procurement. It also authorizes contracting officers to restrict competition or award sole source contracts or orders to eligible WOSBs for certain Federal contracts or orders in industries in which SBA determines that WOSBs are substantially underrepresented in Federal procurement and has waived the economically disadvantaged requirement.

3. Amend §127.102 by revising the definitions of the terms “EDWOSB requirement”, “Substantial underrepresentation”, “Underrepresentation”, and “WOSB requirement” to read as follows:

§127.102 What are the definitions of the terms used in this part?

EDWOSB requirement means a Federal requirement for services or supplies for which a contracting officer has restricted competition or awarded a sole source contract or order to eligible EDWOSBs, including Multiple Award Contracts, partial set-asides, reserves, sole source awards, and orders set aside for EDWOSBs issued against a Multiple Award Contract.

Substantial underrepresentation is determined by a study using a reliable and relevant methodology.

Underrepresentation is determined by a study using a reliable and relevant methodology.

WOSB requirement means a Federal requirement for services or supplies for which a contracting officer has restricted competition or awarded a sole source contract or order to eligible WOSBs, including Multiple Award Contracts, partial set-asides, reserves, sole source awards, and orders set aside for WOSBs issued against a Multiple Award Contract.

4. Revise §127.500 to read as follows:

§127.500 In what industries is a contracting officer authorized to restrict competition or make a sole source award under this part?

A contracting officer may restrict competition or make a sole source award under this part only in those industries in which SBA has determined that WOSBs are underrepresented or substantially underrepresented in Federal procurement, as specified in §127.501.

§127.501 [Amended]

5. Amend §127.501 by removing the word “disparity” in the two places where it appears in paragraph (b) and adding the word “underrepresentation” in its place.

6. Amend §127.503 as follows:

(a) Competition restricted to EDWOSBs. * * *
(b) Competition restricted to WOSBs. * * *
(c) Sole source awards to EDWOSBs. For requirements in industries designated by SBA as underrepresented pursuant to §127.501, a contracting officer may issue a sole source award to an EDWOSB when the contracting officer determines that:

(1) The EDWOSB is a responsible contractor with respect to performance of the requirement and the contracting officer does not have a reasonable expectation that 2 or more EDWOSBs will submit offers;

(2) The anticipated award price of the contract (including options) will not exceed $6,500,000 in the case of a contract assigned a North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code for manufacturing, or $4,000,000 in the case of any other contract opportunity; and

(3) In the estimation of the contracting officer, the award can be made at a fair and reasonable price.

(d) Sole source awards to WOSBs. For requirements in industries designated by SBA as substantially underrepresented pursuant to §127.501, a contracting officer may issue a sole source award to a WOSB when the contracting officer determines that:

(1) The WOSB is a responsible contractor with respect to performance of the requirement and the contracting officer does not have a reasonable expectation that 2 or more WOSBs will submit offers;

(2) The anticipated award price of the contract (including options) will not exceed $6,500,000 in the case of a contract assigned a NAICS code for manufacturing, or $4,000,000 in the case of any other contract opportunity; and

7. Revise §127.507 to read as follows:

§127.507 Are there EDWOSB and WOSB contracting opportunities at or below the simplified acquisition threshold?

If the requirement is valued at or below the simplified acquisition threshold, the contracting officer may set aside the requirement or award the requirement on a sole source basis as set forth in §127.503.

8. Revise §127.600 to read as follows:

§127.600 Who may protest the status of a concern as an EDWOSB or WOSB?

(a) For sole source procurements. SBA or the contracting officer may protest the proposed awardee’s EDWOSB or WOSB status.

(b) For all other EDWOSB or WOSB requirements. An interested party may protest the apparent successful offeror’s EDWOSB or WOSB status.

Maria Contreras-Sweet,
Administrator.

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Part 170 of the Commission’s regulations relates to RFAs. An RFA is an association of persons registered with the Commission pursuant to Section 17 of the Commodity Exchange Act (‘‘CEA’’ or ‘‘Act’’).1 Subject to Section 17 of the Commodity Exchange Act, the Commission as such pursuant to an association of persons registered with the CEA and the regulations thereunder shall be promulgated regulations requiring other Commission registrants, including IBs,5 to be an RFA member, subject to an exception for certain notice registered securities brokers or dealers.2 Because the National Futures Association (‘‘NFA’’) was the only RFA under Section 17(a) of the CEA4 at the time § 170.15 and § 170.16, respectively, were promulgated, these registered FCMs, SDRs, and MSPs were required to be NFA members and, thus, were subject to NFA’s rules. The Commission did not promulgate regulations requiring other Commission registrants, including IBs,5 2 Those Commission registrants that are not RFA members are nevertheless subject to the rules and regulations of the Commission. See 7 U.S.C. 21(e), which specifies that any person registered under the CEA, who is not an RFA member, ‘‘in addition to the other requirements and obligations of [the CEA] and the regulations thereunder shall be subject to such other rules and regulations as the Commission may find necessary to protect the public interest and promote just and equitable principles of trade.’’ 3 17 CFR 170.15 and 170.16. See also Registration of Swap Dealers and Major Swap Participants, 77 FR 2613 (Jan. 19, 2012). 4 7 U.S.C. 21(b). NFA remains the only RFA under Section 17(a) of the CEA and is also self-regulatory organization (‘‘SRO’’). Per Commission regulation 1.3(ee), SROs are designated contract markets, contract market facilities, and registered futures associations. 17 CFR 1.3(e). Certain SROs maintain and update, among other things, a standardized audit program and coordinate audit and financial statement surveillance activities over certain types of firms that are members of more than one SRO. See 17 CFR 1.52. 5 IB is defined, subject to certain exclusions and additions, in CEA Section 1a(31) as any person (except an individual who elects to be or is a CPOs,6 and CTAs,7 to be members of an registered as an associated person of a futures commission merchant) (i) who (I) is engaged in soliciting or in accepting orders for (aa) the purchase or sale of any commodity for future delivery, security futures product, or swap; (bb) any agreement, contract, or transaction described in Section 2(c)(2)(C)(i) or Section 2(c)(2)(D)(i); (cc) any commodity option authorized under Section 4c; or (dd) any leverage transaction authorized under Section 19; and (ii) does not accept any money, securities, or property (or extend credit in lieu thereof) to margin, guarantee, or secure any trades or contracts that result or may result therefrom; or (ii) who is registered with the Commission as an IB. 7 U.S.C. 1(a)(13).

