



## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[SEC File No. 270-514, OMB Control No. 3235-0572]

### **Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Reinstatement without Change: Reports of Evidence of Material Violations**

Upon Written Request, Copies Available From:

Securities and Exchange Commission

Office of FOIA Services

100 F Street, NE

Washington, DC 20549-2736

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 3501-3520, the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) is soliciting comments on the collection of information summarized below. The Commission plans to submit the existing collection of information to the Office of Management and Budget for reinstatement without change.

On February 6, 2003, the Commission published final rules, effective August 5, 2003, entitled “Standards of Professional Conduct for Attorneys Appearing and Practicing Before the Commission in the Representation of an Issuer” (17 CFR 205.1-205.7). The information collection embedded in the rules is necessary to implement the Standards of Professional Conduct for Attorneys prescribed by the rule and required by Section 307 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 7245). The rules impose an “up-the-ladder” reporting requirement when attorneys appearing and practicing before the Commission become aware of evidence of a material violation by the issuer or any officer, director, employee, or agent of the issuer. An issuer may choose to establish a qualified legal compliance committee (“QLCC”) as an alternative procedure for reporting evidence of a material violation. In the rare cases in which a majority of a QLCC has

concluded that an issuer did not act appropriately, the information may be communicated to the Commission. The collection of information is, therefore, an important component of the Commission’s program to discourage violations of the federal securities laws and promote ethical behavior of attorneys appearing and practicing before the Commission.

This information collection requirement was previously approved by OMB, but the approval expired on November 30, 2021. Accordingly, the Commission will request a reinstatement without change of OMB’s approval.

The respondents to this collection of information are attorneys who appear and practice before the Commission and, in certain cases, the issuer, and/or officers, directors and committees of the issuer. We believe that, in providing quality representation to issuers, attorneys report evidence of violations to others within the issuer, including the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Executive Officer, and, where necessary, the directors. In addition, officers and directors investigate evidence of violations and report within the issuer the results of the investigation and the remedial steps they have taken or sanctions they have imposed. Except as discussed below, we therefore believe that the reporting requirements imposed by the rule are “usual and customary” activities that do not add to the burden that would be imposed by the collection of information.

Certain aspects of the collection of information, however, may impose a burden. For an issuer to establish a QLCC, the QLCC must adopt written procedures for the confidential receipt, retention, and consideration of any report of evidence of a material violation. We estimate for purposes of the PRA that there are approximately 11,484 issuers that are subject to the rules.<sup>1</sup> Of these, we estimate that approximately 346, which is approximately 3 percent, have established or will establish a QLCC.<sup>2</sup> Establishing the

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<sup>1</sup> This figure is based on the estimated 8,230 operating companies that filed annual reports on Form 10-K, Form 20-F, or Form 40-F during the 2023 calendar year, and the estimated 3,254 investment companies that filed periodic reports on Form N-CEN during that same period.

<sup>2</sup> This estimate is based on issuer-filings made with the Commission between January 1, 2021, and September 30, 2024, that include a reference to the issuer’s QLCC.

written procedures required by the rule should not impose a significant burden. We assume that an issuer would incur a greater burden in the year that it first establishes the procedures than in subsequent years, in which the burden would be incurred in updating, reviewing, or modifying the procedures. For purposes of the PRA, we assume that an issuer would spend 6 hours every three-year period on the procedures. This would result in an average burden of 2 hours per year. Thus, we estimate for purposes of the PRA that the total annual burden imposed by the collection of information would be 692 hours. Assuming half of the burden hours will be incurred by outside counsel at a rate of \$700 per hour, the resulting cost would be \$242,200.

The estimate of average burden hours is made solely for the purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act, and is not derived from a comprehensive or even a representative survey or study. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Written comments are requested on: (a) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information has practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Commission's estimate of the burden[s] of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Consideration will be given to comments and suggestions submitted in writing by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Please direct your written comments to: Austin Gerig, Director/Chief Data Officer, Securities and Exchange Commission, c/o Tanya Ruttenberg, 100 F Street NE, Washington, DC 20549, or send an email to: [PRA\\_Mailbox@sec.gov](mailto:PRA_Mailbox@sec.gov).

Dated: December 10, 2024.

**Sherry R. Haywood,**

*Assistant Secretary.*

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