materials that will be published on the referenced website

We recognize that if a proposal references a website that is not operational at the time the proposal is submitted, it will be impossible for a company or the staff to evaluate whether the website reference may be excluded. In our view, a reference to a non-operational website in a proposal or supporting statement could be excluded under Rule 14a-8(i)(3) as irrelevant to the subject matter of a proposal. We understand, however, that a proponent may wish to include a reference to a website containing information related to the proposal but wait to activate the website until it becomes clear that the proposal will be included in the company's proxy materials. Therefore, we will not concur that a reference to a website may be excluded as irrelevant under Rule 14a-8(i)(3) on the basis that it is not yet operational if the proponent, at the time the proposal is submitted, provides the company with the materials that are intended for publication on the website and a representation that the website will become operational at, or prior to, the time the company files its definitive proxy materials.

3. Potential issues that may arise if the content of a referenced website changes after the proposal is submitted

To the extent the information on a website changes after submission of a proposal and the company believes the revised information renders the website reference excludable under Rule 14a-8, a company seeking our concurrence that the website reference may be excluded must submit a letter presenting its reasons for doing so. While Rule 14a-8(j) requires a company to submit its reasons for exclusion with the Commission no later than 80 calendar days before it files its definitive proxy materials, we may concur that the changes to the referenced website constitute "good cause" for the company to file its reasons for excluding the website reference after the 80-day deadline and grant the company's request that the 80-day requirement be waived.

¹ An entity is an "affiliate" of a DTC participant if such entity directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediaries, controls or is controlled by, or is under common control with, the DTC participant.

² Rule 14a-8(b)(2)(i) itself acknowledges that the record holder is "usually," but not always, a broker or bank.

³ Rule 14a-9 prohibits statements in proxy materials which, at the time and in the light of the circumstances under which they are made, are false or misleading with respect to any material fact, or which omit to state any material fact necessary in order to make the statements not false or misleading.

⁴ A website that provides more information about a shareholder proposal may constitute a proxy solicitation under the proxy rules. Accordingly, we remind shareholders who elect to include website addresses in their proposals to comply with all applicable rules regarding proxy solicitations.

<http://www.sec.gov/interps/legal/cfs1b14g.htm>

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Modified: 10/16/2012

From: ***
To: [Elizabeth Lacy](#)
Subject: Rule 14a-8 Proposal (ASMB) blb
Date: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 4:13:11 PM
Attachments: [CCE19122017_5.pdf](#)

Dear Ms. Lacy,
Please see the attached broker letter.
Sincerely,
John Chevedden



Ameritrade

12/19/2017

James Mcritchie, Roth IRA

Re: Your TD Ameritrade Account Ending in ***

Dear James Mcritchie,

Thank you for allowing me to assist you today.

Pursuant to your request, this letter is to confirm that as of the date of this letter, James McRitchie held, and had held continuously for at least thirteen months, 200 shares of Assembly Biosciences (ASMB) common stock in his account ending in *** at TD Ameritrade. The DTC clearinghouse number for TD Ameritrade is 0188

If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know. Just log in to your account and go to the Message Center to write us. You can also call Client Services at 800-669-3900. We're available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Sincerely,

Joy Busse
Resource Specialist
TD Ameritrade

This information is furnished as part of a general information service and TD Ameritrade shall not be liable for any damages arising out of any inaccuracy in the information. Because this information may differ from your TD Ameritrade monthly statement, you should rely only on the TD Ameritrade monthly statement as the official record of your TD Ameritrade account.

Market volatility, volume, and system availability may delay account access and trade executions.

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From: Elizabeth Lacy
Sent: Sunday, January 28, 2018 6:52 PM
To: ***
Subject: RE: (ASMB)

Dear Mr. Chevedden:

Following your submission on behalf of Mr. McRitchie of the shareholder proposal requesting that the company amend its bylaws to add a proxy access provision, the company undertook a comprehensive review of its bylaws in coordination with Delaware counsel to update our bylaws. As part of this general updating exercise of our bylaws, the exclusive forum provision was one of the update changes recommended by counsel.

The shareholder proposal solely requested the addition of a proxy access bylaw provision and our amended and restated bylaws has substantially implemented that request.

Regards,
Elizabeth

Elizabeth H. Lacy
General Counsel, Vice President of Legal Operations
Assembly Biosciences, Inc.
(317) 975-2699 – direct
(317) 250-7750 - cell

From: ***
Sent: Sunday, January 28, 2018 9:12 AM
To: Elizabeth Lacy <elizabeth@assemblybio.com>
Subject: (ASMB)

Dear Ms. Lacy,
Can you advise the company rule before this.
Sincerely,
John Chevedden

Delaware will be the sole and exclusive forum for (i) any derivative action or proceeding brought on behalf of the Company, (ii) any action asserting a claim of breach of a fiduciary duty owed by any director, officer or other employee of the Company to the Company or the Company's stockholders, (iii) any action asserting a claim arising pursuant to any provision of the Delaware General Corporation Law or the Company's certificate of incorporation or the Bylaws, or

(iv) any action asserting a claim against the Company governed by the internal affairs doctrine.

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Exhibit C

AMENDED AND RESTATED BYLAWS
OF
ASSEMBLY BIOSCIENCES, INC.

ARTICLE I OFFICES

1.1 Registered Office. The registered office of **ASSEMBLY BIOSCIENCES, INC.** (the “**Corporation**”), in the State of Delaware is 251 Little Falls Drive, Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware 19808, and its registered agent at such address is Corporation Service Company.

1.2 Principal Office. The principal office for the transaction of the business of the Corporation shall be at such location, within or without the State of Delaware, as shall be designated by the board of directors of the Corporation.

1.3 Other Offices. The Corporation may also have an office or offices at such other place or places, either within or without the State of Delaware, as the board of directors may from time to time determine or as the business of the Corporation may require.

ARTICLE II MEETINGS OF STOCKHOLDERS

2.1 Place of Meetings. Meetings of stockholders shall be held at any place (if any), within or outside the State of Delaware, designated by the board of directors. The board of directors may, in its sole discretion, determine that a meeting shall not be held at any place, but may instead be held solely by means of remote communication as authorized by Section 211 of the General Corporation Law of Delaware.

If authorized by the board of directors in its sole discretion, and subject to such guidelines and procedures as the board of directors may adopt, stockholders and proxyholders not physically present at a meeting of stockholders may, by means of remote communication, participate in a meeting of stockholders, be deemed present in person and vote at a meeting of stockholders whether such meeting is to be held at a designated place or solely by means of remote communication, provided that (i) the Corporation shall implement reasonable measures to verify that each person deemed present and permitted to vote at the meeting by means of remote communication is a stockholder or proxyholder, (ii) the Corporation shall implement reasonable measures to provide such stockholders and proxyholders a reasonable opportunity to participate in the meeting and to vote on matters submitted to the stockholders, including an opportunity to read or hear the proceedings of the meeting substantially concurrently with such proceedings, and (iii) if any stockholder or proxyholder votes or takes other action at the meeting by means of remote communication, a record of such vote or other action shall be maintained by the Corporation.

2.2 Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of stockholders shall be held each year on a date and at a time and place (if any) designated by the board of directors, which date, time and place (if any) may subsequently be changed at any time by vote of the board of directors. In the absence of such designation, the annual meeting of stockholders shall be held on the fourth Tuesday in May of each year at 10:00 a.m. However, if such day falls on a legal holiday, then the meeting shall be held at the same time and place on the next succeeding full business day. At the meeting, directors shall be elected and any other proper business may be transacted. If no

annual meeting has been held for a period of thirteen (13) months after the Corporation's last annual meeting, a special meeting in lieu thereof may be held, and such special meeting shall have, for the purposes of these bylaws or otherwise, all the force and effect of an annual meeting. Any and all references hereafter in these bylaws to an annual meeting or annual meetings also shall be deemed to refer to any special meeting(s) in lieu thereof.

2.3 Special Meeting. Except as otherwise required by statute and subject to the rights, if any, of the holders of any series of preferred stock, special meetings of the stockholders may be called, at any time for any purpose or purposes, by the board of directors or by such person or persons as may be authorized by the certificate of incorporation, or by such person or persons duly designated by the board of directors whose powers and authority, as expressly provided in a resolution of the board of directors, include the power to call such meetings, but such special meetings may not be called by any other person or persons. Only those matters set forth in the notice of the special meeting or brought by or at the direction of the board of directors may be considered or acted upon at a special meeting of stockholders of the Corporation. Nominations of persons for election to the board of directors of the Corporation and stockholder proposals of other business shall not be brought before a special meeting of stockholders to be considered by the stockholders unless such special meeting is held in lieu of an annual meeting of stockholders in accordance with Article II, Section 2.2 of these bylaws, in which case such special meeting in lieu thereof shall be deemed an annual meeting for purposes of these bylaws and the provisions of Article II of these bylaws shall govern such special meeting.

2.4 Notice of Stockholders' Meetings.

(a) Except to the extent otherwise required by law, all notices of meetings of stockholders shall be in writing and shall be sent or otherwise given in accordance with Section 2.5 of these bylaws not less than ten (10) nor more than sixty (60) days before the date of the meeting to each stockholder entitled to vote at such meeting as of the record date for determining the stockholders entitled to notice of such meeting. The notice shall specify the place, if any, date, and hour of the meeting, the means of remote communication, if any, by which stockholders and proxyholders may be deemed to be present in person and vote at such meeting, the record date for determining stockholder entitled to vote at such meeting (if such date is different from the record date for determining stockholders entitled to notice of such meeting), and, in the case of a special meeting, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called.

(b) Without limiting the manner by which notice otherwise may be given effectively to stockholders, any notice to stockholders given by the Corporation under any provision of the General Corporation Law of Delaware, the certificate of incorporation of the Corporation or these bylaws shall also be effective if given by a form of electronic transmission consented to by the stockholder to whom the notice is given. Any such consent shall be revocable by the stockholder by written notice to the Corporation. Any such consent shall be deemed revoked if (i) the Corporation is unable to deliver by electronic transmission two consecutive notices given by the Corporation in accordance with such consent, and (ii) such inability becomes known to the secretary or an assistant secretary of the Corporation or to the transfer agent, or other person responsible for the giving of notice; provided, however, the inadvertent failure to recognize such revocation shall not invalidate any meeting or other action.

(c) Without limiting the manner by which notice otherwise may be given effectively to stockholders, any notice to stockholders given by the Corporation under any provision of the General Corporation Law of Delaware, the certificate of incorporation of the Corporation or these bylaws shall be effective if given by a single written notice to stockholders who share an address if consented to by the stockholders at that address to whom such notice is given. Any such consent shall be revocable by the stockholder by written notice to the Corporation. Any stockholder who fails to object in writing to the Corporation, within sixty (60) days of having been given written notice by the Corporation of its intention to send the single notice permitted under this subsection 2.4(c), shall be deemed to have consented to receiving such single written notice.

(d) Sections 2.4(b) and (c) shall not apply to any notice given to stockholders under sections 164 (notice of sale of shares of stockholder who failed to pay an installment or call on stock not fully paid), 296 (notice of disputed claims relating to insolvent corporations), 311 (notice of meeting of stockholders to revoke dissolution of corporation), 312 (notice of meeting of stockholders of corporation whose certificate of incorporation has been renewed or revived) and 324 (notice when stock has been attached as required for sale upon execution process) of the General Corporation Law of Delaware.

(e) Notice of all special meetings of stockholders shall be given in the same manner as provided for annual meetings, except that the notice of all special meetings shall state the purpose or purposes for which the meeting has been called.

2.5 Manner of Giving Notice; Affidavit of Notice

(a) Written notice of any meeting of stockholders, if mailed, is given when deposited in the United States mail, postage prepaid, directed to the stockholder at his, her or its address as it appears on the records of the Corporation. An affidavit of the secretary or an assistant secretary or of the transfer agent or other agent of the Corporation that the notice has been given shall, in the absence of fraud, be prima facie evidence of the facts stated therein.

(b) Notice given pursuant to Section 2.4 shall be deemed given: (i) if by facsimile telecommunication, when directed to a number at which the stockholder has consented to receive notice; (ii) if by electronic mail, when directed to an electronic mail address at which the stockholder has consented to receive notice; (iii) if by a posting on an electronic network together with separate notice to the stockholder of such specific posting, upon the later of such posting and the giving of such separate notice; and (iv) if by any other form of electronic transmission, when directed to the stockholder. An affidavit of the secretary, an assistant secretary or the transfer agent or other agent of the Corporation that the notice has been given by a form of electronic transmission shall, in the absence of fraud, be prima facie evidence of the facts stated therein.