RFA. One of the NFA rules to which NFA members are subject, however, is NFA’s Bylaw 1101. NFA Bylaw 1101 requires that, generally, no NFA member may ‘‘carry an account, accept an order or handle a transaction in commodity futures contracts for, or on behalf of, any non-member of NFA that is required to be registered with the Commission as, among other things, an IB, CPO, or CTA.8 Accordingly, any IB, CPO, or CTA required to be registered with the Commission that desires to conduct business with respect to commodity futures contracts directly or derivatively, must ensure that it only conducts such business with those IBs, CPOs, or CTAs that are also NFA members. Therefore, § 170.15, at the time it was promulgated, operated in conjunction with NFA Bylaw 1101 ‘‘to assure essentially complete NFA membership from the universe of commodity professionals: [PCMs, CPOs, CTAs, and IBs].’’9

Title VII of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (‘‘Dodd-Frank Act’’) amended the person who (i) for compensation or profit, engages in the business of advising others, either directly or through publications, writings, or electronic media, as to the value of or the advisability of trading in (i) any contract of sale of a commodity for future delivery, security futures product, or swap; (ii) any agreement, contract, or transaction described in Section 2(c)(2)(C)(i) or Section 2(c)(2)(D)(i); (iii) any commodity option authorized under Section 4c; or (iv) any leverage transaction authorized under Section 19; (ii) for compensation or profit, and as part of a regular business, issues or promulgates analyses or reports concerning any of the activities referred to in clause (i); (iii) is registered with the Commission as a CTA; or (iv) the Commission, by rule or regulation, may include if the Commission determines that the rule or regulation will effectuate the purposes of the Act. 7 U.S.C. 1a(12).

CTA is further defined, subject to certain exclusions and additions, in Commission regulation 1.3(c)(c) as any person engaged in a business which is of the nature of a commodity pool, investment trust, syndicate, or similar form of enterprise, and who, in connection therewith, solicits, accepts, or receives from others, funds, securities, or property, either directly or through capital contributions, the sale of stock or other forms of securities, or otherwise, for the purpose of trading in commodity interests, including any (i) commodity for future delivery, security futures product, or swap; (ii) agreement, contract, or transaction described in Section 2(c)(2)(C)(i) or Section 2(c)(2)(D)(i); (iii) commodity option authorized under Section 4c; or (iv) leverage transaction authorized under Section 19; or (ii) who is registered with the Commission as a CPO. 7 U.S.C. 1a(13).

CPOs are subject to registration with the Commission under CEA Section 4(d)(6) and Commission regulation 3.4(a). 7 U.S.C. 6d(6) and 17 CFR 3.4(a).

CPO is defined, subject to certain exclusions and additions, in CEA Section 1a(31) as any person (i) engaged in a business which is of the nature of a commodity pool, investment trust, syndicate, or similar form of enterprise, and who, in connection therewith, solicits, accepts, or receives from others, funds, securities, or property, either directly or through capital contributions, the sale of stock or other forms of securities, or otherwise, for the purpose of trading in commodity interests, including any (i) commodity for future delivery, security futures product, or swap; (ii) agreement, contract, or transaction described in Section 2(c)(2)(C)(i) or Section 2(c)(2)(D)(i); (iii) commodity option authorized under Section 4c; or (iv) leverage transaction authorized under Section 19; or (ii) who is registered with the Commission as a CPO. 7 U.S.C. 1a(13).

CPOs are subject to registration with the Commission under CEA Section 4d and Commission regulation 3.4(a). 7 U.S.C. 6d and 17 CFR 3.4(a).

