

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

NATIONAL CREDIT UNION ADMINISTRATION

12 CFR Part 701

Change in Official or Senior Executive Officer in Credit Unions That Are Newly Chartered or Are in Troubled Condition

AGENCY: National Credit Union Administration (NCUA).

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: NCUA is proposing to revise its rule concerning the requirement that federally-insured credit unions that are newly chartered or troubled file notice with NCUA before adding or replacing a board or committee member or employing or changing the duties of a senior executive officer. The proposed amendments will clarify the relationship between the prior notice provision and the commencement of service provision, so as to eliminate any potential confusion. In addition, the amendments reorganize the requirements in the current rule to make it easier to understand.

DATES: The NCUA must receive comments on or before August 30, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods (Please send comments by one method only):

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *NCUA Web site:* http://www.ncua.gov/RegulationsOpinionsLaws/proposed_regs/proposed_regs.html. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- *E-mail:* Address to regcomments@ncua.gov. Include "[Your name] Comments on Proposed Rule 701.14, Change in Official in Newly Chartered or Troubled Credit Unions" in the e-mail subject line.

- *Fax:* (703) 518-6319. Use the subject line described above for e-mail.

- *Mail:* Address to Becky Baker, Secretary of the Board, National Credit Union Administration, 1775 Duke

Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3428.

- *Hand Delivery/Courier:* Same as mail address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mary F. Rupp, Staff Attorney, Division of Operations, Office of General Counsel, at the above address or telephone: (703) 518-6540.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 212 of the Federal Credit Union Act and § 701.14 of NCUA's regulations require newly chartered and troubled credit unions to seek NCUA approval before the appointment or employment of directors and senior management officials. 12 U.S.C. 1790a; 12 CFR 701.14. Section 701.14 sets out the substantive and procedural requirements for credit unions seeking approval of an individual. The rule was adopted in 1990 and has had one substantive revision since that time. 55 FR 43084 (October 26, 1990); 64 FR 28715 (May 27, 1999).

The NCUA Board has a policy of continually reviewing NCUA regulations to "update, clarify and simplify existing regulations and eliminate unnecessary and redundant and unnecessary provisions." NCUA Interpretive Ruling and Policy Statement (IRPS) 87-2, Developing and Reviewing Government Regulations. As a result of NCUA's 2003 review, the Board determined that the Change in Official or Senior Executive Officer rule should be updated.

Summary of Proposed Changes

The only substantive proposed change to the rule is to § 701.14(e), the provision dealing with commencement of service. As currently written, this provision states a proposed director, committee member or senior executive officer may serve temporarily until the credit union and the individual are notified in writing of NCUA's approval or disapproval. This provision conflicts with the prior notice requirement in § 701.14(c).

Section 701.14(c) requires at least 30 days prior notice to NCUA before the addition of a board or committee member or the employment of a senior executive officer. There are some exceptions to the prior notice requirement but they are addressed in other sections of the rule. 12 CFR

701.14(d)(2) and (3). To resolve this inconsistency, the Board proposes adopting language in the commencement of service provision that is similar to regulations of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the other financial regulators. 12 CFR 303.103(b).

The revised provision is redesignated § 701.14(d). It provides for commencement of service at the expiration of the 30-day period or any additional time under paragraph (c)(3)(iii) of the section, unless NCUA disapproves the notice before the end of the period.

The proposed rule reorganizes the paragraph structure so that it is easier to read. All of the notice requirements are moved to current paragraph (d) *Procedures for Notice of Proposed Change in Official or Senior Executive Officer*. This paragraph is redesignated paragraph (c) and now includes in paragraph (c)(1) the prior notice requirements from current paragraph (c). Current paragraph (d)(2) *Waiver of prior notice requirements* is redesignated (c)(2)(i) and (iii). Current paragraph (d)(3) *Election of directors or credit committee members* is retitled *Automatic waiver* and redesignated (c)(2)(ii).

