

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Before the
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

SECURITIES ACT OF 1933
Release No. 10600 / December 26, 2018

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDING
File No. 3-18963

In the Matter of

JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.

Respondent.

ORDER INSTITUTING CEASE-AND-DESIST PROCEEDINGS, PURSUANT TO SECTION 8A OF THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933, MAKING FINDINGS, AND IMPOSING REMEDIAL SANCTIONS AND A CEASE-AND-DESIST ORDER

I.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) deems it appropriate and in the public interest that public cease-and-desist proceedings be, and hereby are, instituted pursuant to Section 8A of the Securities Act of 1933 (“Securities Act”), against JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. (“JPMorgan” or “Respondent”).

II.

In anticipation of the institution of these proceedings, Respondent has submitted an Offer of Settlement (the “Offer”) which the Commission has determined to accept. Solely for the purpose of these proceedings and any other proceedings brought by or on behalf of the Commission, or to which the Commission is a party, and without admitting or denying the findings herein, except as to the Commission’s jurisdiction over it and the subject matter of these proceedings, which are admitted, Respondent consents to the entry of this Order Instituting Cease-and-Desist Proceedings, Pursuant to Section 8A of the Securities Act of 1933, Making Findings, and Imposing Remedial Sanctions and a Cease-and-Desist Order (“Order”), as set forth below.

III.

On the basis of this Order and Respondent's Offer, the Commission finds¹ that:

Summary

1. These proceedings arise out of JPMorgan's improper practices involving the pre-release of American Depositary Receipts ("ADRs").²

2. ADR facilities, which provide for the issuance of ADRs, are established by a depositary bank ("Depositary"), such as JPMorgan, pursuant to a deposit agreement ("Deposit Agreement").

3. As part of its role, a Depositary issues ADRs to a market participant that contemporaneously delivers the corresponding number of foreign securities to the Depositary's foreign custodian ("Custodian"). However, in certain situations, Deposit Agreements may provide for "pre-release" transactions in which a market participant can obtain newly issued ADRs from the Depositary before delivering ordinary shares to the Custodian.³ Only brokers (or other market participants) that have entered into pre-release agreements with a Depositary ("Pre-Release Agreements") can obtain pre-released ADRs from the Depositary. The Pre-Release Agreements, consistent with the Deposit Agreements, require the broker receiving the pre-released ADRs ("Pre-Release Broker"), or its customer on whose behalf the Pre-Release Broker is acting, to beneficially own the ordinary shares represented by the ADRs, and to assign all beneficial rights, title, and interest in those ordinary shares to the Depositary while the pre-release transaction is outstanding. In effect, the Pre-Release Broker or its customer becomes the temporary custodian of the ordinary shares that would otherwise have been delivered to the Custodian.

4. Contrary to how pre-release transactions were supposed to work under the Deposit and Pre-Release Agreements, JPMorgan at times pre-released ADRs to Pre-Release Brokers in circumstances where JPMorgan was negligent with respect to whether the Pre-Release Brokers, or the parties on whose behalf the pre-released ADRs were being obtained, actually beneficially owned the corresponding number of ordinary shares, as they represented to

¹ The findings herein are made pursuant to Respondent's Offer of Settlement and are not binding on any other person or entity in this or any other proceeding.

² ADRs allow U.S. investors to invest in foreign companies without having to purchase the shares in the foreign markets, and allow foreign companies to get increased exposure to U.S. markets.

³ The securities deposited typically are equity securities, but debt securities may also underlie ADRs.

JPMorgan in their Pre-Release Agreements. The result of this conduct was the issuance of ADRs that in many instances were not backed by ordinary shares as required by the ADR facility.⁴ This conduct violated Section 17(a)(3) of the Securities Act.⁵

Respondent

5. JPMorgan, headquartered in New York City, is a financial services firm that, among other things, serves as a Depository that issues and cancels depository receipts. JPMorgan is a wholly owned subsidiary of JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Background

ADRs and the Pre-Release of ADRs

6. ADRs are negotiable instruments that represent an ownership interest in a specified number of foreign securities that have been deposited with a Depository. ADRs may be traded on U.S. stock exchanges or over-the-counter. The owner of an ADR has the right to obtain the underlying foreign securities by withdrawing them from the ADR facility.⁶

7. An ADR is either “sponsored” or “unsponsored.” If the ADR is sponsored, the Deposit Agreement is among the foreign issuer whose securities are represented by the ADRs (*i.e.*, the sponsor), the Depository, and ADR holders. If the ADR is unsponsored, the agreement is between a Depository and the ADR holders.⁷ In either case, the Deposit Agreement or ADR

⁴ See, *e.g.*, settled orders in *Matter of ITG Inc.*, Securities Act Rel. No. 10279 (Jan. 12, 2017) (finding that settling respondent, a pre-release ADR broker, had obtained pre-released ADRs from depository banks that in many instances were not backed by ordinary shares); *Matter of Banca IMI Securities Corp.*, Securities Act Rel. No. 10401 (Aug. 18, 2017) (same).

