

March 1, 2026

**LEGG MASON GLOBAL ASSET MANAGEMENT TRUST**

Fund	Ticker Symbol					
	Class A	Class C	Class FI	Class R	Class I	Class IS
BRANDYWINEGLOBAL – MULTI-SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES FUND (the “Fund”)	LROAX	LAOCX	LBAFX	LBARX	LROIX	LROXS

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Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
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**STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

This Statement of Additional Information (“SAI”) is not a prospectus and is meant to be read in conjunction with the Prospectus of the Fund, dated March 1, 2026, as amended or supplemented from time to time, and is incorporated by reference in its entirety into the Prospectus.

Additional information about the Fund’s investments is available in the Fund’s annual and semi-annual reports to shareholders and in Form N-CSR. In the Fund’s annual report, you will find a discussion of the market conditions and investment strategies that significantly affected the Fund’s performance during its last fiscal year. In Form N-CSR, you will find the Fund’s annual and semi-annual financial statements. The Fund’s audited financial statements and the accompanying independent registered public accounting firm’s report for the fiscal year ended October 31, 2025, as filed on Form N-CSR, are incorporated herein by reference ([https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0001474103/000113322825014139/bmssof-efp20715\\_ncsr.htm](https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0001474103/000113322825014139/bmssof-efp20715_ncsr.htm)). The Fund’s Prospectus, copies of the annual and semi-annual reports and other information such as Fund financial statements may be obtained free of charge by contacting banks, brokers, dealers, insurance companies, investment advisers, financial consultants or advisers, mutual fund supermarkets and other financial intermediaries that have entered into an agreement with the Fund’s distributor to sell shares of the Fund (each called a “Service Agent”), by writing the Fund at Legg Mason Funds, P.O. Box 33030, St. Petersburg, FL 33733-8030, by calling the telephone number set forth above, by sending an e-mail request to [prospectus.us.franklintempleton@fisglobal.com](mailto:prospectus.us.franklintempleton@fisglobal.com) or by visiting [www.franklintempleton.com/prospectus](http://www.franklintempleton.com/prospectus). Franklin Distributors, LLC (“Franklin Distributors” or the “Distributor”), an indirect, wholly-owned broker/dealer subsidiary of Franklin Resources, Inc., serves as the Fund’s sole and exclusive distributor.

**THIS SAI IS NOT A PROSPECTUS AND IS AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION TO PROSPECTIVE INVESTORS ONLY IF PRECEDED OR ACCOMPANIED BY AN EFFECTIVE PROSPECTUS.**

No person has been authorized to give any information or to make any representations not contained in the Prospectus or this SAI in connection with the offering made by the Prospectus and, if given or made, such information or representations must not be relied upon as having been authorized by the Fund or the Distributor. The Prospectus and this SAI do not constitute an offering by the Fund or by the Distributor in any jurisdiction in which such offering may not lawfully be made.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Because the following is a combined glossary of terms, certain terms below may not apply to your fund. Any terms used but not defined herein have the meaning ascribed to them in the applicable Fund's prospectus.**

"12b-1 Plans" means the Fund's distribution and shareholder services plan.

"1933 Act" means the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

"1934 Act" means the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended.

"1940 Act" means the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended.

"1940 Act Vote" means the vote of the lesser of: (a) more than 50% of the outstanding shares of the Fund; or (b) 67% or more of the shares of the Fund present at a shareholders' meeting if more than 50% of the outstanding shares of that Fund are represented at the meeting in person or by proxy.

"Advisers Act" means the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, as amended.

"Board" means the Board of Trustees or Board of Directors, as applicable.

"CEA" means the Commodity Exchange Act, as amended.

"CFTC" means the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

"Code" means the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

"Corporation" (if applicable) means the corporation listed on the cover page of this SAI.

"Directors" means the directors of the Corporation.

"Distributor" means the party that is responsible for the distribution or sale of the Fund's shares. Franklin Distributors, LLC ("Franklin Distributors") is the Fund's distributor.

"FINRA" means the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc.

"Franklin Resources" means Franklin Resources, Inc.

"Fund" means the Fund or Funds listed on the cover of this SAI unless stated otherwise.

"Fundamental Investment Policy" means an investment policy of the Fund that may be changed only by a 1940 Act Vote. Only those policies expressly designated as such are fundamental investment policies. All other policies and restrictions may be changed by the Board without shareholder approval.

"Independent Director" or "Independent Trustee" (as applicable) means a Director of the Corporation or a Trustee of the Trust who is not an "interested person" (as defined in the 1940 Act) of the Corporation or Trust (as applicable).

"IRAs" means Individual Retirement Accounts.

"IRS" means Internal Revenue Service.

"Legg Mason" means Legg Mason, Inc.

"Manager" or "FTFA" means Franklin Templeton Fund Adviser, LLC.

"NAV" means net asset value.

"NRSROs" means nationally recognized (or non-U.S.) statistical rating organizations, including, but not limited to, Moody's Investors Service, Inc. ("Moody's"), Fitch Ratings and S&P Global Ratings, a subsidiary of S&P Global Inc. ("S&P").

"NYSE" means the New York Stock Exchange.

"Prospectus" means the prospectus of a Fund as referenced on the cover page of this SAI.

"SAI" means this Statement of Additional Information.

"SEC" means the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

"Service Agent" means each bank, broker, dealer, insurance company, investment adviser, financial consultant or adviser, mutual fund supermarket and any other financial intermediaries that have entered into an agreement with the Distributor to sell shares of the Fund.

"Subadviser" means Brandywine Global Investment Management, LLC, as referred to in the Fund's Prospectus and this SAI.

"Trust" (if applicable) means the trust listed on the cover page of this SAI.

"Trustees" means the trustees of the Trust.

## INVESTMENT POLICIES

### Investment Objective and Strategies

The Fund is registered under the 1940 Act as an open-end management investment company. The Fund's Prospectus discusses the Fund's investment objective and strategies. The following is a summary of certain strategies and investment limitations of the Fund and supplements the description of the Fund's investment strategies in its Prospectus. Additional information regarding investment practices and risk factors with respect to the Fund may also be found below in the section entitled *Investment Practices and Risk Factors*.

### Multi-Sector Opportunities Fund

- *Investment Objective:* The Fund's investment objective is to generate a high level of current income while outperforming the total return of the Fund's performance benchmark over a market cycle.
- The Fund may invest in multiple types of fixed income securities including, but not limited to, corporate debt, high yield debt, bank loans or loan participation interests, mortgage-backed securities, asset-backed securities, and convertible securities.
- Although the Fund may invest in securities of any maturity, the Fund will normally seek to maintain a dollar-weighted average effective duration, as estimated by the Subadviser, of less than 3 years.
- The fund may invest in investment grade debt securities and below-investment grade debt securities (commonly known as "high yield" or "junk" bonds). The Fund may invest in securities rated, at the time of purchase, as low as B- by at least one NRSRO or, if unrated, securities of comparable quality at the time of purchase (as determined by the Subadviser).
- The Fund may invest up to 20% of its net assets in unrated securities.
- The Fund may invest up to 20% of its net assets in securities of non-U.S. issuers, which may be denominated in foreign currencies.
- Generally, the Fund may purchase and sell any type of derivative. However, as an operating policy, the Fund will only purchase or sell a particular derivative if the Fund is authorized to invest in the type of asset by which the return on, or value of, the derivative is primarily measured. Since the Fund is authorized to invest in foreign securities, the Fund may purchase and sell foreign currency derivatives.

### Fundamental and Non-Fundamental Investment Policies

#### General

The Fund has adopted the fundamental and non-fundamental investment policies below for the protection of shareholders. Fundamental investment policies of the Fund may not be changed without a 1940 Act Vote. The Board may change non-fundamental investment policies at any time without shareholder approval and upon notice to shareholders.

If any percentage restriction described below (other than the limitation on borrowing) is complied with at the time of an investment, a later increase or decrease in the percentage resulting from a change in asset values or characteristics will not constitute a violation of such restriction, unless otherwise noted below. An investment will be deemed to have been made at the time the Fund enters into a binding commitment to complete the investment. The Fund will monitor the level of borrowing in its portfolio and will make necessary adjustments to maintain the required asset coverage.

The Fund's investment objective is non-fundamental.

#### Fundamental Investment Policies

The Fund's fundamental investment policies are as follows:

**Borrowing:** The Fund may not borrow money, except (1) in an amount not exceeding 33 1/3% of the Fund's total assets (including the amount borrowed) less liabilities (other than borrowings) or (2) by entering into reverse repurchase agreements or dollar rolls;

**Underwriting:** The Fund may not engage in the business of underwriting the securities of other issuers, except as permitted by the 1940 Act, and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, as such statute, rules, and regulations are amended from time to time or are interpreted from time to time by the SEC or SEC staff or to the extent that the Fund may be permitted to do so by exemptive order or other relief from the SEC

or SEC staff (collectively, "1940 Act Laws, Interpretations and Exemptions"). This restriction does not prevent the Fund from engaging in transactions involving the acquisition, disposition or resale of portfolio securities, regardless of whether the Fund may be considered to be an underwriter under the 1933 Act;

**Loans:** The Fund may not lend money or other assets, except to the extent permitted by the 1940 Act Laws, Interpretations and Exemptions. This restriction does not prevent the Fund from purchasing debt obligations in pursuit of its investment program, or for defensive or cash management purposes, entering into repurchase agreements, loaning its portfolio securities to financial intermediaries, institutions or institutional investors, or investing in loans, including assignments and participation interests;

**Senior Securities:** The Fund may not issue senior securities, except as permitted under the 1940 Act Laws, Interpretations and Exemptions;

**Real Estate:** The Fund may not purchase or sell real estate unless acquired as a result of ownership of securities or other instruments. This restriction does not prevent the Fund from investing in issuers that invest, deal, or otherwise engage in transactions in or hold real estate or interests therein, investing in instruments that are secured by real estate or interests therein, or exercising rights under agreements relating to such securities, including the right to enforce security interests;

**Commodities:** The Fund may not purchase or sell physical commodities unless acquired as a result of ownership of securities or other instruments. This restriction does not prevent the Fund from engaging in transactions involving foreign currency, futures contracts and options, forward contracts, swaps, caps, floors, collars, securities purchased or sold on a forward-commitment or delayed-delivery basis or other similar financial instruments, or investing in securities or other instruments that are secured by physical commodities;

**Concentration:** The Fund may not make any investment if, as a result, the Fund's investments will be concentrated (as that term may be defined or interpreted by the 1940 Act Laws, Interpretations and Exemptions) in a particular industry or group of industries. This restriction does not limit the Fund's investment in securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government, its agencies or instrumentalities and repurchase agreements with respect thereto. To the extent securities of a foreign government are deemed by the 1940 Act Laws, Interpretations and Exemptions to constitute an industry, the Fund will concentrate in the securities of a foreign government if the portfolio managers believe that the country offers extraordinary absolute return opportunities.

With respect to the fundamental policy relating to issuing senior securities set forth above, "senior securities" are defined as fund obligations that have a priority over the Fund's shares with respect to the payment of dividends or the distribution of Fund assets. The 1940 Act prohibits a fund from issuing senior securities except that the fund may borrow money in amounts of up to one third of the fund's total assets from banks for any purpose. A fund may also borrow up to 5% of the fund's total assets from banks or other lenders for temporary purposes, and these borrowings are not considered senior securities. The issuance of senior securities by the Fund can increase the speculative character of the Fund's outstanding shares through leveraging. Leveraging of the Fund's portfolio through the issuance of senior securities magnifies the potential for gain or loss on monies, because even though the Fund's net assets remain the same, the total risk to investors is increased to the extent of the Fund's gross assets. The policy above will be interpreted not to prevent collateral arrangements with respect to swaps, options, forward or futures contracts or other derivatives, or the posting of initial or variation margin.

Although not a part of the Fund's fundamental investment limitation on loans, the Fund presently does not intend to lend its portfolio securities.

Although not a part of the Fund's fundamental investment limitation on concentration, it is the current position of the SEC staff that a fund's investments are concentrated in an industry when 25% or more of the fund's net assets are invested in issuers whose principal business is in that industry.

Although not a part of the Fund's fundamental investment limitation on concentration, it is the current position of the SEC staff that (1) the securities of a foreign government constitute an industry and (2) securities issued by supranational organizations, collectively, constitute an industry. As a non-fundamental policy, and except as noted in the Fund's fundamental

investment limitation on concentration, the Fund will not concentrate in either of these “industries,” but reserves the right to change this policy if the staff changes its position. Investment in the currency of a country, and certain derivatives thereon, may result in certain risk exposures similar to those created by investment in the sovereign debt of that country. Effective July 29, 2025, the Fund’s investment objective and strategies changed, and the Fund’s portfolio managers no longer expect to invest to any significant degree in sovereign government debt.

### **Diversification**

The Fund is non-diversified; however, the Fund intends to continue to qualify for treatment as a regulated investment company under the Code. Compliance with the diversification requirements of the Code may limit the investment flexibility of the Fund. See “Taxes.”

