



DIVISION OF
CORPORATION FINANCE

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

February 3, 2016

Ronald O. Mueller
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP
shareholderproposals@gibsondunn.com

Re: Bank of America Corporation
Incoming letter dated December 28, 2015

Dear Mr. Mueller:

This is in response to your letter dated December 28, 2015 concerning the shareholder proposal submitted to Bank of America by Kenneth Steiner. 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

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

February 3, 2016

Response of the Office of Chief Counsel
Division of Corporation Finance

Re: Bank of America Corporation
Incoming letter dated December 28, 2015

The proposal urges the board to amend Bank of America's clawback policy in the manner set forth in the proposal.

We are unable to concur in your view that Bank of America may exclude the proposal under rule 14a-8(i)(7). In arriving at this position, we note that the proposal focuses on senior executive compensation. Accordingly, we do not believe that Bank of America may omit the proposal from its proxy materials in reliance on rule 14a-8(i)(7).

Sincerely,

Ryan J. Adams
Attorney-Adviser

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 matter 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 proposals 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 administered by the Commission, including argument as to whether or not activities proposed to be taken would be violative of 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 adversary procedure.

It is important to note that the staff's and Commission'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 shareholders 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 management omit the proposal from the company's proxy material.

December 28, 2015

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Office of Chief Counsel
Division of Corporate Finance
Securities and Exchange Commission
100 F St., NE
Washington, DC 20549

Re: *Bank of America Corporation*
Stockholder Proposal of Kenneth Steiner
Exchange Act of 1934—Rule 14a-8

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This letter is to inform you that our client, Bank of America Corporation (the “Company”), intends to omit from its proxy statement and form of proxy for its 2016 Annual Meeting of Stockholders (collectively, the “2016 Proxy Materials”) a stockholder proposal (the “Proposal”) and statements in support thereof (the “Supporting Statement”) received from John Chevedden on behalf of Kenneth Steiner (the “Proponent”).

Pursuant to Rule 14a-8(j), we have:

- filed this letter with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “Commission”) no later than eighty (80) calendar days before the Company intends to file its definitive 2016 Proxy Materials with the Commission; and
- concurrently sent copies of this correspondence to the Proponent.

Rule 14a-8(k) and Staff Legal Bulletin No. 14D (Nov. 7, 2008) (“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 of the Division of Corporation Finance (the “Staff”). Accordingly, we are 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 this Proposal, a copy of that correspondence should be furnished concurrently to the undersigned on behalf of the Company pursuant to Rule 14a-8(k) and SLB 14D.

Office of Chief Counsel
Division of Corporation Finance
December 28, 2015
Page 2

THE PROPOSAL

The Proposal relates to the Company's legal compliance program and advocates a specific mechanism to promote legal compliance and pay for any penalties imposed on the Company as a result of any violation of law. Specifically, the Proposal states:

RESOLVED, shareholders urge our Board of Directors to amend the General Clawback policy to provide that a substantial portion of annual total compensation of Executive Officers, identified by the board, shall be deferred and be forfeited in part or in whole, at the discretion of Board [*sic*], to help satisfy any monetary penalty associated with any violation of law regardless of any determined responsibility by any individual officer; and that this annual deferred compensation be paid to the officers no sooner than 10 years after the absence of any monetary penalty; and that any forfeiture and relevant circumstances be reported to shareholders. These amendments should operate prospectively and be implemented in a way that does not violate any contract, compensation plan, law or regulation.

A copy of the Proposal and the Supporting Statement, as well as related correspondence with the Proponent, is attached to this letter as Exhibit A.

BASIS FOR EXCLUSION

We hereby respectfully request that the Staff concur in our view that the Proposal may be excluded from the 2016 Proxy Materials pursuant to Rule 14a-8(i)(7) because the Proposal deals with matters relating to the Company's ordinary business operations.

ANALYSIS

The Proposal May Be Excluded Under Rule 14a-8(i)(7) Because The Proposal Deals With Matters Relating To The Company's Ordinary Business Operations.