2.6 Quorum: Action at Meeting. The holders of a majority of the stock issued and outstanding and entitled to vote thereat, present in person or represented by proxy, shall constitute a quorum at all meetings of the stockholders for the transaction of business except as otherwise required by statute or provided by the certificate of incorporation; provided, however, that where a separate vote by a class or series or classes or series is required, a majority of the

voting power of the stock of such class or series or classes or series outstanding and entitled to vote on that matter, present in person or represented by proxy, shall constitute a quorum entitled to take action with respect to such matter. If, however, such quorum is not present or represented at any meeting of the stockholders, then the presiding officer or the stockholders holding a majority of the voting power entitled to vote thereat, present in person or represented by proxy, shall have power to adjourn the meeting from time to time in accordance with Section 2.7, without notice other than announcement at the meeting, until a quorum is present or represented. At such adjourned meeting at which a quorum is present or represented, any business may be transacted that might have been transacted at the meeting as originally noticed. Subject to applicable law, the stockholders present at a duly constituted meeting may continue to transact business until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough stockholders to leave less than a quorum. When a quorum is present at any meeting of stockholders, any matter before any such meeting (other than an election of a director or directors) shall be decided by a majority of the votes properly cast for and against such matter, except where a larger vote is required by law, by the certificate of incorporation or by these bylaws. Any election of directors by stockholders shall be determined by a plurality of the votes properly cast on the election of directors.

2.7 Adjournments: Notice

(a) The board of directors may postpone and reschedule any previously scheduled annual meeting or special meeting of stockholders and any record date with respect thereto, regardless of whether any notice or public disclosure with respect to any such meeting has been sent or made pursuant to these bylaws or otherwise. In no event shall the public announcement of an adjournment, postponement or rescheduling of any previously scheduled meeting of stockholders commence a new time period for the giving of a stockholder's notice under these bylaws.

(b) Any meeting of stockholders, whether or not a quorum is present, may be adjourned to any other time and to any other place at which a meeting of stockholders may be held under these bylaws by the chairperson of the board of directors, or in the absence of such person, by any officer entitled to preside at or to act as secretary of such meeting. When a meeting is adjourned to another time or place, unless these bylaws otherwise require, notice need not be given of the adjourned meeting if the time and place thereof, and the means of remote communication, if any, by which stockholders and proxyholders may be deemed to be present in person and vote at such meeting, are announced at the meeting at which the adjournment is taken. At the adjourned meeting, the Corporation may transact any business that might have been transacted at the original meeting. If the adjournment is for more than thirty (30) days, or if after the adjournment a new record date is fixed for the adjourned meeting, a notice of the adjourned meeting shall be given to each stockholder of record entitled to vote at the meeting. If after the adjournment a new record date for stockholders entitled to vote is fixed for the adjourned meeting, the board of directors shall fix a new record date for notice of such adjourned meeting in accordance with Section 213(a) of General Corporation Law of Delaware, and shall give notice of the adjourned meeting to each stockholder of record entitled to vote at such adjourned meeting as of the record date fixed for notice of such adjourned meeting.

2.8 Voting. The stockholders entitled to vote at any meeting of stockholders shall be determined in accordance with the provisions of Section 2.11 of these bylaws, subject to the

provisions of Sections 217 and 218 of the General Corporation Law of Delaware (relating to voting rights of fiduciaries, pledgors and joint owners of stock and to voting trusts and other voting agreements).

Except as otherwise provided in the certificate of incorporation or by law, each stockholder shall be entitled to one vote for each share of capital stock held by such stockholder of record according to the stock ledger of the Corporation as of the record date for determining the stockholders entitled to vote, unless otherwise provided by law or by the certificate of incorporation.

2.9 Waiver of Notice. Whenever notice is required to be given under any provision of the General Corporation Law of Delaware or of the certificate of incorporation or these bylaws, a written waiver thereof, signed by the person entitled to notice, or a waiver by electronic transmission by the person entitled to notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to notice. Attendance of a person at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except when the person attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the stockholders need be specified in any written waiver or any waiver by electronic transmission of notice unless so required by the certificate of incorporation or these bylaws.

2.10 No Stockholder Action by Written Consent Without a Meeting. Any action required or permitted to be taken by the stockholders of the Corporation must be effected at a duly called annual or special meeting of the stockholders of the Corporation and may not be effected by any consent in writing by such stockholders.

2.11 Record Date for Stockholder Notice; Voting; Giving Consents

(a) In order that the Corporation may determine the stockholders entitled to notice of any meeting of stockholders or any adjournment thereof, the board of directors may fix a record date, which record date shall not precede the date upon which the resolution fixing the record date is adopted by the board of directors, and which record date shall not be more than 60 nor less than 10 days before the date of such meeting. If the board of directors so fixes a date, such date shall also be the record date for determining the stockholders entitled to vote at such meeting unless the board of directors determines, at the time it fixes such record date, that a later date on or before the date of the meeting shall be the date for making such determination. If no record date is fixed by the board of directors, the record date for determining stockholders entitled to notice of and to vote at a meeting of stockholders shall be at the close of business on the day next preceding the day on which notice is given, or, if notice is waived, at the close of business on the day next preceding the day on which the meeting is held. A determination of stockholders of record entitled to notice of or to vote at a meeting of stockholders shall apply to any adjournment of the meeting; provided, however, that the board of directors may fix a new record date for determination of stockholders entitled to vote at the adjourned meeting, and in such case shall also fix as the record date for stockholders entitled to notice of such adjourned meeting the same or an earlier date as that fixed for determination of stockholders entitled to vote in accordance with the foregoing provisions of this Section 2.11(a) at the adjourned meeting.

(b) In order that the Corporation may determine the stockholders entitled to receive payment of any dividend or other distribution or allotment of any rights or the stockholders entitled to exercise any rights in respect of any change, conversion or exchange of stock, or for the purpose of any other lawful action, the board of directors may fix a record date, which record date shall not precede the date upon which the resolution fixing the record date is adopted, and which record date shall be not more than 60 days prior to such action. If no record date is fixed, the record date for determining stockholders for any such purpose shall be at the close of business on the day on which the board of directors adopts the resolution relating thereto.

2.12 Proxies. Each stockholder entitled to vote at a meeting of stockholders may authorize another person or persons to act for such stockholder by proxy, but no such proxy shall be voted or acted upon after 3 years from its date, unless the proxy provides for a longer period. Without limiting the manner in which a stockholder may authorize another person or persons to act for such stockholder as proxy pursuant to this Section 2.12, the following shall constitute a valid means by which a stockholder may grant such authority:

(a) A stockholder may execute a writing authorizing another person or persons to act for such stockholder as proxy. Execution may be accomplished by the stockholder or such stockholder's authorized officer, director, employee or agent signing such writing or causing such person's signature to be affixed to such writing by any reasonable means including, but not limited to, by facsimile signature.

(b) A stockholder may authorize another person or persons to act for such stockholder as proxy by transmitting or authorizing the transmission of a telegram, cablegram, or other means of electronic transmission to the person who will be the holder of the proxy or to a proxy solicitation firm, proxy support service organization or like agent duly authorized by the person who will be the holder of the proxy to receive such transmission, provided that any such telegram, cablegram or other means of electronic transmission must either set forth or be submitted with information from which it can be determined that the telegram, cablegram or other electronic transmission was authorized by the stockholder. If it is determined that such telegrams, cablegrams or other electronic transmissions are valid, the inspectors or, if there are no inspectors, such other persons making that determination shall specify the information upon which they relied.

Any copy, facsimile telecommunication or other reliable reproduction of the writing or transmission created pursuant to this Section 2.12 may be substituted or used in lieu of the original writing or transmission for any and all purposes for which the original writing or transmission could be used, provided that such copy, facsimile telecommunication or other reproduction shall be a complete reproduction of the entire original writing or transmission. A duly executed proxy shall be irrevocable if it states that it is irrevocable and if, and only as long as, it is coupled with an interest sufficient in law to support an irrevocable power. A proxy may be made irrevocable regardless of whether the interest with which it is coupled is an interest in the stock itself or an interest in the corporation generally.

2.13 List of Stockholders Entitled to Vote. The Corporation shall prepare and make, at least ten (10) days before every meeting of stockholders, a complete list of the stockholders

entitled to vote at the meeting; provided, however, if the record date for determining stockholders entitled to vote is less than ten (10) days before the meeting date, the list shall reflect the stockholders entitled to vote as of the tenth (10th) day before the meeting date, arranged in alphabetical order, and showing the address of each stockholder and the number of shares registered in the name of each stockholder. The Corporation shall not be required to include electronic mail addresses or other electronic contact information on such list. Such list shall be open to the examination of any stockholder for any purpose germane to the meeting for a period of at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting: (a) on a reasonably accessible electronic network, provided that the information required to gain access to such list is provided with the notice of the meeting, or (b) during ordinary business hours, at the principal place of business of the Corporation. In the event that the Corporation determines to make the list available on an electronic network, the Corporation may take reasonable steps to ensure that such information is available only to stockholders of the Corporation. If the meeting is to be held at a place, then the list shall be produced and kept at the time and place of the meeting during the whole time thereof, and may be examined by any stockholder who is present. If the meeting is to be held solely by means of remote communication, then the list shall also be open to the examination of any stockholder during the whole time of the meeting on a reasonably accessible electronic network, and the information required to access such list shall be provided with the notice of the meeting.

2.14 Stockholder Proposals.

(a) Nominations of persons for election to the board of directors of the Corporation and the proposal of other business to be considered by the stockholders may be brought before an annual meeting (i) pursuant to the Corporation's proxy materials, (ii) by or at the direction of the board of directors, (iii) by any stockholder of the Corporation who was a stockholder of record at the time of giving of notice provided for in this bylaw, who is entitled to vote at the meeting, who is present (in person or by proxy) at the meeting and who complies with the notice procedures set forth in this bylaw (including to the extent applicable, Section 3.15) as to such nomination or business or (iv) by way of proxy access in accordance with Section 3.16. For the avoidance of doubt, the foregoing clauses (iii) and (iv) shall be the exclusive means for a stockholder to bring nominations or business properly before an annual meeting (other than matters properly brought under Rule 14a-8 (or any successor rule) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "**Exchange Act**")), and such stockholder must comply with the notice and other procedures set forth in these bylaws to bring such nominations or business properly before an annual meeting. In addition to the other requirements set forth in this bylaw, for any proposal of business to be considered at an annual meeting, it must be a proper subject for action by stockholders of the Corporation under Delaware law.

(b) Any stockholder wishing to bring any other business before a meeting of stockholders, except for the nomination of persons for election as directors which shall be made pursuant to Sections 3.15 or 3.16 of these bylaws, must provide notice to the Corporation not more than ninety (90) and not less than sixty (60) days before the meeting in writing by registered mail, return receipt requested, of the business to be presented by the stockholders at the stockholders' meeting; provided, however, that in the event that less than seventy (70) days' notice or prior public disclosure of the date of the annual meeting is given or made to stockholders, notice by a stockholder, to be timely, must be received no later than the close of

business on the tenth (10th) day following the day on which such notice of the date of annual meeting was mailed or such public disclosure was made, whichever first occurs.

(c) Any such notice shall set forth the following as to each matter the stockholder proposes to bring before the meeting: (i) a brief description of the business desired to be brought before the meeting and the reasons for conducting such business at the meeting and, if such business includes a proposal to amend the bylaws of the Corporation, the language of the proposed amendment; (ii) the name and address, as they appear on the Corporation's books, of the stockholder proposing such business; (iii) the class and number of shares of the Corporation that are beneficially owned by such stockholder; (iv) a representation that the stockholder is a holder of record of stock of the Corporation entitled to vote at such meeting and intends to appear in person or by proxy at the meeting to propose such business and (v) a statement whether or not the stockholder giving the notice and/or making a proposal, if any, will deliver a proxy statement and form of proxy to holders of, in the case of a business proposal, at least the percentage of voting power of all of the shares of capital stock of the Corporation required under applicable law to approve the proposal or, in the case of a nomination or nominations, at least the percentage of voting power of all of the shares of capital stock of the Corporation reasonably believed by the stockholder making the proposal to be sufficient to elect the nominee or nominees proposed to be nominated by such stockholder (such statement being the "**Solicitation Statement**"). In the absence of such notice to the Corporation meeting the above requirements, a stockholder shall not be entitled to present any business at any meeting of stockholders.

(d) In any such event, such stockholder must also set forth in its notice: (i) any material interest in such business of such stockholder and any Stockholder Associated Person (as defined below), individually or in aggregate, including any anticipated benefit to the stockholder or the Stockholder Associated Person therefrom; (ii) as to the stockholder giving notice and any Stockholder Associated Person, (A) the class, series and number of all shares of the Corporation beneficially owned, directly or indirectly, by such stockholder and by such Stockholder Associated Person, (B) the nominee holder for, and number of, shares owned beneficially but not of record by such stockholder and by any such Stockholder Associated Person, (C) any proxy, contract, arrangement, understanding or relationship pursuant to which either the stockholder or the Stockholder Associated Person has the right to vote, directly or indirectly, any shares of stock of the Corporation; and (D) whether and the extent to which any hedging or other transaction or series of transactions has been entered into by or on behalf of, or any other agreement, arrangement or understanding (including any short position or any borrowing or lending of shares) has been made, the effect or intent of which is to mitigate loss to or manage risk or benefit of share price changes for, or to increase or decrease the voting power of, such stockholder of any such Stockholder Associated Person with respect to any share of stock of the Corporation; (iii) as to the stockholder giving the notice and any Stockholder Associated Person, the name and address of such stockholder, as they appear on the Corporation's stock ledger, and current name and address, if different, and of such Stockholder Associated Person; and (iv) to the extent known by the stockholder giving the notice, the name and address of any other stockholder supporting the proposal of other business on the date of such stockholder's notice.