⁵ A violation of Section 17(a)(3) (prohibiting engaging in any transaction, practice or course of business that operates or would operate as a fraud or deceit upon the purchaser in the offer or sale of securities) may rest on a finding of simple negligence; scienter is not required. *SEC v. Hughes Capital Corp.*, 124 F.3d 449, 453-54 (3d Cir. 1997).

⁶ In a more technical sense, ADRs evidence American Depositary Shares, or ADSs, which represent the specific number of underlying securities of the same company on deposit with the Custodian in the foreign issuer’s home market. In addition, an ADR for a particular company may actually represent one ordinary share, more than one ordinary share, or a fraction of an ordinary share. The ADR-to-ordinary share ratio varies by ADR facility, based on pricing in the foreign and U.S. markets.

⁷ An unsponsored ADR is created by the Depository and does not involve the formal participation (or require the agreement) of the foreign company whose securities the ADRs represent.

describes fees applicable to the ADRs and the party responsible for paying those fees. In addition, the Depositary files a Securities Act registration statement on Form F-6 with the Commission to register the offer and sale of the ADRs, which includes the Deposit Agreement and the form of ADR as exhibits.

8. Form F-6 may be used to register the offer and sale of ADRs if certain conditions are met, including that the ADR holder must be entitled to withdraw the deposited securities at any time, subject to certain limited exceptions inapplicable here. Typically, when ADRs are issued, a specified number of ordinary shares represented by the ADRs are contemporaneously delivered to the Custodian. In this way, those underlying ordinary shares are in effect removed from the market and the total number of securities in the markets — ADRs plus ordinary shares — is unaffected. This procedure is designed to ensure that all ADR holders are able to withdraw the ordinary shares underlying their ADRs.

9. In some situations, a person may seek to obtain ADRs through a “pre-release” transaction pursuant to a Pre-Release Agreement with a Depositary, as provided for in the Deposit Agreements and in the ADR itself. In a pre-release transaction, a market participant obtains newly issued ADRs from the Depositary (as opposed to purchasing existing ADRs on the market) without simultaneously delivering the corresponding ordinary shares to the Custodian.

10. The traditional rationale for pre-release transactions was to address settlement timing disparities that could delay delivery to the Custodian of recently purchased ordinary shares. In theory, following the traditional rationale, the pre-release transaction would be closed within a few days after the purchased ordinary shares were received by the Pre-Release Broker. Once issued, pre-released ADRs are indistinguishable from other ADRs of the same issuer and can be freely traded, even while the pre-release transaction remains open.

11. Deposit Agreements, the ADR itself, and Pre-Release Agreements govern the terms of pre-release transactions. Pre-Release Brokers may obtain pre-released ADRs directly from Depositaries with which they have entered into Pre-Release Agreements.

12. Deposit Agreements, the ADR itself, and Pre-Release Agreements typically require a representation that at the time of each pre-release and for the duration such pre-release remains outstanding, the Pre-Release Broker or its customer: (i) beneficially owns corresponding ordinary shares; (ii) assigns all beneficial right, title, and interest in the shares to the Depositary; and (iii) will not take any action with respect to such shares that is inconsistent with the transfer of beneficial ownership (collectively, the “Pre-Release Obligations”). In effect, the Pre-Release Broker or its customer must maintain the ordinary shares for the benefit of ADR holders, similar to how the Depositary, through its Custodian, maintains the ordinary shares when it issues ADRs that are not pre-released.

13. Deposit Agreements, the ADR itself, and Pre-Release Agreements also include provisions addressing the situation where ADRs have been pre-released over a dividend record date. The provisions typically require the Pre-Release Broker or its customer to ensure that foreign withholding taxes, to the extent due in connection with the dividend on the

corresponding ordinary shares, are paid to the foreign jurisdiction at the rate required for ADR holders, to forward to the Depositary all dividends received on the ordinary shares, net of any foreign withholding tax paid, and to pass through any tax credits or refunds from the dividends to the Depositary. In this way, the rights and obligations of all ADR holders (including those who hold pre-released ADRs) will be protected, and the flow of dividend and tax payments will not be altered by the fact that the ordinary shares were not simultaneously deposited with the Custodian when the pre-released ADRs were issued.