The Proposal may be excluded under Rule 14a-8(i)(7) because it relates to ordinary business operations involving the Company's legal compliance program. Specifically, the Proposal requests that the Company's Board of Directors implement a specific mechanism to promote legal compliance and pay for any penalties imposed on the Company by providing that a substantial portion of executive officers' compensation be deferred and applied "to help satisfy any monetary penalty associated with any violation of law regardless of any determined responsibility by any individual officer" Although the Proposal labels the requested compliance mechanism as an amendment of the "General Clawback policy," the thrust and

Office of Chief Counsel
Division of Corporation Finance
December 28, 2015
Page 3

focus of the Proposal and the Supporting Statement implicate the ordinary business issue of legal compliance. Consistent with Staff precedent, the Proposal is therefore excludable under Rule 14a-8(i)(7).

According to the Commission release accompanying the 1998 amendments to Rule 14a-8, the term “ordinary business” “refers to matters that are not necessarily ‘ordinary’ in the common meaning of the word,” but instead the term “is rooted in the corporate law concept providing management with flexibility in directing certain core matters involving the company’s business and operations.” Exchange Act Release No. 40018 (May 21, 1998) (the “1998 Release”). In the 1998 Release, the Commission stated that the underlying policy of the ordinary business exclusion is “to confine the resolution of ordinary business problems to management and the board of directors, since it is impracticable for shareholders to decide how to solve such problems at an annual shareholders meeting,” and identified as a central consideration that underlies this policy that “[c]ertain tasks are so fundamental to management’s ability to run a company on a day-to-day basis that they could not, as a practical matter, be subject to direct shareholder oversight.” *Id.* (citing Exchange Act Release No. 12999 (Nov. 22, 1976)).

The Staff has long recognized that proposals that implicate a company’s legal compliance program relate to ordinary business operations and are excludable under Rule 14a-8(i)(7). For example, in *Navient Corp.* (avail. Mar. 26, 2015, *recon. denied* Apr. 8, 2015), a stockholder proposal recommended the preparation of “a report on the [c]ompany’s internal controls over its student loan servicing operations, including a discussion of the actions taken to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws.” The Staff concurred that the company could exclude the proposal from the company’s proxy materials, noting in particular that that “[p]roposals that concern a company’s legal compliance program are generally excludable under rule 14a-8(i)(7).” Similarly, in *Raytheon Co.* (avail. Mar. 25, 2013), a stockholder proposal requested a report on the board’s oversight of the company’s efforts to implement certain legislative provisions. The Staff concurred in the exclusion of the proposal as relating to the company’s ordinary business operations, stating that “[p]roposals that concern a company’s legal compliance program are generally excludable under rule 14a-8(i)(7).”¹

¹ See also *JPMorgan Chase & Co.* (avail. Mar. 13, 2014) (Staff concurred in the exclusion under Rule 14a-8(i)(7) of a proposal seeking a report on board and officer fiduciary, moral, and legal obligations (which may include “concrete recommendations” such as amending governance documents), stating that “[p]roposals that concern a company’s legal compliance program are generally excludable”); *Yahoo! Inc.* (avail. Apr. 3, 2012) (Staff concurred in the exclusion under Rule 14a-8(i)(7) of a proposal directing the board to “perform due diligence” of certain alleged conduct to, among other things, “assure that potential abuses not occur in the future”); *Sprint Nextel Corp.* (avail. Mar. 16, 2010, *recon. denied* Apr. 20, 2010) (Staff concurred in the exclusion of a proposal requesting a report to explain why the company had failed to adopt an ethics code that was reasonably designed to deter wrongdoing by the company’s chief executive officer and to promote ethical conduct, securities laws

(*Cont’d on next page*)