CTAs are defined, subject to certain exclusions and additions, in CEA Section 1a(12) as any person who, for compensation or profit, engages in the business of advising others, either directly or through publications, writings, or electronic media, as to the value of or the advisability of trading in (i) any contract of sale of a commodity for future delivery, security futures product, or swap; (ii) any agreement, contract, or transaction described in Section 2(c)(2)(C)(i) or Section 2(c)(2)(D)(i); (iii) any commodity option authorized under Section 4c; or (iv) any leverage transaction authorized under Section 19; or (ii) who is registered with the Commission as a CTA; or (iv) the Commission, by rule or regulation, may include if the Commission determines that the rule or regulation will effectuate the purposes of the Act. 7 U.S.C. 1a(12).

CTAs are defined, subject to certain exclusions and additions, in CEA Section 1a(12) as any person who, for compensation or profit, engages in the business of advising others, either directly or through publications, writings, or electronic media, as to the value of or the advisability of trading in (i) any contract of sale of a commodity for future delivery, security futures product, or swap; (ii) any agreement, contract, or transaction described in Section 2(c)(2)(C)(i) or Section 2(c)(2)(D)(i); (iii) any commodity option authorized under Section 4c; or (iv) any leverage transaction authorized under Section 19; or (ii) who is registered with the Commission as a CTA; or (iv) the Commission, by rule or regulation, may include if the Commission determines that the rule or regulation will effectuate the purposes of the Act. 7 U.S.C. 1a(12).

CTA is further defined, subject to certain exclusions and additions, in Commission regulation 1.3(c)(c) as any person engaged in a business which is of the nature of a commodity pool, investment trust, syndicate, or similar form of enterprise, and who, in connection therewith, solicits, accepts, or receives from others, funds, securities, or property, either directly or through capital contributions, the sale of stock or other forms of securities, or otherwise, for the purpose of trading in commodity interests, including any (i) commodity for future delivery, security futures product, or swap; (ii) agreement, contract, or transaction described in Section 2(c)(2)(C)(i) or Section 2(c)(2)(D)(i); (iii) commodity option authorized under Section 4c; or (iv) leverage transaction authorized under Section 19; or (ii) who is registered with the Commission as a CTA. 7 U.S.C. 1a(13).

CPOs are subject to registration with the Commission under CEA Section 4d and Commission regulation 3.4(a). 7 U.S.C. 6d and 17 CFR 3.4(a).


Futures Associations: Futures Commission Merchants: Mandatory Membership, 48 FR 26304, 26306 and n.22 (June 7, 1983).
CEA to establish a comprehensive new regulatory framework for swaps and security-based swaps. The new regulatory framework provides that, among other things, persons that engage in regulated activity with respect to swaps will be required to register with the Commission as IBs, CPOs, or CTAs, as appropriate. Because of these definitional amendments, the intersection of § 170.15 and NFA Bylaw 1101 no longer assures NFA membership for IBs, CPOs, or CTAs that are required to register with the Commission because, as noted above, NFA Bylaw 1101 relates only to commodity futures contracts.

II. Proposed Rule

On November 8, 2013, the Commission proposed to amend part 170 by adding § 170.17, which would, if adopted, have required each IB, CPO, and CTA registered with the Commission to become and remain a member of at least one RFA ("Proposal").

In the Proposal, the Commission specifically solicited comments regarding, among other things, the impact of the Proposal on CTAs that are registered with the Commission despite being eligible to rely on the exemption from registration set forth in Commission regulation 4.14(a)(9) ("§ 4.14(a)(9) Exempted CTAs").

Regulation 4.14(a)(9) provides that a person is not required to register with the Commission as a CTA if it does not: (i) Direct any client accounts; or (ii) provide commodity trading advice based on, or tailored to, the commodity interest or cash market positions or other circumstances or characteristics of particular clients. When the Commission promulgated regulation 4.14(a)(9), it stated that "(a) CTA exempt under rule 4.14(a)(9) that wishes to apply for registration or retain its current registration may do so." Therefore, CTAs that may avail themselves of the exemption from registration in regulation 4.14(a)(9) may be currently registered with the Commission and may so register in the future.

The comment period for the Proposal ended on January 7, 2014. The Commission received two substantive comments in response to the Proposal and, in consideration of those comments, is adopting the Proposal subject to certain changes, as noted below.

III. Summary of Comments

In response to the Proposal, the Commission received two substantive comments, one from NFA and one from James W. Lovely, Esq. ("Lovely"). Both comments related to the impact of the Proposal on CTAs. No comments were received in response to the CPO and IB aspects of the Proposal.

A. NFA Comment

NFA supported the Proposal as an appropriate and effective way to require IBs, CPOs, and CTAs engaging in swaps activities that otherwise are not captured by the intersection of NFA Bylaw 1101 or NFA Compliance Rule 2–36 to become and remain NFA members, and comply with the applicable NFA requirements. However, NFA recommended that the Commission exclude § 4.14(a)(9) Exempted CTAs from the Proposal. In support of its position, NFA stated that its existing rules focus primarily on an intermediary’s conduct with respect to clients and thus have little applicability to CTAs that do not direct client accounts or otherwise exercise discretion (i.e., § 4.14(a)(9) Exempted CTAs).

B. Lovely Comment

Conversely, Lovely generally stated that the Proposal “while well-intentioned, is ill-founded in many respects” and argued that the costs associated with further requiring registered CTAs to become and remain NFA members would be disproportionate to any regulatory benefit.