### **Non-Fundamental Investment Policies**

Unless otherwise stated, the Fund’s investment policies and limitations are non-fundamental and may be changed by the Board without shareholder approval. The following are some of the non-fundamental investment limitations that the Fund currently observes:

**Borrowing:** The Fund will not borrow for investment purposes in an amount in excess of 5% of its total assets.

**Illiquid Securities:** The Fund may invest up to 15% of its net assets in illiquid securities. If, due to subsequent fluctuations in value or any other reasons, the value of the Fund’s illiquid securities exceeds the percentage limitation applicable at the time of acquisition, the Fund will consider what actions, if any, are necessary to maintain adequate liquidity. The Fund monitors the portion of its total assets that is invested in illiquid securities on an ongoing basis, not only at the time of investment in such securities.

**Margin Purchases:** The Fund may not purchase securities on margin, except that (1) the Fund may obtain such short-term credits as are necessary for the clearance of transactions and (2) the Fund may make margin payments in connection with foreign currency, futures contracts, options, forward contracts, swaps, caps, floors, collars, securities purchased or sold on a forward-commitment or delayed-delivery basis or other financial instruments.

**Investment Companies:** The Fund may not invest in other registered open-end investment companies and registered unit investment trusts in reliance upon the provisions of subparagraphs (G) or (F) of Section 12(d)(1) of the 1940 Act. The foregoing investment policy does not restrict the Fund from (i) acquiring securities of other registered investment companies in connection with a merger, consolidation, reorganization, or acquisition of assets; or (ii) purchasing the securities of registered closed-end investment companies, to the extent permissible under Section 12(d)(1)(G) of the 1940 Act.

**Short Sales:** The Fund may not sell securities short (unless it owns or has the right to obtain securities equivalent in kind and amount to the securities sold short). This restriction does not prevent the Fund from entering into short positions in foreign currency, futures contracts, options, forward contracts, swaps, caps, floors, collars, securities purchased or sold on a forward-commitment or delayed-delivery basis or other financial instruments.

### **Commodity Exchange Act Regulation — Exclusion from Commodity Pool Operator Definition**

The Fund is operated by persons who have claimed an exclusion, granted to operators of registered investment companies like the Fund, from registration as a “commodity pool operator” with respect to the Fund under the CEA and, therefore are not subject to registration or regulation with respect to the Fund under the CEA. As a result, the Fund is limited in its ability to trade instruments subject to the CFTC’s jurisdiction, including commodity futures (which include futures on broad-based securities indexes, interest rate futures and currency futures), options on commodity futures, and certain swaps or other investments, either directly or indirectly through investments in other investment vehicles (collectively, “Commodity Interests”).

Under this exclusion, the Fund must satisfy one of the following two trading limitations whenever it establishes a new Commodity Interest position: (1) the aggregate initial margin and premiums required to establish the Fund’s Commodity Interest positions does not exceed 5% of the liquidation value of the Fund’s portfolio (after accounting for unrealized profits and unrealized losses on any such investments); or (2) the aggregate net notional value of the Fund’s Commodity Interests, determined at the time the most recent position was established, does not exceed 100% of the liquidation value of the Fund’s portfolio (after accounting for unrealized profits and unrealized losses on any such positions). The Fund is not required to consider

its exposure to such instruments if they are held for “bona fide hedging” purposes, as such term is defined in the rules of the CFTC. In addition to meeting one of the foregoing trading limitations, the Fund may not be marketed as a commodity pool or otherwise as a vehicle for trading in the markets for Commodity Interests.

If the Fund’s operators were to lose their ability to claim this exclusion with respect to the Fund, such persons would be required to comply with certain CFTC rules regarding commodity pools that could impose additional regulatory requirements and compliance obligations.

## **INVESTMENT PRACTICES AND RISK FACTORS**

In addition to the investment strategies and the risks described in the Fund's Prospectus and in this SAI under Investment Objective and Strategies, the Fund may employ other investment practices and may be subject to other risks, which are described below. The Fund may engage in the practices described below to the extent consistent with its investment objectives, strategies, policies and restrictions. However, as with any investment or investment technique, even when the Fund’s Prospectus or this discussion indicates that the Fund may engage in an activity, the Fund may not actually do so for a variety of reasons. In addition, new types of instruments and other securities may be developed and marketed from time to time. Consistent with its investment limitations, the Fund expects to invest in those new types of securities and instruments that its portfolio manager believes may assist the Fund in achieving its investment objective.

This discussion is not intended to limit the Fund’s investment flexibility, unless such a limitation is expressly stated, and therefore will be construed by the Fund as broadly as possible. Statements concerning what the Fund may do are not intended to limit any other activity.

### **Artificial Intelligence**

Artificial intelligence refers to computer systems that can perform tasks that would otherwise require human intelligence and encompasses various different forms of artificial intelligence, including machine learning models. Artificial intelligence is typically designed to analyze data, learn from patterns and experiences, make decisions, and solve problems. Artificial intelligence can be categorized into two types: narrow artificial intelligence, which is designed for specific tasks, and general artificial intelligence, which has the ability to perform any intellectual task that a human can do and includes generative artificial intelligence (“GAI”). GAI is a type of artificial intelligence technology that produces new text, images, audio, and other content based on training data that includes examples of the desired output.

Typically, users enter questions, queries, or other inputs that prompt the GAI model or tool to produce output. In addition, some software uses GAI to suggest changes, summarize information, or translate text. Artificial intelligence has various applications in many fields such as healthcare, finance, transportation, and law.

The use of artificial intelligence in general may adversely impact markets, the overall performance of the Fund’s investments, or the services provided to the Fund by its service providers. The Manager or the Subadviser or a third party service provider may use and/or expand its use of artificial intelligence in connection with its business, operating and investment activities and the Fund’s investments may also use such technologies. Actual usage of such artificial intelligence will vary, and while the Manager or the Subadviser expects it and the third party service provider to the Fund may, from time to time, adopt and adjust usage policies and procedures governing the use of artificial intelligence by its personnel, there is a risk of misuse of artificial intelligence technologies.

Artificial intelligence is highly reliant on the collection and analysis of large amounts of data and complex algorithms, but it is not possible nor practicable to incorporate all data that would be relevant for a task conducted by artificial intelligence. Therefore, it is possible that the information provided through use of artificial intelligence could be insufficient, incomplete, inaccurate or biased leading to adverse effects for the Fund, including, potentially, operational errors and investment losses.

Artificial intelligence and its current and potential future applications, including in the investment and financial sectors, as well as the regulatory frameworks within which they operate, continue to rapidly evolve, and it is impossible to predict the full extent of future applications or regulations. Ongoing and future regulatory actions with respect to artificial intelligence generally or artificial intelligence’s use in any industry in particular may alter, perhaps to a materially adverse extent, the ability of the Manager or the Subadviser, a third-party service provider, the Fund or its investments to utilize artificial intelligence in the manner it has to-date, and may have an adverse impact on the ability of any of those entities to continue to operate as intended.

## **Bank Obligations**

The Fund may invest in all types of bank obligations, including certificates of deposit ("CDs"), time deposits and bankers' acceptances. CDs are short-term negotiable obligations of commercial banks. Time deposits are non-negotiable deposits maintained in banking institutions for specified periods of time at stated interest rates. Bankers' acceptances are time drafts drawn on commercial banks by borrowers usually in connection with international transactions.

U.S. commercial banks organized under federal law are supervised and examined by the Comptroller of the Currency and are required to be members of the Federal Reserve System and to be insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (the "FDIC"). U.S. banks organized under state law are supervised and examined by state banking authorities, but are members of the Federal Reserve System only if they elect to join. Most state banks are insured by the FDIC (although such insurance may not be of material benefit to the Fund, depending upon the principal amount of CDs of each bank held by the Fund) and are subject to federal examination and to a substantial body of federal law and regulation. As a result of federal and state laws and regulations, U.S. branches of U.S. banks are, among other things, generally required to maintain specified levels of reserves, and are subject to other supervision and regulation designed to promote financial soundness. Banks may be particularly susceptible to certain economic factors, such as interest rate changes and adverse developments in the market for real estate. Fiscal and monetary policy and general economic cycles can affect the availability and cost of funds, loan demand and asset quality and thereby impact the earnings and financial conditions of banks.

Obligations of foreign branches of U.S. banks, such as CDs and time deposits, may be general obligations of the parent bank in addition to the issuing branch, or may be limited by the terms of a specific obligation and governmental regulation. Such obligations are subject to different risks than are those of U.S. banks or U.S. branches of foreign banks. These risks relate to foreign economic and political developments, foreign governmental restrictions that may adversely affect payment of principal and interest on the obligations, foreign exchange controls and foreign withholding and other taxes on interest income. Foreign branches of U.S. banks and foreign branches of foreign banks are not necessarily subject to the same or similar regulatory requirements that apply to U.S. banks, such as mandatory reserve requirements, loan limitations and accounting, auditing and financial recordkeeping requirements. In addition, less information may be publicly available about a foreign branch of a U.S. bank or about a foreign bank than about a U.S. bank.

Obligations of U.S. branches of foreign banks may be general obligations of the parent bank, in addition to the issuing branch, or may be limited by the terms of a specific obligation and by federal and state regulation as well as governmental action in the country in which the foreign bank has its head office. A U.S. branch of a foreign bank with assets in excess of \$1 billion may or may not be subject to reserve requirements imposed by the Federal Reserve System or by the state in which the branch is located if the branch is licensed in that state. In addition, branches licensed by the Comptroller of the Currency and branches licensed by certain states ("State Branches") may or may not be required to: (a) pledge to the regulator, by depositing assets with a designated bank within the state; and (b) maintain assets within the state in an amount equal to a specified percentage of the aggregate amount of liabilities of the foreign bank payable at or through all of its agencies or branches within the state. The deposits of State Branches may not necessarily be insured by the FDIC. In addition, there may be less publicly available information about a U.S. branch of a foreign bank than about a U.S. bank.

Volatility in the banking system may impact the viability of banking and financial services institutions. In the event of failure of any of the financial institutions where the Fund maintains its cash and cash equivalents, there can be no assurance that the Fund would be able to access uninsured funds in a timely manner or at all and the Fund may incur losses. Any such event could adversely affect the business, liquidity, financial position and performance of the Fund.

## **Benchmark Reference Rates Risk**

Many debt securities, derivatives, and other financial instruments utilize benchmark or reference rates for variable interest rate calculations, including the Euro Interbank Offer Rate, Sterling Overnight Index Average Rate, and the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (each a "Reference Rate"). Instruments in which the Fund invests may pay interest at floating rates based on such Reference Rates or may be subject to interest caps or floors based on such Reference Rates. The Fund and issuers of instruments in which the Fund invests may also obtain financing at floating rates based on such Reference Rates. The elimination of a Reference Rate or any other changes to or reforms of the determination or supervision of Reference Rates could have an adverse impact on the market for, or value of, any instruments or payments linked to those Reference Rates.

For example, some Reference Rates, as well as other types of rates and indices, are described as “benchmarks” and have been the subject of ongoing national and international regulatory reform, including under the European Union regulation on indices used as benchmarks in financial instruments and financial contracts (known as the “Benchmarks Regulation”). The Benchmarks Regulation has been enacted into United Kingdom law by virtue of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (as amended), subject to amendments made by the Benchmarks (Amendment and Transitional Provision) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/657) and other statutory instruments. Following the implementation of these reforms, the manner of administration of benchmarks has changed and may further change in the future, with the result that relevant benchmarks may perform differently than in the past, the use of benchmarks that are not compliant with the new standards by certain supervised entities may be restricted, and certain benchmarks may be eliminated entirely. Such changes could cause increased market volatility and disruptions in liquidity for instruments that rely on or are impacted by such benchmarks. Additionally, there could be other consequences which cannot be predicted.

## **Commercial Paper**

Commercial paper (including variable amount master demand notes and funding agreements) consists of short-term, unsecured promissory notes issued by corporations, partnerships, trusts and other entities to finance short-term credit needs.

## **Contingent Convertible Securities (“CoCos”)**

CoCos are a form of hybrid debt security, typically issued by banking institutions, and are intended to either convert into equity or have their principal written down upon the occurrence of certain “triggers.” The triggers are generally linked to regulatory capital requirements or regulatory actions calling into question the issuing banking institution’s continued viability as a going-concern. CoCos’ unique equity conversion or principal write-down features are tailored to the issuing banking institution and its regulatory requirements. Some additional risks associated with CoCos include, but are not limited to:

*Loss absorption risk.* CoCos have fully discretionary coupons. This means coupons can potentially be cancelled or adjusted downward to below the original par value upon the occurrence of a trigger at the banking institution’s discretion or at the request of the relevant regulatory authority in order to help the bank absorb losses. A write down of the par value would occur automatically and if written down to zero, would effectively cancel the securities, causing investors (including the Fund) to lose the entire value of their investment, even as the issuer remains in business. If such an event occurs, an investor may not have any rights to repayment of the principal amount of the securities and may not entitle the holders to seek bankruptcy of the company. In addition, an automatic write-down could result in a reduced income rate if the dividend or interest payment is based on the security’s par value. Such securities may, but are not required to, provide for circumstances under which the liquidation value may be adjusted back up to par, such as an improvement in capitalization and/or earnings. Similarly, if a CoCo provides for a mandatory conversion of the security into the issuer’s equity securities in the event of certain circumstances, the Fund could experience a reduced income rate (even to zero) if such conversion event occurs and the issuer’s equity securities pay little or no dividend.