Office of Chief Counsel
Division of Corporation Finance
December 28, 2015
Page 4

It is clear that the goal of the Proposal is to enhance the Company's legal compliance program. The Proposal itself states that executive officers' compensation is to be deferred and forfeited in part or in whole "to help satisfy any monetary penalty associated with any violation of law regardless of any determined responsibility by any individual officer" and that the deferred amounts will be paid to officers "after the absence of any monetary penalty" The Supporting Statement describes the Proposal as creating "a performance bond" and states: "This would create a strong incentive for individuals to monitor the actions of their colleagues, and to call attention to any issues" and that the deferral arrangement would operate to prevent an executive from being able to "'opt out' of the firm as a way of escaping the problem." Moreover, the Proposal is designed to address "any monetary penalty associated with any violation of law regardless of any determined responsibility by any individual officer" (emphasis added). In this respect, the Proposal is not narrowly focused on the traditional concepts of executive compensation "clawbacks" that are designed to address the recoupment of unearned compensation that was paid as a result of a material accounting error or as a result of an employee's serious misconduct. Instead, the breadth of legal compliance concerns encompassed by the Proposal, applied "regardless of any determined responsibility," is comparable to the proposal considered in *PetSmart, Inc.* (avail. Mar. 24, 2011). In *PetSmart*, the Staff concurred in the exclusion of a proposal requesting that the board require suppliers to certify their compliance with the Animal Welfare Act, the Lacey Act "or any state law equivalents," stating that "we note your view that the scope of the laws covered by the proposal is 'fairly broad in nature from serious violations such as animal abuse to violations of administrative matters such as record keeping.'" Here as well, the Proposal applies to "any violation of law regardless of any determined responsibility by any individual officer." Thus, the Proposal would apply to, for example, fines that could be imposed if a local branch of the Company were found to have violated a city's zoning or land use laws.

Although the Proposal seeks to use the Company's executive compensation programs to implement its objective of promoting legal compliance by imposing personal liability on the

(Cont'd from previous page)

compliance, and accountability for adherence to the ethics code); *FedEx Corp.* (avail. July 14, 2009) (Staff concurred in the exclusion under Rule 14a-8(i)(7) of a proposal seeking a report regarding compliance with federal and state law governing classification of employees and independent contractors); *Verizon Communications Inc.* (avail. Jan. 7, 2008) (Staff concurred in the exclusion under Rule 14a-8(i)(7) of a proposal requesting that the board of directors adopt policies to ensure that the company and its contractors do not engage in illegal trespass actions and the preparation of an annual report describing such policies); *The AES Corp.* (Jan. 9, 2007) (Staff concurred in the exclusion under Rule 14a-8(i)(7) of a proposal seeking the creation of a board oversight committee to monitor compliance with applicable laws, rules and regulations of federal, state and local governments and the company's code of conduct).

Office of Chief Counsel
Division of Corporation Finance
December 28, 2015
Page 5

Company's executives for "any monetary penalty associated with any violation of law regardless of any determined responsibility (emphasis added)," this does not result in the Proposal transcending the day-to-day business matters of the Company or raise policy issues so significant that it would be appropriate for a shareholder vote. On the contrary, because the proposal relates to "any" penalty from "any" violation of law and regardless of the individual's personal culpability or even knowledge of such violations, it clearly applies to the day-to-day compliance operations of the Company. In addition, the Proposal states the executive's deferred compensation will "be paid to the officers no sooner than 10 years after the absence of any monetary penalty" (emphasis added). Given the difficulty of determining when the absence of any event occurs, the Proposal would mandate that all compensation be deferred for an indefinite period until the Company is in compliance with all laws for at least 10 years. Therefore, the Proposal is not a "clawback" proposal, but is instead an attempt to second-guess the terms of the Company's legal compliance program, which is unquestionably a day-to-day business matter.

The Staff consistently has concurred that when the thrust and focus of a proposal is a matter of ordinary business, the proposal is excludable under Rule 14a-8(i)(7) even when the proposal seeks to implement its goals through a company's executive compensation programs. In this respect, the Proposal is comparable to the proposal considered by the Staff last year in *Apple Inc.* (avail. Dec. 30, 2014). In *Apple*, the proposal urged the company's compensation committee to include in the metrics used to determine incentive compensation for the company's five most-highly compensated executives "a metric related to the effectiveness of [the company]'s policies and procedures designed to promote adherence to laws and regulations." In requesting no-action relief, the company noted that, while the language of the proposal was "couched as an executive compensation proposal, presumably in an effort to qualify the [p]roposal as one relating to executive compensation, which the staff generally considers to transcend 'ordinary business,'" the thrust and focus of the proposal was the company's "policies and procedures for complying with the laws applicable to its operations." The company argued that the proposal was therefore excludable under Rule 14a-8(i)(7) as relating to a matter of ordinary business because it sought "to enhance or otherwise direct the [c]ompany's administration of its legal compliance program." The Staff concurred that the company could exclude the proposal under Rule 14a-8(i)(7), explaining that "although the proposal relates to executive compensation, the thrust and focus of the proposal is on the ordinary business matter of the company's legal compliance program." Here as well, although the Proposal would be implemented through a deferred compensation program for executive officers, the goal of the Proposal is to enhance the Company's legal compliance program by imposing personal liability upon the Company's executive officers for "any violation of law regardless of ... responsibility."