14. Significantly, these agreements are intended to ensure that, at all times until the pre-release position is closed by delivery of ordinary shares to the Custodian (or delivery of an equivalent number of ADRs to the Depositary), the Depositary and the Pre-Release Broker or its customer are collectively maintaining, for the benefit of ADR holders, the required number of ordinary shares to correspond to the number of outstanding ADRs. This ensures that the total number of ordinary shares plus shares represented by ADRs available in the markets is unaffected by the fact that some ADRs were pre-released, and that any economic or tax impact related to holding the ordinary shares flows to the Depositary and the ADR holders for whose benefit the Depositary custodies ordinary shares.

JPMorgan's Pre-Release Practices

15. From at least November 2011 through early 2015, JPMorgan was a Depositary that pre-released ADRs to Pre-Release Brokers in thousands of transactions.

16. At least several of the largest (by share volume) Pre-Release Brokers that routinely obtained pre-released ADRs from JPMorgan during that period failed in many instances to take reasonable steps to ensure that they or their counterparties complied with the Pre-Release Obligations. Indeed, those Pre-Release Brokers falsely certified to JPMorgan that they were complying with the Pre-Release Agreements. Instead, these Pre-Release Brokers loaned the ADRs they received in the pre-release transactions to other parties pursuant to loan agreements that did not require compliance with the Pre-Release Obligations. As a result of these transactions, many of the ADRs that JPMorgan provided to the Pre-Release Brokers were not actually backed by ordinary shares held for the benefit of JPMorgan in accordance with the terms of the Deposit and Pre-Release Agreements.

17. The Depositary Receipts Execution Desk ("DR Execution Desk") of JPMorgan handled the issuance (including pre-release) and cancellation of ADRs for the Depositary. Certain personnel in the DR Execution Desk did not act reasonably in pre-releasing ADRs in light of what such personnel knew about the circumstances of such transactions, which indicated that Pre-Release Brokers and their counterparties may not have been complying with the Pre-Release Obligations set forth in the Deposit and Pre-Release Agreements.

18. For example, certain personnel in the DR Execution Desk knew that Pre-Release Brokers routinely loaned pre-released ADRs they received to counterparties of the Pre-Release Brokers, including securities lending desks at other larger broker-dealers. The Pre-Release Brokers profited from the transactions by lending the ADRs to their counterparties at higher rates

than those at which they obtained them from JPMorgan, thus earning revenue on the difference between these rates. That pattern of conduit activity should have alerted DR Execution Desk personnel that the Pre-Release Brokers themselves were most likely not beneficial owners of the corresponding ordinary shares.

19. If Pre-Release Brokers did not themselves beneficially own the ordinary shares that were supposed to underlie the pre-released ADRs, that meant that, for there to be compliance with the Pre-Release Obligations, the Pre-Release Brokers' counterparties needed to beneficially own those shares. But DR Execution Desk personnel also were negligent with respect to whether the Pre-Release Brokers' counterparties owned the ordinary shares.

20. JPMorgan understood that the traditional reason for a pre-release — a reason that would appear consistent with the Pre-Release Obligations — was to address settlement timing disparities that prevented a party from delivering the ordinary shares to the Custodian in time to obtain the ADRs. In these circumstances, the ordinary shares would have been expected to be delivered to the Custodian shortly after the pre-release transaction was opened, as the timing disparity or fail would only have been of limited duration. In addition, a party in compliance with the Pre-Release Obligations would likely have wanted to make delivery as soon as possible in order to minimize its borrowing costs.

21. In practice, however, JPMorgan conducted pre-release transactions that were often outstanding for lengths of time that typically would not result from such inter-jurisdictional settlement disparities. For example, from November 2011 through June 2014 JPMorgan had over 14,600 pre-release transactions; of those, over 7,000 were outstanding for more than 5 days; over 1,300 were outstanding for more than 30 days; and over 400 were outstanding for more than 100 days. In addition, virtually all of the pre-release transactions were closed by the Pre-Release Broker delivering ADRs to the Depositary rather than delivering ordinary shares to the Custodian. Based on the durations of its pre-release transactions and the manner in which the transactions were closed, JPMorgan should have recognized that pre-release was being used in connection with trading strategies that had nothing to do with settlement timing disparities, and in circumstances indicating potential non-compliance with the Pre-Release Obligations.