*Subordination risk.* CoCos will, in the majority of circumstances, be issued in the form of subordinated debt instruments in order to provide the appropriate regulatory capital treatment prior to a conversion. Accordingly, in the event of liquidation, dissolution or winding-up of an issuer prior to a conversion having occurred, the rights and claims of the holders of the CoCos, such as the Fund, against the issuer in respect of or arising under the terms of the CoCos will generally rank junior to the claims of all holders of unsubordinated obligations of the issuer. In addition, if the CoCos are converted into the issuer’s underlying equity securities following a conversion event, each holder will be subordinated due to their conversion from being the holder of a debt instrument to being the holder of an equity instrument, hence worsening the holder’s standing in a bankruptcy. In addition, some CoCos also provide for an automatic write-down if the price of the common stock is below the conversion price on the conversion date.

*Market risk.* The value of CoCos is unpredictable and will be influenced by many factors including, without limitation: (i) the creditworthiness of the issuer and/or fluctuations in such issuer’s applicable capital ratios; (ii) supply and demand for the CoCos; (iii) general market conditions and available liquidity; and (iv) economic, financial and political events that affect the issuer, its particular market or the financial markets in general. It is often difficult to predict when, if at all, an automatic write-down or conversion event will occur, but any indication that an automatic write-down or conversion event may occur can be expected to have a material adverse effect on the market price of affected CoCos. Accordingly, the trading behavior of CoCos may not follow the trading behavior of other types of debt and preferred securities. CoCos are a relatively new form of security

and the full effects of an automatic write-down or conversion event have not been experienced broadly in the marketplace. The occurrence of an automatic write-down or conversion event may be unpredictable and the potential effects of such event on the Fund's yield, NAV and/or market price may be adverse.

### **Convertible Securities**

Convertible securities are fixed income securities (usually debt or preferred stock) that may be converted or exchanged for a prescribed amount of common stock or other equity securities of the same or a different issuer within a particular period of time at a specified price or formula. A convertible security entitles the holder to receive interest paid or accrued on debt or the dividend paid on preferred stock until the convertible security matures or is redeemed, converted or exchanged. Before conversion or exchange, convertible securities ordinarily provide a stream of income with generally higher yields than those of common stocks of the same or similar issuers, but lower than the yield of nonconvertible debt. However, there can be no assurance of current income because the issuers of the convertible securities may default on their obligations. Convertible securities are usually subordinated to comparable nonconvertible debt or preferred stock, but rank senior to common stock in a corporation's capital structure.

The value of a convertible security is generally related to (1) its yield in comparison with the yields of other securities of comparable maturity and quality that do not have a conversion privilege and/or (2) its worth, at market value, if converted or exchanged into the underlying common stock. A convertible security may be subject to redemption at the option of the issuer at a price established in the convertible security's governing instrument, which may be less than the ultimate conversion or exchange value.

Convertible securities are subject to stock market and other risks associated with equity securities, as well as credit, interest rate and other risks associated with fixed income securities. As the market price of the equity security underlying a convertible security falls, the convertible security tends to trade on the basis of its yield and other fixed income characteristics. As the market price of such equity security rises, the convertible security tends to trade on the basis of its equity conversion features. Investments in convertible securities generally entail less risk than investments in common stock of the same issuer.

### Synthetic Convertible Securities

A synthetic convertible security is comprised of two distinct securities that together resemble convertible securities in certain respects. Synthetic convertible securities are created by combining non-convertible bonds or preferred shares with common stocks, warrants or stock call options. The options that will form elements of synthetic convertible securities will be listed on a securities exchange. The two components of a synthetic convertible security, which will be issued with respect to the same entity, generally are not offered as a unit, and may be purchased and sold by the Fund at different times. Synthetic convertible securities differ from convertible securities in certain respects, including that each component of a synthetic convertible security has a separate market value and responds differently to market fluctuations. Investing in synthetic convertible securities involves the risk normally involved in holding the securities comprising the synthetic convertible security.

### **Cybersecurity Risk**

Like other funds and business enterprises, the Fund, the Manager and the Subadviser and their service providers are subject to the risk of cyber incidents occurring from time to time. With the increased use of technologies such as mobile devices and Web-based or "cloud" applications, and the dependence on the Internet and computer systems to conduct business, the Fund, the Manager, the Subadviser, and other service providers are susceptible to operational, information security and related risks. In general, cybersecurity incidents can result from deliberate attacks or unintentional events (arising from external or internal sources) that may cause the Fund, the Manager and the Subadviser and/or their service providers to lose proprietary information, suffer data corruption, physical damage to a computer or network system or lose operational capacity. Cybersecurity attacks include, but are not limited to, infection by malicious software, such as malware or computer viruses or gaining unauthorized access to digital systems, networks or devices that are used to service the Fund's operations (e.g., through "hacking," "phishing" or malicious software coding) or other means for purposes of misappropriating assets or sensitive information, corrupting data, or causing operational disruption. Cybersecurity attacks may also be carried out in a manner that does not require gaining unauthorized access, such as causing denial-of-service attacks on the Fund's websites (i.e., efforts to make network services unavailable to intended users). Recently, geopolitical tensions may have increased the scale and sophistication of deliberate cybersecurity attacks, particularly those from nation-states or from entities with nation-state backing.

In addition, authorized persons could inadvertently or intentionally release confidential or proprietary information stored on the Fund's systems.

Cybersecurity incidents affecting the Fund's Manager, the Subadviser, and other service providers to the Fund or its shareholders (including, but not limited to, Fund accountants, custodians, sub-custodians, transfer agents and financial intermediaries) have the ability to cause disruptions and impact business operations, potentially resulting in financial losses to both the Fund and its shareholders, interference with the Fund's ability to calculate its net asset value, impediments to trading, the inability of Fund shareholders to transact business and the Fund to process transactions (including fulfillment of Fund share purchases and redemptions), violations of applicable privacy and other laws (including the release of private shareholder information) and attendant breach notification and credit monitoring costs, regulatory fines, penalties, litigation costs, reputational damage, reimbursement or other compensation costs, forensic investigation and remediation costs, and/or additional compliance costs. Similar adverse consequences could result from cybersecurity incidents affecting issuers of securities in which the Fund invests, counterparties with which the Fund engages in transactions, governmental and other regulatory authorities, exchange and other financial market operators, banks, brokers, dealers, insurance companies and other financial institutions (including financial intermediaries and other service providers) and other parties. In addition, substantial costs may be incurred in order to safeguard against and reduce the risk of any cybersecurity incidents in the future. In addition to administrative, technological and procedural safeguards, the Fund's Manager and the Subadviser have established business continuity plans in the event of, and risk management systems to prevent or reduce the impact of, such cybersecurity incidents. However, there are inherent limitations in such plans and systems, including the possibility that certain risks have not been identified, as well as the rapid development of new threats. Furthermore, the Fund cannot control the cybersecurity plans and systems put in place by its service providers or any other third parties whose operations may affect the Fund and its shareholders. The Fund and its shareholders could be negatively impacted as a result.

New ways to carry out cyber attacks continue to develop. There is a chance that some risks have not been identified or prepared for, or that an attack may not be detected, which puts limitations on the Fund's, the Manager's and the Subadviser's and/or their service providers' ability to plan for or respond to a cyber attack.

### **Debt and Fixed Income Securities**

The Fund may invest in a variety of debt and fixed income securities, which may be issued by governmental, corporate or other issuers. Debt securities may pay fixed, floating or variable rates of interest or interest at a rate contingent upon some other factor. Variable rate securities reset at specified intervals, while floating rate securities reset whenever there is a change in a specified index rate. In most cases, these reset provisions reduce the effect of market interest rates on the value of the security. However, some securities do not track the underlying index directly, but reset based on formulas that can produce an effect similar to leveraging; others may provide for interest payments that vary inversely with market rates. The market prices of these securities may fluctuate significantly when interest rates change.

These securities share principal risks. For example, the level of interest income generated by the Fund's fixed income investments may decline due to a decrease in market interest rates. Thus, when fixed income securities mature or are sold, they may be replaced by lower-yielding investments. Also, their values fluctuate with changes in interest rates. A decrease in interest rates will generally result in an increase in the value of the Fund's fixed income investments. Conversely, during periods of rising interest rates, the value of the Fund's fixed income investments will generally decline. However, a change in interest rates will not have the same impact on all fixed rate securities. For example, the magnitude of these fluctuations will generally be greater when the Fund's duration or average maturity is longer. In addition, certain fixed income securities are subject to credit risk, which is the risk that an issuer of securities will be unable to pay principal and interest when due, or that the value of the security will suffer because investors believe the issuer is unable to pay. Recently, there have been inflationary price movements. As such, fixed income securities markets may experience heightened levels of interest rate volatility and liquidity risk.

*Changing Interest Rates.* In a low or negative interest rate environment, debt securities may trade at, or be issued with, negative yields, which means the purchaser of the security may receive at maturity less than the total amount invested. To the extent the Fund holds a negatively-yielding debt security or has a bank deposit with a negative interest rate, the Fund would generate a negative return on that investment. Cash positions may also subject the Fund to increased counterparty risk to the Fund's bank. Debt market conditions are highly unpredictable and some parts of the market are subject to dislocations. In a low or negative interest rate environment, some investors may seek to reallocate assets to other income-producing assets. This may cause the price of such higher yielding instruments to rise, could further reduce the value of instruments with a negative yield,

and may limit the Fund's ability to locate fixed income instruments containing the desired risk/return profile. Changes in monetary or fiscal policy may exacerbate the risks associated with changing interest rates. In the past, the U.S. government and certain foreign central banks have taken steps to stabilize markets by, among other things, reducing interest rates. In recent years, the U.S. government implemented increases to the federal funds interest rate and there may be further rate increases or other actions which may increase market volatility to the extent inconsistent with general market expectations. As interest rates rise, there is risk that rates across the financial system also may rise. To the extent rates increase substantially and/or rapidly, the Fund may be subject to significant losses. Changing interest rates could have unpredictable effects on the markets and may expose fixed income markets to heightened volatility, increased redemptions, and potential illiquidity.

*Fixed Income Securities Ratings.* Securities rated in the fourth highest ratings category by a NRSRO, such as those rated BBB by S&P, or Baa by Moody's, and unrated securities of comparable quality, are generally regarded as having adequate capacity to pay interest and repay principal but may have some speculative characteristics. Securities rated below the fourth highest ratings category by a NRSRO, including those rated below Baa by Moody's or BBB by S&P, and unrated securities of comparable quality, are generally considered below "investment grade," and may have speculative characteristics, including a greater possibility of default or bankruptcy of the issuers of such securities, market price volatility based upon interest rate sensitivity, questionable creditworthiness and relative liquidity of the secondary trading market. Changes in economic conditions or other circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity for lower rated securities to make principal and interest payments, including a greater possibility of default or bankruptcy of the issuer, than is the case for high rated securities. Appendix B to this SAI contains further information concerning the rating categories of NRSROs and their significance.

## **Derivatives — Generally**

A derivative is a financial instrument that has a value based on, or derived from, the value of one or more underlying reference instruments or measures of value or interest rates ("underlying instruments"), such as a security, a commodity, a currency, an index, an interest rate or a currency exchange rate. A derivative can also have a value based on the likelihood that an event will or will not occur. Derivatives include futures contracts, forward contracts, options and swaps.

The Fund may use derivatives for any purpose, including but not limited to, to attempt to enhance income, yield or return, as a substitute for investing directly in a security or asset, or as a hedging technique in an attempt to manage risk in the Fund's portfolio. The Fund may choose not to make use of derivatives for a variety of reasons, and no assurance can be given that any derivatives strategy employed will be successful. The Fund's use of derivative instruments may be limited from time to time by applicable law, availability or by policies adopted by the Board, Manager or Subadviser (as applicable).

The Fund may utilize multiple derivative instruments and combinations of derivative instruments to seek to adjust the risk and return characteristics of its overall position. Combined positions will typically contain elements of risk that are present in each of its component transactions. It is possible that the combined position will not achieve its intended goal and will instead increase losses or risk to the Fund. Because combined positions involve multiple trades, they result in higher transaction costs and may be more difficult to open and close out.

The Fund may enter into derivatives with standardized terms that have no or few special or unusual components, which are generally traded on an exchange, as well as derivatives with more complex features, singly or in combination. Non-standardized derivatives are generally traded over the counter ("OTC"). OTC derivatives may be standardized or have customized features and may have limited or no liquidity. The Fund's derivatives contracts may be centrally cleared or settled bilaterally directly with a counterparty. The Fund's derivatives contracts may be cash settled or physically settled.

In addition to the instruments and strategies discussed in this section, additional opportunities in connection with derivatives and other similar or related techniques may become available to the Fund as a result of the development of new techniques, the development of new derivative instruments or a regulatory authority broadening the range of permitted transactions. The Fund may utilize these opportunities and techniques to the extent that they are consistent with the Fund's investment objectives and permitted by its investment limitations and applicable regulatory authorities. These opportunities and techniques may involve risks different from or in addition to those summarized herein.

- *Risks of Derivatives Generally.* The use of derivatives involves special considerations and risks, certain of which are summarized below, and may result in losses to the Fund. In general, derivatives may increase the volatility of the Fund and may involve a small investment of cash relative to the magnitude of the risk or exposure assumed. Even a small investment in derivatives may magnify or otherwise increase investment losses to the Fund.