Office of Chief Counsel
Division of Corporation Finance
December 28, 2015
Page 6

Similarly, in *Moody's Corp.* (avail. Feb. 9, 2011), the company sought the exclusion of a proposal urging the company's board of directors to adopt a policy regarding the use of Rule 10b5-1 plans for senior executives. In its no-action request, the company explained that the establishment of policies and programs to promote compliance with law (prohibiting insider trading by senior executives) related to the company's ordinary business operations. In response, the proponent claimed that the proposal focused "on pay-for-performance issues that are at the core of the executive compensation resolution," that "[t]he concern here is with unearned and unwarranted executive compensation" and that "the issues transcend ordinary business and go to the heart of policy issues that shareholders view as part of an effective executive compensation policy." The Staff concurred with the company that the proposal could be excluded from the company's proxy materials under Rule 14a-8(i)(7), noting that "the proposal relates to specific conditions to be included in a policy concerning compliance with insider trading laws." The *Apple* and *Moody's Corp.* no-action letters are only the most recent examples in a long line of precedents where the Staff has concurred that proposals addressing ordinary business issues are excludable even if they seek to implement their goal through a company's executive compensation arrangements.²

² See also *Delta Air Lines, Inc.* (avail. Mar. 27, 2012) (Staff concurred in the exclusion of a proposal requesting that the board of directors initiate a program that prohibits payment of incentive compensation to executive officers unless the company first adopted a process to fund the retirement accounts of the company's pilots, noting in particular that, "although the proposal mentions executive compensation, the thrust and focus of the proposal is on the ordinary business matter of employee benefits"); *Exelon Corp.* (avail. Feb. 21, 2007) (Staff concurred in the exclusion of a proposal seeking to prohibit payment of bonuses to the company's executives to the extent that performance goals were achieved through a reduction in retiree benefits, noting that "although the proposal mentions executive compensation, the thrust and focus of the proposal is on the ordinary business matter of general employee benefits"); *General Electric Co.* (Jan. 10, 2005) (Staff concurred in the exclusion of a proposal requesting that the compensation committee include social responsibility and environmental criteria among the performance goals executives must meet to earn their compensation, where the supporting statement demonstrated that the goal of the proposal was to address a purported link between teen smoking and the presentation of smoking in movies produced by the company's media subsidiary, noting that "although the proposal mentions executive compensation, the thrust and focus of the proposal is on the ordinary business matter of the nature, presentation and content of programming and film production"); *Walt Disney Co.* (avail. Dec. 15, 2004) (Staff concurred in the exclusion of a proposal because "although the proposal mentions executive compensation, the thrust and focus of the proposal is on the ordinary business matter of the nature, presentation and content of programming and film production"); and *Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (Service Employees International Union)* (avail. Mar. 17, 2003) (Staff concurred in the exclusion of a proposal requesting that the board of directors consider increasing the percentage of employees covered by the company's medical health insurance plan in determining senior executive compensation, noting that "while the proposal mentions executive compensation, the thrust and focus of the proposal is on the ordinary business matter of general employee benefits").

Office of Chief Counsel
Division of Corporation Finance
December 28, 2015
Page 7

The Company's programs and policies for avoiding "any violation of law," including the implementation of specific mechanisms for promoting compliance and accountability, encouraging personnel to speak up regarding concerns, and reporting on how the Company holds personnel accountable for violations if they do occur, are fundamental aspects of the day-to-day management of the Company and thus fall squarely within the Company's ordinary business operations. Similar to the proposal in *Moody's Corp.*, the Proposal relates to specific steps designed to enhance the Company's policies concerning compliance with laws, and, as with the proposal in *Apple Inc.*, the Proposal seeks to promote the Company's administration of its legal compliance program. Thus, the Proposal's thrust and focus is on the ordinary business matter of the Company's legal compliance program. Consistent with these precedents and the other precedents cited above, the Proposal involves ordinary business operations and accordingly may properly be excluded under Rule 14a-8(i)(7).