22. Beginning at least as early as November 2011, JPMorgan became aware that each of its largest Pre-Release Brokers sometimes was not in compliance with the Pre-Release Obligations.

23. At that time, JPMorgan came close to exceeding the number of pre-released ADRs it was permitted to issue in the stock of a particular issuer ("Issuer A") under the relevant Depositary Agreement. In order to reduce the number of pre-released ADRs, JPMorgan called upon its Pre-Release Brokers to close some of their pre-release transactions by returning the pre-released ADRs of Issuer A to the bank. A number of the Pre-Release Brokers were unable to immediately return the pre-released ADRs.

24. The Pre-Release Brokers also could have closed out their positions, pursuant to the Pre-Release Agreement, by delivering the ordinary shares that they had represented they held in custody or obtaining them from the counterparty, but none of them did.

25. In a subsequent review of the incident involving Issuer A's pre-released ADRs, certain of the Pre-Release Brokers informed JPMorgan that neither they nor their customers possessed the ordinary shares in Issuer A. This was inconsistent with the Pre-Release Agreements.

26. The pre-released ADRs of Issuer A were at times used to facilitate short sales without any corresponding ownership of ordinary shares. The use of pre-released shares in this manner was not limited to shares of Issuer A, but also affected other issuers as well.

27. JPMorgan nonetheless continued to enter into pre-release transactions with the Pre-Release Brokers. JPMorgan did not attempt to verify their compliance with the terms of the Pre-Release Agreement or the Deposit Agreement by exercising its contractual right to demand that its Pre-Release Brokers make delivery of the ordinary shares they were supposed to be holding. JPMorgan could have periodically used this methodology to test whether its Pre-Release Brokers held the ordinary shares, but it did not do so.

28. JPMorgan derived the majority of its pre-release revenue through transactions open over the foreign issuer's dividend record date. DR Execution Desk personnel should have understood the risk that these pre-released ADRs were being used by Pre-Release Brokers' counterparties to maximize the after-tax yield on dividends. As described in more detail below, DR Execution Desk personnel should have known that the trading strategy could not succeed if the Pre-Release Brokers or their counterparties actually complied with the Pre-Release Obligations.

29. Pursuant to the Deposit and Pre-Release Agreements, the payment of dividends to ADR holders, and any resulting taxes due to foreign tax authorities, should have been unaffected by the pre-release of ADRs if all relevant parties were fulfilling their obligations under those agreements. Under these agreements, the dividend payments on ordinary shares that would otherwise have been received by JPMorgan's Custodian (*i.e.*, in those circumstances where there was no pre-release transaction) generally would have been forwarded by the Pre-Release Broker's counterparty to the Pre-Release Broker and on to JPMorgan. In addition, the Pre-Release Agreements provide that the applicable foreign tax withholding on that dividend payment should have been calculated as though JPMorgan owned and held the underlying ordinary shares for the benefit of a U.S. resident holder of ADRs, consistent with the transfer of beneficial ownership of the shares to JPMorgan. In that situation, the Pre-Release Agreement would have required the Pre-Release Broker or its counterparty to pay any applicable withholding tax to the foreign jurisdiction. Thus, despite the existence of pre-released ADRs in the marketplace, all ADR holders on the record date would have been entitled to (a) receive the appropriate dividend amount, minus any withholding for foreign taxes, and (b) rely on the representations concerning transfer of beneficial ownership and, by extension, payment of any foreign taxes.

30. Here, the Pre-Release Brokers forwarded the correct dividend amounts (net of foreign withholding tax) to JPMorgan. However, DR Execution Desk personnel should have recognized the risk that neither Pre-Release Brokers nor their counterparties had made the foreign tax payments required by the Pre-Release Agreements because it would not have made economic sense for them to have entered into such pre-release transactions had they done so.

31. The profit from these dividend-driven pre-release transactions derived from a non-U.S. party entitled to a reduced rate in a foreign jurisdiction securing pre-released ADRs in order to obtain dividends subject to little or no foreign withholding tax, while only having to pay a smaller net dividend (that is, the dividend subject to a higher withholding rate) back to the source of the pre-released ADRs.