(e) For nominations or other business to be properly brought before an annual meeting by a stockholder pursuant to this bylaw, the stockholder must (i) have given notice as described above (or in Sections 3.15 or 3.16 with respect to nominations), (ii) have provided any

updates or supplements to such notice at the times and in the forms required by this bylaw and (iii) together with the beneficial owner(s), if any, on whose behalf the nomination or business proposal is made, have acted in accordance with the representations set forth in the Solicitation Statement (as described above) required by this bylaw.

(f) Except as set forth in Section 3.4 of Article III of these bylaws and subject to the Corporation's certificate of incorporation, only such business shall be conducted at a meeting of stockholders as shall have been brought before the meeting in accordance with the procedures set forth in this Section 2.14. The presiding officer of the meeting shall have the power and duty to determine whether any business proposed to be brought before the meeting was made in accordance with the procedures set forth in this Section 2.14 and, if any proposed business is not in compliance with this Section 2.14, to declare that such defective proposal be disregarded.

(g) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this Section 2.14, a stockholder shall also comply with all applicable requirements of state law and of the Exchange Act and the rules and regulations thereunder with respect to the matters set forth in this Section 2.14. Nothing in this Section 2.14 shall be deemed to affect any rights of (i) stockholders to have proposals included in the Corporation's proxy statement pursuant to Rule 14a-8 (or any successor rule), as applicable, under the Exchange Act and, to the extent required by such rule, have such proposals considered and voted on at an annual meeting or (ii) the holders of any series of preferred stock to elect directors under specified circumstances.

(h) Except as otherwise required by law or Section 3.16 of these Bylaws, nothing in this Section 2.14 shall obligate the Corporation or the board of directors to include in any proxy statement or other stockholder communication distributed on behalf of the Corporation or the board of directors information with respect to any nominee for director or any other matter of business submitted by a stockholder.

(i) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this Section 2.14 or the provisions of Section 3.15, if the nominating or proposing stockholder (or qualified representative of the stockholder) does not appear at the annual meeting to present a nomination or any business, the presiding officer shall have the discretion to declare that such nomination or business shall be disregarded, notwithstanding that proxies in respect of such vote may have been received by the Corporation. For purposes of this Section 2.14, to be considered a qualified representative of the proposing stockholder, a person must be authorized by a written instrument executed by such stockholder or an electronic transmission delivered by such stockholder to act for such stockholder as proxy at the meeting of stockholders and such person must produce such written instrument or electronic transmission, or a reliable reproduction of the written instrument or electronic transmission, to the presiding officer at the meeting of stockholders.

(j) For the purposes of these bylaws, "**Stockholder Associated Person**" of any stockholder shall mean (i) any person controlling, directly or indirectly, or acting in concert with, such stockholder, (ii) any beneficial owner of shares of stock of the Corporation owned of record or beneficially by such stockholder and (iii) any person controlling, controlled by or under common control with such Stockholder Associated Person.

2.15 Presiding Officer. The board of directors shall designate a representative to preside over all annual meetings or special meetings of stockholders, provided that if the board of directors does not so designate such a presiding officer, then the chairperson of the board of directors, if one is elected, shall preside over such meetings. If the board of directors does not so designate such a presiding officer and there is no chairperson of the board of directors or the chairperson of the board of directors is unable to so preside or is absent, then the chief executive officer, if one is elected, shall preside over such meetings, provided further that if there is no chief executive officer or the chief executive officer is unable to so preside or is absent, then the president shall preside over such meetings. The presiding officer at any annual meeting or special meeting of stockholders shall have the power, among other things, to adjourn such meeting at any time and from time to time, subject to Sections 2.6 and 2.7 of this Article II. The order of business and all other matters of procedure at any meeting of the stockholders shall be determined by the presiding officer. The presiding officer and the board of directors shall have the authority to adopt and enforce rules providing for the orderly conduct of the meeting and the safety of those in attendance, including without limitation the authority to: (i) determine when the polls will open and close on items submitted for stockholder action; (ii) fix the time allotted for consideration of each agenda item and for questions and comments by persons in attendance; (iii) adopt rules for determining who may pose questions and comments during the meeting; (iv) adopt rules for determining who may attend the meeting; and (v) adopt procedures (if any) requiring attendees to provide the Corporation advance notice of their intent to attend the meeting.

2.16 Inspector of Elections. The Corporation shall, in advance of any meeting of stockholders, appoint one or more inspectors to act at the meeting and make a written report thereof. The Corporation may designate one or more persons as alternate inspectors to replace any inspector who fails to act. If no inspector or alternate is able to act at a meeting of stockholders, the presiding officer shall appoint one or more inspectors to act at the meeting. Any inspector may, but need not, be an officer, employee or agent of the Corporation. Each inspector, before entering upon the discharge of his or her duties, shall take and sign an oath faithfully to execute the duties of inspector with strict impartiality and according to the best of his or her ability. The inspectors shall perform such duties as are required by the General Corporation Law of Delaware, including the counting of all votes and ballots. The inspectors may appoint or retain other persons or entities to assist the inspectors in the performance of the duties of the inspectors. All determinations by the inspectors shall be subject to further review by any court of competent jurisdiction.

ARTICLE III DIRECTORS

3.1 Powers. Except as may be otherwise provided in the General Corporation Law of Delaware or the certificate of incorporation, the business and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by or under the direction of the board of directors.

3.2 Number of Directors. Subject to the rights, if any, of the holders of any series of preferred stock, the number of directors constituting the board of directors shall be not more than nine (9) but not less than three (3), and may be fixed or changed, by resolution adopted by the

board of directors. No reduction of the authorized number of directors shall have the effect of removing any director before that director's term of office expires.

3.3 Election, Qualification and Term of Office of Directors. Except as provided in Section 3.4 of these bylaws, directors shall be elected at each annual meeting of stockholders to hold office until the next annual meeting. Directors need not be stockholders unless so required by the certificate of incorporation or these bylaws, wherein other qualifications for directors may be prescribed. Each director, including a director elected to fill a vacancy, shall hold office until his or her successor is elected and qualified or until his or her earlier resignation or removal. Each director shall be a natural person.

Elections of directors need not be by written ballot.

3.4 Resignation and Vacancies. Any director may resign at any time upon notice given in writing or electronic transmission to the Corporation. When one or more directors so resigns and the resignation is effective at a future date, a majority of the directors then in office, including those who have so resigned, shall have power to fill such vacancy or vacancies, the vote thereon to take effect when such resignation or resignations shall become effective, and each director so chosen shall hold office as provided in this Section 3.4 in the filling of other vacancies. Unless otherwise provided in the certificate of incorporation or these bylaws:

(a) vacancies and newly created directorships resulting from any increase in the authorized number of directors elected by all of the stockholders having the right to vote as a single class may be filled by a majority of the directors then in office, although less than a quorum, or by a sole remaining director; and

(b) whenever the holders of any class or classes of stock or series thereof are entitled to elect one or more directors by the provisions of the certificate of incorporation, vacancies and newly created directorships of such class or classes or series may be filled by a majority of the directors elected by such class or classes or series thereof then in office, or by a sole remaining director so elected.

If at any time, by reason of death or resignation or other cause, the Corporation should have no directors in office, then any officer or any stockholder or an executor, administrator, trustee or guardian of a stockholder, or other fiduciary entrusted with like responsibility for the person or estate of a stockholder, may call a special meeting of stockholders in accordance with the provisions of the certificate of incorporation or these bylaws, or may apply to the Court of Chancery for a decree summarily ordering an election as provided in Section 211 of the General Corporation Law of Delaware.

3.5 Place of Meetings; Meetings by Telephone. The board of directors of the Corporation may hold meetings, both regular and special, either within or outside the State of Delaware.

Unless otherwise restricted by the certificate of incorporation or these bylaws, members of the board of directors, or any committee designated by the board of directors, may participate in a meeting of the board of directors, or any committee, by means of conference telephone or other communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can

hear each other, and such participation in a meeting shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.

3.6 Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the board of directors may be held without notice at such time and at such place as shall from time to time be determined by the board of directors and publicized among the directors.

3.7 Special Meetings; Notice. Special meetings of the board of directors for any purpose or purposes may be called at any time by the chairperson of the board of directors, the chief executive officer, the president, or any two directors. The person calling any such special meeting of the board of directors may fix the hour, date and place thereof.

Notice of the time and place of special meetings shall be delivered either personally or by mail, facsimile, telephone or electronic transmission to each director, addressed to each director at such director's address and/or phone number and/or electronic transmission address as it is shown on the records of the Corporation. If the notice is mailed, it shall be deposited in the United States mail at least four (4) days before the time of the holding of the meeting. If the notice is delivered personally or by facsimile, telephone or electronic transmission, it shall be delivered by telephone or transmitted at least forty-eight (48) hours before the time of the holding of the meeting. Any oral notice given personally or by telephone may be communicated either to the director or to a person at the office of the director who the person giving the notice has reason to believe will promptly communicate it to the director. The notice need not specify (1) the purpose of the meeting (and, unless indicated in the notice thereof, any and all business may be transacted at a special meeting) or (2) the place of the meeting (if the meeting is to be held at the principal executive office of the Corporation). Notice may be delivered by any person entitled to call a special meeting or by an agent of such person.

3.8 Quorum. At all meetings of the board of directors, a majority of the authorized number of directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the act of a majority of the directors present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the board of directors, except as otherwise specifically required by statute or provided the certificate of incorporation. If a quorum is not present at any meeting of the board of directors, then the directors present thereat may adjourn the meeting from time to time, without notice other than announcement at the meeting, until a quorum is present. Any business which might have been transacted at the meeting as originally noticed may be transacted at such adjourned meeting at which a quorum is present. For purposes of this section, the total number of directors for quorum purposes includes any unfilled vacancies on the board of directors.

3.9 Waiver Of Notice. Whenever notice is required to be given under any provision of the General Corporation Law of Delaware or of the certificate of incorporation or these bylaws, a written waiver thereof, signed by the person entitled to notice, or a waiver by electronic transmission by the person entitled to notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to notice. Attendance of a person at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except when the person attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the directors, or meeting of a committee of

directors, need be specified in any written waiver of notice unless so required by the certificate of incorporation or these bylaws.

3.10 Adjourned Meeting; Notice. If a quorum is not present at any meeting of the board of directors, then the directors present thereat may adjourn the meeting from time to time, without notice other than announcement at the meeting, until a quorum is present.

3.11 Board of Directors Action by Written Consent Without a Meeting. Unless otherwise restricted by the certificate of incorporation or these bylaws, any action required or permitted to be taken at any meeting of the board of directors, or of any committee thereof, may be taken without a meeting if all members of the board of directors or committee, as the case may be, consent thereto in writing or by electronic transmission and the writing or writings or electronic transmission or transmissions are filed with the minutes of proceedings of the board of directors or committee. Such filing shall be in paper form if the minutes are maintained in paper form and shall be in electronic form if the minutes are maintained in electronic form. Such consent shall be treated as a resolution of the board of directors for all purposes. Any person (whether or not then a director) may provide, whether through instruction to an agent or otherwise, that a consent to action will be effective at a future time (including a time determined upon the happening of an event), no later than 60 days after such instruction is given or such provision is made and such consent shall be deemed to have been given for purposes of this subsection at such effective time so long as such person is then a director and did not revoke the consent prior to such time. Any such consent shall be revocable prior to its becoming effective.

3.12 Fees and Compensation of Directors. Unless otherwise restricted by the certificate of incorporation or these bylaws, the board of directors, or a designated committee thereof, shall have the authority to fix the compensation of directors, provided that directors who are serving the Corporation as employees and who receive compensation for their services as such, shall not receive any salary or other compensation for their services as directors of the Corporation.

3.13 Removal of Directors. Unless otherwise restricted by statute, by the certificate of incorporation or by these bylaws, any director or the entire board of directors may be removed, with or without cause, by the holders of a majority of the shares then entitled to vote at an election of directors; provided, that, whenever the holders of any class or classes of stock, or series thereof, are entitled to elect one or more directors by the provisions of the certificate of incorporation, removal without cause of any directors elected by such class or classes of stock, or series thereof, shall be by the holders of a majority of the shares or such class or classes of stock, or series of stock, then entitled to vote at an election of directors.