CONCLUSION

Based upon the foregoing analysis, we respectfully request that the Staff concur that it will take no action if the Company excludes the Proposal from its 2016 Proxy Materials.

We would be happy to provide you with any additional information and answer any questions that you may have regarding this subject. Correspondence regarding this letter should be sent to shareholderproposals@gibsondunn.com. If we can be of any further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to call me at (202) 955-8671 or Ross E. Jeffries, Jr., the Company's Corporate Secretary, at (980) 388-6878.

Sincerely,



Ronald O. Mueller

Enclosure

cc: Ross E. Jeffries, Jr., Bank of America Corporation
John Chevedden
Kenneth Steiner

EXHIBIT A

From: *** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***
Sent: Monday, November 09, 2015 1:17 PM
To: Ross Jeffries - Bank of America Corporate Secretary
Cc: Mareski, Brenda J - Legal; Johnston, Erin L - Legal
Subject: Rule 14a-8 Proposal (BAC)` `

Dear Mr. Jeffries,

Please see the attached rule 14a-8 proposal to enhance long-term shareholder value.

Sincerely,

John Chevedden

Kenneth Steiner

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

Mr. Ross Jeffries
Corporate Secretary
Bank of America Corporation (BAC)
100 N. Tryon Street
Charlotte NC 28255
PH: 704-386-5681

Dear Mr. Jeffries,

I purchased stock in our company because I believed our company had greater potential. My attached Rule 14a-8 proposal is submitted in support of the long-term performance of our company. This Rule 14a-8 proposal is submitted as a low-cost method to improve company performance.

My proposal is for the next annual shareholder meeting. I will meet Rule 14a-8 requirements including the continuous ownership of the required stock value until after the date of the respective shareholder meeting. My submitted format, with the shareholder-supplied emphasis, is intended to be used for definitive proxy publication. This is my proxy for John Chevedden and/or his designee to forward this Rule 14a-8 proposal to the company and to act on my behalf regarding this Rule 14a-8 proposal, and/or modification of it, for the forthcoming shareholder meeting before, during and after the forthcoming shareholder meeting. Please direct all future communications regarding my rule 14a-8 proposal to John Chevedden

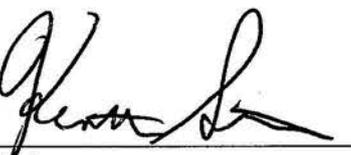
(PH: *** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***) at:

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

to facilitate prompt and verifiable communications. Please identify this proposal as my proposal exclusively.

This letter does not cover proposals that are not rule 14a-8 proposals. This letter does not grant the power to vote. Your consideration and the consideration of the Board of Directors is appreciated in support of the long-term performance of our company. Please acknowledge receipt of my proposal promptly by email to *** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

Sincerely,



Kenneth Steiner

10/25/15

Date

cc: Erin L.C. Johnston <erin.johnston@bankofamerica.com>

Assistant Corporate Secretary

PH: 980.683.8927

FX: 704.625.4378

FX: 704-625-4378

FX: 980-386-1760

FX: 704-409-0119

Brenda Mareski <brenda.mareski@bankofamerica.com>

Brian Grube <brian.grube@bankofamerica.com>

[BAC: Rule 14a-8 Proposal, November 9, 2015]

Proposal [4] – Clawback Amendment

RESOLVED, that shareholders of Citigroup Inc. urge the Board of Directors to amend the General Clawback policy to provide that a substantial portion of annual total compensation of Executive Officers, identified by the board, shall be deferred and be forfeited in part or in whole, at the discretion of Board, to help satisfy any monetary penalty associated with any violation of law regardless of any determined responsibility by any individual officer; and that this annual deferred compensation be paid to the officers no sooner than 10 years after the absence of any monetary penalty; and that any forfeiture and relevant circumstances be reported to shareholders. These amendments should operate prospectively and be implemented in a way that does not violate any contract, compensation plan, law or regulation.

President William Dudley of the New York Federal Reserve outlined the utility of what he called a performance bond. “In the case of a large fine, the senior management . . . would forfeit their performance bond. . . . Each individual’s ability to realize their deferred debt compensation would depend not only on their own behavior, but also on the behavior of their colleagues. This would create a strong incentive for individuals to monitor the actions of their colleagues, and to call attention to any issues. . . . Importantly, individuals would not be able to “opt out” of the firm as a way of escaping the problem. If a person knew that something is amiss and decided to leave the firm, their deferred debt compensation would still be at risk.”