- *Market risk.* Derivatives can be complex, and their success depends in part upon the portfolio manager’s ability to forecast correctly future market or other trends or occurrences or other financial or economic factors or the value of the underlying instrument. Even if the portfolio manager’s forecasts are correct, other factors may cause distortions or dislocations in the markets that result in losses or otherwise unsuccessful transactions. Derivatives may behave in unexpected ways, especially in abnormal or volatile market conditions. The market value of the derivative itself or the market value of underlying instruments may change in a way that is adverse to the Fund’s interest. There is no assurance that the use of derivatives will be advantageous to the Fund or that the portfolio manager will use derivatives to hedge at an appropriate time.
- *Illiquidity risk.* The Fund’s ability to close out or unwind a derivative prior to expiration or maturity depends on the existence of a liquid market or, in the absence of such a market, the ability and willingness of the other party to the transaction (the “counterparty”) to enter into a transaction closing out the position. If there is no market or the Fund is not successful in its negotiations, the Fund may not be able to sell or unwind the derivative position at an advantageous or anticipated time or price. This may also be the case if the counterparty becomes insolvent. The Fund may be required to make delivery of portfolio securities or other underlying instruments in order to settle a position or to sell portfolio securities or assets at a disadvantageous time or price in order to obtain cash to settle the position. While a position remains open, the Fund continues to be subject to investment risk on a derivative. The Fund may or may not be able to take other actions or enter into other transactions, including hedging transactions, to limit or reduce its exposure to the derivative. Illiquidity risk may be enhanced if a derivative transaction is particularly large. Certain derivatives, including certain OTC options and swaps, may be considered illiquid and therefore subject to the Fund’s limitation on illiquid investments.
- *Leverage risk.* Certain derivative transactions may have a leveraging effect on the Fund, meaning that the Fund can obtain significant investment exposure in return for meeting a relatively small margin or other investment requirement. An adverse change in the value of an underlying instrument can result in losses substantially greater than the amount invested in the derivative itself. When the Fund engages in transactions that have a leveraging effect, the value of the Fund is likely to be more volatile and certain other risks also are likely to be compounded. This is because leverage generally magnifies the effect of any increase or decrease in the value of an investment. Certain derivatives have the potential for unlimited loss, regardless of the size of the initial investment.
- *Margin risk.* Certain derivatives require the Fund to make initial margin payments, a form of security deposit intended to protect against nonperformance of the derivative contract. The Fund may have to post additional margin (known as “variation margin”) if the value of the derivative position changes in a manner adverse to the Fund. Derivatives may be difficult to value, which may result in increased payment requirements to counterparties or a loss of value to the Fund. If the Fund has insufficient cash to meet additional margin requirements, it might need to sell securities at a disadvantageous time.
- *Speculation risk.* Derivatives used for non-hedging purposes may result in losses which are not offset by increases in the value of portfolio holdings or declines in the cost of securities or other assets to be acquired. In the event that the Fund uses a derivative as an alternative to purchasing or selling other investments or in order to obtain desired exposure to an index or market, the Fund will be exposed to the same risks as are incurred in purchasing or selling the other investments directly, as well as the risks of the derivative transaction itself, such as counterparty risk.
- *Counterparty risk.* Derivatives involve the risk of loss resulting from the actual or potential insolvency or bankruptcy of the counterparty or the failure by the counterparty to make required payments or otherwise comply with the terms of the contract. In the event of default by a counterparty (or its affiliates), the Fund may have contractual remedies pursuant to the agreements related to the transaction, which may be limited by applicable law in the case of the counterparty’s (or its affiliates’) bankruptcy. The Fund may not be able to recover amounts owed to it by an insolvent counterparty.
- *Operational risk.* There may be incomplete or erroneous documentation or inadequate collateral or margin, or transactions may fail to settle. The Fund may have only contractual remedies in the event of a counterparty default, and there may be delays, costs or disagreements as to the meaning of contractual terms and litigation in enforcing those remedies.
- *OTC risk.* Derivative transactions that are traded OTC, such as options, swaps, forward contracts, and options on foreign currencies, are entered into directly with counterparties or financial institutions acting as market makers, rather than being traded on exchanges or centrally cleared. Because OTC derivatives and other transactions are traded between counterparties based on contractual relationships, the Fund is subject to increased risk that its counterparty will not perform its obligations under the related contracts. Although the Fund intends to enter into transactions only with counterparties which the Fund believes to be creditworthy, there can be no assurance that a counterparty will not default and that the Fund

will not sustain a loss on a transaction as a result. Information available on counterparty creditworthiness may be incomplete or outdated, thus reducing the ability to anticipate counterparty defaults. The Fund bears the risk of loss of the amount expected to be received under an OTC derivative in the event of the default or bankruptcy of the counterparty to the OTC derivative. When a counterparty's obligations are not fully secured by collateral, then the Fund is essentially an unsecured creditor of the counterparty. If the counterparty defaults, the Fund will have contractual remedies, but there is no assurance that a counterparty will be able to meet its obligations pursuant to such contracts or that, in the event of default, the Fund will succeed in enforcing contractual remedies. Credit/counterparty risk still exists even if a counterparty's obligations are secured by collateral because the Fund's interest in collateral may not be perfected or additional collateral may not be promptly posted as required. Credit/counterparty risk also may be more pronounced if a counterparty's obligations exceed the amount of collateral held by the Fund (if any), the Fund is unable to exercise its interest in collateral upon default by the counterparty, or the termination value of the instrument varies significantly from the marked-to-market value of the instrument.

- *Non-U.S. derivatives risk.* Derivative transactions may be conducted OTC outside of the United States or traded on foreign exchanges. Such transactions may not be regulated as effectively as similar transactions in the United States, may not involve a clearing mechanism and related guarantees and are subject to the risk of governmental actions affecting trading in, or the price of, foreign securities or currencies. The value of such positions also could be adversely affected by (1) other foreign political, legal and economic factors, (2) lesser availability than in the United States of data on which to make trading decisions, (3) delays in the Fund's ability to act upon economic events occurring in foreign markets during non-business hours in the United States, (4) the imposition of different exercise and settlement terms, procedures, margin requirements, fees, taxes or other charges than in the United States and (5) lesser trading volume. Counterparty risk and many of the risks of OTC derivatives transactions are also applicable to derivative transactions conducted outside the United States.
- *Currency derivatives risk.* Currency related transactions may be negatively affected by factors such as government exchange controls, blockages, and manipulations. Exchange rates may be influenced by factors extrinsic to a country's economy. Also, there is no systematic reporting of last sale information with respect to foreign currencies. As a result, the information on which trading in currency derivatives is based may not be as complete as, and may be delayed beyond, comparable data for other types of transactions.
- *Turnover risk.* Use of derivatives involves transaction costs, which may be significant. The Fund may be required to sell or purchase investments in connection with derivative transactions, potentially increasing the Fund's portfolio turnover rate and transaction costs. Use of derivatives also may increase the amount of taxable income to shareholders, if applicable.

*Risks Associated with Hedging with Derivatives.* If the portfolio manager uses a hedging strategy at the wrong time or judges market conditions incorrectly, hedging strategies may reduce the Fund's return. Successful use of derivatives to hedge positions depends on the correlation between the price of the derivative and the price of the hedged asset.

The Fund may attempt to protect against declines in the value of the Fund's portfolio assets by entering into a variety of derivatives transactions, including selling futures contracts, entering into swaps or purchasing puts on indices or futures contracts (short hedging). Short hedging involves the risk that the prices of the futures contracts or the value of the swap or the applicable index will correlate imperfectly with price movements in the Fund's assets. If the value of the assets held in the Fund's portfolio declines while the Fund has used derivative instruments in a short hedge, and the prices referenced in the short hedge do not also decline, the value of the Fund's assets would decline, and the short hedge would not hedge or mitigate the loss in the value of the assets. With respect to a derivative transaction based on an index, the risk of imperfect correlation increases as the composition of the Fund's portfolio diverges from the assets included in the applicable index. To compensate for the imperfect correlation of movements in the price of the portfolio securities being hedged and movements in the price of the hedging instruments, the Fund may use derivative instruments in a greater dollar amount than the dollar amount of portfolio assets being hedged. It might do so if the historical volatility of the prices of the portfolio assets being hedged is more than the historical volatility of the applicable index.

If the Fund has used derivatives to hedge or otherwise reduce the Fund's risk exposure to a particular position and then disposes of that position at a time at which it cannot also settle, terminate or close out the corresponding hedge position, this may create short investment exposure. Certain "short" derivative positions involve investment leverage, and the amount of the Fund's potential loss is theoretically unlimited.

The Fund can use derivative instruments to establish a position in the market as a temporary substitute for the purchase of individual securities or other assets (long hedging) by buying futures contracts and/or calls on such futures contracts, indices or on securities or other assets, or entering into swaps. It is possible that when the Fund does so the market might decline. If the Fund then decides not to invest in the assets because of concerns that the market might decline further or for other reasons, the Fund will realize a loss on the hedge position that is not offset by a reduction in the price of the asset the Fund had intended to purchase.

*Risk of Government Regulation of Derivatives.* The regulation of derivatives transactions and funds that engage in such transactions is an evolving area of law and is subject to modification by government, self-regulatory organization and judicial action. Registered investment companies are subject to regulatory limitations on their use of derivative investments and certain financing transactions (e.g. reverse repurchase agreements). Among other things, a fund that invests in derivative instruments beyond a specified limited amount must apply a value-at-risk based limit to its use of certain derivative instruments and financing transactions and must adopt and implement a derivatives risk management program. A fund that uses derivative instruments in a limited amount, as specified by applicable rules, is not subject to the same restrictions. Regulatory restrictions may restrict the Fund's ability to engage in certain derivatives transactions and/or increase the costs of such derivatives transactions, which could adversely affect the value or performance of the Fund.

The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (the "Dodd-Frank Act") has caused broad changes to the OTC derivatives market and granted significant authority to the SEC and the CFTC to regulate OTC derivatives and market participants. Pursuant to such authority, rules have been enacted that currently require clearing of many OTC derivatives transactions and may require clearing of additional OTC derivatives transactions in the future and that impose minimum margin and capital requirements for uncleared OTC derivatives transactions. Similar regulations have been or are being adopted in other jurisdictions around the world. The implementation of the clearing requirement has increased the costs of derivatives transactions since investors have to pay fees to clearing members and are typically required to post more margin for cleared derivatives than had historically been the case. While the new rules and regulations and central clearing of some derivatives transactions are designed to reduce systemic risk (i.e., the risk that the interdependence of large derivatives dealers could cause them to suffer liquidity, solvency or other challenges simultaneously), there is no assurance that they will achieve that result, and mandatory clearing of derivatives may expose the Fund to new kinds of costs and risks.

Additionally, new regulations may result in increased uncertainty about credit/counterparty risk and may limit the flexibility of the Fund to protect its interests in the event of an insolvency of a derivatives counterparty. In the event of a counterparty's (or its affiliate's) insolvency, the Fund's ability to exercise remedies, such as the termination of transactions, netting of obligations and realization on collateral, could be stayed or eliminated under the rules of the applicable exchange or clearing corporation or under relatively new special resolution regimes adopted in the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and various other jurisdictions. Such regimes provide government authorities with broad authority to intervene when a financial institution is experiencing financial difficulty. In particular, with respect to counterparties who are subject to such proceedings in the United Kingdom and the European Union, the liabilities of such counterparties to the Fund could be reduced, eliminated, or converted to equity in such counterparties (sometimes referred to as a "bail in").

#### Foreign Currency Instruments and Hedging Strategies

The Fund may use options and futures contracts on foreign currencies and forward currency contracts and currency swap agreements (collectively, "Currency Instruments"), deliverable and non-deliverable, to attempt to hedge against movements in the values of the foreign currencies in which the Fund's securities are denominated or to attempt to enhance the Fund's return or yield. The Fund may also use such investments to attempt to establish a short position or to gain exposure to a market that would be more costly or difficult to access with other types of investments, such as bonds or currency. The Fund may also engage in foreign currency transactions on a spot (cash) basis at the rate prevailing in the currency exchange market at the time of the transaction. The Fund may determine not to hedge, and the Fund may be completely unhedged at any point in time. In cases when a particular currency is difficult to hedge or difficult to hedge against the U.S. dollar, the Fund may seek to hedge against price movements in that currency by entering into transactions using Currency Instruments on another currency or a basket of currencies, the value of which the portfolio manager believes will have a high degree of positive correlation to the value of the currency being hedged. The risk that movements in the price of the Currency Instrument will not correlate perfectly with movements in the price of the currency subject to the hedging transaction is magnified when this strategy is used.