Lovely discussed those CTAs that register with the Commission even though they may not be required to so register (e.g., because they may avail themselves of a registration exception or exclusion provided under Commission regulation 4.14(a) or Sections 1a(12)(B) or 4m(1) of the CEA, respectively). According to Lovely, these CTAs register for legal comfort in light of the “practical ambiguities around concepts [related to CTA registration requirements] such as ‘solely incidental’, ‘principal business or profession’, ‘holding out’ and ‘tailored advice’” but do not have to become NFA members, so long as such CTAs do not manage or exercise discretion over customer accounts or funds. He argues that these CTAs’ voluntary registration benefits the CFTC and that such persons will likely deregister if the Commission adopts the Proposal.

Lovely further stated that the CFTC “significantly underestimates the cost of NFA [membership]” for these CTAs who are not currently required to become NFA members. He noted that most of such CTAs “have only incidental involvement with commodity interests” and, if required to become NFA members, “would need to retain external legal counsel or compliance consultants to try to ascertain [which NFA rules] apply to their activities and, if so, how to comply with the same.” Notwithstanding that Lovely argues that many NFA rules are not applicable to such CTAs, he estimates that “external

11 For example, as noted in the Proposal, currently Commission non-registered CTAs, CPOs, and IBs engaging solely in swap-related activities are not captured by the intersection of § 170.15 and NFA Bylaw 1101 and, thus, are not required to be NFA members. As such, these registrants, to the extent that they have not voluntarily become NFA members, are not being supervised in the same manner as Commission registrants engaging in similar activities relating to commodity futures contracts, which registrants are effectively required to be NFA members.
12 See Membership in a Registered Futures Association, 78 FR 67080 (Nov. 8, 2013).
13 78 FR 67080 (Nov. 8, 2013).
14 17 CFR 4.14(a)(9). This exemption from CTA registration generally pertains to persons only providing advice to the general public, such as in a newsletter, and not to specific clients.
15 See Exemption from Registration as a Commodity Trading Advisor, 65 FR 12938, 12941 (March 10, 2000).
16 The Proposal inaccurately stated the comment period ended on January 7, 2014. To reflect the accurate date, the Federal Register published a correction that the comment period ended on January 7, 2014.
17 NFA Comment Letter and James Lovely, Esq, Comment Letter.
18 Clause (d) of NFA Compliance Rule 2–36 applies to forex transactions and requires that no NFA member carry a forex account for, accept a forex order or otherwise exercise discretion (directly or indirectly) for forex transactions for or on behalf of, receive compensation (directly or indirectly) for forex transactions from, or pay compensation (directly or indirectly) to any non-member of NFA, or suspended member, that is required to be registered with the Commission as, among other things, an FCM, IB, CPO, or CTA in connection with its forex activities. NFA Compliance Rule 2–36 is available at: http://www.nfa.futures.org/nfamanual/NFAManual.aspx?RuleID=RULE%2036&Section=4.
19 Clause (g) of NFA Compliance Rule 2–36 applies to forex transactions and requires that no NFA member carry a forex account for, accept a forex order or otherwise exercise discretion (directly or indirectly) for forex transactions on or otherwise exercise discretion (directly or indirectly) for forex transactions from, or pay compensation (directly or indirectly) to any non-member of NFA, or suspended member, that is required to be registered with the Commission as, among other things, an FCM, IB, CPO, or CTA in connection with its forex activities. NFA Compliance Rule 2–36 is available at: http://www.nfa.futures.org/nfamanual/NFAManual.aspx?RuleID=RULE%2036&Section=4.
20 Presumably Lovely means that such CTAs would not be captured by the intersection of § 170.15 and NFA Bylaw 1101.
21 In this regard, Lovely also asserted that if the Commission adopts the Proposal, the First Amendment rights of these CTAs could be jeopardized, and, in some cases, such CTAs may drop their CFTC registration entirely "in reliance on . . . [their] commercial free speech rights under the U.S. Constitution."
22 Lovely provided a non-exhaustive list of what he believes to be inapposite NFA member rules including rules regarding: (1) Account opening, risk disclosure and trading authority; (2) bunched orders and order allocation; (3) suitability or churning security futures products; (4) CTA program and performance disclosure for managed accounts or
legal and compliance assistance... could easily cost [such a CTA] $15,000.00 to $20,000.00 per year.”

IV. Final Rule

The Commission, in consideration of the comments received by it on the Proposal, is adopting the Proposal but excluding § 4.14(a)(9) Exempted CTAs from the Final Rule.25 The Final Rule will help ensure the integrity of the swaps and futures market and its participants by subjecting all registered IBs, CPOs, and CTAs, except for § 4.14(a)(9) Exempted CTAs, to NFA’s developed set of rules and oversight capabilities.26 As such, the Commission believes that the markets are better served, and the public better protected, by having persons subject to the requirements of the Final Rule become RFA members.27

After considering the comments, the Commission is persuaded by Lovely and NFA that NFA’s rules have little applicability to § 4.14(a)(9) Exempted CTAs and, thus, there would be little benefit from requiring § 4.14(a)(9) Exempted CTAs to become and remain RFA members.