The statute of limitations under the FIRREA is 10 years, meaning that annual deferral period should be 10 years.

Please vote to protect shareholder value:

Clawback Amendment – Proposal [4]

Notes:

Kenneth Steiner,

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

sponsors this proposal.

Please note that the title of the proposal is part of the proposal. The title is intended for publication.

If the company thinks that any part of the above proposal, other than the first line in brackets, can be omitted from proxy publication based on its own discretion, please obtain a written agreement from the proponent.

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

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

From: FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***
To: [Ross Jeffries - Bank of America Corporate Secretary](#)
Cc: [Mareski, Brenda J - Legal](#); [Johnston, Erin L - Legal](#)
Subject: Rule 14a-8 Proposal (BAC) blb
Date: Thursday, November 12, 2015 7:10:38 PM
Attachments: [CCE12112015_9.pdf](#)

Dear Mr. Jeffries,
Please see the attached broker letter.
Sincerely,
John Chevedden



November 12, 2015

BAC

Post-it® Fax Note	7671	Date	11-12-15	# of pages ▶
To	<i>R. ss Jeffries</i>	From	<i>John Chewedden</i>	
Co./Dept.		Co.		
Phone #		Phone #	*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***	
Fax #	<i>707-625-4228</i>	Fax #		

William Steiner

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

Re: Your TD Ameritrade account and OMB Memorandum TD Ameritrade Clearing Inc. DTC #0188

Dear William Steiner,

Thank you for allowing me to assist you today. As you requested, this letter confirms that as of the date of this letter, you have continuously held no less than 500 shares of each of the following stocks in the above reference account since July 1, 2014.

1. International Business Machine (IBM)
2. Citigroup (C)
3. Baxter International Group (BAX)
4. Ferro Corp (FOE)
5. Vector Group LTD (VGR)
6. Abbott Labs (ABT)
7. First Niagara Financial Group (FNFG)
8. Bank of America (BAC)
9. Windstream Holdings Inc. (WIN)

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,

Chris Blue
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:* FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***
To: [Ross Jeffries - Bank of America Corporate Secretary](#)
Cc: [Mareski, Brenda J - Legal](#); [Johnston, Erin L - Legal](#)
Subject: Rule 14a-8 Proposal Revision (BAC)``
Date: Monday, November 16, 2015 12:50:18 PM
Attachments: [CCE16112015.pdf](#)

Dear Mr. Jeffries,

Please see the attached rule 14a-8 proposal revision to enhance long-term shareholder value.

Sincerely,

John Chevedden

Kenneth Steiner

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

Mr. Ross Jeffries
Corporate Secretary
Bank of America Corporation (BAC)
100 N. Tryon Street
Charlotte NC 28255
PH: 704-386-5681

REVISED NOV. 16, 2015

Dear Mr. Jeffries,

I purchased stock in our company because I believed our company had greater potential. My attached Rule 14a-8 proposal is submitted in support of the long-term performance of our company. This Rule 14a-8 proposal is submitted as a low-cost method to improve company performance.

My proposal is for the next annual shareholder meeting. I will meet Rule 14a-8 requirements including the continuous ownership of the required stock value until after the date of the respective shareholder meeting. My submitted format, with the shareholder-supplied emphasis, is intended to be used for definitive proxy publication. This is my proxy for John Chevedden and/or his designee to forward this Rule 14a-8 proposal to the company and to act on my behalf regarding this Rule 14a-8 proposal, and/or modification of it, for the forthcoming shareholder meeting before, during and after the forthcoming shareholder meeting. Please direct all future communications regarding my rule 14a-8 proposal to John Chevedden

(PH: *** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***) at:

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

to facilitate prompt and verifiable communications. Please identify this proposal as my proposal exclusively.