Current paragraph (d)(1) *Filing and acceptance* is retitled *Filing Procedures*, redesignated (c)(3), and broken into three subparts: (i) *Where to file*; (ii) *Contents*; and (iii) *Processing*.

The final change is the redesignation of paragraph (f) as paragraph (e).

Regulatory Procedures

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) requires NCUA to prepare an analysis to describe any significant economic impact any proposed regulation may have on a substantial number of small entities. NCUA considers credit unions having less than ten million in assets to be small for purposes of RFA. Interpretive Ruling and Policy Statement (IRPS) 87-2 as amended by IRPS 03-2. The proposal clarifies the relationship between the waiver of prior notice provision and the temporary service provision, so as to eliminate any potential confusion. The NCUA has determined and certifies that this proposed rule, if adopted, will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small credit

unions. Accordingly, the NCUA has determined that a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is not required.

Paperwork Reduction Act

NCUA has determined that the proposed rule would not increase paperwork requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and regulations of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). NCUA currently has OMB clearance for § 701.14's collection requirements (OMB No. 3133-0121).

Executive Order 13132

Executive Order 13132 encourages independent regulatory agencies to consider the impact of their actions on state and local interests. In adherence to fundamental federalism principles, NCUA, an independent regulatory agency as defined in 44 U.S.C. 3502(5), voluntarily complies with the executive order. The proposed rule will apply to all federally insured credit unions. NCUA has determined that the proposed amendments will not have a substantial direct effect on the states, on the connection between the national government and the states, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. NCUA has determined that this proposed rule does not constitute a policy that has federalism implications for purposes of the executive order.

The Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 1999—Assessment of Federal Regulations and Policies on Families

NCUA has determined that this proposed rule would not affect family well-being within the meaning of section 654 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 1999, Pub. L. 105-277, 112 Stat. 2681 (1998).

Agency Regulatory Goal

NCUA's goal is clear, understandable regulations that impose a minimal regulatory burden. We request your comments on whether the proposed rule is understandable and minimally intrusive if implemented as proposed.

List of Subjects in 12 CFR Part 701

Credit unions, Senior executive officials.

By the National Credit Union Administration Board on June 24, 2004.

Becky Baker,
Secretary of the Board.

Accordingly, the National Credit Union Administration proposes to amend 12 CFR Part 701 as follows:

PART 701—ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS OF FEDERAL CREDIT UNIONS

1. The authority citation for part 701 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 12 U.S.C. 1752(5), 1755, 1756, 1757, 1759, 1761a, 1761b, 1766, 1767, 1782, 1784, 1787, 1789.

2. Amend § 701.14 by removing paragraphs (c) (d) and (e), adding new paragraphs (c) and (d), and redesignating paragraph (f) as paragraph (e) to read as follows:

§ 701.14 Change in official or senior executive officer in credit unions that are newly chartered or in troubled condition.

* * * * *

(c) *Procedures for Notice of Proposed Change in Official or Senior Executive Officer*—(1) *Prior Notice Requirement.*

An insured credit union must give NCUA written notice at least 30 days before the effective date of any addition or replacement of a member of the board of directors or committee member or the employment or change in responsibilities of any individual to a position of senior executive officer if:

(i) The credit union has been chartered for less than two years; or

(ii) The credit union meets the definition of troubled condition in paragraph (b)(3) or (4) of this section.

(2) *Waiver of Prior Notice*—(i) *Waiver requests.* Parties may petition the appropriate Regional Director for a waiver of the prior notice required under this section. Waiver may be granted if it is found that delay could harm the credit union or the public interest.

(ii) *Automatic waiver.* In the case of the election of a new member of the board of directors or credit committee member at a meeting of the members of a federally insured credit union, the prior 30-day notice is automatically waived and the individual may immediately begin serving, provided that a complete notice is filed with the appropriate Regional Director within 48 hours of the election. If NCUA disapproves a director or credit committee member, the board of directors of the credit union may appoint its own alternate, to serve until the next annual meeting, contingent on NCUA approval.