The Commission, however, is not persuaded that other registered CTAs, regardless of whether such CTAs are required to register with the Commission, should be excluded from the requirements of the Final Rule. Any registered CTA that does not meet the requirements of § 4.14(a)(9) would, by definition, be engaged in either (i) directing client accounts, or (ii) providing commodity trading advice based on, or tailored to, the commodity interest or cash market positions or

other circumstances or characteristics of particular clients. As noted above, and consistent with § 170.15, the Commission believes that RFA supervision of registered CTAs engaging in these activities is beneficial to the markets and the clients of such CTAs. In addition, the Commission believes that Lovely’s cost estimates are very high for retaining advisors in relation to NFA’s rules. Assuming a CTA was to contact an attorney familiar with Commission regulations and NFA rules applicable to CTAs, the Commission believes that determining which NFA rules are applicable to such a CTA would be a routine task that would not take a substantial amount of time.26 Furthermore, with respect to those CTAs that opt into GFTC registration to avoid making determinations as to their activities in relation to their eligibility for the exceptions or exclusions from the CTA registration requirements noted in Lovely’s comments, such persons should review available guidance from the Commission to consult with their advisors and Commission staff, as necessary, to determine if registration is required.27

In support of the Final Rule, Section 4p of the CEA authorizes the Commission to “specify by rules and regulations appropriate standards with respect to training, experience, and such other qualifications as the Commission finds necessary or desirable to insure the fitness of persons required to be registered with the Commission.”28 The Final Rule also provides a means for assuring that the purpose of Section 17(m) of the CEA,29 allowing for compensatory RFA membership, is achieved.30 The Commission believes that the Final Rule is reasonably necessary and desirable to effectuate comprehensive and effective market oversight by NFA in its capacity as an SRO. As the only RFA, NFA serves as the frontline regulator of its members, subject to Commission oversight. Without such mandatory membership in NFA or another RFA, effective implementation of the programs required by Section 17 of the CEA and NFA’s self-regulatory programs could be impeded.31

In summary, by mandating RFA membership by each registered IB, CPO, and CTA, except § 4.14(a)(9) Exempted CTAs, the Final Rule enables the Commission to further ensure the fitness, and provide for direct NFA oversight, of these Commission registrants.

V. Administrative Compliance

A. Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (“PRA”)32 imposes certain requirements on Federal agencies, including the Commission, in connection with their conducting or sponsoring any collection of information, as defined by the PRA. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a registered entity is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid control number by the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”).

In connection with the Proposal, the Commission anticipated that, if adopted, the Final Rule would simply require an amendment to the number of respondents included in OMB Collection 3038–0023.33 The basis for this preliminary finding was that, at the time of the Proposal, NFA had indicated that certain CPOs, CTAs, and IBs were registered with the Commission, but not NFA members. Therefore, because registration and membership require the filing of Form 7–R, the Commission initially believed these respondents’ paperwork burden would have been affected by the Proposal. As discussed above, the Final Rule does not require IBs, CPOs, or CTAs to

30 See Futures Associations: Futures Commission Merchants: Mandatory Membership, 48 FR 26304 (June 7, 1983).

31 The Commission notes that in addition to the authority discussed herein, as noted previously, CPOs and CTAs are subject to registration with the Commission under Section 4m of the CEA, and IBs are subject to such registration under Section 4d(g) of the CEA. 7 U.S.C. 6m and 6d(g).

32 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.

register with the Commission. Rather, the Final Rule only requires that certain of such persons that register with the Commission become and remain an NFA member. To indicate NFA membership an applicant needs to “check a box” on Form 7–R. Current OMB Collection 3038–0023 captures the burdens associated with the registration process for these persons, including the filing of and updating of Form 7–R for registration purposes. Therefore, to comply with the Final Rule, such registrants that are not NFA members, would be required to “check-the-box” on Form 7–R indicating their status as an NFA member.

Accordingly, because the burden associated with updating Form 7–R is currently captured in OMB Collection 3038–0023 for those persons who are directly impacted by the Final Rule are either currently registered with the Commission (i.e., have already filed a Form 7–R) or will be required to file a Form 7–R in connection with their registration with the Commission, no adjustment is necessary to take into account the number of Commission registrants who will have to become NFA members as a result of the Final Rule. Further, the Commission believes the additional burden of “checking the box” on Form 7–R to be non-substantive. Therefore, upon further review and for the reasons stated above, the Final Rule does not require amending existing OMB Collection 3038–0023.

B. Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act requires federal agencies, in promulgating regulations, to consider the impact of those regulations on small entities. In the Proposal, the Commission certified that the Proposal would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The Commission has previously determined that CPOs are not small entities for purposes of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. Accordingly, the Chairman, on behalf of the Commission, hereby certifies pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 605(b) that the Final Rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities with respect to CPOs.

2. IBs and CTAs

The Commission has previously determined to evaluate within the context of a particular rule proposal whether all or some IBs or CTAs should be considered to be small entities and, if so, to analyze the economic impact on them of any such rule. Since there may be some small entities that are IBs or CTAs and would be required to become NFA members, the Commission has considered whether this rulemaking would have a significant economic impact on these entities.