*Currency Instruments Risks.* In addition to the risks found under “Derivatives – Risks of Derivatives Generally,” Currency Instruments are subject to the following risks:

The value of Currency Instruments depends on the value of the underlying foreign currency relative to the U.S. dollar. Because foreign currency transactions occurring in the interbank market might involve substantially larger amounts than those involved in the Fund’s use of such Currency Instruments, the Fund could be disadvantaged by having to deal in the odd lot market (generally consisting of transactions of less than \$1 million) for the underlying foreign currencies at prices that are less favorable than for round lots. There is no systematic reporting of last sale information for foreign currencies or any regulatory requirement that quotations available through dealers or other market sources be firm or revised on a timely basis. Quotation information generally is representative of very large transactions in the interbank market and thus might not reflect odd-lot transactions where rates might be less favorable. The interbank market in foreign currencies is a global, round-the-clock market. To the extent the U.S. options or futures markets are closed while the markets for the underlying currencies remain open, significant price and rate movements might take place in the underlying markets that cannot be reflected in the U.S. markets for the Currency Instruments until they reopen.

Settlement of hedging transactions involving foreign currencies might be required to take place within the country issuing the underlying currency. Thus, the Fund might be required to accept or make delivery of the underlying foreign currency in accordance with any U.S. or foreign regulations regarding the maintenance of foreign banking arrangements by U.S. residents and might be required to pay any fees, taxes and charges associated with such delivery assessed in the issuing country.

#### Forward Currency Contracts

The Fund may enter into forward currency contracts to purchase or sell foreign currencies for a fixed amount of U.S. dollars or another currency at a future date and at a price set by the parties to the forward currency contract. Forward currency contracts are traded directly between currency traders (usually large commercial banks) and their customers (such as the Fund).

The Fund may purchase a forward currency contract to lock in the U.S. dollar price of a security denominated in a foreign currency that the Fund intends to acquire (a long hedge). The Fund may sell a forward currency contract to lock in the U.S. dollar equivalent of the proceeds from the anticipated sale of a security, dividend or interest payment denominated in a foreign currency (a short hedge). A “position hedge” is when the Fund owns a security denominated in, for example, euros and to protect against a possible decline in the euro’s value, the Fund enters into a forward currency contract to sell euros in return for U.S. dollars. A “position hedge” tends to offset both positive and negative currency fluctuations but would not offset changes in security values caused by other factors. A “proxy hedge” is when the Fund owns a security denominated in, for example, euros and to protect against a possible decline in the euro’s value, the Fund enters into a forward currency contract to sell a currency expected to perform similarly to the euro in return for U.S. dollars. A “proxy hedge” could offer advantages in terms of cost, yield or efficiency, but generally would not hedge currency exposure as effectively as a position hedge to the extent the proxy currency does not perform similarly to the targeted currency. The Fund could, in fact, lose money on both legs of the hedge, *i.e.*, between the euro and proxy currency, and between the proxy currency and the dollar. The Fund also may use forward currency contracts to attempt to enhance return or yield. The Fund could use forward currency contracts to increase its exposure to foreign currencies that the portfolio manager believes might rise in value relative to the U.S. dollar, or shift its exposure to foreign currency fluctuations from one currency to another. For example, if the Fund’s portfolio manager believes that the U.S. dollar will increase in value relative to the euro, the Fund could write a forward contract to buy U.S. dollars in three months at the current price in order to sell those U.S. dollars for a profit if the U.S. dollar does in fact appreciate in value relative to the euro. The cost to the Fund of engaging in forward currency contracts varies with factors such as the currency involved, the length of the contract period and the market conditions then prevailing. Because forward currency contracts are usually entered into on a principal basis, no fees or commissions are involved. When the Fund enters into a forward currency contract, it relies on the counterparty to make or take delivery of the underlying currency at the maturity of the contract or to otherwise fulfill its obligations in connection with settlement. Failure by the counterparty to do so would result in the loss of any expected benefit of the transaction.

The precise matching of forward currency contract amounts, and the value of the securities involved generally will not be possible because the value of such securities, measured in the foreign currency, will change after the forward currency contract has been established. Thus, the Fund may need to purchase or sell foreign currencies in the spot (*i.e.*, cash) market to the extent such foreign currencies are not covered by forward currency contracts. The projection of short-term currency market movements is extremely difficult, and the successful execution of a short-term hedging strategy is highly uncertain.

Successful use of forward currency contracts depends on the portfolio manager's skill in analyzing and predicting currency values. Forward currency contracts may substantially change the Fund's exposure to changes in currency exchange rates and could result in losses to the Fund if currencies do not perform as the portfolio manager anticipates. There is no assurance that the portfolio manager's use of forward currency contracts will be advantageous to the Fund or that the portfolio manager will hedge at an appropriate time.

*Non-deliverable Forwards.* The consummation of a deliverable foreign exchange forward requires the actual exchange of the principal amounts of the two currencies in the contract (i.e., settlement on a physical basis). Forward currency contracts in which the Fund may engage also include non-deliverable forwards ("NDFs"). NDFs are cash-settled, forward contracts on foreign currencies (each a "Reference Currency") that are non-convertible and that may be thinly traded or illiquid. NDFs involve an obligation to pay an amount equal to the difference between the prevailing market exchange rate for the Reference Currency and the agreed upon exchange rate, with respect to an agreed notional amount. NDFs are subject to many of the risks associated with derivatives in general and forward currency transactions, including risks associated with fluctuations in foreign currency and the risk that the counterparty will fail to fulfill its obligations.

Under the Dodd-Frank Act, NDFs are classified as "swaps" and are therefore subject to the full panoply of CFTC swap regulations under the Dodd-Frank Act. Although NDFs have historically been traded OTC, in the future, pursuant to the Dodd-Frank Act, they may be subject to mandatory clearing. Non-centrally-cleared NDFs are subject to mandatory minimum margin requirements for uncleared swaps. Deliverable foreign exchange forwards that solely involve the exchange of two different currencies on a specific future date at a fixed rate agreed upon by the parties are not considered "swaps" and accordingly are not subject to many of the regulations that apply to NDFs. However, as mandated by the Dodd-Frank Act and set forth in CFTC regulations adopted thereunder, foreign exchange forwards must be reported to a swap data repository, and swap dealers and major swap participants who are party to such transactions remain subject to the business conduct standards pertaining to swaps in connection with such deliverable foreign exchange forwards.

#### Futures Contracts and Options on Futures Contracts

Generally, a futures contract is an exchange-traded, standardized agreement that obligates the seller of the contract to sell a specified quantity of an underlying instrument or asset, such as a security, currency or commodity, to the purchaser of the contract, who has the obligation to buy the underlying instrument or asset, at a specified price and date. In the case of futures on indices, the two parties agree to take or make delivery of an amount of cash equal to the difference between the level of the index calculated for purposes of settlement and the price at which the contract originally was written. Options on futures give the purchaser the right to assume a position in a futures contract at the specified exercise price at any time during the period of the option or at the expiration of the option, depending on the terms of the option.

Futures contracts, by their terms, have stated expirations and, at a specified point in time prior to expiration, trading in a futures contract for the current delivery month will cease. As a result, an investor wishing to maintain exposure to a futures contract with the nearest expiration must close out the position in the expiring contract and establish a new position in the contract for the next delivery month, a process referred to as "rolling." The process of rolling a futures contract can be profitable or unprofitable depending in large part on whether the futures price for the subsequent delivery month is less than or more than the price of the expiring contract.

Futures contracts and related options may be used for hedging and non-hedging purposes, such as to simulate full investment in the underlying instrument or asset while retaining a cash balance for portfolio management purposes, as a substitute for direct investment in the underlying instrument or asset, to facilitate trading, to reduce transaction costs, or to seek higher investment returns (e.g., when a futures contract or option is priced more attractively than the underlying instrument). In addition, futures strategies can be used to manage the average duration of the Fund's fixed income portfolio, if applicable. The Fund may sell a debt futures contract or a call option thereon or purchase a put option on that futures contract to attempt to shorten the portfolio's average duration. Alternatively, the Fund may buy a debt futures contract or a call option thereon or sell a put option thereon to attempt to lengthen the portfolio's average duration.

At the inception of a futures contract the Fund is required to deposit "initial margin" with a futures commission merchant ("FCM") in an amount at least equal to the amount designated by the futures exchange. Margin must also be deposited when writing a call or put option on a futures contract, in accordance with applicable exchange rules. Unlike margin in securities transactions, initial margin on futures contracts does not represent a borrowing, but rather is in the nature of a performance bond

or good-faith deposit that is required to be returned to the Fund at the termination of the transaction if all contractual obligations have been satisfied. Under certain circumstances, such as periods of high volatility, the Fund may be required by an exchange or by its FCM to increase the level of its initial margin payment, and initial margin requirements might be increased generally in the future by regulatory action.

In addition to initial margin payments, during the life of the transaction “variation margin” payments are made to and from the FCM as the value of the margin and the underlying derivative transaction varies, a process known as “marking-to-market.” Variation margin is intended to represent a daily settlement of the Fund’s obligations to or from an FCM. When the Fund purchases an option on a futures contract, the premium paid plus transaction costs is all that is at risk. However, there may be circumstances when the purchase of an option on a futures contract would result in a loss to the Fund when the use of a futures contract would not, such as when there is no movement in the value of the securities or currencies being hedged. In that case, the Fund would lose the premium it paid for the option plus transaction costs. In contrast, when the Fund purchases or sells a futures contract or writes a call or put option thereon, it is subject to daily variation margin calls that could be substantial in the event of adverse price movements. If the Fund has insufficient cash to meet daily variation margin requirements, it might need to sell securities at a time when such sales are disadvantageous.

Although some futures and options on futures call for making or taking delivery of the underlying instrument or asset, generally those contracts are closed out prior to delivery by offsetting purchases or sales of matching futures or options (involving the same instrument or asset and delivery month). If an offsetting purchase price is less than the original sale price, the Fund realizes a gain, or if it is more, the Fund realizes a loss. If an offsetting sale price is more than the original purchase price, the Fund realizes a gain, or if it is less, the Fund realizes a loss. The Fund will also bear transaction costs for each contract, which will be included in these calculations. Positions in futures and options on futures may be closed only on an exchange or board of trade that provides a secondary market. However, there can be no assurance that a liquid secondary market will exist for a particular contract at a particular time. In such event, it may not be possible to close a futures contract or options position.

Under certain circumstances, futures exchanges may establish daily limits on the amount that the price of a futures contract or an option on a futures contract can vary from the previous day’s settlement price; once that limit is reached, no trades may be made that day at a price beyond the limit. Daily price limits do not limit potential losses because prices could move to the daily limit for several consecutive days with little or no trading, thereby preventing liquidation of unfavorable positions. If the Fund were unable to liquidate a futures contract or an option on a futures position due to the absence of a liquid secondary market, the imposition of price limits or otherwise, it could incur substantial losses. The Fund would continue to be subject to market risk with respect to the position. In addition, except in the case of purchased options, the Fund would continue to be required to make daily variation margin payments.

*Risks of Futures Contracts and Options Thereon.* In addition to the risks found under “Derivatives – Risks of Derivatives Generally,” futures contracts and options on futures contracts are subject to the following risks:

Successful use of futures contracts and related options depends upon the ability of the portfolio manager to assess movements in the direction of prices of securities, commodities, measures of value, or interest or exchange rates, which requires different skills and techniques than assessing the value of individual securities. Moreover, futures contracts relate not to the current price level of the underlying instrument or asset, but to the anticipated price level at some point in the future; accordingly trading of stock index futures may not reflect the trading of the securities that are used to formulate the index or even actual fluctuations in the index itself. There is, in addition, the risk that movements in the price of the futures contract will not correlate with the movements in the prices of the securities or other assets being hedged. Price distortions in the marketplace, resulting from increased participation by speculators in the futures market (among other things), may also impair the correlation between movements in the prices of futures contracts and movements in the prices of the hedged assets. If the price of the futures contract moves less than the price of assets that are the subject of the hedge, the hedge will not be fully effective; but if the price of the assets being hedged has moved in an unfavorable direction, the Fund would be in a better position than if it had not hedged at all. If the price of the assets being hedged has moved in a favorable direction, this advantage may be partially offset by losses on the futures position.

Positions in futures contracts and related options may be closed out only on an exchange or board of trade that provides a market for such contracts. Although the Fund intends to purchase and sell futures and related options only on exchanges or boards of trade where there appears to be a liquid market, there is no assurance that such a market will exist for any particular contract at any particular time. In such event, it may not be possible to close a futures position and, in the event of

adverse price movements, the Fund would continue to be required to make variation margin payments, where applicable. Options have a limited life and thus can be disposed of only within a specific time period.

Purchasers of options on futures contracts pay a premium in cash at the time of purchase which, in the event of adverse price movements, could be lost. Sellers of options on futures contracts must post initial margin and are subject to additional margin calls that could be substantial in the event of adverse price movements. Because of the low margin deposits required, futures trading involves a high degree of leverage; as a result, a relatively small price movement in a futures contract may result in immediate and substantial loss, or gain, to the Fund. In addition, the Fund's activities in the futures markets may result in a higher portfolio turnover rate (see "Portfolio Transactions and Brokerage") and additional transaction costs in the form of added brokerage commissions.

As noted above, exchanges may impose limits on the amount by which the price of a futures contract or related option is permitted to change in a single day. If the price of a contract moves to the limit for several consecutive days, the Fund may be unable during that time to close its position in that contract and may have to continue making payments of variation margin. The CFTC and domestic exchanges have also established (and continue to evaluate and revise) speculative position limits on the maximum speculative position that any person, or group of persons acting in concert, may hold or control in particular contracts. Under current rules and regulations, other accounts managed by the Manager or, if applicable, Subadviser are combined with the positions held by the Fund under the Manager's or, if applicable, Subadviser's management for position limit purposes, unless an exemption applies. This aggregation could preclude additional trading by the Fund in such contracts and may require positions held by the Fund to be liquidated, which may adversely affect the performance of the Fund.