No reduction of the authorized number of directors shall have the effect of removing any director prior to the expiration of such director's term of office.

3.14 Chairperson of the board of directors. The Corporation may also have, at the discretion of the board of directors, a chairperson of the board of directors. The chairperson of the board of directors shall, if such a person is elected, preside at the meetings of the board of directors and exercise and perform such other powers and duties as may from time to time be assigned to him or her by the board of directors, or as may be prescribed by these bylaws.

3.15 Nominating Procedures. Nominations for election of directors (other than nominations pursuant to Section 3.16) shall be governed by this Section 3.15. Any stockholder of record entitled to vote generally in elections of directors may nominate one or more persons for election as directors at a meeting of stockholders pursuant to this Section 3.15 only if written notice of such stockholder's intent to make such nomination or nominations has been given, either by personal delivery or by United States certified mail, postage prepaid, to the secretary of the Corporation (i) with respect to an election to be held at an annual meeting of stockholders, not more than ninety (90) days nor less than sixty (60) days in advance of such meeting; provided, however, that in the event that less than seventy (70) days' notice or prior public disclosure of the date of the annual meeting is given or made to stockholders, notice by a stockholder, to be timely, must be received no later than the close of business on the tenth (10th) day following the day on which such notice of the date of annual meeting was mailed or such public disclosure was made, whichever first occurs, and (ii) with respect to an election to be held at a special meeting of stockholders called for the purpose of the election of directors in accordance with Section 2.2, not later than the close of business on the tenth business day following the date on which notice of such meeting is first given to stockholders. Each such notice of a stockholder's intent to nominate a director or directors at an annual or special meeting shall set forth the following: (A) the name and address, as they appear on the Corporation's books, of (i) the stockholder who intends to make the nomination and the name and residence address of the person or persons to be nominated, and (ii) any Stockholder Associated Person; (B) the information required in Section 2.14(c) and (d) of these bylaws; (C) a representation that the stockholder is a holder of record of stock of the Corporation entitled to vote at such meeting and intends to appear in person or by proxy at the meeting to nominate the person or persons specified in the notice; (D) a description of all arrangements or understandings between the stockholder and any Stockholder Associated Person and each nominee and any other person or persons (naming such person or persons) pursuant to which the nomination or nominations are to be made by the stockholder; (E) such other information regarding each nominee proposed by such stockholder as would be required to be disclosed in solicitations of proxies for election of directors, or as would otherwise be required, in each case pursuant to Regulation 14A under the Exchange Act including any information that would be required to be included in a proxy statement filed pursuant to Regulation 14A had the nominee been nominated by the board of directors; and (F) the written consent of each nominee to be named in a proxy statement and to serve as director of the Corporation if so elected. Subject to Section 3.16, no person shall be eligible to serve as a director of the Corporation unless nominated in accordance with this Section 3.15. If the chairperson of the stockholders' meeting shall determine that a nomination was not made in accordance with the procedures described by these bylaws (including Section 2.14(e), (g), (h) and (i) to the extent applicable), he or she shall so declare to the meeting, and the defective nomination shall be disregarded. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this Section, a stockholder shall also comply with all applicable requirements of the Exchange Act and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder with respect to the matters set forth in this Section.

3.16 Proxy Access.

(a) Inclusion of Shareholder Nominees in Corporation's Proxy Statement.

(i) Subject to the provisions of this Section 3.16, if expressly requested in the relevant Nomination Notice (as defined below), the Corporation shall include in its proxy statement for any annual meeting of stockholders (but not at any special meeting of stockholders): (A) the names of any person or persons therein nominated for the election of directors (each, a “**Shareholder Nominee**”), who shall also be included on the Corporation’s form of proxy and ballot, by any Eligible Shareholder (as defined below) or group of up to 20 Eligible Shareholders that, as determined by the board of directors, has (individually and collectively, in the case of a group) satisfied all applicable conditions and complied with all applicable procedures and requirements set forth in this Section 3.16 (such Eligible Shareholder or group of Eligible Shareholders being a “**Nominating Shareholder**”); (B) disclosure about each Shareholder Nominee and the Nominating Shareholder required under the rules of the SEC or other applicable law to be included in the proxy statement; (C) any statement included by the Nominating Shareholder in the Nomination Notice for inclusion in the proxy statement in support of each Shareholder Nominee’s election to the board of directors (subject, without limitation, to Section 3.16(e)(ii), and provided that such statement does not exceed 500 words and fully complies with Section 14 of the Exchange Act, including Rule 14a-9 thereunder (the “**Supporting Statement**”)); and (D) any other information that the Corporation or the board of directors determines, in their discretion, to include in the proxy statement relating to the Nominating Shareholder and the nomination of each Shareholder Nominee, including, without limitation, any statement in opposition to the nomination, any of the information provided pursuant to this Section 3.16 and any solicitation materials or related information with respect to a Shareholder Nominee.

(ii) For purposes of this Section 3.16, any determination to be made by the board of directors may be made by the board of directors, a committee of the board of directors or any officer of the Corporation designated by the board of directors or a committee of the board of directors, and any such determination shall be final and binding on any Eligible Shareholder, any Nominating Shareholder, any Shareholder Nominee and any other person for purposes of this Section 3.16 so long as made in good faith (without any further requirements). If any intervening events, facts or circumstances arise subsequent to any such determination, the presiding officer of any annual meeting of stockholders, in addition to making any other determinations that may be appropriate to the conduct of the meeting, shall have the power and duty to determine whether a Shareholder Nominee has been nominated in accordance with the requirements of this Section 3.16 and, if not so nominated, shall direct and declare at the meeting that such Shareholder Nominee shall not be considered.

(b) Maximum Number of Shareholder Nominees.

(i) The Corporation shall not be required to include in the proxy statement for an annual meeting of stockholders more Shareholder Nominees than that number constituting the greater of (A) two or (B) 20% of the total number of directors of the

Corporation then serving on the last day on which a Nomination Notice may be submitted pursuant to this Section 3.16 (rounded down to the nearest whole number) (the “**Maximum Number**”).

(ii) The Maximum Number for a particular annual meeting shall be reduced by: (A) each Shareholder Nominee whose nomination is withdrawn by the Nominating Shareholder or who becomes unwilling to serve on the board of directors; (B) each Shareholder Nominee who ceases to satisfy, or each Shareholder Nominee of a Nominating Shareholder that ceases to satisfy, the eligibility requirements in this Section 3.16, as determined by the board of directors; (C) each Shareholder Nominee who the board of directors itself decides to nominate for election at such annual meeting; and (D) the number of incumbent directors who had been Shareholder Nominees at either of the preceding two annual meetings of stockholders and whose reelection at the upcoming annual meeting of stockholders is being recommended by the board of directors. In the event that one or more vacancies for any reason occurs on the board of directors after the deadline for submitting a Nomination Notice as set forth in Section 3.16(d) but before the date of the annual meeting of stockholders and the board of directors resolves to reduce the size of the board of directors in connection therewith, the Maximum Number shall be calculated based on the number of directors in office as so reduced.

(iii) If the number of Shareholder Nominees pursuant to this Section 3.16 for any annual meeting of stockholders exceeds the Maximum Number then, promptly upon notice from the Corporation, each Nominating Shareholder will select one Shareholder Nominee for inclusion in the proxy statement until the Maximum Number is reached, going in order of the amount (largest to smallest) of shares of the Corporation’s common stock that each Nominating Shareholder disclosed as owned in its Nomination Notice, with the process repeated if the Maximum Number is not reached after each Nominating Shareholder has selected one Shareholder Nominee. If, after the deadline for submitting a Nomination Notice as set forth in Section 3.16(d), a Nominating Shareholder or a Shareholder Nominee ceases to satisfy the eligibility requirements in this Section 3.16, as determined by the board of directors, a Nominating Shareholder withdraws its nomination or a Shareholder Nominee becomes unwilling to serve on the board of directors, whether before or after the mailing or other distribution of the definitive proxy statement, then the Corporation: (A) shall not be required to include in its proxy statement or on any ballot or form of proxy the Shareholder Nominee or any successor or replacement Shareholder Nominee proposed by the Nominating Shareholder or by any other Nominating Shareholder and (B) may otherwise communicate to the stockholders of the Corporation, including without limitation by amending or supplementing its proxy statement or ballot or form of proxy, that the Shareholder Nominee will not be included as a Shareholder Nominee in the proxy statement or on any ballot or form of proxy and will not be voted on at the annual meeting of stockholders (notwithstanding that proxies in respect of such vote may have been received by the Corporation).

(c) Eligibility of Nominating Shareholder.

(i) An “**Eligible Shareholder**” is a person who has either (A) been a record holder of the shares of common stock of the Corporation used to satisfy the eligibility

requirements in this Section 3.16(c) continuously for the three-year period specified in Section 3.16(c)(ii) or (B) provides to the Secretary, within the time period referred to in Section 3.16(d), evidence of continuous ownership of such shares for such three-year period from one or more securities intermediaries in a form that the board of directors determines acceptable.

(ii) An Eligible Shareholder or group of up to 20 Eligible Shareholders may submit a nomination in accordance with this Section 3.16 only if the person or group (in the aggregate) has continuously owned at least the Minimum Number (as defined below) (as adjusted for any stock splits, reverse stock splits, stock dividends or similar events) of shares of the Corporation's common stock throughout the three-year period preceding and including the date of submission of the Nomination Notice, and continues to own at least the Minimum Number of shares through the date of the annual meeting of stockholders. The following shall be treated as one Eligible Shareholder if such Eligible Shareholder shall provide together with the Nomination Notice documentation satisfactory to the board of directors that the Eligible Shareholder consists only of persons or entities that are: (A) under common management and investment control; (B) under common management and funded primarily by the same employer; or (C) a "group of investment companies" (as defined in the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended). In the event of a nomination by a Nominating Shareholder that includes a group of Eligible Shareholders, any and all requirements and obligations for an Eligible Shareholder shall apply to each Eligible Shareholder in such group; provided, however, that the Minimum Number shall apply to the aggregate ownership of the group of Eligible Shareholders constituting the Nominating Shareholder. Should any Eligible Shareholder cease to satisfy the eligibility requirements in this Section 3.16, as determined by the board of directors, or withdraw from a group of Eligible Shareholders constituting a Nominating Shareholder at any time prior to the annual meeting of stockholders, the Nominating Shareholder shall be deemed to own only the shares held by the remaining Eligible Shareholders. As used in this Section 3.16, any reference to a "**group**" or "**group of Eligible Shareholders**" refers to any Nominating Shareholder that consists of more than one Eligible Shareholder and to all the Eligible Shareholders that make up such Nominating Shareholder.

(iii) The "**Minimum Number**" of shares of the Corporation's common stock means 3% of the aggregate number of shares outstanding of each class of the Corporation's common stock, as disclosed in each filing by the Corporation under the Exchange Act during the three-year period prior to the submission of the Nomination Notice.

(iv) For purposes of this Section 3.16, an Eligible Shareholder "**owns**" only those outstanding shares of the Corporation's common stock as to which such Eligible Shareholder possesses both: (A) the full voting and investment rights pertaining to such shares and (B) the full economic interest in (including the opportunity for profit from and the risk of loss on) such shares; *provided* that the number of shares calculated in accordance with clauses (A) and (B) shall not include any shares: (w) purchased or sold by such Eligible Shareholder or any of its affiliates in any transaction that has not been settled or closed, (x) that are subject to short positions or were otherwise sold short by

such Eligible Shareholder or any of its affiliates, (y) borrowed by such Eligible Shareholder or any of its affiliates for any purpose or purchased by such Eligible Shareholder or any of its affiliates pursuant to an agreement to resell or subject to any other obligation to resell to another person, or (z) subject to any option, warrant, forward contract, swap, contract of sale, other derivative or similar agreement entered into by such Eligible Shareholder or any of its affiliates, whether any such instrument or agreement is to be settled with shares, with cash based on the notional amount or value of outstanding shares of common stock of the Corporation or a combination thereof, in any such case, which instrument or agreement has, or is intended to have, or if exercised or settled would have, the purpose or effect of: (1) reducing in any manner, to any extent or at any time in the future, such Eligible Shareholder's or any of its affiliates' full right to vote or direct the voting of any such shares and/or (2) hedging, offsetting or altering to any degree any gain or loss arising from the full economic interest in such shares by such Eligible Shareholder or any of its affiliates. An Eligible Shareholder "owns" shares held in the name of a nominee or other intermediary so long as the Eligible Shareholder retains the right to instruct how the shares are voted with respect to the election of directors and possesses the full economic interest in the shares. An Eligible Shareholder's ownership of shares shall be deemed to continue during any period in which the Eligible Shareholder has delegated any voting power by means of a proxy, power of attorney or other similar instrument or arrangement that is revocable at any time by the Eligible Shareholder. An Eligible Shareholder's ownership of shares shall be deemed to continue during any period in which the Eligible Shareholder has loaned such shares; provided that the Eligible Shareholder has the power to recall such loaned shares on not more than five business days' notice. The terms "owned," "owning" and other variations of the word "own" shall have correlative meanings. Whether outstanding shares of the Corporation are "owned" for these purposes shall be determined by the board of directors. For purposes of this Section 3.16(c)(iv), the term "affiliate" or "affiliates" shall have the meaning ascribed thereto under the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act.