The Final Rule requires all IBs and CTAs, except § 4.14(a)(9) Exempt CTAs, who register with the Commission to become RFA members. This would require such IBs and CTAs to pay membership dues, “check a box” on Form 7–R, and ensure that they are prepared for an NFA audit. As noted in the Proposal, the Commission is of the view that any costs associated with preparing for an audit by the NFA should not be substantially different from, or significantly exceed, the costs associated with preparing for an audit by the Commission, which every registered person would already be responsible to do. Moreover, because the Final Rule only pertains to Commission Registrants, any audit related costs incident to NFA membership would be negligible, and should not have a significant economic impact on IBs or CTAs that may be small entities. The Commission also stated its preliminary belief that NFA membership would impose few additional compliance costs on affected entities, because these entities are already subject to the majority of regulations that NFA enforces, whether or not they are NFA members. The Commission specifically requested comment on any additional compliance costs beyond those an entity would face as a result of it being registered with the Commission.

a. Comments on Costs to CTAs

In response to the Proposal, a comment from Lovely stated that most CTAs that opt into CFTC registration and do not manage or exercise discretion over customer accounts or funds are “small or one-person operations or may have only incidental involvement with commodity interests.” Further, Lovely asserts that, although many of NFA’s rules are not relevant to such CTAs, the Commission understates the cost of required NFA membership, including that the costs to these CTAs of reviewing and complying with such rules would be approximately $15,000 to $20,000 annually.

As discussed above, the Commission believes that Lovely’s compliance cost estimates are very high. Rather, the Commission believes that the costs faced by a CTA would, at most, be approximately $2,950 in the first year and $1,476 in subsequent years. The Commission does not believe that these amounts plus the $750 membership dues required of all NFA members that are CTAs, results in an unreasonable burden on any CTAs (including those that may be small entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act). Further, as

37 Policy Statement and Establishment of Definitions of “Small Entities” for Purposes of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 47 FR 18618, 18619 (Apr. 30, 1982).

38 See, with respect to CTAs, 47 FR at 18620 (Apr. 30, 1982); and see, with respect to IBs, Introducing Brokers and Associated Persons of Introducing Brokers, Commodity Trading Advisors and Commodity Pool Operators; Registration and Other Regulatory Requirements, 48 FR 35276 (Aug. 3, 1983).

39 See 78 FR 67083 (Nov. 8, 2013). As stated in the booklet titled “NFA Regulatory Requirements: For FCMs, IBs, CPOs, and CTAs,” NFA audits have two major objectives: (1) To determine whether the firm is maintaining records in accordance with NFA rules and applicable CFTC regulations; and (2) to ensure that the firm is being operated in a professional manner and that customers are protected against unscrupulous activities and fraudulent or high-pressure sales practices.

40 As noted above, the Commission believes that many of the burdens associated with preparing for an NFA audit are already required for Commission registrants. Moreover, given the average periodicity for NFA audits, the magnitude of annual audit-related costs is limited.
As discussed above, § 4.14(a)(9) Exempted CTAs (i.e., those CTAs that neither manage nor exercise discretion over customer accounts or funds and that do not provide clients advice described in § 4.14(a)(9)(iii)) will not be required to become or remain RFA members pursuant to the Final Rule and, thus, will not face any compliance costs from the Final Rule.

b. Commission Determination

Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, the Commission believes that the Final Rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. Therefore, the Chairman, on behalf of the Commission, hereby certifies, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 605(b), that the Final Rule being published today by this Federal Register release will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

C. Considerations of Costs and Benefits

Section 15(a) of the CEA requires the Commission to consider the costs and benefits of its actions before promulgating a regulation under the CEA or issuing an order. Section 15(a) further specifies that the costs and benefits shall be evaluated in light of the following five broad areas of market and public concern: (1) Protection of market participants and the public; (2) efficiency, competitiveness, and financial integrity of futures markets; (3) price discovery; (4) sound risk management practices; and (5) other public interest considerations. The Commission considers the costs and benefits resulting from its discretionary determinations with respect to the section 15(a) factors.

1. Background

As discussed above, the Dodd-Frank Act amended the CEA to establish a comprehensive new regulatory framework for swaps markets and, in doing so, required IBs, CPOs, and CTAs acting in relation to swaps to register with the Commission. These newly registered persons, however, are not currently required to become NFA members because, as discussed above, they are not captured by the intersection of § 170.15 and NFA Bylaw 1101.

NFA cannot enforce its rules over Commission registrants who do not become NFA members, including IBs, CPOs, and CTAs active solely in relation to swap transactions, which are not currently required to become NFA members. Thus, the Final Rule requires registered IBs, CPOs, and CTAs, except § 4.14(a)(9) Exempted CTAs, to become NFA members similarly to how § 170.15 presently requires FCMS to become NFA members and how § 170.16 requires the same of SDs and MSPs. In conjunction with §§ 170.15 and 170.16, the Commission is intending to create an oversight regime that ensures more consistent treatment of its registered intermediaries. The Commission believes that the Final Rule is reasonably necessary to ensure the fitness and comprehensive regulation and appropriate oversight of such persons.