When the Fund engages in futures transactions, it will also be exposed to the credit risk of its FCM. If the Fund's FCM becomes bankrupt or insolvent, or otherwise defaults on its obligations to the Fund, the Fund may not receive all amounts owed to it in respect of its trading, even if the clearinghouse fully discharges all of its obligations. If an FCM were not to appropriately segregate client assets to the full extent required by the CEA, the Fund might not be fully protected in the event of the bankruptcy of an FCM. In the event of an FCM's bankruptcy, the Fund would be limited to recovering only a pro rata share of all available funds segregated on behalf of an FCM's combined customer accounts for the relevant account class, even if certain property held by an FCM is specifically traceable to the Fund (for example, U.S. Treasury bills deposited by the Fund). Such situations could arise due to various factors, or a combination of factors, including inadequate FCM capitalization, inadequate controls on customer trading and inadequate customer capital. In addition, in the event of the bankruptcy or insolvency of a clearinghouse, the Fund might experience a loss of funds deposited through its FCM as margin with the clearinghouse, a loss of unrealized profits on its open positions and the loss of funds owed to it as realized profits on closed positions. Such a bankruptcy or insolvency might also cause a substantial delay before the Fund could obtain the return of funds owed to it by an FCM who is a member of such clearinghouse.

## Options

A call option gives the purchaser the right to buy, and obligates the writer to sell, an underlying investment (such as a specified security, commodity, currency, interest rate, currency exchange rate or index) at an agreed-upon price ("strike price"). A put option gives the purchaser the right to sell, and obligates the writer to buy, an underlying investment at an agreed-upon price. An American-style option may be exercised at any time during the term of the option, while a European-style option may be exercised only at the expiration of the option. Purchasers of options pay an amount, known as a premium, to the option writer in exchange for the right granted under the option contract.

The value of an option position will reflect, among other things, the current market value of the underlying instrument, the time remaining until expiration, the relationship of the strike price to the market price of the underlying instrument, the historical price volatility of the underlying instrument and general market conditions. If the purchaser does not exercise the option, it will expire and the purchaser will have only lost the premium paid. If a secondary market exists, a purchaser or the writer may terminate a put option position prior to its exercise by selling it in the secondary market at its current price. The Fund will pay a brokerage commission each time it buys or sells an option. Such commissions may be higher than those that would apply to direct purchases or sales of the underlying instrument.

Exchange-traded options in the United States are issued by a clearing organization affiliated with the exchange on which the option is listed and are standardized with respect to the underlying instrument, expiration date, contract size and strike price. In contrast, OTC options (options not traded on exchanges) are contracts between the Fund and a counterparty (usually a

securities dealer or a bank) with no clearing organization guarantee. The terms of OTC options generally are established through negotiation with the other party to the option contract (the counterparty). For a discussion on options on futures see "*Futures Contracts and Options on Futures Contracts*".

*Put Options.* In return for receipt of the premium, the writer of a put option assumes the obligation to pay the strike price for the option's underlying instrument if the buyer exercises the option. A put writer would generally expect to profit, although its gain would be limited to the amount of the premium it received, if the underlying instrument's price remains greater than or equal to the strike price. If the underlying instrument's price falls below the strike price, the put writer would expect to suffer a loss. The buyer of a put option can expect to realize a gain if the underlying instrument's price falls enough to offset the cost of purchasing the option. Any losses suffered by the buyer would be limited to the amount of the premium plus related transaction costs.

Optional delivery standby commitments are a type of put that gives the buyer of an underlying instrument the right to sell the underlying instrument back to the seller on specified terms to induce a purchase of the underlying instrument.

*Call Options.* In return for the receipt of the premium, the writer of a call option assumes the obligation to sell the underlying instrument at the strike price to the buyer upon exercise of the option. A call writer would generally expect to profit, although its gain would be limited to the amount of the premium it received, if the option goes unexercised, which typically occurs when the underlying instrument's price remains less than or equal to the strike price. If the underlying instrument's price were to rise above the strike price, the writer of the call option would generally expect to suffer a loss, which is theoretically unlimited. A call buyer's maximum loss is the premium paid for the call option, whereas the buyer's maximum profit is theoretically unlimited.

*Straddles.* A long straddle is the purchase of a call and a put option with the same expiration date and relating to the same underlying instrument where the strike price of the put is less than or equal to the strike price of the call. The Fund may enter into a long straddle when its portfolio manager believes that the underlying instrument's price will move significantly during the term of the options. A short straddle is a combination of a call and a put written on the same underlying instrument with the same expiration date where the strike price of the put is less than or equal to the strike price of the call. In a covered short straddle, the underlying instrument is considered cover for both the put and the call that the Fund has written. The Fund may enter into a short straddle when the portfolio manager believes that it is unlikely that the underlying instrument's prices will experience volatility during the term of the options.

*Options on Indices.* Puts and calls on indices are similar to puts and calls on other underlying instruments except that all settlements are in cash and gains or losses depend on changes in the level of the index rather than on price movements of individual underlying instruments. The writer of a call on an index receives a premium and the obligation to pay the purchaser an amount of cash equal to the difference between the closing level of the index and the strike price times a specified multiple ("multiplier"), if the closing level of the index is greater than the strike price of the call. The writer of a put on an index receives a premium and the obligation to deliver to the buyer an amount of cash equal to the difference between the closing level of the index and strike price times the multiplier if the closing level is less than the strike price.

*Risks of Options* – In addition to the risks described under "*Derivatives – Risks of Derivatives Generally*," options are also subject to the following risks:

*Options on Indices Risk.* The risks of investment in options on indices may be greater than options on securities and other instruments. Because index options are settled in cash, when the Fund writes a call on an index it generally cannot provide in advance for other underlying instruments because it may not be practical for the call writer to hedge its potential settlement obligations by acquiring and holding the underlying securities. The Fund can offset some of the risk of writing a call index option by holding a diversified portfolio of securities similar to those on which the underlying index is based. However, the Fund cannot, as a practical matter, acquire and hold a portfolio containing exactly the same securities as underlie the index and, as a result, bears a risk that the value of the securities held will vary from the value of the index.

If the Fund exercises an index option before the closing index value for that day is available, there is the risk that the level of the underlying index may subsequently change. If such a change causes the exercised option to fall out-of-the-money, the Fund will be required to pay the difference between the closing index value and the strike price of the option (times the applicable multiplier) to the assigned writer.

*Timing Risk.* The hours of trading for options may not conform to the hours during which the underlying instrument are traded. To the extent that the options markets close before the markets for the underlying instrument, significant price and rate movements can take place in the underlying markets that cannot be reflected in the options markets. Options are marked to market daily and their value will be affected by changes in the value of the underlying instrument, changes in the dividend rates of the underlying securities, an increase in interest rates, changes in the actual or perceived volatility of the stock market and the underlying instrument and the remaining time to the options' expiration. Additionally, the exercise price of an option may be adjusted downward before the option's expiration as a result of the occurrence of certain corporate or other events affecting the underlying instrument, such as extraordinary dividends, stock splits, merger or other extraordinary distributions or events. A reduction in the exercise price of an option would reduce the Fund's capital appreciation potential on an underlying instrument.

## Swaps

Generally, a swap agreement involves the exchange between two parties of their respective commitments to pay or receive cash flows, *e.g.*, an exchange of floating rate payments for fixed-rate payments. Swaps may be negotiated bilaterally and traded OTC (OTC swaps) or, for certain types of swaps, must be executed through a centralized exchange or regulated facility and be cleared through a regulated clearinghouse (cleared swaps). Swaps include but are not limited to, interest rate swaps, total return swaps, index swaps, inflation indexed swaps, currency swaps, credit default swaps and options on swaps or "swaptions".

OTC swap agreements can be individually negotiated and structured to include exposure to a variety of different types of investments (such as individual securities, baskets of securities and securities indices) or market factors. The swapped returns are generally calculated with respect to a notional amount, that is, the nominal or face amount used to calculate the payments to be made between the parties to the OTC swap.

The Fund may enter into a swap agreement for hedging or non-hedging purposes, including but not limited to, to enhance returns, increase liquidity, protect against currency and security price fluctuations, manage duration and gain exposure to certain markets or securities in a more cost-efficient manner.

*Risks of Swaps Generally.* In addition to the risks found under "Derivatives – Risks of Derivatives Generally," swaps are subject to the following risks:

Depending on their structure, swap agreements may increase or decrease the overall volatility of the Fund's investments and its share price and yield and may affect the Fund's exposure to long- or short-term interest rates (in the United States or abroad), foreign currency values, mortgage-backed security values, corporate borrowing rates or other market factors such as security prices or inflation rates.

Swap agreements will tend to shift the Fund's investment exposure from one type of investment to another. For example, if the Fund agrees to exchange payments in U.S. dollars for payments in foreign currency, the swap agreement would tend to decrease the Fund's exposure to U.S. interest rates and increase its exposure to foreign currency and interest rates.

The absence of a central exchange or market for OTC swap transactions may lead, in some instances, to difficulties in trading and valuation, especially in the event of market disruptions.

*Cleared Swaps.* Relatively recent legislation and implementing regulation require certain swaps to be cleared through a regulated clearinghouse. Although this clearing mechanism is generally intended to reduce counterparty credit risk, it may disrupt or limit the swap market and may result in swaps being more difficult to trade or value. As swaps become more standardized, the Fund may not be able to enter into swaps that meet its investment needs. The Fund also may not be able to find a clearing member and clearinghouse willing to accept a swap for clearing. In a cleared swap, a central clearing organization will be the counterparty to the transaction. The Fund will assume the risk that the clearinghouse and the clearing member through which the Fund holds its position may be unable to or may otherwise fail to perform their obligations.

When the Fund enters into a cleared swap transaction, the Fund is subject to the credit and counterparty risk of the clearinghouse and the clearing member through which it holds its cleared position. Credit/counterparty risk of market participants with respect to centrally cleared swaps is concentrated in a few clearinghouses, and it is not clear how an insolvency proceeding of a clearinghouse would be conducted and what impact an insolvency of a clearinghouse would have on the financial system. A clearing member is obligated by contract and by applicable regulation to segregate all funds received from customers with respect to cleared derivatives transactions from the clearing member's proprietary assets. However, all funds and other property received by a clearing broker from its customers generally are held by the clearing broker on a

commingled basis in an omnibus account by account class, and the clearing member may invest those funds in certain instruments permitted under the applicable regulations. The assets of the Fund might not be fully protected in the event of the bankruptcy of the Fund's clearing member, because the Fund would be limited to recovering only a pro rata share of all available funds segregated on behalf of the clearing broker's customers for a relevant account class. Also, the clearing member is required to transfer to the clearing organization the amount of margin required by the clearing organization for cleared derivatives, which amounts generally are held in an omnibus account at the clearing organization for all customers of the clearing member. Regulations promulgated by the CFTC require that the clearing member notify the clearinghouse of the amount of initial margin provided by the clearing member to the clearing organization that is attributable to each cleared swaps customer. However, if the clearing member does not provide accurate reporting, the Fund is subject to the risk that a clearing organization will use the Fund's assets held in an omnibus account at the clearing organization to satisfy payment obligations of a defaulting customer of the clearing member to the clearing organization. In addition, clearing members generally provide to the clearing organization the net amount of variation margin required for cleared swaps for all of its customers in the aggregate, rather than the gross amount of each customer. The Fund is therefore subject to the risk that a clearing organization will not make variation margin payments owed to the Fund if another customer of the clearing member has suffered a loss and is in default, and the risk that the Fund will be required to provide additional variation margin to the clearinghouse before the clearinghouse will move the Fund's cleared derivatives transactions to another clearing member. In addition, if a clearing member does not comply with the applicable regulations or its agreement with the Fund, or in the event of fraud or misappropriation of customer assets by a clearing member, the Fund could have only an unsecured creditor claim in an insolvency of the clearing member with respect to the margin held by the clearing member.

In some ways, centrally cleared swaps arrangements are less favorable to the Fund than OTC swaps arrangements. For example, the Fund may be required to provide greater amounts of margin for cleared swaps than for OTC swaps. Also, in contrast to OTC swaps, following a period of notice to the Fund, a clearing member generally can require termination of existing cleared swaps at any time or increases in margin requirements above the margin that the clearing member required at the beginning of a transaction. Clearinghouses also have broad rights to increase margin requirements for existing transactions or to terminate transactions at any time. Any increase in margin requirements or termination by the clearing member or the clearinghouse could interfere with the ability of the Fund to pursue its investment strategy. Further, any increase in margin requirements by a clearing member could also expose the Fund to greater credit risk of its clearing member, because margin for cleared swaps in excess of clearinghouse margin requirements typically is held by the clearing member. While the documentation in place between the Fund and its clearing members generally provides that the clearing members will accept for clearing all transactions submitted for clearing that are within credit limits (specified in advance) for the Fund, the Fund is still subject to the risk that no clearing member will be willing or able to clear a transaction. In those cases, the transaction might have to be terminated, and the Fund could lose some or all of the benefit of the transaction, including loss of an increase in the value of the transaction and/or loss of hedging protection offered by the transaction. In addition, the documentation governing the relationship between the Fund and its clearing members is developed by the clearing members and generally is less favorable to the Fund than typical OTC swap documentation. For example, this documentation generally includes a one-way indemnity by the Fund in favor of the clearing member, indemnifying the clearing member against losses it incurs in connection with acting as the Fund's clearing member, and the documentation typically does not give the Fund any rights to exercise remedies if the clearing member defaults or becomes insolvent.