(v) No Eligible Shareholder shall be permitted to be in more than one group constituting a Nominating Shareholder, and if any Eligible Shareholder appears as a member of more than one such group, such Eligible Shareholder shall be deemed to be a member of only the group that owns the largest aggregate number of shares of each class of the Corporation's common stock, as reflected in the Nomination Notice.

(d) Nomination Notice.

(i) To nominate a Shareholder Nominee pursuant to this Section 3.16, the Nominating Shareholder (including each Eligible Shareholder in the case of a Nominating Shareholder consisting of a group of Eligible Shareholders) must deliver to the Secretary at the principal executive offices of the Corporation all of the following information and documents in a form that the board of directors determines acceptable (collectively, the "**Nomination Notice**"), not less than 120 days nor more than 150 days prior to the anniversary of the date that the Corporation first mailed or otherwise distributed its proxy statement for the prior year's annual meeting of stockholders; provided, however, that if (and only if) the annual meeting of stockholders is not

scheduled to be held within a period that commences 30 days before and concludes 30 days after the first anniversary date of the preceding year's annual meeting of stockholders, or if no annual meeting was held in the preceding year, the Nomination Notice shall be given in the manner provided herein by the later of the close of business on the date that is 180 days prior to such annual meeting or the tenth day following the date such annual meeting is first publicly announced or disclosed (in no event shall the adjournment or postponement of an annual meeting, or the public announcement thereof, commence a new time period (or extend any time period) for the giving of the Nomination Notice):

(A) one or more written statements from the record holder of the shares (and from each intermediary through which the shares are or have been held during the requisite three-year holding period) verifying that, as of a date within seven days prior to the date of the Nomination Notice, the Nominating Shareholder owns, and has continuously owned for the preceding three years, the Minimum Number of shares, and the Nominating Shareholder's agreement to provide, within five business days after the record date for the annual meeting, written statements from the record holder and intermediaries verifying the Nominating Shareholder's continuous ownership of the Minimum Number of shares through the record date;

(B) an agreement to hold the Minimum Number of shares through the annual meeting and to provide immediate notice if the Nominating Shareholder ceases to own the Minimum Number of shares at any time prior to the date of the annual meeting;

(C) a Schedule 14N (or any successor form) relating to each Shareholder Nominee, completed and filed with the SEC by the Nominating Shareholder, as applicable, in accordance with SEC rules;

(D) the written consent of each Shareholder Nominee to being named in the Corporation's proxy statement, form of proxy and ballot as a Shareholder Nominee and to serving as a Director if elected;

(E) a written notice, in a form deemed satisfactory by the board of directors, of the nomination of each Shareholder Nominee that includes the following additional information, agreements, representations and warranties by the Nominating Shareholder: (1) the information that would be required to be set forth in a stockholder's notice of nomination pursuant to Section 3.15; (2) a representation and warranty that the Nominating Shareholder acquired the securities of the Corporation in the ordinary course of business and did not acquire, and is not holding, securities of the Corporation for the purpose or with the intent of changing or influencing control of the Corporation; (3) a representation and warranty that the Nominating Shareholder has not nominated and will not nominate for election to the board of directors at the annual meeting any person other than such Nominating Shareholder's Shareholder Nominee(s); (4) a representation and warranty that the Nominating Shareholder has not

engaged in and will not engage in a “**solicitation**” within the meaning of Rule 14a-1(l) under the Exchange Act (without reference to the exception in Section 14a-1(l)(2)(iv)) with respect to the annual meeting, other than with respect to such Nominating Shareholder’s Shareholder Nominee(s) or any nominee of the board of directors; (5) a representation and warranty that the Nominating Shareholder will not use any form of proxy and ballot other than the Corporation’s form of proxy and ballot in soliciting stockholders in connection with the election of a Shareholder Nominee at the annual meeting; (6) a representation and warranty that each Shareholder Nominee’s candidacy or, if elected, membership on the board of directors would not violate the Certificate of Incorporation, these bylaws, any applicable law, rule, regulation, order or decree to which the Corporation is subject, including rules or regulations of any stock exchange on which the Corporation’s shares of common stock are listed; (7) a representation and warranty that each Shareholder Nominee: (a) does not have any direct or indirect relationship with the Corporation that would cause the Shareholder Nominee to be deemed not independent pursuant to the Corporation’s standards in its Corporate Governance Guidelines and otherwise qualifies as independent under any other standards established by the Corporation and the rules of any stock exchange on which the Corporation’s shares of common stock are listed; (b) meets the audit committee and compensation committee independence requirements under the rules of any stock exchange on which the Corporation’s shares of common stock are listed; (c) is a “non-employee director” for the purposes of Rule 16b-3 under the Exchange Act (or any successor rule); (d) is an “outside director” for the purposes of Section 162(m) of the Internal Revenue Code (or any successor provision); (e) is not and has not been subject to any event specified in Rule 506(d)(1) of Regulation D (or any successor rule) under the Securities Act of 1933 or Item 401(f) of Regulation S-K (or any successor rule) under the Exchange Act, without reference to whether the event is material to an evaluation of the ability or integrity of such Shareholder Nominee; and (f) meets the Director qualifications set forth in the Corporation’s Corporate Governance Guidelines and any other standards established by the Corporation (notwithstanding this clause (7), for the avoidance of doubt, the board of directors is responsible for making the final determination of the Shareholder Nominee’s independence); (8) a representation and warranty that the Nominating Shareholder satisfies the eligibility requirements set forth in Section 3.16(c) and intends to continue to satisfy such eligibility requirements through the date of the annual meeting; (9) details of any position of a Shareholder Nominee as an employee, officer or director of any company, and of any other material relationship with or material financial interest in any company, within the three years preceding the submission of the Nomination Notice; (10) if desired, a Supporting Statement; and (11) in the case of a nomination by a Nominating Shareholder comprised of a group, the designation by all Eligible Shareholders in such group of one Eligible Shareholder that is authorized to act on behalf of the Nominating Shareholder with respect to matters relating to the nomination, including withdrawal of the nomination;

(F) an executed agreement, in a form deemed satisfactory by the board of directors, pursuant to which the Nominating Shareholder (including in the case of

a group, each Eligible Shareholder in that group) agrees: (1) to comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations in connection with the nomination, solicitation and election of the Shareholder Nominee; (2) to file any written solicitation or other communication with the Corporation's stockholders relating to one or more of the Corporation's directors or director nominees or any Shareholder Nominee with the SEC, regardless of whether any such filing is required under any rule or regulation or whether any exemption from filing is available for such materials under any rule or regulation; (3) to assume all liability stemming from any action, suit or proceeding concerning any actual or alleged legal or regulatory violation arising out of any communication by the Nominating Shareholder or any of its Shareholder Nominees with the Corporation, the stockholders of the Corporation or any other person in connection with the nomination or election of Directors, including, without limitation, the Nomination Notice; (4) to indemnify and hold harmless (jointly with all other Eligible Shareholders, in the case of a group of Eligible Shareholders) the Corporation and each of its Directors, officers and employees individually against any liability, loss, damages, expenses or other costs (including attorneys' fees) incurred in connection with any threatened or pending action, suit or proceeding, whether legal, administrative or investigative, against the Corporation or any of its Directors, officers or employees arising out of or relating to a failure or alleged failure of the Nominating Shareholder or any of its Shareholder Nominees to comply with, or any breach or alleged breach of, its or their obligations, agreements or representations under, this Section 3.16; (5) in the event that any information included in the Nomination Notice or any other communication by the Nominating Shareholder (including with respect to any Eligible Shareholder included in a group) with the Corporation, the stockholders of the Corporation or any other person in connection with the nomination or election ceases to be true and accurate in all material respects (or omits a material fact necessary to make the statements made not misleading), to promptly (and in any event within 48 hours of discovering such misstatement or omission) notify the Corporation and any other recipient of such communication of the misstatement or omission in such previously provided information and of the information that is required to correct the misstatement or omission; and (6) in the event that the Nominating Shareholder (including any Eligible Shareholder in a group) has failed to continue to satisfy the eligibility requirements described in Section 3.16(c), to promptly notify the Corporation; and

(G) an executed agreement, in a form deemed satisfactory by the board of directors, by each Shareholder Nominee: (1) to promptly, but in any event within ten business days after such request, provide to the Corporation such other information and certifications, including completion of the Corporation's director nominee questionnaire, as the Corporation may reasonably request; (2) at the reasonable request of the board of directors, any committee or any officer of the Corporation, to meet with the board of directors, any committee or any officer of the Corporation to discuss matters relating to the nomination of such Shareholder Nominee to the board of directors, including the information provided by such Shareholder Nominee to the Corporation in connection with his or her nomination

and such Shareholder Nominee's eligibility to serve as a member of the board of directors; (3) that such Shareholder Nominee has read and agrees, if elected, to comply with all of the Corporation's corporate governance guidelines, code of conduct, conflict of interest, confidentiality, and stock ownership and trading policies and guidelines, and any other Corporation policies and guidelines applicable to directors; (4) understands his or her duties as a director under Delaware law and agrees to act in accordance with those duties while serving as a director, and (5) that such Shareholder Nominee is not and will not become a party to: (a) any agreement, arrangement or understanding with any person with respect to any direct or indirect compensation, reimbursement or indemnification of the Shareholder Nominee in connection with being a Shareholder Nominee that has not been fully disclosed in writing to the Corporation prior to or concurrently with the Nominating Shareholder's submission of the Nomination Notice; (b) any agreement, arrangement, or understanding with any person other than the Corporation with respect to any direct or indirect compensation, reimbursement, or indemnification of the Shareholder Nominee in connection with service or action as a director of the Corporation if so elected; (c) any agreement, arrangement or understanding with any person or entity as to how such Shareholder Nominee, if elected, will vote or act on any issue (a "**Voting Commitment**") except such as is already existing and has been fully disclosed to the Corporation prior to or concurrently with the Nominating Shareholder's submission of the Nomination Notice; or (d) any Voting Commitment that could limit or interfere with such Shareholder Nominee's ability to comply, if elected, with his or her fiduciary duties under applicable law.

(ii) The information and documents required by this Section 3.16(d) to be provided by the Nominating Shareholder shall be: (A) provided with respect to and executed by each Eligible Shareholder in the case of a Nominating Shareholder comprised of a group of Eligible Shareholders; and (B) provided with respect to both the persons specified in Instructions 1 and 2 to Items 6(c) and (d) of Schedule 14N (or any successor item) and limited liability companies (x) in the case of a Nominating Shareholder that is an entity and (y) in the case of a Nominating Shareholder that is a group that includes one or more Eligible Shareholders that are entities. The Nomination Notice shall be deemed submitted on the date on which all of the information and documents referred to in this Section 3.16(d) (other than such information and documents contemplated to be provided after the date the Nomination Notice is provided) have been delivered to and received by the Secretary.

(e) Exceptions.

(i) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this Section 3.16, the Corporation may omit from its proxy statement any Shareholder Nominee and any information concerning such Shareholder Nominee (including a Nominating Shareholder's Supporting Statement) and no vote on such Shareholder Nominee will occur (notwithstanding that proxies in respect of such vote may have been received by the Corporation), and the Nominating

Shareholder may not, after the last day on which a Nomination Notice would be timely, cure in any way any defect preventing the nomination of such Shareholder Nominee, if: (A) the Corporation receives a notice pursuant to the advance notice requirements set forth in Section 3.15 that a stockholder intends to nominate a candidate for director at the annual meeting, whether or not such notice is subsequently withdrawn or made the subject of a settlement with the Corporation; (B) the Nominating Shareholder (or, in the case of a Nominating Shareholder consisting of a group of Eligible Shareholders, the Eligible Shareholder that is authorized to act on behalf of the Nominating Shareholder), or any qualified representative thereof, does not appear at the annual meeting to present the nomination submitted pursuant to this Section 3.16, the Nominating Shareholder withdraws its nomination or the presiding officer of the annual meeting declares that such nomination was not made in accordance with the procedures prescribed by this Section 3.16 and shall therefore be disregarded; (C) the board of directors in good faith determines that such Shareholder Nominee fails to satisfy all the standards set forth in Section 3.16(d)(i)(E)(7)(a)-(f), such Shareholder Nominee has been, within the past three years, an officer or director of a competitor, as defined for purposes of Section 8 of the Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914, as amended, or if such Shareholder Nominee's nomination or election to the board of directors would result in the Corporation violating or failing to be in compliance with the Certificate of Incorporation, these bylaws or any applicable law, rule, regulation, order or decree to which the Corporation is subject, including any rules or regulations of any stock exchange on which the Corporation's shares of common stock are listed; (D) such Shareholder Nominee was nominated for election to the board of directors pursuant to this Section 3.16 at one of the Corporation's two preceding annual meetings of stockholders and either withdrew from or became ineligible or unavailable for election at such annual meeting or received less than 25% of the votes that all stockholders are entitled to cast in favor of the election of such Shareholder Nominee; or (E) the Corporation is notified, or the board of directors determines, that the Nominating Shareholder or such Shareholder Nominee has failed to continue to satisfy the eligibility requirements described in Section 3.16(c), any of the representations and warranties made in the Nomination Notice ceases to be true and accurate in all material respects (or omits a material fact necessary to make the statements made not misleading), such Shareholder Nominee becomes unwilling or unable to serve on the board of directors or any material violation or breach occurs of any of the obligations, agreements, representations or warranties of the Nominating Shareholder or such Shareholder Nominee under this Section 3.16.

