

consent of the holders of a majority of CL&P preferred stock then outstanding, and providing that holders of one-third of the aggregate voting rights represented by shares of CL&P preferred stock then outstanding do not dissent in writing or vote against such action, CL&P may not issue or assume any unsecured debt if, immediately after such issuance or assumption, (a) the total outstanding principal amount of all unsecured debt of CL&P will thereby exceed twenty percent of the aggregate of all outstanding secured debt and the capital stock, premium and surplus of CL&P, as stated on its books ("Capitalization"), or (b) the total outstanding principal amount of all unsecured debt of CL&P having maturities of less than ten years will then exceed ten percent of its Capitalization. This limitation is referred to as the "Unsecured Debt Restriction."

CL&P states that, as a result of utility restructuring in Connecticut, its capitalization has become smaller and its unsecured debt has become a greater proportion of its total capitalization. The company believes that eliminating the Unsecured Debt Restriction would provide more financial flexibility to lower its financing costs as it issues debt to fund its planned construction and improvement program.

CL&P requests authority to solicit proxies regarding the Proposals 1 and 2, described below, for use at a special meeting of the holders of CL&P preferred stock on November 25, 2003 ("Meeting"). The company states that it will solicit proxies by mail from holders of its preferred stock in accordance with all applicable rules under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

The first proposal, "Proposal 1," seeks the consent of holders of CL&P common stock and preferred stock to eliminate the Unsecured Debt Restriction. Holders of CL&P common stock and holders of CL&P preferred stock are entitled to one vote per share. Under the Charter, adoption of Proposal 1 requires the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the total number of outstanding shares of common and preferred CL&P stock, each voting as a single class.

CL&P requests authority to eliminate the Unsecured Debt Restriction from the Charter in the event it receives the necessary shareholder approvals. The elimination of the Unsecured Debt Restriction may also require approval by the Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control ("DPUC"), and the company represents that, if it obtains the necessary consents from shareholders, it will obtain DPUC approval before eliminating the

Unsecured Debt Restriction from the Charter.

Additionally, if Proposal 1 is adopted, CL&P requests authority, effective upon the amendment of the Charter, to make a cash payment ("Cash Payment") of one percent of par value per share to each holder of CL&P preferred stock that properly voted at the Meeting (in person by ballot or by proxy) in favor of Proposal 1.

In the event that the required Proposal 1 shareholder approvals are not obtained, or if DPUC approval is required and not obtained, CL&P also seeks the consent of holders of CL&P preferred stock to continue the current waiver of the ten percent limit contained in the Unsecured Debt Restrictions for an additional ten-year period.<sup>1</sup> This alternative proposal is referred to as "Proposal 2." Under the Charter, adoption of Proposal 2 requires: (1) The affirmative vote of a majority of shares of CL&P preferred stock; and (2) that less than one-third of the aggregate voting rights represented by shares of CL&P preferred stock outstanding do not dissent in writing or vote against the proposal. Assuming that Proposal 1 cannot be implemented, and if it obtains shareholder approval to implement Proposal 2, CL&P requests authority to do so.

The company estimates that the fees, commissions and expenses to be incurred in connection with the proposed transactions will be \$100,000, consisting chiefly of outside solicitation fees and expenses, brokers' fees and printing costs.

CL&P has filed its proxy solicitation materials and requests that its proposal to solicit proxies be permitted to become effective immediately, as provided in rule 62(d) under the Act. It appears to the Commission that the Declaration, with respect to the proposed solicitation of proxies, should be permitted to become effective immediately under rule 62(d).

It is ordered, under rule 62 under the Act, that the Declaration regarding the proposed solicitation of proxies from CL&P shareholders become effective immediately, subject to the terms and

conditions contained in rule 24 under the Act.

For the Commission, by the Division of Investment Management, pursuant to delegated authority.

**Margaret H. McFarland,**

*Deputy Secretary.*

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## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-48545; File No. S7-17-03]

### Business Continuity Planning for Trading Markets

**AGENCY:** Securities and Exchange Commission.

**ACTION:** Policy statement; request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Securities and Exchange Commission (Commission) is issuing a Policy Statement setting forth its view that self-regulatory organizations operating trading markets (SRO Markets) and electronic communications networks (ECNs) should apply certain basic principles in their business continuity planning within the specified implementation timeframe. The Commission also requests comments on the Policy Statement. After the comment period has closed, the Commission may re-evaluate the Policy Statement in light of the comments received.

**DATES:** Effective Date: October 1, 2003. Comments must be received on or before October 31, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** All comments concerning the Policy Statement should be submitted in triplicate to Jonathan G. Katz, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 5th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20549-0609. Comments can be submitted electronically at the following E-mail address: [rule-comments@sec.gov](mailto:rule-comments@sec.gov). All comment letters should refer to File No. S7-17-03; this file number should be included on the subject line if E-mail is used. To help us process and review your comments more effectively, comments should be sent by one method—U.S. mail or electronic mail only. All comments received will be available for public inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Reference Room, 450 5th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20549. Electronically submitted comment letters will be posted on the Commission's Internet Web site (<http://www.sec.gov>). The Commission does not edit personal identifying information, such as names

<sup>1</sup> By order dated October 20, 1993 (HCAR No. 24910), the Commission authorized CL&P to solicit proxies regarding Proposals 1 and 2. At a shareholders' meeting held on December 15, 1993, CL&P obtained the consent of the holders of the two classes of CL&P preferred stock for Proposal 2, which allowed the company to issue or assume unsecured indebtedness with a maturity of less than ten years in excess of the ten percent limitation for a ten-year period through March 31, 2004, provided that all unsecured indebtedness would not exceed twenty percent of its total capitalization. By order dated February 24, 1994 (HCAR No. 25992), the Commission authorized CL&P to implement Proposal 2.