Some types of cleared swaps are required to be executed on an exchange or on a swap execution facility ("SEF"). A SEF is a trading platform where multiple market participants can execute swaps by accepting bids and offers made by multiple other participants in the platform. While this execution requirement is designed to increase transparency and liquidity in the cleared swap market, trading on a SEF can create additional costs and risks for the Fund. For example, SEFs typically charge fees, and if the Fund executes swaps on a SEF through a broker intermediary, the intermediary may impose fees as well. Also, the Fund may indemnify a SEF, or a broker intermediary who executes cleared swaps on a SEF on the Fund's behalf, against any losses or costs that may be incurred as a result of the Fund's transactions on the SEF.

The Fund may enter into swap transactions with certain counterparties pursuant to master netting agreements. A master netting agreement provides that all swaps entered into between the Fund and that counterparty shall be regarded as parts of an integral agreement. If amounts are payable on a particular date in the same currency in respect of more than one swap transaction, the amount payable shall be the net amount. In addition, the master netting agreement may provide that if one party (or its affiliates) defaults generally or on any swap, the counterparty can terminate all outstanding swaps with that party.

As a result, to the extent the Fund enters into master netting agreements with a counterparty, the Fund may be required to terminate a greater number of swap agreements than if it had not entered into such an agreement, which may result in losses to the Fund.

*Interest Rate Swaps, Caps and Floors.* Interest rate swaps are agreements between two parties to exchange interest rate payment obligations. Typically, one party's obligation is based on a fixed interest rate while the other party's obligation is based on an interest rate that fluctuates with changes in a designated benchmark. An interest rate cap transaction entitles the purchaser, to the extent that a specified index exceeds a predetermined value, to receive payments on a notional principal amount from the party selling the cap. An interest rate floor transaction entitles the purchaser, to the extent that a specified index falls below a predetermined value, to receive payments on a notional principal amount from the party selling the floor. A collar combines elements of buying a cap and a floor. Caps and floors have an effect similar to buying or writing options. Caps and floors typically have lower liquidity than swaps.

*Options on Swaps ("Swaptions").* A swaption is a contract that gives the counterparty the right, but not the obligation to enter into a new swap agreement or to shorten, extend, cancel or otherwise modify an existing swap agreement, at some designated future time on specified terms. The Fund may write (sell) and purchase put and call swaptions. Swaptions are generally subject to the same risks involved in the use of options and swaps. Depending on the terms of the option agreement, the Fund will generally incur a greater degree of risk when it writes a swaption than it will incur when it purchases a swaption. When the Fund purchases a swaption, only the amount of premium the Fund paid is at risk should the option expire unexercised. However, when the Fund writes a swaption, upon exercise of the option the Fund will become obligated according to the terms of the underlying agreement, which may result in losses to the Fund in excess of the premium it received.

*Credit Default Swaps and Related Investments.* The Fund may enter into credit default swap contracts for investment purposes and to add leverage to its investment portfolio. As the seller in a credit default swap contract, the Fund would be required to pay the par (or other agreed-upon) value of a debt-reference obligation to the counterparty in the event of a default by a third party on the debt obligation. In return, the Fund would receive from the counterparty a periodic stream of payments over the term of the contract provided that no event of default has occurred. If no default occurs, the Fund would keep the stream of payments and would have no payment obligations. As the seller, the Fund would effectively add leverage to its portfolio because, in addition to its net assets, the Fund would be subject to investment exposure on the swap. Credit default swap contracts involve special risks and may result in losses to the Fund. Credit default swaps may in some cases be illiquid, and they increase credit risk since the Fund has exposure to both the issuer of the referenced obligation and the counterparty to the credit default swap. As there is no central exchange or market for certain credit default swap transactions, they may be difficult to trade or value, especially in the event of market disruptions. It is possible that developments in the swap market, including new or modified government regulation, could adversely affect the Fund's ability to terminate existing credit default swap agreements or to realize amounts to be received under such agreements.

The Fund may also purchase credit default swap contracts to attempt to hedge against the risk of default of debt securities held in its portfolio, in which case the Fund would function as the counterparty referenced in the preceding paragraph. This would involve the risk that the investment may expire worthless and would only generate income in the event of an actual default by the issuer of the underlying obligation (or, as applicable, a credit downgrade or other indication of financial instability). It would also involve credit risk—that the seller may fail to satisfy its payment obligations to the Fund in the event of a default.

The Fund may invest in credit default swap index products that provide exposure to obligations of multiple issuers. The Fund can either buy the index (take on credit exposure) or sell the index (pass credit exposure to a counterparty). Such investments are subject to the associated risks with investments in credit default swaps discussed above.

*Total Return Swaps.* Total return swaps are contracts in which, during a specified period, one party agrees to make periodic payments based on the change in market value of an underlying instrument, which may include a specified security, basket of securities or security indexes, in return for periodic payments based on a fixed or variable interest rate or the total return from other underlying assets. Alternatively, a total return swap can be structured so that one party will make payments to the other party if the value of an underlying instrument increases but receive payments from the other party if the value of that underlying instrument decreases. Total return swap agreements may be used to obtain exposure to a security or market without owning or taking physical custody of such security or asset.

*Inflation Index Swaps.* Inflation index swaps are contracts in which one party agrees to pay the cumulative percentage increase in a price index, such as the Consumer Price Index, over the term of the swap (with some lag on the referenced inflation index), and the other party pays a compounded fixed rate. Inflation index swaps can be designated as zero coupon, whereby both sides of the swap compound interest over the life of the swap and then the accrued interest is paid out only at the swap's maturity. The value of inflation index swap agreements is expected to change in response to changes in real interest rates. Real interest rates are tied to the relationship between nominal interest rates and the rate of inflation. If nominal interest rates increase at a faster rate than inflation, real interest rates may rise, leading to a decrease in value of an inflation index swap agreement.

## **Dollar Rolls**

The Fund may enter into dollar roll transactions in which the Fund sells a fixed income security for delivery in the current month and simultaneously contracts to purchase substantially similar (same type, coupon and maturity) securities at an agreed upon future time. By engaging in a dollar roll transaction, the Fund forgoes principal and interest paid on the security that is sold, but receives the difference between the current sales price and the forward price for the future purchase. The Fund would also be able to invest the proceeds of the securities sold.

When the Fund reinvests the proceeds of a dollar roll in other securities, any fluctuations in the market value of the securities purchased for future delivery or the securities in which the proceeds are invested would affect the market value of the Fund's assets. As a result, such transactions could increase fluctuation in the Fund's net asset value. If the Fund reinvests the proceeds of the dollar roll at a rate lower than the cost of the dollar roll, engaging in the dollar roll will lower the Fund's yield.

## **Equity Securities**

Equity securities include exchange-traded and over-the-counter common and preferred stocks, warrants and rights, and securities convertible into common stocks. Equity securities fluctuate in price based on changes in a company's financial condition and overall market and economic conditions. The value of a particular security may decline due to factors that affect a particular industry or industries, such as an increase in production costs, competitive conditions or labor shortages; or due to general market conditions, such as real or perceived adverse economic conditions, changes in the general outlook for corporate earnings, changes in interest or currency rates or generally adverse investor sentiment. The value of an equity security can be more volatile than the market as a whole and can perform differently from the value of the market as a whole. The value of a company's equity securities may deteriorate because of a variety of factors, including disappointing earnings reports by the issuer, unsuccessful products or services, loss of major customers, major litigation against the issuer or changes in government regulations affecting the issuer or the competitive environment.

## **Exchange Traded Funds ("ETFs")**

ETFs are ownership interests in investment companies, unit investment trusts, depositary receipts and other pooled investment vehicles that are traded on an exchange and that hold a portfolio of securities or other financial instruments (the "Underlying Assets"). The Underlying Assets are typically selected to correspond to the securities that comprise a particular broad based sector or international index, or to provide exposure to a particular industry sector or asset class, including precious metals or other commodities. "Short ETFs" seek a return similar to the inverse, or a multiple of the inverse, of a reference index. Short ETFs carry additional risks because their Underlying Assets may include a variety of financial instruments, including futures and options on futures, options on securities and securities indexes, swap agreements and forward contracts, and a short ETF may engage in short sales. An ETF's losses on short sales are potentially unlimited; however, the Fund's risk would be limited to the amount it invested in the ETF. Certain ETFs are actively managed by a portfolio manager or management team that makes investment decisions on Underlying Assets without seeking to replicate the performance of a reference index or industry sector or asset class.

Unlike shares of typical open-end management investment companies or unit investment trusts, shares of ETFs are designed to be traded throughout the trading day and bought and sold based on market price rather than net asset value. Shares can trade at either a premium or discount to net asset value. The portfolios held by ETFs are typically publicly disclosed on each trading day and an approximation of actual net asset value is disseminated throughout the trading day. An ETF will generally gain or lose value depending on the performance of the Underlying Assets. In the future, as new products become available, the Fund may invest in ETFs that do not have this same level of transparency and, therefore, may be more likely to trade at a larger discount or premium to actual net asset values.

Gains or losses on the Fund's investment in ETFs will ultimately depend on the purchase and sale price of the ETF. An active trading market for an ETF's shares may not develop or be maintained and trading of an ETF's shares may be halted if the listing exchange's officials deem such action appropriate, the shares are delisted from the exchange or the activation of market-wide "circuit breakers" (which are tied to large decreases in stock prices) halts stock trading generally. The performance of an ETF will be reduced by transaction and other expenses, including fees paid by the ETF to service providers. Investors in ETFs are eligible to receive their portion of income, if any, accumulated on the securities held in the portfolio, less fees and expenses of the ETF.

An investment in an ETF involves risks similar to investing directly in the Underlying Assets, including the risk that the value of the Underlying Assets may fluctuate in accordance with changes in the financial condition of their issuers, the value of securities and other financial instruments generally, and other market factors.

If an ETF is a registered investment company (as defined in the 1940 Act), the limitations applicable to the Fund's ability to purchase securities issued by other investment companies apply absent certain exemptive rules or other available exemptive relief. However, under Rule 12d1-4, the Fund may invest in other investment companies, including ETFs, in excess of these limits, subject to certain conditions. These restrictions may limit the Fund's ability to invest in ETFs to the extent desired. Some ETFs are not structured as investment companies and thus are not regulated under the 1940 Act.

### **Foreign Securities**

The risks of investing in securities of non-U.S. issuers or issuers with significant exposure to non-U.S. markets may be related, among other things, to (i) differences in size, liquidity and volatility of, and the degree and manner of regulation of, the securities markets of certain non-U.S. markets compared to the securities markets in the U.S.; (ii) economic, political and social factors; and (iii) foreign exchange matters, such as restrictions on the repatriation of capital, fluctuations in exchange rates between the U.S. dollar and the currencies in which the Fund's portfolio securities are quoted or denominated, exchange control regulations and costs associated with currency exchange. The political and economic structures in certain foreign countries, particularly emerging markets, are expected to undergo significant evolution and rapid development, and such countries may lack the social, political and economic stability characteristic of more developed countries.

Unanticipated political or social developments may affect the values of the Fund's investments in such countries. The economies and securities and currency markets of many emerging markets have experienced significant disruption and declines. There can be no assurances that these economic and market disruptions will not continue.

Legal remedies available to investors in certain foreign countries may be less extensive than those available to investors in the U.S. or other foreign countries. Accounting standards in other countries are also not necessarily the same as in the United States. If the accounting standards in another country do not require as much detail as U.S. accounting standards, it may be harder for the portfolio manager to completely and accurately determine a company's financial condition. In addition, the U.S. Government has from time to time in the past imposed restrictions, through penalties and otherwise, on foreign investments by U.S. investors such as the Fund. Also, brokerage commissions and other costs of buying or selling securities often are higher in foreign countries than they are in the U.S. This reduces the amount the Fund can earn on its investments.

The Fund generally holds its foreign securities and cash in foreign banks and securities depositories. Some foreign banks and securities depositories may be recently organized or new to the foreign custody business. In addition, there may be limited or no regulatory oversight over their operations. Also, the laws of certain countries may put limits on the Fund's ability to recover its assets if a foreign bank or depository or issuer of a security or any of their agents goes bankrupt. In addition, it is often more expensive for the Fund to buy, sell and hold securities in certain foreign markets than in the U.S. The increased expense of investing in foreign markets reduces the amount the Fund can earn on its investments and typically results in a higher operating expense ratio for the Fund as compared to investment companies that invest only in the United States.

Securities of some foreign companies have lower liquidity, and their prices are more volatile, than securities of comparable domestic companies. Certain foreign countries are known to experience long delays between the trade and settlement dates of securities purchased or sold resulting in increased exposure of the Fund to market and foreign exchange fluctuations brought about by such delays, and to the corresponding negative impact on Fund liquidity.