(ii) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this Section 3.16, the Corporation may omit from its proxy statement, or may supplement or correct, any information, including all or any portion of the Supporting Statement or any other statement in support of a Shareholder Nominee included in the Nomination Notice, if the board of directors determines that: (A) such information is not true in all material respects or omits a material statement necessary to make the statements made not misleading; (B) such information directly or indirectly impugns the character, integrity or personal reputation of, or directly or indirectly

makes charges concerning improper, illegal or immoral conduct or associations, without factual foundation, with respect to, any individual, corporation, partnership, association or other entity, organization or governmental authority; (C) the inclusion of such information in the proxy statement would otherwise violate SEC proxy rules or any other applicable law, rule or regulation; or (D) the inclusion of such information in the proxy statement would impose a material risk of liability upon the Corporation.

(iii) The Corporation may solicit against, and include in the proxy statement its own statement relating to, any Shareholder Nominee.

ARTICLE IV COMMITTEES

4.1 Committees of Directors. The board of directors may, by resolution passed by a majority of the whole board of directors, designate one or more committees, including, without limitation, a Compensation Committee, a Nominating & Governance Committee and an Audit Committee, with each committee to consist of one or more of the directors of the Corporation. In the absence or disqualification of a member of a committee, the member or members present at any meeting and not disqualified from voting, whether or not the member or members present constitute a quorum, may unanimously appoint another member of the board of directors to act at the meeting in the place of any such absent or disqualified member. The board of directors may delegate thereto some or all of its powers except those which by law, by the certificate of incorporation or by these bylaws may not be delegated. Any such committee, to the extent provided in the resolution of the board of directors or in the bylaws of the Corporation, shall have and may exercise all the powers and authority of the board of directors in the management of the business and affairs of the Corporation, and may authorize the seal of the Corporation to be affixed to all papers that may require it; but no such committee shall have the power or authority to (i) approve or adopt, or recommend to the stockholders, any action or matter expressly required by the General Corporation Law of Delaware to be submitted to stockholders for approval (other than the election or removal of directors), or (ii) adopt, amend or repeal any bylaws of the Corporation. All members of such committees shall hold such offices at the pleasure of the board of directors. The board of directors may abolish any such committee at any time.

4.2 Committee Minutes. Each committee shall keep regular minutes of its meetings and report the same to the board of directors when required.

4.3 Meetings and Action of Committees. Meetings and actions of committees shall be governed by, and be held and taken in accordance with, the provisions of Article III of these bylaws, Section 3.5 (place of meetings; meetings by telephone), Section 3.6 (regular meetings), Section 3.7 (special meetings and notice), Section 3.8 (quorum), Section 3.9 (waiver of notice), Section 3.10 (adjourned meeting; notice), and Section 3.11 (board of directors action by written consent without a meeting), with such changes in the context of those bylaws as are necessary to substitute the committee and its members for the board of directors and its members; provided, however, that the time of regular meetings of committees may also be called by resolution of the board of directors, who shall have the right to attend all meetings of the committee. The board of

directors may adopt rules for the governance of any committee not inconsistent with the provisions of these bylaws.

ARTICLE V OFFICERS

5.1 Officers. The officers of the Corporation shall be a president, one or more vice presidents, a secretary and a treasurer. The Corporation may also have, at the discretion of the board of directors, a chairperson of the board of directors (who must be a director), one or more assistant vice presidents, assistant secretaries, assistant treasurers, and any such other officers as may be appointed in accordance with the provisions of Section 5.3 of these bylaws.

5.2 Election of Officers. The officers of the Corporation, except such officers as may be appointed in accordance with the provisions of Sections 5.3 of these bylaws, shall be chosen by the board of directors, subject to the rights, if any, of an officer under any contract of employment. Except as otherwise provided by the certificate of incorporation or by these bylaws, each of the officers of the Corporation shall hold office until his or her successor is elected and qualified or until his or her earlier resignation and removal.

5.3 Subordinate Officers. The board of directors may appoint, or empower the president to appoint, such other officers and agents as the business of the Corporation may require, each of whom shall hold office for such period, have such authority, and perform such duties as are provided in these bylaws or as the board of directors may from time to time determine.

5.4 Qualification. No officer need be a stockholder or a director. Any person may occupy more than one office of the Corporation at any time.

5.5 Removal and Resignation of Officers. Subject to the rights, if any, of an officer under any contract of employment, any officer may be removed, either with or without cause, by an affirmative vote of the majority of the board of directors at any regular or special meeting of the board of directors or by any officer upon whom such power of removal may be conferred by the board of directors.

Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Corporation. Any resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of that notice or at any later time specified in that notice; and, unless otherwise specified in that notice, the acceptance of the resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. Any resignation is without prejudice to the rights, if any, of the Corporation under any contract to which the officer is a party.

5.6 Absence or Disability. In the event of the absence or disability of any officer, the board of directors may designate another officer to act temporarily in place of such absent or disabled officer.

5.7 Vacancies in Offices. Any vacancy occurring in any office of the Corporation shall be filled by the board of directors.

5.8 Chairperson of the Board. The chairperson of the board of directors, if such an officer be elected, shall, if present, preside at meetings of the board of directors and exercise and perform such other powers and duties as may from time to time be assigned to him or her by the board of directors or as may be prescribed by these bylaws. The chairperson of the board of directors shall be chosen by the board of directors. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of stockholders to the extent provided pursuant to Article II, Section 2.15.

5.9 Chief Executive Officer. Subject to the control of the Board and such supervisory powers, if any, as may be given by the Board, the powers and duties of the chief executive officer of the Corporation are:

- (a) To act as the general manager and, subject to the control of the Board, to have general supervision, direction and control of the business and affairs of the Corporation;
- (b) To the extent provided pursuant to Article II, Section 2.15, to preside at all meetings of the stockholders; and
- (c) To affix the signature of the Corporation to all deeds, conveyances, mortgages, guarantees, leases, obligations, bonds, certificates and other papers and instruments in writing which have been authorized by the Board or which, in the judgment of the chief executive officer, should be executed on behalf of the Corporation; and, subject to the direction of the Board, to have general charge of the property of the Corporation and to supervise and control all officers, agents and employees of the Corporation.

The president shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation unless the Board shall designate another officer to be the chief executive officer.

5.10 President. The chief executive officer shall be the president of the Corporation unless the Board shall have designated one individual as the president and a different individual as the chief executive officer of the Corporation. Subject to the provisions of these Bylaws and to the direction of the Board, and subject to the supervisory powers of the chief executive officer (if the chief executive officer is an officer other than the president), and subject to such supervisory powers and authority as may be given by the Board to the Chairperson of the Board, and/or to any other officer, the president shall have the responsibility for the general management and control of the business and affairs of the Corporation and the general supervision and direction of all of the officers, employees and agents of the Corporation (other than the chief executive officer, if the chief executive officer is an officer other than the president) and shall perform all duties and have all powers that are commonly incident to the office of president or that are delegated to the president by the Board.

5.11 Vice Presidents. The vice presidents shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as from time to time may be prescribed for them by the board of directors, these bylaws, the chief executive officer or the chairperson of the board of directors.

5.12 Chief Financial Officer. The chief financial officer shall be the treasurer of the Corporation unless the Board shall have designated another officer as the treasurer of the

Corporation. Subject to the direction of the Board and the chief executive officer, the chief financial officer shall perform all duties and have all powers that are commonly incident to the office of chief financial officer.

5.13 Treasurer. The treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct books and records of accounts of the properties and business transactions of the Corporation, including accounts of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, gains, losses, capital, retained earnings, and shares. The books of account shall at all reasonable times be open to inspection by any director.

The treasurer shall deposit all money and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the Corporation with such depositories as may be designated by the board of directors. The treasurer shall disburse the funds of the Corporation as may be ordered by the board of directors, shall render to the president and directors, whenever they request it, an account of all of his or her transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the Corporation, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the board of directors or these bylaws.

5.14 Secretary. The secretary or an agent of the Corporation shall keep or cause to be kept, at the principal executive office of the Corporation or such other place as the board of directors may direct, a book of minutes of all meetings and actions of directors, committees of directors, and stockholders. The minutes shall show the time and place of each meeting, whether regular or special (and, if special, how authorized and the notice given), the names of those present at directors' meetings or committee meetings, the number of shares present or represented at stockholders' meetings, and the proceedings thereof.

The secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, at the principal executive office of the Corporation or at the office of the Corporation's transfer agent or registrar, as determined by resolution of the board of directors, a share register, or a duplicate share register, showing the names of all stockholders and their addresses, the number and classes of shares held by each, the number and date of certificates evidencing such shares, and the number and date of cancellation of every certificate surrendered for cancellation.

The secretary shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of the stockholders and of the board of directors required to be given by law or by these bylaws. The secretary shall keep the seal of the Corporation, if one be adopted, in safe custody and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the board of directors or by these bylaws.

5.15 Assistant Secretary. The assistant secretary, or, if there is more than one, the assistant secretaries in the order determined by the stockholders or board of directors (or if there be no such determination, then in the order of their election) shall, in the absence of the secretary or in the event of his or her inability or refusal to act, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the secretary and shall perform such other duties and have such other powers as the board of directors or the stockholders may from time to time prescribe.

5.16 Representation of Securities of Other Entities. The chairperson of the board of directors, the chief executive officer, the president, any vice president, the treasurer, the secretary or assistant secretary of this corporation, or any other person authorized by the board of directors or the chief executive officer, president or a vice president, is authorized to vote, represent, and exercise on behalf of this corporation all rights incident to any and all securities of any other entity standing in the name of the Corporation. The authority granted herein may be exercised either by such person directly or by any other person authorized to do so by proxy or power of attorney duly executed by such person having the authority.

5.17 Authority and Duties of Officers. In addition to the foregoing authority and duties, all officers of the Corporation shall respectively have such authority and perform such duties in the management of the business of the Corporation as may be designated from time to time by the board of directors.

ARTICLE VI INDEMNITY

6.1 Indemnification of Directors and Officers. The Corporation shall, to the maximum extent and in the manner permitted by the General Corporation Law of Delaware (as such law may from time to time be amended, but, in the case of any such amendment, only to the extent that such amendment permits the Corporation to provide broader indemnification rights), indemnify each of its directors and officers (each such person sometimes referred to in this Section 6.1 as an “**indemnitee**”) against Expenses (as herein defined), judgments, fines, penalties, ERISA excise taxes, settlements, loss, liability, and other amounts actually and reasonably incurred in connection with any Proceeding (as herein defined), arising by reason of such person’s Official Capacity or anything done or not done in such person’s Official Capacity (as herein defined); provided, however, that except as provided in Section 6.1(d) with respect to Proceedings to enforce rights to indemnification and advancement, the Corporation shall indemnify any such indemnitee in connection with a Proceeding (or part thereof) initiated by such indemnitee only if such Proceeding (or part thereof) was authorized by the board of directors. For purposes of this Section 6.1, a director or officer of the Corporation includes any person (a) who is or was a director or officer of the Corporation, (b) who is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a director, officer, manager, member, partner, trustee, or other agent of another corporation, limited liability company, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, or (c) who was a director or officer of a corporation that was a predecessor corporation of the Corporation or of another enterprise at the request of such predecessor corporation. Such indemnification shall include the right to receive payment of any Expenses incurred by the indemnitee in connection with any Proceeding in advance of its final disposition, consistent with the provisions of applicable law as then in effect. The right of indemnification provided in this Section 6.1 shall not be exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification may otherwise be entitled, and the provisions of this Section 6.1 shall inure to the benefit of the heirs and legal representatives of any person entitled to indemnity under this Section 6.1 and shall be applicable to Proceedings commenced or continuing after the adoption of this Section 6.1, whether arising from acts or omissions occurring before or after such adoption. In furtherance, but not in limitation of the foregoing provisions, the following procedures, presumptions and remedies shall apply with respect to advancement of Expenses and the right to indemnification under this Section 6.1. Indemnitee shall be entitled to

indemnification and advancement against all Expenses reasonably incurred for serving as a witness by reason of indemnitee's Official Capacity in any Proceeding with respect to which indemnitee is not a party.