In assessing the costs and benefits of the Final Rule, the Commission employs a status quo baseline. The Commission analyzes the cost and benefit to those registered persons that, but for the Final Rule, would not have to become RFA members. As of June 30, 2015, the following numbers of Commission registered IBs, CPOs, and CTAs (registered in the below categories) were not NFA members (“Non-member Registrants”):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration category</th>
<th>Non-member registrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IB only</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPO only</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTA only</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB &amp; CPO</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB &amp; CTA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTA &amp; CPO</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCM &amp; CPO</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>700</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of these Non-member Registrants, however, approximately 138 are pending withdrawal of their Commission registration. The Commission is assuming that these Non-member Registrants will withdraw their registration and, thus, will not be impacted by the Final Rule. In addition, only approximately one percent of the Non-member Registrants registered solely as CTAs reported to the Commission in the most recent reporting cycle that they had directed

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34 See NFA’s daily directory of CFTC Registrants and Members available at: [http://www.nfa.futures.org/NFA-registration/NFA-directories.html](http://www.nfa.futures.org/NFA-registration/NFA-directories.html)

43 See NFA’s daily directory of CFTC Registrants and Members available at: [http://www.nfa.futures.org/NFA-registration/NFA-directories.html](http://www.nfa.futures.org/NFA-registration/NFA-directories.html)

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thereafter. Thus, the 296 affected Non-member Registrants, in the aggregate, will incur an initial and ongoing annual registration/membership cost of approximately $222,000. The Commission agrees with Lovely that the Final Rule will also impose certain compliance costs on affected Non-member Registrants. However, as noted above, the Commission believes that, given the existing requirements imposed on such registrants, the compliance costs of becoming an NFA member and complying with NFA’s rules (including paying for an audit by NFA) will be partially offset by the costs already incurred by these registrants (i.e., the costs associated with complying with Commission regulations and preparing for examinations by the Commission). In that regard, as discussed above, the Commission disagrees with Lovely’s cost estimates and estimates that an affected registrant may, at most, face additional compliance costs of approximately $2,950 initially and $1,476 in subsequent years, equating to an industry total of $873,200 in the first year and $436,896 in subsequent years, plus the indirect costs of the periodic audits. The Commission cannot reasonably provide an exact estimate of these costs due to the idiosyncratic nature of the indirect costs incurred.

b. Other Market Costs

In addition to the direct costs to Commission Registrants, the Commission considered other costs to the markets of the Final Rule. In particular, the Commission considered the impact the Final Rule will have on IBs, CPOs, and CTAs (i) election to not register with the Commission and (ii) optional deregistration, in each case, where such persons are not required to be registered with the Commission. Further, the Commission considered that the requirements of the Final Rule may cause fewer persons to elect to become IBs, CPOs, and CTAs because of the added burden of being an RFA member. The Commission is unable to estimate accurately how many IBs, CPOs, and CTAs will deregister with the Commission or elect not to so register in the future, or how many persons will choose to not become such an intermediary, in each case, as a result of the Final Rule. Further, the Commission believes that if a market participant has chosen not to register with the Commission, the costs incurred by that participant for not registering would be less than the costs that would have been incurred to register. Otherwise, the market participant would likely have chosen to register instead. However, the Commission cannot make a more accurate determination of costs beyond this overestimate without knowing more specifics about a particular market participant.

c. Consideration of the Proposal as an Alternative to the Final Rule

The Commission believes the costs in a. and b. above, respectively, are reduced from those that would have resulted had the Proposal been adopted without modification (the Proposal would have required each registered IB, CPO, and CTA, without exception, to become and remain a member of an RFA), because the Commission has excepted § 4.14(a)(9) Exempt CTAs from the requirements of the Final Rule. This exclusion limits the Commission’s ability to oversee these persons through delegation to an RFA; however, the Commission has determined that this reduction in the Commission’s oversight abilities is reasonable in light of the burden that the Proposal would otherwise impose on § 4.14(a)(9) Exempt CTAs and the markets. The Commission further notes that, as discussed above, § 4.14(a)(9) Exempt CTAs that are not RFA members are still subject to the Commission’s rules and regulations.

3. Benefits

The Final Rule enables the Commission to (i) carry out its obligations pursuant to Section 17 of the CEA to delegate certain oversight responsibility for intermediaries, including IBs, CPOs, and CTAs, to an RFA, and (ii) ensure the fitness of its registrants as described under Section 4p of the CEA. The Commission believes that by requiring RFA membership, the Final Rule results in a more efficient deployment of agency resources which would otherwise have to be used to oversee these registrants who would, without the Final Rule, not be overseen by an RFA. Further, the Commission believes that the Final Rule enables NFA to apply its experience as a SRO to oversee and ensure the fitness of all registered IBs, CPOs, and CTAs, except § 4.14(a)(9) Exempt CTAs. The markets and the public will benefit from NFA’s developed set of rules and oversight capabilities to ensure the integrity of the swaps market and its participants.