32. When pre-releasing ADRs that were to be used by Pre-Release Brokers and their counterparties for such foreign withholding tax strategies, JPMorgan charged Pre-Release Brokers a rebate rate for the duration of the pre-release transaction and also required them to pass along the dividend on the corresponding ordinary shares net of the standard foreign withholding tax rate applicable to an ordinary U.S. ADR holder. The potential profit in the transactions was the difference between the full untaxed dividend and the dividend net of foreign withholding tax. In effect, JPMorgan, the Pre-Release Brokers, the Pre-Release Brokers' counterparties, and the non-U.S. parties entitled to a reduced rate profited from that net amount. In those circumstances, JPMorgan should have recognized the risk that the Pre-Release Brokers or their counterparties were not making the foreign tax payments required by the Pre-Release Agreement.

33. Given the economics of these transactions and the likelihood that the Pre-Release Brokers and their counterparties did not beneficially own corresponding ordinary shares, DR Division personnel should have done more to ascertain the truthfulness of the Pre-Release Brokers' representations. If the Pre-Release Broker had beneficially owned the required ordinary shares, it would have made economic sense for the Pre-Release Broker to lend those shares to its counterparty in order to maximize its profit, rather than incurring the cost of a pre-release. And if the Pre-Release Broker's counterparty actually owned the ordinary shares on which the pre-release was supposed to have been based, it would have made economic sense for that counterparty to have used those ordinary shares to engage in its foreign tax strategy, rather than incurring the cost of a stock loan of additional ordinary shares and, by extension, a pre-release.

34. The DR Execution Desk personnel, who administered the bank's pre-release program, were aware of the dividend arbitrage trading strategy and priced pre-release transactions over record date differently than other transactions. Essentially, JPMorgan's pricing allowed it to capture a portion of the additional dividend produced by the transactions.

35. The DR Execution Desk personnel also were aware that the overwhelming majority of pre-released ADRs over record date were immediately being converted to ordinary shares. One Pre-Release Broker ("Broker A") exchanged the pre-released ADRs with JPMorgan soon after obtaining them. Another pre-release broker ("Broker B"), which itself was responsible for as much as 40 percent of pre-release volume, routinely informed the DR

Execution Desk of the counterparties to whom it was lending the pre-released ADRs so that they DR Execution Desk could negotiate with them the rates for converting the pre-released ADRs into ordinary shares.

36. In or about May 2012, management for the ADR business noticed that Broker A simultaneously converted the pre-released ADRs it received into ordinary shares. Management for the ADR business questioned why Broker A would be converting the pre-released ADRs to ordinary shares when Broker A was representing that it already was holding the ordinary shares in custody for JPMorgan.

37. In April 2013, JPMorgan was told that another depositary had adopted a policy banning the pre-release of ADRs over record dates, but JPMorgan made no further inquiry about the other bank's policy and did not adopt any similar policy at that time.

38. By May 2013, a full year after questions were first raised about Broker A's use of pre-released ADRs, management for the ADR business continued to question Broker A's use of pre-release. Notwithstanding these questions, JPMorgan took no steps to verify that Broker A was complying with its pre-release agreement obligations by exercising JPMorgan's contractual right to demand that Broker A make delivery of the ordinary shares it was supposed to be holding.

39. While these questions were being raised, the DR Execution Desk explored ways to increase pre-release revenue over record dates. For example, JPMorgan negotiated with issuer clients to increase the permissible percentage of ADRs that could be pre-released. The DR Execution Desk also explored strategies to increase the number of ADRs outstanding throughout the year, so that the absolute number of ADRs available for pre-release over record dates would be higher, resulting in greater revenue to the bank.

40. In an effort to ensure compliance with the Pre-Release Obligations during the relevant period, JPMorgan relied on the Pre-Release Agreements and annual certifications ("Certifications") stating that the Pre-Release Brokers were complying with the Pre-Release Obligations. In addition, on several occasions, JPMorgan personnel sought confirmation directly from senior employees at certain of the Pre-Release Brokers that they were complying with the Pre-Release Obligations.

41. In light of the information that the DR Execution Desk had about the practices of Pre-Release Brokers, the Pre-Release Agreements and Certifications and other representations made by the Pre-Release Brokers were insufficient to address the known risks of pre-released ADRs being issued without the Pre-Release Broker or its counterparty owning the corresponding ordinary shares.

42. From November 2011 through early 2015, JPMorgan's revenues from the negligently conducted pre-release transactions described above totaled approximately \$71 million.