(iii) *Effect on disapproval authority.* A waiver does not affect the authority of NCUA to issue a Notice of Disapproval within 30 days of the waiver or within 30 days of any subsequent required notice.

(3) *Filing procedures*—(i) *Where to file.* Notices will be filed with the appropriate Regional Director or, in the

case of a corporate credit union, with the Director of the Office of Corporate Credit Unions. All references to Regional Director will, for corporate credit unions, mean the Director of Office of Corporate Credit Unions. State-chartered federally insured credit unions will also file a copy of the notice with their state supervisor.

(ii) *Contents.* The notice must contain information about the competence, experience, character, or integrity of the individual on whose behalf the notice is submitted. The Regional Director or his or her designee may require additional information. The information submitted must include the identity, personal history, business background, and experience of the individual, including material business activities and affiliations during the past five years, and a description of any material pending legal or administrative proceedings in which the individual is a party and any criminal indictment or conviction of the individual by a state or federal court. Each individual on whose behalf the notice is filed must attest to the validity of the information filed. At the option of the individual, the information may be forwarded to the Regional Director by the individual; however, in such cases, the credit union must file a notice to that effect.

(iii) *Processing.* Within ten calendar days after receiving the notice, the Regional Director will inform the credit union either that the notice is complete or that additional, specified information is needed and must be submitted within 30 calendar days. If the initial notice is complete, the Regional Director will issue a written decision of approval or disapproval to the individual and the credit union within 30 calendar days of receipt of the notice. If the initial notice is not complete, the Regional Director will issue a written decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the original notice plus the amount of time the credit union takes to provide the requested additional information. If the additional information is not submitted within 30 calendar days of the Regional Director's request, the Regional Director may either disapprove the proposed individual or review the notice based on the information provided. If the credit union and the individual have submitted all requested information and the Regional Director has not issued a written decision within the applicable time period, the individual is approved.

(d) *Commencement of Service.* A proposed director, committee member, or senior executive officer may begin service after the end of the 30-day period or any other additional period as provided under paragraph (c)(3)(iii) of

this section, unless the NCUA disapproves the notice before the end of the period.

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[FR Doc. 04-14764 Filed 6-30-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7535-01-P

NATIONAL CREDIT UNION ADMINISTRATION

12 CFR Part 723

Member Business Loans

AGENCY: National Credit Union Administration (NCUA).

ACTION: Proposed rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: NCUA proposes to revise the collateral and security requirements of its member business loans (MBL) rule to enable credit unions subject to the rule to participate more fully in Small Business Administration (SBA) guaranteed loan programs.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before August 30, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods (Please send comments by one method only):

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *NCUA Web Site:* http://www.ncua.gov/RegulationsOpinionsLaws/proposed_regs/proposed_regs.html. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- *E-mail:* Address to regcomments@ncua.gov. Include “[Your name] Comments on Proposed Rule 723, Member Business Loans” in the e-mail subject line.

- *Fax:* (703) 518-6319. Use the subject line described above for e-mail.

- *Mail:* Address to Becky Baker, Secretary of the Board, National Credit Union Administration, 1775 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3428.

- *Hand Delivery/Courier:* Same as mail address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Frank S. Kressman, Staff Attorney, at the above address, or telephone: (703) 518-6540.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Background

Last year, NCUA amended its MBL rule and other rules related to business lending to enhance credit unions' ability to meet their members' business loans needs. 68 FR 56537 (October 1, 2003).

