

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111-203 effective 1 day after July 21, 2010, except as otherwise provided, see section 4 of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as an Effective Date note under section 5301 of Title 12, Banks and Banking.

§ 7220. Definitions

For the purposes of this subchapter, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) Audit

The term “audit” means an examination of the financial statements, reports, documents, procedures, controls, or notices of any issuer, broker, or dealer by an independent public accounting firm in accordance with the rules of the Board or the Commission, for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the financial statements or providing an audit report.

(2) Audit report

The term “audit report” means a document, report, notice, or other record—

(A) prepared following an audit performed for purposes of compliance by an issuer, broker, or dealer with the requirements of the securities laws; and

(B) in which a public accounting firm either—

(i) sets forth the opinion of that firm regarding a financial statement, report, notice, or other document, procedures, or controls; or

(ii) asserts that no such opinion can be expressed.

(3) Broker

The term “broker” means a broker (as such term is defined in section 78c(a)(4) of this title) that is required to file a balance sheet, income statement, or other financial statement under section 78q(e)(1)(A) of this title, where such balance sheet, income statement, or financial statement is required to be certified by a registered public accounting firm.

(4) Dealer

The term “dealer” means a dealer (as such term is defined in section 78c(a)(5) of this title) that is required to file a balance sheet, income statement, or other financial statement under section 78q(e)(1)(A) of this title, where such balance sheet, income statement, or financial statement is required to be certified by a registered public accounting firm.

(5) Professional standards

The term “professional standards” means—

(A) accounting principles that are—

(i) established by the standard setting body described in section 77s(b) of this title, as amended by this Act, or prescribed by the Commission under section 77s(a) of this title or section 78m(b) of this title; and

(ii) relevant to audit reports for particular issuers, brokers, or dealers, or dealt with in the quality control system of a particular registered public accounting firm; and

(B) auditing standards, standards for attestation engagements, quality control policies

and procedures, ethical and competency standards, and independence standards (including rules implementing title II) that the Board or the Commission determines—

(i) relate to the preparation or issuance of audit reports for issuers, brokers, or dealers; and

(ii) are established or adopted by the Board under section 7213(a) of this title, or are promulgated as rules of the Commission.

(6) Self-regulatory organization

The term “self-regulatory organization” has the same meaning as in section 78c(a) of this title.

(Pub. L. 107-204, title I, §110, as added Pub. L. 111-203, title IX, §982(a)(1), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 1927.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 77s(b) of this title, as amended by this Act, referred to in par. (5)(A)(i), means section 77s(b) of this title, as amended by Pub. L. 107-204.

Title II, referred to in par. (5)(B), means title II of Pub. L. 107-204, July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 771, which enacted subchapter II of this chapter and amended sections 78c, 78j-1, 78l and 78q of this title. For complete classification of title II to the Code, see Tables.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective 1 day after July 21, 2010, except as otherwise provided, see section 4 of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as a note under section 5301 of Title 12, Banks and Banking.

SUBCHAPTER II—AUDITOR INDEPENDENCE

§ 7231. Exemption authority

The Board may, on a case by case basis, exempt any person, issuer, public accounting firm, or transaction from the prohibition on the provision of services under section 78j-1(g) of this title, to the extent that such exemption is necessary or appropriate in the public interest and is consistent with the protection of investors, and subject to review by the Commission in the same manner as for rules of the Board under section 7217 of this title.

(Pub. L. 107-204, title II, §201(b), July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 772.)

§ 7232. Study of mandatory rotation of registered public accounting firms**(a) Study and review required**

The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study and review of the potential effects of requiring the mandatory rotation of registered public accounting firms.

(b) Report required

Not later than 1 year after July 30, 2002, the Comptroller General shall submit a report to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives on the results of the study and review required by this section.

(c) Definition

For purposes of this section, the term “mandatory rotation” refers to the imposition of a

limit on the period of years in which a particular registered public accounting firm may be the auditor of record for a particular issuer.

(Pub. L. 107-204, title II, §207, July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 775.)

§ 7233. Commission authority

(a) Commission regulations

Not later than 180 days after July 30, 2002, the Commission shall issue final regulations to carry out each of subsections (g) through (l) of section 78j-1 of this title.

(b) Auditor independence

It shall be unlawful for any registered public accounting firm (or an associated person thereof, as applicable) to prepare or issue any audit report with respect to any issuer, if the firm or associated person engages in any activity with respect to that issuer prohibited by any of subsections (g) through (l) of section 78j-1 of this title or any rule or regulation of the Commission or of the Board issued thereunder.

(Pub. L. 107-204, title II, §208, July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 775.)

§ 7234. Considerations by appropriate State regulatory authorities

In supervising nonregistered public accounting firms and their associated persons, appropriate State regulatory authorities should make an independent determination of the proper standards applicable, particularly taking into consideration the size and nature of the business of the accounting firms they supervise and the size and nature of the business of the clients of those firms. The standards applied by the Board under this Act should not be presumed to be applicable for purposes of this section for small and medium sized nonregistered public accounting firms.

(Pub. L. 107-204, title II, §209, July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 775.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This Act, referred to in text, is Pub. L. 107-204, July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 745, known as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Tables.

SUBCHAPTER III—CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

§ 7241. Corporate responsibility for financial reports

(a) Regulations required

The Commission shall, by rule, require, for each company filing periodic reports under section 78m(a) or 78o(d) of this title, that the principal executive officer or officers and the principal financial officer or officers, or persons performing similar functions, certify in each annual or quarterly report filed or submitted under either such section of this title that—

- (1) the signing officer has reviewed the report;
- (2) based on the officer's knowledge, the report does not contain any untrue statement of a material fact or omit to state a material

fact necessary in order to make the statements made, in light of the circumstances under which such statements were made, not misleading;

(3) based on such officer's knowledge, the financial statements, and other financial information included in the report, fairly present in all material respects the financial condition and results of operations of the issuer as of, and for, the periods presented in the report;

(4) the signing officers—

(A) are responsible for establishing and maintaining internal controls;

(B) have designed such internal controls to ensure that material information relating to the issuer and its consolidated subsidiaries is made known to such officers by others within those entities, particularly during the period in which the periodic reports are being prepared;

(C) have evaluated the effectiveness of the issuer's internal controls as of a date within 90 days prior to the report; and

(D) have presented in the report their conclusions about the effectiveness of their internal controls based on their evaluation as of that date;

(5) the signing officers have disclosed to the issuer's auditors and the audit committee of the board of directors (or persons fulfilling the equivalent function)—

(A) all significant deficiencies in the design or operation of internal controls which could adversely affect the issuer's ability to record, process, summarize, and report financial data and have identified for the issuer's auditors any material weaknesses in internal controls; and

(B) any fraud, whether or not material, that involves management or other employees who have a significant role in the issuer's internal controls; and

(6) the signing officers have indicated in the report whether or not there were significant changes in internal controls or in other factors that could significantly affect internal controls subsequent to the date of their evaluation, including any corrective actions with regard to significant deficiencies and material weaknesses.

(b) Foreign reincorporations have no effect

Nothing in this section shall be interpreted or applied in any way to allow any issuer to lessen the legal force of the statement required under this section, by an issuer having reincorporated or having engaged in any other transaction that resulted in the transfer of the corporate domicile or offices of the issuer from inside the United States to outside of the United States.

(c) Deadline

The rules required by subsection (a) shall be effective not later than 30 days after July 30, 2002.

(Pub. L. 107-204, title III, §302, July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 777.)

§ 7242. Improper influence on conduct of audits

(a) Rules to prohibit

It shall be unlawful, in contravention of such rules or regulations as the Commission shall