43. In or about January 2015, after the staff's investigation began, but before JPMorgan had been subpoenaed, JPMorgan voluntarily ceased pre-release over record date. Later in early 2015, it ceased offering any pre-release.

Violations

44. As result of the conduct described above, Respondent violated Section 17(a)(3) of the Securities Act, which prohibits, in the offer or sale of securities, engaging in any transaction, practice, or course of business which operates or would operate as a fraud or deceit upon the purchaser.

JPMorgan's Cooperation

45. In determining to accept the Offer, the Commission considered JPMorgan's voluntary remediation and cooperation afforded the Commission staff.

IV.

In view of the foregoing, the Commission deems it appropriate to impose the sanctions agreed to in JPMorgan's Offer.

Accordingly, pursuant to Section 8A of the Securities Act, it is hereby ORDERED that:

- A. Respondent cease and desist from committing or causing any violations and any future violations of Section 17(a)(3) of the Securities Act.
- B. JPMorgan shall, within thirty (30) days of the entry of this Order, pay disgorgement of \$71,041,225.47 and prejudgment interest of \$14,407,595.64 to the Securities and Exchange Commission for transfer to the general fund of the United States Treasury, subject to Exchange Act Section 21F(g)(3). If timely payment is not made, additional interest shall accrue under SEC Rule of Practice 600.
- C. JPMorgan shall, within thirty (30) days of the entry of this Order, pay a civil money penalty in the amount of \$49,728,857.83 to the Securities and Exchange Commission for transfer to the general fund of the United States Treasury, subject to Exchange Act Section 21F(g)(3). If timely payment is not made, additional interest shall accrue pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717.

Payment must be made in one of the following ways:

- (1) Respondent may transmit payment electronically to the Commission, which will provide detailed ACH transfer/Fedwire instructions upon request;
- (2) Respondent may make direct payment from a bank account via Pay.gov through the SEC website at <http://www.sec.gov/about/offices/ofm.htm>; or

- (3) Respondent may pay by certified check, bank cashier's check, or United States postal money order, made payable to the Securities and Exchange Commission and hand-delivered or mailed to:

Enterprise Services Center
Accounts Receivable Branch
HQ Bldg., Room 181, AMZ-341
6500 South MacArthur Boulevard
Oklahoma City, OK 73169

Payments by check or money order must be accompanied by a cover letter identifying JPMorgan as Respondent in these proceedings, and the file number of these proceedings; a copy of the cover letter and check or money order must be sent to Sanjay Wadhwa, Senior Associate Director, Division of Enforcement, Securities and Exchange Commission, 200 Vesey Street, New York, NY 10281.

D. Amounts ordered to be paid as civil money penalties pursuant to this Order shall be treated as penalties paid to the government for all purposes, including all tax purposes. To preserve the deterrent effect of the civil penalty, Respondent agrees that in any Related Investor Action, it shall not argue that it is entitled to, nor shall it benefit by, offset or reduction of any award of compensatory damages by the amount of any part of Respondent's payment of a civil penalty in this action ("Penalty Offset"). If the court in any Related Investor Action grants such a Penalty Offset, Respondent agrees that it shall, within thirty (30) days after entry of a final order granting the Penalty Offset, notify the Commission's counsel in this action and pay the amount of the Penalty Offset to the Securities and Exchange Commission. Such a payment shall not be deemed an additional civil penalty and shall not be deemed to change the amount of the civil penalty imposed in this proceeding. For purposes of this paragraph, a "Related Investor Action" means a private damages action brought against Respondent by or on behalf of one or more investors based on substantially the same facts as alleged in the Order instituted by the Commission in this proceeding.

E. Respondent acknowledges that the Commission is not imposing a civil penalty in excess of \$49,728,857.83 based upon its cooperation and agreement to cooperate in a Commission investigation and related enforcement action. If at any time following the entry of the Order, the Division of Enforcement ("Division") obtains information indicating that Respondent knowingly provided materially false or misleading information or materials to the Commission or in a related proceeding, the Division may, at its sole discretion and with prior notice to the Respondent, petition the Commission to reopen this matter and seek an order directing that the Respondent pay an additional civil penalty. Respondent may contest by way of defense in any resulting administrative proceeding whether it knowingly provided materially false or misleading information, but may not: (1) contest the findings in the Order; or (2) assert any defense to liability or remedy, including, but not limited to, any statute of limitations defense.

By the Commission.

Brent J. Fields
Secretary