In addition to comments on the proposed amendments, NCUA received

other suggestions as to how it could improve the MBL rule. Among the most significant of these, commenters suggested NCUA amend the MBL rule “so that it could be better aligned with lending programs offered by the Small Business Administration” such as the SBA's Basic 7(a) Loan Program. *Id.* at 56538. While NCUA recognized the merits of this suggestion, NCUA could not include it in the final rulemaking because it addressed issues outside the scope of the proposed rule. The Administrative Procedure Act generally prohibits federal government agencies from adopting rules without affording the opportunity for public comment. 5 U.S.C. 553. NCUA noted in the final rule, however, that it would review this suggestion to determine if it would be appropriate to act on it in a subsequent rulemaking.

B. Regulatory Amendments

NCUA proposes to amend the MBL rule to permit credit unions to make SBA guaranteed loans under SBA's less restrictive lending requirements instead of under the more restrictive MBL rule's lending requirements. NCUA has reviewed the SBA's loan programs in which credit unions can participate and believes they provide reasonable criteria for credit union participation and compliance within the bounds of safety and soundness. Additionally, these SBA programs are ideally suited to the mission of many credit unions to satisfy their members' business loans needs.

NCUA recognizes that the collateral and security requirements for MBLs, including construction and development loans, are generally more restrictive than those of the SBA's guaranteed loan programs and could hamper a credit union's ability to participate fully in SBA loan programs. As a result, the MBL rule's collateral and security requirements could prevent a credit union from making a particular loan that it could otherwise make under SBA's requirements. NCUA believes the proposal will provide relief from these more restrictive requirements and will help enable credit unions to better serve their members' business loans needs.

C. Clarification of Existing Authority

Recently, NCUA's Office of General Counsel in Legal Opinion #03-0911, dated May 20, 2004, clarified that NCUA's general lending rule and the Federal Credit Union Act (Act) permit federal credit unions (FCUs) to make MBLs under the terms of the SBA's guaranteed loan programs to the extent the terms and conditions under which the guarantee is provided are consistent with the requirements and limitations in

the MBL rule, 12 CFR 701.21(e); 12 U.S.C. 1757(5)(A)(iii). Specifically, the opinion identified loan maturity limits, usury ceilings and prepayment penalties as terms of the SBA's guaranteed loan programs that an FCU could use in lieu of corresponding terms in NCUA's rules. The opinion stated, however, that a credit union could not rely on the exception for government guaranteed loan programs in NCUA's general lending rule and the Act with regard to collateral requirements for MBLs. 12 CFR 701.21(e); 12 U.S.C. 1757(5)(A)(iii). The opinion explained the MBL rule expressly sets collateral requirements for MBLs, in the form of maximum loan-to-value ratios. The collateral requirements of the SBA's guaranteed loan programs are not consistent with those of the current MBL rule and, therefore, cannot be used. The proposed amendments will remove that impediment by exempting SBA guaranteed loans from the MBL rule's collateral requirements.

There could be circumstances where a business loan made under an SBA loan program would not be subject to the MBL rule. For example, a \$40,000 business loan with an SBA guarantee to a member who has no other loans with the originating credit union would be too small to meet the definition of an MBL. Thus, the credit union in this example can rely on the authority provided by § 701.21(e) of NCUA's rules and make a business loan as part of an SBA loan program under all of the terms and conditions required or permitted by the program.

The MBL rule applies to all FCUs and to most federally-insured state credit unions (FISCUs). A FISCU is exempt from the MBL rule only if, after August 7, 1998, the enactment of the Credit Union Membership Access Act, Public Law 105-21, its state supervisory authority (SSA) has adopted its own business loan rule, with the approval of the NCUA Board, for use instead of NCUA's MBL rule. The proposed regulatory amendments regarding collateral requirements apply to all credit unions subject to the MBL rule, but it is important to note that legal opinion OGC 03-0911 applies only to FCUs, not FISCUs. NCUA does not object to a FISCU using the exception for government guaranteed loan programs in NCUA's general lending rule if its SSA has determined the FISCU has authority to do so under relevant state law.

While NCUA believes many credit unions would greatly benefit from participating in these SBA programs, NCUA also believes that programs of this type can create some additional