(a) Advancement of Expenses. All reasonable Expenses incurred by or on behalf of the indemnitee in connection with any Proceeding shall be advanced to the indemnitee by the Corporation within twenty (20) days after the receipt by the Corporation of a statement or statements from the indemnitee requesting such advance or advances from time to time, whether prior to or after final disposition of such, Proceeding. Such statement or statements shall reasonably evidence the Expenses incurred by the indemnitee and, if required by law at the time of such advance, shall include or be accompanied by an undertaking by or on behalf of the indemnitee to repay the amounts advanced if it should ultimately be determined that the indemnitee is not entitled to be indemnified against such Expenses pursuant to this Section 6.1.

(b) Procedure for Determination of Entitlement to Indemnification.

(i) To obtain indemnification under this Section 6.1, an indemnitee shall submit to the secretary of the Corporation a written request, including such documentation and information as is reasonably available to the indemnitee and reasonably necessary to determine whether and to what extent the indemnitee is entitled to indemnification (the "**Supporting Documentation**"). The determination of the indemnitee's entitlement to indemnification shall be made not later than sixty (60) days after receipt by the Corporation of the written request for indemnification together with the Supporting Documentation. The secretary of the Corporation shall, promptly upon receipt of such a request for indemnification, advise the board of directors in writing that the indemnitee has requested indemnification, whereupon the Corporation shall provide such indemnification, including without limitation advancement of Expenses, so long as the indemnitee is legally entitled thereto in accordance with applicable law.

(ii) The indemnitee's entitlement to indemnification under this Section 6.1 shall be determined in one of the following ways: (A) by a majority vote of the Disinterested Directors (as hereinafter defined), even though less than a quorum of the board of directors; (B) by a committee of such Disinterested Directors designated by a majority vote of the Disinterested Directors, even though less than a quorum of the board of directors; (C) by a written opinion of Independent Counsel (as hereinafter defined) if (x) a Change of Control (as hereinafter defined) shall have occurred and the indemnitee so requests or (y) if there are no Disinterested Directors; (D) by the stockholders of the Corporation (but only if a majority of the Disinterested Directors, if they constitute a quorum of the board of directors, presents the issue of entitlement to indemnification to the stockholders for their determination); or (E) as provided in paragraph (c) below.

(iii) In the event the determination of entitlement to indemnification is to be made by Independent Counsel pursuant to paragraph (b)(ii) above, a majority of the Disinterested Directors shall select the Independent Counsel, but only an Independent Counsel to which the indemnitee does not reasonably object; provided, however, that if a Change of Control shall have occurred, or there are no Disinterested Directors, the

indemnatee shall select such Independent Counsel, but only an Independent Counsel to which the board of directors does not reasonably object.

(iv) The only basis upon which a finding that indemnification may not be made is that such indemnification is prohibited by law.

(v) The Corporation shall pay all costs associated with its determination of indemnatee's eligibility for indemnification.

(c) Presumptions and Effect of Certain Proceedings. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this Section 6.1, if a Change of Control shall have occurred, the indemnatee shall be presumed to be entitled to indemnification under this Section 6.1 upon submission of a request for indemnification together with the Supporting Documentation in accordance with paragraph (b)(i), and thereafter the Corporation shall have the burden of proof to overcome that presumption in reaching a contrary determination. In any event, if the person or persons empowered under paragraph (b)(ii) above to determine entitlement to indemnification shall not have been appointed or shall not have made a determination within sixty (60) days after receipt by the Corporation of the request therefor together with the Supporting Documentation, the indemnatee shall be deemed to be entitled to indemnification and the indemnatee shall be entitled to such indemnification unless (A) the indemnatee misrepresented a material fact, or omitted a material fact necessary to make indemnatee's statement not misleading, in making the request for indemnification or in the Supporting Documentation or (B) such indemnification is prohibited by law. The termination of any Proceeding described in this Section 6.1, or of any claim, issue or matter therein, by judgment, order, settlement or conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, adversely affect the right of the indemnatee to indemnification or create a presumption that the indemnatee did not act in good faith and in a manner that the indemnatee reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Corporation or, with respect to any criminal Proceeding, that the indemnatee had reasonable cause to believe that the indemnatee's conduct was unlawful.

(d) Remedies of Indemnatee.

(i) In the event that a determination is made pursuant to paragraph (b)(ii) that the indemnatee is not entitled to indemnification under this Section 6.1: (A) the indemnatee shall be entitled to seek an adjudication of his or her entitlement to such indemnification either, at the indemnatee's sole option, in (x) an appropriate court of the State of Delaware, or (y) an arbitration to be conducted by a single arbitrator pursuant to the rules of the American Arbitration Association; (B) any such judicial Proceeding or arbitration shall be de novo and the indemnatee shall not be prejudiced by reason of such adverse determination; and (C) in any such judicial Proceeding or arbitration the Corporation shall have the burden of proving that the indemnatee is not entitled to indemnification under this Section 6.1.

(ii) If a determination shall have been made or is deemed to have been made, pursuant to paragraph (b)(ii) or (iii), that the indemnatee is entitled to indemnification, the Corporation shall be obligated to pay the amounts constituting such indemnification within five (5) days after such determination has been made or is deemed

to have been made and shall be conclusively bound by such determination unless (A) the indemnitee misrepresented a material fact, or omitted a material fact necessary to make indemnitee's statement not misleading, in making the request for indemnification or in the Supporting Documentation, or (B) such indemnification is prohibited by law. In the event that: (X) advancement of Expenses is not timely made pursuant to paragraph (a); or (Y) payment of indemnification is not made within five (5) days after a determination of entitlement to indemnification has been made or deemed to have been made pursuant to paragraph (b)(ii) or (iii), the indemnitee shall be entitled to seek judicial enforcement of the Corporation's obligation to pay to the indemnitee such advancement of Expenses or indemnification. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Corporation may bring an action, in an appropriate court in the State of Delaware, contesting the right of the indemnitee to receive indemnification hereunder due to the occurrence of an event described in subclause (A) or (B) of this clause (ii) (a "**Disqualifying Event**"); provided, however, that in any such action the Corporation shall have the burden of proving the occurrence of such Disqualifying Event.

(iii) The Corporation shall be precluded from asserting in any judicial Proceedings or arbitration commenced pursuant to this paragraph (d) that the procedures and presumptions of this Section 6.1 are not valid, binding and enforceable and shall stipulate in any such court or before any such arbitrator that the Corporation is bound by all the provisions of this Section 6.1.

(iv) In the event that the indemnitee, pursuant to this paragraph (d), seeks a judicial adjudication of or an award in arbitration to enforce his or her rights under, or to recover damages for breach of, this Section 6.1, the indemnitee shall be entitled to recover from the Corporation, and shall be indemnified by the Corporation against, any Expenses actually and reasonably incurred by the indemnitee if the indemnitee prevails in such judicial adjudication or arbitration. If it shall be determined in such judicial adjudication or arbitration that the indemnitee is entitled to receive part but not all of the indemnification or advancement of Expenses sought, the Expenses incurred by the indemnitee in connection with such judicial adjudication shall be prorated accordingly.

(e) Definitions. For purposes of this Section 6:

(i) "**Change in Control**" means a change in control of the Corporation of a nature that would be required to be reported in response to Item 6(e) of Schedule 14A of Regulation 14A promulgated under the Exchange Act, whether or not the Corporation is then subject to such reporting requirement; provided that, without limitation, such a change in control shall be deemed to have occurred if (i) any "person" (as such term is used in Sections 13(d) and 14(d) of the Exchange Act) is or becomes the "beneficial owner" (as defined in Rule 13d-3 under the Exchange Act), directly or indirectly, of securities of the Corporation representing 25% or more of the combined voting power of the Corporation's then outstanding securities without the prior approval of at least a majority of the members of the board of directors in office immediately prior to such acquisition; (ii) the Corporation is a party to a merger, consolidation, sale of assets or other reorganization, or a proxy contest, as a consequence of which members of

the board of directors in office immediately prior to such transaction or event constitute less than a majority of the board of directors thereafter; or (iii) during any period of two consecutive years, individuals who at the beginning of such period constituted the board of directors (including for this purpose any new director whose election or nomination for election by the Corporation's stockholders was approved by a vote of at least a majority of the directors then still in office who were directors at the beginning of such period) cease for any reason to constitute at least a majority of the board of directors;

(ii) “**Disinterested Director**” means a director of the Corporation who is not a party to the Proceeding in respect of which indemnification or advancement of Expenses is sought by the indemnitee;

(iii) “**Expenses**” shall include all direct and indirect costs including, but not limited to, attorneys' fees, retainers, court costs, transcript costs, fees of experts, witness fees, advisory fees, travel expenses, duplicating costs, printing and binding costs, telephone charges, postage, delivery service fees, and all other disbursements or expenses of the types customarily incurred in connection with investigating, prosecuting, defending (or preparing to investigate, prosecute or defend) a Proceeding, or being or preparing to be a witness in a Proceeding;

(iv) “**Independent Counsel**” means a law firm or a member of a law firm that neither presently is, nor in the past five (5) years has been, retained to represent: (A) the Corporation or the indemnitee in any matter material to either such party or (B) any other party to the Proceeding giving rise to a claim for indemnification under this Section 6.1. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the term “Independent Counsel” shall not include any person who, under the applicable standards of professional conduct then prevailing under such persons relevant jurisdiction of practice, would have a conflict of interest in representing either the Corporation or the indemnitee in an action to determine the indemnitee's rights under this Section 6.1;

(v) “**Official Capacity**” means indemnitee's corporate status as an officer and/or director and any other fiduciary capacity in which indemnitee serves the Corporation, its subsidiaries or affiliates, and any other entity which indemnitee serves in such capacity at the request of any of the Corporation's board of directors or any committee of its board of directors, chief executive officer, chairperson of the board of directors, or president. “Official Capacity” also refers to all actions which indemnitee takes or does not take while serving in such capacity; and

(vi) “**Proceeding**” includes any actual or threatened inquiry, investigation, action, suit, arbitration, or any other such actual or threatened action or occurrence, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative.

(f) Invalidity; Severability; Interpretation. If any provision or provisions of this Section 6.1 shall be held to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable for any reason whatsoever: (i) the validity, legality and enforceability of the remaining provisions of this Section 6.1 (including, without limitation, all portions of any paragraph of this Section 6.1 containing any such provision held to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable, that are not themselves invalid, illegal or

unenforceable) shall not in any way be affected or impaired thereby; and (ii) to the fullest extent possible, the provisions of this Section 6.1 (including, without limitation, all portions of any paragraph of this Section 6.1 containing any such provision held to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable, that are not themselves invalid; illegal or unenforceable) shall be construed so as to give effect to the intent manifested by the provision held invalid, illegal or unenforceable. Reference herein to laws, regulations or agencies shall be deemed to include all amendments thereof, substitutions therefor and successors thereto.

(g) Contractual Rights; Applicability. The right to be indemnified or to the reimbursement or advancement of Expenses pursuant hereto (i) is a contract right based upon good and valuable consideration, pursuant to which the person entitled thereto may bring suit as if the provisions hereof were set forth in a separate written contract between the Corporation and the director or officer, (ii) is intended to be retroactive and shall be available with respect to events occurring prior to the adoption hereof, and (iii) shall continue to exist after the rescission or restrictive modification hereof.

6.2 Indemnification of Others. The Corporation shall have the power, to the extent and in the manner permitted by the General Corporation Law of Delaware, to indemnify each of its employees and agents (other than directors and officers) against Expenses, judgments, fines, settlements, and other amounts actually and reasonably incurred in connection with any Proceeding, arising by reason of the fact that such person is or was an employee or agent of the Corporation. For purposes of this Section 6.2, an employee or agent of the Corporation (other than a director or officer) includes any person (a) who is or was an employee or agent of the Corporation, (b) who is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a director, officer, manager, member, partner, trustee, employee or other agent of another corporation, limited liability company, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, or (c) who was an officer, employee or agent of a corporation that was a predecessor corporation of the Corporation or of another enterprise at the request of such predecessor corporation.

6.3 Insurance. The Corporation may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a director, officer, manager, member, partner, trustee, employee or other agent of the Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, limited liability company, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his or her status as such, whether or not the Corporation would have the power to indemnify him against such liability under the provisions of the General Corporation Law of Delaware.

