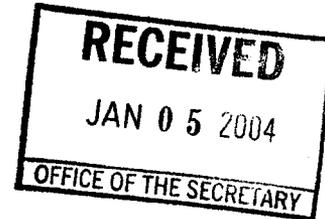


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The Herbold Group, LLC
1106 108th Ave NE
Suite 203
Bellevue, WA 98004

December 29, 2003



Mr. Jonathan G. Katz, Secretary
U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
450 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20549-0609

Dear Mr. Katz:

REFERENCE: File No. S7-19-03

I appreciate this opportunity to provide my comments on the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") proposal to require companies to include shareholder nominees for director in company proxy materials under certain circumstances. I am a corporate director for the following public companies: Weyerhaeuser Corporation, Cintas Corporation, Agilent Technologies, and First Mutual Bank.

I agree and it is important that corporate boards and management hold themselves to the highest standards of corporate governance – but, complicating the director election process by requiring companies to include shareholder nominees in their proxy materials is not good corporate governance. The proposals under consideration will enhance special interest groups' access to boardrooms and run counter to the good governance reforms previously adopted by the Congress, SEC and the NYSE. The election of shareholder-nominated candidates also could create factions on the board, leading to dissension and delay and jeopardizing the board's ability to function effectively.

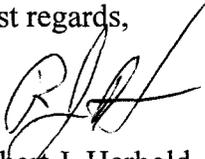
It concerns me that permitting shareholders to place nominees in company proxy materials would undercut the role of the board and its nominating committee in the important process of nominating director candidates. This proposal is inconsistent with the proposed NYSE listing standards, which strengthen the role and independence of boards of directors and board nominating committees. Bypassing the nominating committee – which must be composed solely of independent directors under the NYSE listing standards—would diminish board accountability to shareholders.

In conclusion, the proposed rules could turn director elections into proxy contests, substantially disrupting corporate affairs, causing significant costs to the company and all of its shareholders, and dissuading from board service well-qualified individuals who do not want to routinely stand for election in a contested situation.

I believe the SEC should allow the corporate governance reforms adopted by Congress, the SEC and the securities markets to be fully implemented before proceeding with additional regulation. With the increased independence of boards of directors, the strengthened role and independence of nominating committees, and the enhancement of shareholder-director communications, I believe that the issues that led to calls for shareholder access will be addressed in a proper and timely fashion. If the inclusion of shareholder nominees in company proxy materials is ultimately required, I agree with the SEC's goal of limiting it to a small number of companies that have not been responsive to their shareholders.

Your consideration of my concerns about the proposed rules is very much appreciated.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Herbold', written over a horizontal line.

Robert J. Herbold
Managing Director