This letter does not cover proposals that are not rule 14a-8 proposals. This letter does not grant the power to vote. Your consideration and the consideration of the Board of Directors is appreciated in support of the long-term performance of our company. Please acknowledge receipt of my proposal promptly by email to *** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

Sincerely, 

Kenneth Steiner

10/25/15
Date

cc: Erin L.C. Johnston <erin.johnston@bankofamerica.com>
Assistant Corporate Secretary
PH: 980.683.8927
FX: 704.625.4378
FX: 704-625-4378
FX: 980-386-1760
FX: 704-409-0119
Brenda Mareski <brenda.mareski@bankofamerica.com>
Brian Grube <brian.grube@bankofamerica.com>

[BAC: Rule 14a-8 Proposal, November 9, 2015, Revised November 16, 2016]

Proposal [4] – Clawback Amendment

RESOLVED, shareholders urge our Board of Directors to amend the General Clawback policy to provide that a substantial portion of annual total compensation of Executive Officers, identified by the board, shall be deferred and be forfeited in part or in whole, at the discretion of Board, to help satisfy any monetary penalty associated with any violation of law regardless of any determined responsibility by any individual officer; and that this annual deferred compensation be paid to the officers no sooner than 10 years after the absence of any monetary penalty; and that any forfeiture and relevant circumstances be reported to shareholders. These amendments should operate prospectively and be implemented in a way that does not violate any contract, compensation plan, law or regulation.

President William Dudley of the New York Federal Reserve outlined the utility of what he called a performance bond. “In the case of a large fine, the senior management . . . would forfeit their performance bond. . . . Each individual’s ability to realize their deferred debt compensation would depend not only on their own behavior, but also on the behavior of their colleagues. This would create a strong incentive for individuals to monitor the actions of their colleagues, and to call attention to any issues. . . . Importantly, individuals would not be able to “opt out” of the firm as a way of escaping the problem. If a person knew that something is amiss and decided to leave the firm, their deferred debt compensation would still be at risk.”

The statute of limitations under the FIRREA is 10 years, meaning that annual deferral period should be 10 years.

Please vote to protect shareholder value:

Clawback Amendment – Proposal [4]

Notes:

Kenneth Steiner,

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

sponsors this proposal.

Please note that the title of the proposal is part of the proposal. The title is intended for publication.

If the company thinks that any part of the above proposal, other than the first line in brackets, can be omitted from proxy publication based on its own discretion, please obtain a written agreement from the proponent.

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

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

November 20, 2015

VIA OVERNIGHT MAIL

Mr. John Chevedden

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

Dear Mr. Chevedden:

I am writing on behalf of Bank of America Corporation (the "Company"), which received on November 9, 2015, as revised on November 16, 2015, the stockholder proposal entitled "Proposal [4] – Clawback Amendment" that you submitted on behalf of Kenneth Steiner (the "Proponent") pursuant to Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") Rule 14a-8 for inclusion in the proxy statement for the Company's 2016 Annual Meeting of Stockholders (the "Proposal").

The Proposal contains certain procedural deficiencies, which SEC regulations require us to bring to your attention. Rule 14a-8(b) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, provides that stockholder proponents must submit sufficient proof of their continuous ownership of at least \$2,000 in market value, or 1%, of a company's shares entitled to vote on the proposal for at least one year as of the date the stockholder proposal was submitted. The Company's stock records do not indicate that the Proponent is the record owner of sufficient shares to satisfy this requirement. In addition, to date we have not received adequate proof that the Proponent has satisfied Rule 14a-8's ownership requirements as of the date that the Proposal was submitted to the Company. The November 12, 2015 letter from TD Ameritrade that you provided is insufficient because it purports to confirm William Steiner's ownership of Company shares rather than the Proponent's ownership of Company shares.

To remedy this defect, the Proponent must obtain a proof of ownership letter verifying his continuous ownership of the requisite number of Company shares for the one-year period preceding and including November 9, 2015, the date the Proposal initially was submitted to the Company. As explained in Rule 14a-8(b) and in SEC staff guidance, sufficient proof must be in the form of:

- (1) a written statement from the "record" holder of the Proponent's shares (usually a broker or a bank) verifying that the Proponent continuously held the requisite number of Company shares for the one-year period preceding and including November 9, 2015; or
- (2) if the Proponent has filed with the SEC a Schedule 13D, Schedule 13G, Form 3, Form 4 or Form 5, or amendments to those documents or updated forms, reflecting his ownership of the requisite number of Company shares as of or before the date on which the one-year eligibility period begins, a copy of the schedule and/or form, and any subsequent amendments reporting a change in the ownership level and a written

statement that the Proponent continuously held the requisite number of Company shares for the one-year period.