4. Section 15(a) Factors

The Commission requested comment on all aspects of the Section 15(a) factors. Except as discussed above, the Commission did not receive any comments relating to costs and benefits of the Final Rule. Section 15(a) of the CEA requires the Commission to consider the effects of its actions in light of the following five factors:

a. Protection of Market Participants and the Public

The Final Rule will protect the public by ensuring that registered IBs, CPOs, and CTAs, except § 4.14(a)(9) Exempt CTAs, are subject to the same level of comprehensive NFA oversight.

b. Efficiency, Competitiveness, and Financial Integrity of Markets

The Final Rule ensures that all registered IBs, CPOs, and CTAs, except § 4.14(a)(9) Exempt CTAs, are subject to a similar level of oversight and regulatory responsibility. In so doing, the Commission believes the integrity of markets is enhanced. Furthermore, the Commission also believes that the Final Rule will promote public confidence in the integrity of derivatives markets by ensuring consistent and adequate regulation and oversight of registered IBs, CPOs, and CTAs, except § 4.14(a)(9) Exempt CTAs.

c. Price Discovery

The Commission has not identified an impact on price discovery as a result of the Final Rule.

d. Sound Risk Management

The Commission has not identified an impact on the risk management decisions of market participants as a result of the Final Rule.

e. Other Public Interest Considerations

The Commission has not identified an impact on other public interest considerations as a result of the Final Rule.

List of Subjects in 17 CFR Part 170

Authority delegations (Government agencies), Commodity futures, Membership in a Registered Futures
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Wage and Hour Division

29 CFR Part 552

RIN 1235-AA05

Application of the Fair Labor Standards Act to Domestic Service; Announcement of 30-Day Period of Non-Enforcement

AGENCY: Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor.

ACTION: Policy statement.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor’s (Department) Final Rule amending regulations regarding domestic service employment, which extends Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) protections to most home care workers, had an effective date of January 1, 2015. The Department has not begun enforcement of the Final Rule both because of its previously announced time-limited non-enforcement policy and because it is a party to a federal lawsuit regarding the amended regulations in which the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia issued opinions and orders vacating the rule’s major provisions. Home Care Ass’n of Am. v. Weil, 76 F. Supp. 3d 138 (D.D.C. 2014); Home Care Ass’n of Am. v. Weil, 78 F. Supp. 3d 123 (D.D.C. 2015). On August 21, 2015, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit reversed the district court’s judgment. Home Care Ass’n of America v. Weil, . . . F.3d . . . . No. 15–5018, 2015 WL 4979980 (D.C. Cir. Aug. 21, 2015). The Court of Appeals opinion will become effective after the date the mandate will issue, the Department will not bring enforcement actions against any employer for violations of FLSA obligations resulting from the amended domestic service regulations for 30 days after the date the Court of Appeals issues a mandate making its opinion effective.

DATES: This policy statement was signed on September 9, 2015.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Ziegler, Assistant Administrator, Office of Policy, U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, 200 Constitution Avenue NW., Room S–3502, FP Building, Washington, DC 20210; telephone: (202) 343–5940 (this is not a toll-free number), email: HomeCare@dol.gov. Copies of this Policy Statement may be obtained in alternative formats (Large Print, Braille, Audio Tape, or Disc), upon request, by calling (202) 693–0675 (not a toll-free number). TTY/TTD callers may dial toll-free (877) 889–5627 to obtain information or request materials in alternative formats.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. 30-Day Non-Enforcement Period After Mandate Issues

The Department’s Final Rule amending regulations regarding domestic service employment, 78 FR 60454, which extends FLSA protections to most home care workers, had an effective date of January 1, 2015. The Department has not begun enforcement of the Final Rule both because of its time-limited non-enforcement policy, 79 FR 60974 (October 9, 2014), and because it is a party to a federal lawsuit regarding the amended regulations in which the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia issued opinions and orders vacating the rule’s major provisions. Home Care Ass’n of Am. v. Weil, 76 F. Supp. 3d 138 (D.D.C. 2014); Home Care Ass’n of Am. v. Weil, 78 F. Supp. 3d 123 (D.D.C. 2015). On August 21, 2015, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit reversed the district court’s judgment. Home Care Ass’n of America v. Weil, . . . F.3d . . . . No. 15–5018, 2015 WL 4979980 (D.C. Cir. Aug. 21, 2015). The Court of Appeals opinion will become effective after the date the mandate will issue, the Department will not bring enforcement actions against any employer for violations of FLSA obligations resulting from the amended domestic service regulations for 30 days after the date the mandate issues.

This 30-day non-enforcement policy does not replace or affect the timeline of the Department’s existing time-limited non-enforcement policy announced in October 2014. 79 FR 60974. Under that policy, through December 31, 2015, the Department will exercise prosecutorial discretion in determining whether to bring enforcement actions, with particular consideration given to the extent to which States and other entities have made good faith efforts to bring their home care programs into compliance with the FLSA since the promulgation of the Final Rule. The Department will also continue to provide intensive technical assistance to the regulated community, as it has since promulgation of the Final Rule.

II. Regulatory Requirements

This Policy Statement is guidance articulating considerations relevant to the Department’s exercise of its enforcement authority under the FLSA. It is therefore exempt from the notice-and-comment rulemaking requirements under the Administrative Procedure Act pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b).

Because no notice of proposed rulemaking is required, the Regulatory Flexibility Act does not require an initial or final regulatory flexibility analysis. 5 U.S.C. 603(a), 604(a). The Department has determined that this guidance does not impose any new or revise any existing recordkeeping.