ARTICLE VII RECORDS AND REPORTS

7.1 Maintenance and Inspection of Records.

(a) The Corporation shall, either at its principal executive office or at such place or places as designated by the board of directors, keep a record of its stockholders listing their names and addresses and the number and class of shares held by each stockholder, a copy of these bylaws as amended to date, a copy of the certificate of incorporation as amended to

date, records of all meetings of the incorporators, stockholders and the board of directors, the stock transfer books, accounting books, and other records.

(b) Any stockholder, in person or by attorney or other agent, shall, upon written demand under oath stating the purpose thereof, have the right during the usual hours for business to inspect for any proper purpose, and to make copies and extracts from:

(i) The Corporation's stock ledger, a list of its stockholders, and its other books and records; and

(ii) A subsidiary's books and records, to the extent that:

(A) The Corporation has actual possession and control of such records of such subsidiary; or

(B) The Corporation could obtain such records through the exercise of control over such subsidiary, provided that as of the date of the making of the demand:

(1) The stockholder inspection of such books and records of the subsidiary would not constitute a breach of an agreement between the Corporation or the subsidiary and a person or persons not affiliated with the Corporation; and

(2) The subsidiary would not have the right under the law applicable to it to deny the Corporation access to such books and records upon demand by the Corporation.

In every instance where the stockholder is other than a record holder of stock of the Corporation, the demand under oath shall state the person's status as a stockholder, be accompanied by documentary evidence of beneficial ownership of the stock, and state that such documentary evidence is a true and correct copy of what it purports to be. A proper purpose shall mean a purpose reasonably related to such person's interest as a stockholder. In every instance where an attorney or other agent shall be the person who seeks the right to inspection, the demand under oath shall be accompanied by a power of attorney or such other writing which authorizes the attorney or other agent to so act on behalf of the stockholder.

As used in this Section 7.1(b):

(1) "**Stockholder**" means a holder of record of stock of the Corporation, or a person who is the beneficial owner of shares of such stock held either in a voting trust or by a nominee on behalf of such person.

(2) "**Subsidiary**" means any entity directly or indirectly owned, in whole or in part, by the Corporation and over the affairs of which the Corporation directly or indirectly exercises control, and includes, without limitation, corporations, partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability partnerships, limited liability companies, statutory trusts and/or joint ventures.

(3) “**Under oath**” includes statements the declarant affirms to be true under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States or any state.

7.2 Inspection by Directors. Any director shall have the right to examine the Corporation’s stock ledger, a list of its stockholders, and its other books and records for a purpose reasonably related to his or her position as a director. The Court of Chancery is hereby vested with the exclusive jurisdiction to determine whether a director is entitled to the inspection sought. The Court may summarily order the Corporation to permit the director to inspect any and all books and records, the stock ledger, and the stock list and to make copies or extracts therefrom. The burden of proof shall be upon the Corporation to establish that the inspection such director seeks is for an improper purpose. The Court may, in its discretion, prescribe any limitations or conditions with reference to the inspection, or award such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

ARTICLE VIII GENERAL MATTERS

8.1 Checks. From time to time, the board of directors shall determine by resolution which person or persons may sign or endorse all checks, drafts, other orders for payment of money, notes or other evidences of indebtedness that are issued in the name of or payable to the Corporation, and only the persons so authorized shall sign or endorse those instruments.

8.2 Execution of Corporate Contracts and Instruments. The board of directors, except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, may authorize any officer or officers, or agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation; such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized or ratified by the board of directors or within the agency power of an officer, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Corporation by any contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable for any purpose or for any amount.

8.3 Stock Certificates; Partly Paid Shares. The shares of the Corporation shall be represented by certificates, provided that the board of directors of the Corporation may provide by resolution or resolutions that some or all of any or all classes or series of its stock shall be uncertificated shares. Any such resolution shall not apply to shares represented by a certificate until such certificate is surrendered to the Corporation. Notwithstanding the adoption of such a resolution by the board of directors, every holder of stock represented by certificates and upon request every holder of uncertificated shares shall be entitled to have a certificate signed by, or in the name of the Corporation by any two of the chairperson of the board of directors, the vice-chairperson of the board of directors, the president, a vice president, the treasurer, an assistant treasurer, the secretary, an assistant secretary or any other authorized officer of the Corporation representing the number of shares registered in certificate form. Any or all of the signatures on the certificate may be a facsimile. In case any officer, transfer agent or registrar who has signed or whose facsimile signature has been placed upon a certificate has ceased to be such officer, transfer agent or registrar before such certificate is issued, it may be issued by the Corporation

with the same effect as if he were such officer, transfer agent or registrar at the date of issue. The Corporation shall not have power to issue a certificate in bearer form.

The Corporation may issue the whole or any part of its shares as partly paid and subject to call for the remainder of the consideration to be paid therefor. Upon the face or back of each stock certificate issued to represent any such partly paid shares, or upon the books and records of the Corporation in the case of uncertificated partly paid shares, the total amount of the consideration to be paid therefor and the amount paid thereon shall be stated. Upon the declaration of any dividend on fully paid shares, the Corporation shall declare a dividend upon partly paid shares of the same class, but only upon the basis of the percentage of the consideration actually paid thereon.

8.4 Special Designation on Certificates. If the Corporation is authorized to issue more than one class of stock or more than one series of any class, then the powers, the designations, the preferences, and the relative, participating, optional or other special rights of each class of stock or series thereof and the qualifications, limitations or restrictions of such preferences and/or rights shall be set forth in full or summarized on the face or back of the certificate that the Corporation shall issue to represent such class or series of stock; provided, however, that, except as otherwise provided in Section 202 of the General Corporation Law of Delaware, in lieu of the foregoing requirements there may be set forth on the face or back of the certificate that the Corporation shall issue to represent such class or series of stock a statement that the Corporation will furnish without charge to each stockholder who so requests the powers, the designations, the preferences, and the relative, participating, optional or other special rights of each class of stock or series thereof and the qualifications, limitations or restrictions of such preferences and/or rights.

8.5 Lost Certificates. Except as provided in this Section 8.5, no new certificates for shares shall be issued to replace a previously issued certificate unless the latter is surrendered to the Corporation and cancelled at the same time. The Corporation may issue a new certificate of stock or uncertificated shares in the place of any certificate theretofore issued by it, alleged to have been lost, stolen or destroyed, and the Corporation may require the owner of the lost, stolen or destroyed certificate, or his or her legal representative, to give the Corporation a bond sufficient to indemnify it against any claim that may be made against it on account of the alleged loss, theft or destruction of any such certificate or the issuance of such new certificate or uncertificated shares.

8.6 Construction; Definitions. Unless the context requires otherwise, the general provisions, rules of construction and definitions in the Delaware General Corporation Law shall govern the construction of these bylaws. Without limiting the generality of this provision, the singular number includes the plural, the plural number includes the singular, the masculine includes the feminine, and the term "person" includes a corporation, an entity and a natural person.

8.7 Dividends. The directors of the Corporation, subject to any rights or restrictions contained in the certificate of incorporation, may declare and pay dividends upon the shares of its capital stock pursuant to the General Corporation Law of Delaware. Dividends may be paid in cash, in property, or in shares of the Corporation's capital stock.

The directors of the Corporation may set apart out of any of the funds of the Corporation available for dividends a reserve or reserves for any proper purpose and may abolish any such reserve. Such purposes shall include but not be limited to equalizing dividends, repairing or maintaining any property of the Corporation, and meeting contingencies.

8.8 Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be fixed by resolution of the board of directors and may be changed by the board of directors.

8.9 Seal. The Corporation may adopt a corporate seal which may be altered as desired, and may use the same by causing it or a facsimile thereof, to be impressed or affixed or in any other manner reproduced.

8.10 Transfer of Stock. Upon surrender to the Corporation or the transfer agent of the Corporation of a certificate for shares duly endorsed or accompanied by proper evidence of succession, assignation or authority to transfer, it shall be the duty of the Corporation to issue a new certificate to the person entitled thereto, cancel the old certificate, and record the transaction in its books. Subject to any restrictions on transfer and unless otherwise provided by the board of directors, shares of stock that are represented by a certificate may be transferred on the books of the Corporation by the surrender to the Corporation or its transfer agent of the certificate theretofore properly endorsed or accompanied by a written assignment or power of attorney properly executed, with transfer stamps (if necessary) affixed, and with such proof of authenticity of signature as the Corporation or its transfer agent may reasonably require. Shares of stock that are not represented by a certificate may be transferred on the books of the Corporation by submitting to the Corporation or its transfer agent such evidence of transfer and following such other procedures as the Corporation or its transfer agent may require.

8.11 Stock Transfer Agreements and Restrictions. The Corporation shall have power to enter into and perform any agreement with any number of stockholders of any one or more classes of stock of the Corporation to restrict the transfer of shares of stock of the Corporation of any one or more classes owned by such stockholders in any manner not prohibited by the General Corporation Law of Delaware.

8.12 Record Holders. Except as may otherwise be required by law, by the certificate of incorporation or by these bylaws, the Corporation shall be entitled to treat the record holder of stock as shown on its books as the owner of such stock for all purposes, including the payment of dividends and the right to vote with respect thereto, regardless of any transfer, pledge or other disposition of such stock, until the shares have been transferred on the books of the Corporation in accordance with the requirements of these bylaws.

8.13 Electronic Transmission. For purposes of these bylaws, “electronic transmission” means any form of communication, not directly involving the physical transmission of paper, that creates a record that may be retained, retrieved, and reviewed by a recipient thereof, and that may be directly reproduced in paper form by such a recipient through an automated process.

8.14 Exclusive Jurisdiction of Delaware Courts. Unless the Corporation consents in writing to the selection of an alternative forum, the Court of Chancery of the State of Delaware (or if such court does not have jurisdiction, the Superior Court of Delaware, or if such other court

does not have jurisdiction, the United States District Court for the District of Delaware) shall be the sole and exclusive forum for (i) any derivative action or proceeding brought on behalf of the Corporation, (ii) any action asserting a claim of breach of a fiduciary duty owed by any current or former director, officer or other employee of the Corporation to the Corporation or the Corporation's stockholders, (iii) any action asserting a claim arising pursuant to any provision of the Delaware General Corporation Law or the certificate of incorporation or bylaws, or (iv) any action asserting a claim against the Corporation governed by the internal affairs doctrine. Any person or entity holding any interest in shares of capital stock of the Corporation shall be deemed to have notice of and consented to the provisions of this Section 8.14.

ARTICLE IX AMENDMENTS

9.1 Amendment by Directors. Except as provided otherwise by law, these Bylaws may be amended or repealed by the board of directors.

9.2 Amendment by Stockholders. These bylaws may be amended or repealed at any Annual Meeting, or special meeting of stockholders called for such purpose in accordance with these bylaws, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the outstanding shares entitled to vote on such amendment or repeal, voting together as a single class. Notwithstanding the foregoing, stockholder approval shall not be required unless mandated by the Certificate, these bylaws, or other applicable law.

ARTICLE X DISSOLUTION

If it should be deemed advisable in the judgment of the board of directors of the Corporation that the Corporation should be dissolved, the board of directors, after the adoption of a resolution to that effect by a majority of the whole board of directors at any meeting called for that purpose, shall cause notice to be mailed to each stockholder entitled to vote thereon of the adoption of the resolution and of a meeting of stockholders to take action upon the resolution.

At the meeting a vote shall be taken for and against the proposed dissolution. If a majority of the outstanding stock of the Corporation entitled to vote thereon votes for the proposed dissolution, then a certificate stating, among other things, that the dissolution has been authorized in accordance with the provisions of Section 275 of the General Corporation Law of Delaware and setting forth the names and residences of the directors and officers shall be executed, acknowledged, and filed and shall become effective in accordance with Section 103 of the General Corporation Law of Delaware. Upon such certificate's becoming effective in accordance with Section 103 of the General Corporation Law of Delaware, the Corporation shall be dissolved.

**ARTICLE XI
CUSTODIAN**

11.1 Appointment of a Custodian in Certain Cases. The Court of Chancery, upon application of any stockholder, may appoint one or more persons to be custodians and, if the Corporation is insolvent, to be receivers, of and for the Corporation when:

(a) at any meeting held for the election of directors the stockholders are so divided that they have failed to elect successors to directors whose terms have expired or would have expired upon qualification of their successors;

(b) the business of the Corporation is suffering or is threatened with irreparable injury because the directors are so divided respecting the management of the affairs of the Corporation that the required vote for action by the board of directors cannot be obtained and the stockholders are unable to terminate this division; or

(c) the Corporation has abandoned its business and has failed within a reasonable time to take steps to dissolve, liquidate or distribute its assets.

11.2 Duties of Custodian. The custodian shall have all the powers and title of a receiver appointed under Section 291 of the General Corporation Law of Delaware, but the authority of the custodian shall be to continue the business of the Corporation and not to liquidate its affairs and distribute its assets, except when the Court of Chancery otherwise orders and except in cases arising under Sections 226(a)(3) or 352(a)(2) of the General Corporation Law of Delaware.