If the Proponent intends to demonstrate ownership by submitting a written statement from the “record” holder of his shares as set forth in (1) above, please note that 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 that acts as a securities depository (DTC is also known through the account name of Cede & Co.). Under SEC Staff Legal Bulletin No. 14F, only DTC participants are viewed as record holders of securities that are deposited at DTC. The Proponent can confirm whether his broker or bank is a DTC participant by asking his broker or bank or by checking DTC’s participant list, which is available at <http://www.dtcc.com/~media/Files/Downloads/client-center/DTC/alpha.ashx>. In these situations, stockholders need to obtain proof of ownership from the DTC participant through which the securities are held, as follows:

- (1) If the Proponent’s broker or bank is a DTC participant, then the Proponent needs to submit a written statement from the Proponent’s broker or bank verifying that the Proponent continuously held the requisite number of Company shares for the one-year period preceding and including November 9, 2015.
- (2) If the Proponent’s broker or bank is not a DTC participant, then the Proponent needs to submit proof of ownership from the DTC participant through which the shares are held verifying that the Proponent continuously held the requisite number of Company shares for the one-year period preceding and including November 9, 2015. The Proponent should be able to find out the identity of the DTC participant by asking his broker or bank. If the Proponent’s broker is an introducing broker, the Proponent may also be able to learn the identity and telephone number of the DTC participant through the Proponent’s account statements, because the clearing broker identified on those account statements will generally be a DTC participant. If the DTC participant that holds the Proponent’s shares is not able to confirm the Proponent’s individual holdings but is able to confirm the holdings of the Proponent’s broker or bank, then the Proponent needs to satisfy the proof of ownership requirements by obtaining and submitting two proof of ownership statements verifying that, for the one-year period preceding and including November 9, 2015, the requisite number of Company shares were continuously held: (i) one from the Proponent’s broker or bank confirming the Proponent’s ownership, and (ii) the other from the DTC participant confirming the broker or bank’s ownership.

The SEC’s rules require that your response to this letter be postmarked or transmitted electronically no later than 14 calendar days from the date you receive this letter. Please address any response to me at Bank of America Corporation, 214 North Tryon Street, Mail Code NC1-027-18-05, Charlotte, NC 28255-0001. Alternatively, you may transmit any response by facsimile to me at 704-409-0350.

November 20, 2015
Page 3

If you have any questions with respect to the foregoing, please contact me at 980-683-8927. For your reference, I enclose a copy of Rule 14a-8 and Staff Legal Bulletin No. 14F.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Johnston", written in a cursive style.

Erin L.C. Johnston
Sr. Vice President, Asst. General Counsel
& Asst. Corporate Secretary

cc: Kenneth Steiner

Enclosures

Rule 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.



**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://tts.sec.gov/cgi-bin/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/downloads/membership/directories/dtc/alpha.pdf>.

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>

[Home](#) | [Previous Page](#)

Modified: 10/18/2011

From:*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***
To: [Ross Jeffries - Bank of America Corporate Secretary](#)
Cc: [Mareski, Brenda J - Legal](#); [Johnston, Erin L - Legal](#)
Subject: Rule 14a-8 Proposal (BAC) blb
Date: Friday, November 20, 2015 9:58:52 PM
Attachments: [CCE20112015_15.pdf](#)

Dear Mr. Jeffries,
Please see the attached broker letter.
Sincerely,
John Chevedden



November 19, 2015

Kenneth Steiner

*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***

BAC

Post-it® Fax Note	7671	Date	11-20-15	# of pages	▶
To	Ross Jeffries	From	John Chevallon		
Co./Dept.		Co.			
Phone #		Phor	*** FISMA & OMB Memorandum M-07-16 ***		
Fax #	704-625-9378	Fax #			

Re: Your TD Ameritrade account ending in TD Ameritrade Clearing Inc. DTC #0188

Dear Kenneth Steiner,

Thank you for allowing me to assist you today. As you requested, this letter confirms that as of the date of this letter, you have continuously held no less than 500 shares of each of the following stocks in the above reference account since July 1, 2014.

1. Abbott Labs (ABT)
2. First Niagara Financial Group (FNFG)
3. Bank of America (BAC)
4. Windstream Holdings Inc. (WIN)

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,

Chris Blue
Resource Specialist
TD Ameritrade

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