### Foreign Currency Risks

The U.S. dollar value of securities denominated in a foreign currency will vary with changes in currency exchange rates, which can be volatile. Accordingly, changes in the value of the currency in which the Fund's investments are denominated relative to the U.S. dollar will affect the Fund's net asset value. Exchange rates are generally affected by the forces of supply and demand in the international currency markets, the relative merits of investing in different countries and the intervention or failure to intervene of U.S. or foreign governments and central banks. However, currency exchange rates may fluctuate based on factors intrinsic to a country's economy. Some emerging market countries also may have managed currencies, which are not free floating against the U.S. dollar. In addition, emerging markets are subject to the risk of restrictions upon the free conversion of their currencies into other currencies. Any devaluations relative to the U.S. dollar in the currencies in which the Fund's securities are quoted would reduce the Fund's net asset value per share.

### Investment in Emerging Markets

Investors are strongly advised to consider carefully the special risks involved in emerging markets, which are in addition to the usual risks of investing in developed foreign markets around the world.

The risks of investing in securities in emerging countries include: (i) less social, political and economic stability; (ii) the smaller size of the markets for such securities and lower volume of trading, which result in a lack of liquidity and in greater price volatility; (iii) certain national policies that may restrict the Fund's investment opportunities, including restrictions on investment in issuers or industries deemed sensitive to national interests; (iv) foreign taxation; (v) the absence of developed structures governing private or foreign investment or allowing for judicial redress for injury to private property; and (vi) military unrest, war and terrorism.

Investors should note that upon the accession to power of authoritarian regimes, the governments of a number of emerging market countries previously expropriated large quantities of real and personal property similar to the property which may be represented by the securities purchased by the Fund. The claims of property owners against those governments were never finally settled. There can be no assurance that any property represented by securities purchased by the Fund will not also be expropriated, nationalized, or otherwise confiscated at some time in the future. If such confiscation were to occur, the Fund could lose a substantial portion or all of its investments in such countries. The Fund's investments would similarly be adversely affected by exchange control regulation in any of those countries.

Certain countries in which the Fund may invest may have vocal groups that advocate radical religious or revolutionary philosophies or support ethnic independence. Any disturbance on the part of such individuals could carry the potential for widespread destruction or confiscation of property owned by individuals and entities foreign to such country and could cause the loss of the Fund's investment in those countries.

Settlement mechanisms in emerging market securities may be less efficient and reliable than in more developed markets. In such emerging securities markets there may be delays and failures in share registration and delivery. In certain markets there have been times when settlements have been unable to keep pace with the volume of securities transactions, making it difficult to conduct such transactions. The inability of the Fund to make intended securities purchases due to settlement problems could cause the Fund to miss attractive investment opportunities. Inability to dispose of a portfolio security caused by settlement problems could result either in losses to the Fund due to subsequent declines in the value of the portfolio security or, if the Fund has entered into a contract to sell the security, in possible liability to the purchaser. There may also be a danger that, because of uncertainties in the operation of settlement systems in individual markets, competing claims may arise in respect of securities held by or to be transferred to the Fund. Furthermore, compensation schemes may be non-existent, limited or inadequate to meet the Fund's claims in any of these events.

Inflation and rapid fluctuations in inflation rates have had, and may continue to have, very negative effects on the economies and securities markets of certain emerging markets. While some emerging market countries have sought to develop a number of corrective mechanisms to reduce inflation or mitigate its effects, inflation may continue to have significant effects both on emerging market economies and their securities markets. In addition, many of the currencies of emerging market countries have experienced steady devaluations relative to the U.S. dollar and major devaluations have occurred in certain countries. Economies in emerging markets generally are heavily dependent upon international trade and, accordingly, have been and may continue to be affected adversely by economic conditions, trade barriers, exchange controls, managed adjustments in relative currency values and other protectionist measures imposed or negotiated by the countries with which they trade.

Because of the high levels of foreign-denominated debt owed by many emerging market countries, fluctuating exchange rates can significantly affect the debt service obligations of those countries. This could, in turn, affect local interest rates, profit margins and exports, which are a major source of foreign exchange earnings.

To the extent an emerging market country faces a liquidity crisis with respect to its foreign exchange reserves, it may increase restrictions on the outflow of any foreign exchange. Repatriation is ultimately dependent on the ability of the Fund to liquidate its investments and convert the local currency proceeds obtained from such liquidation into U.S. dollars. Where this conversion must be done through official channels (usually the central bank or certain authorized commercial banks), the ability to obtain U.S. dollars is dependent on the availability of such U.S. dollars through those channels and, if available, upon the willingness of those channels to allocate those U.S. dollars to the Fund. The Fund's ability to obtain U.S. dollars may be adversely affected by any increased restrictions imposed on the outflow of foreign exchange. If the Fund is unable to repatriate any amounts due to exchange controls, it may be required to accept an obligation payable at some future date by the central bank or other governmental entity of the jurisdiction involved. If such conversion can legally be done outside official channels, either directly or indirectly, the Fund's ability to obtain U.S. dollars may not be affected as much by any increased restrictions except to the extent of the price which may be required to be paid in U.S. dollars. Furthermore, repatriation of investment income, capital and the proceeds of sales by foreign investors may require governmental registration and/or approval in some countries.

Many emerging market countries have little experience with the corporate form of business organization and may not have well-developed corporation and business laws or concepts of fiduciary duty in the business context. The Fund may encounter substantial difficulties in obtaining and enforcing judgments against individuals and companies located in certain emerging market countries. It may be difficult or impossible to obtain or enforce legislation or remedies against governments, their agencies and sponsored entities.

Disclosure and regulatory standards in emerging markets in many respects are less stringent than in the United States and other major markets. There also may be a lower level of monitoring and regulation of emerging markets and the activities of investors in such markets; enforcement of existing regulations has been extremely limited. Additionally, accounting, auditing and financial reporting and recordkeeping standards in emerging markets may not provide the same degree of investor protection or information to investors as would generally apply in more developed markets. The Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, which regulates auditors of U.S. public companies, may, from time to time, be unable to inspect audit work papers in certain foreign or emerging market countries.

Trading in the securities of emerging markets presents additional credit and financial risks. The Fund may have limited access to, or there may be a limited number of, potential counterparties that trade in the securities of emerging market issuers. Governmental regulations may restrict potential counterparties to certain financial institutions located or operating in the particular emerging market. Potential counterparties may not possess, adopt or implement creditworthiness standards, financial reporting standards or legal and contractual protections similar to those in developed markets. Currency hedging techniques may not be available or may be limited. The Fund may not be able to reduce or mitigate risks related to trading with emerging market counterparties.

The risk also exists that an emergency situation may arise in one or more emerging markets as a result of which trading of securities may cease or may be substantially curtailed and prices for the Fund's portfolio securities in such markets may not be readily available. Section 22(e) of the 1940 Act permits a registered investment company to suspend redemption of its shares for any period during which an emergency exists, as determined by the SEC. Accordingly, if the Fund believes that appropriate circumstances warrant, it may apply to the SEC for a determination that an emergency exists within the meaning of Section 22(e) of the 1940 Act. During the period commencing from the Fund's identification of such conditions until the date of SEC action, the portfolio securities in the affected markets will be valued at fair value as determined by the Manager in accordance with the Fund's valuation policy.

Although it might be theoretically possible to hedge for anticipated income and gains, the ongoing and indeterminate nature of the risks associated with emerging market investing (and the costs associated with hedging transactions) makes it very difficult to hedge effectively against such risks.

#### Europe — Recent Events

A number of countries in Europe have experienced severe economic and financial difficulties. Many non-governmental issuers, and even certain governments, have defaulted on, or been forced to restructure, their debts; many other issuers have

faced difficulties obtaining credit or refinancing existing obligations; financial institutions have in many cases required government or central bank support, have needed to raise capital, and/or have been impaired in their ability to extend credit; and financial markets in Europe and elsewhere have experienced extreme volatility and declines in asset values and liquidity. These difficulties may continue, worsen or spread within and outside of Europe. Responses to the financial problems by European governments, central banks and others, including austerity measures and reforms, may not work, may result in social unrest and may limit future growth and economic recovery or have other unintended consequences. Further defaults or restructurings by governments and others of their debt could have additional adverse effects on economies, financial markets and asset valuations around the world.

In addition, the United Kingdom left the European Union on January 31, 2020, commonly referred to as “Brexit.” Following a transition period, the United Kingdom’s post-Brexit trade agreement with the European Union passed into law in December 2020, was provisionally applied effective January 1, 2021, and formally entered into force on May 1, 2021. There is significant market uncertainty regarding Brexit’s ramifications. The range and potential implications of possible political, regulatory, economic, and market outcomes cannot be fully known but could be significant, potentially resulting in increased volatility and illiquidity and lower economic growth for companies that rely significantly on Europe for their business activities and revenues. The United Kingdom has one of the largest economies in Europe and is a major trading partner with the European Union countries and the United States. Brexit may create additional and substantial economic stresses for the United Kingdom, including a contraction of the United Kingdom’s economy, decreased trade, capital outflows, devaluation of the British pound, as well as a decrease in business and consumer spending and investment. The negative impact on not only the United Kingdom and other European economies but also the broader global economy could be significant. Moreover, other countries may seek to withdraw from the European Union and/or abandon the euro, the common currency of the European Union. A number of countries in Europe have suffered terror attacks, and additional attacks may occur in the future. Europe has also been struggling with mass migration from the Middle East and Africa.

The ultimate effects of these events and other socio-political or geopolitical issues are not known but could profoundly affect global economies and markets. Whether or not the Fund invests in securities of issuers located in Europe or with significant exposure to European issuers or countries, these events could negatively affect the value and liquidity of the Fund’s investments.

#### Risks Related to Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine

Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 resulted in the United States, other countries and certain international organizations levying broad economic sanctions against Russia. These sanctions froze certain Russian assets and prohibited, among other things, trading in certain Russian securities and doing business with specific Russian corporate entities, large financial institutions, officials and oligarchs. The sanctions also included the removal of some Russian banks from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT), the electronic network that connects banks globally, and imposed restrictive measures to prevent the Russian Central Bank from undermining the impact of the sanctions. The United States and other countries have also imposed economic sanctions on Belarus and may impose sanctions on other countries that support Russia’s military invasion. A number of large corporations and U.S. states have also announced plans to divest interests or otherwise curtail business dealings with certain Russian businesses. These sanctions and any additional sanctions or other intergovernmental actions that may be undertaken against Russia or other countries that support Russia’s military invasion in the future may result in the devaluation of Russian or other affected currencies, a downgrade in the sanctioned country’s credit rating, and a decline in the value and liquidity of Russian securities and securities of issuers in other countries that support the invasion. The potential for wider conflict may further decrease the value and liquidity of certain Russian securities and securities of issuers in other countries affected by the invasion. In addition, the ability to price, buy, sell, receive, or deliver such securities is also affected due to these measures. For example, the Fund may be prohibited from investing in securities issued by companies subject to such sanctions. In addition, the sanctions may require the Fund to freeze its existing investments in companies operating in or having dealings with Russia or other sanctioned countries, which would prevent the Fund from selling these investments. Any exposure that the Fund may have to Russian counterparties or counterparties in other sanctioned countries also could negatively impact the Fund’s portfolio.

Additionally, Russia has taken retaliatory actions, including preventing repatriation of capital by U.S. and other investors. The ongoing conflict has resulted in significant market disruptions, including in certain markets, industries and sectors, such as the oil and natural gas markets, and has negatively affected global supply chains, food supplies, inflation and global growth. The extent and duration of Russia’s military actions and the repercussions of such actions (including any sanctions,

retaliatory actions and countermeasures, including cyber attacks) are impossible to predict. These and any related events could significantly impact the Fund's performance and the value of an investment in the Fund, even if the Fund does not have direct exposure to Russian issuers or issuers in other countries affected by the invasion.

### Eurodollar or Yankee Obligations

Eurodollar bank obligations are U.S. dollar denominated debt obligations issued outside the U.S. capital markets by non-U.S. branches of U.S. banks and by non-U.S. banks. Yankee obligations are U.S. dollar denominated obligations issued in the U.S. capital markets by non-U.S. issuers. Eurodollar (and to a limited extent, Yankee) obligations are subject to certain sovereign risks. One such risk is the possibility that a non-U.S. government might prevent U.S. dollar denominated funds from flowing across its borders. Other risks include: adverse political and economic developments in a non-U.S. country; the extent and quality of government regulation of financial markets and institutions; the imposition of non-U.S. withholding taxes; and expropriation or nationalization of non-U.S. issuers.

### Sovereign Government and Supranational Debt Obligations

The Fund may invest in all types of debt securities of governmental issuers in all countries, including emerging markets. These sovereign debt securities may include: debt securities issued or guaranteed by governments, governmental agencies or instrumentalities and political subdivisions located in emerging market countries; debt securities issued by government owned, controlled or sponsored entities located in emerging market countries; interests issued for the purpose of restructuring the investment characteristics of instruments issued by any of the above issuers; participations in loans between emerging market governments and financial institutions; or debt securities issued by supranational entities such as the World Bank. A supranational entity is a bank, commission or company established or financially supported by the national governments of one or more countries to promote reconstruction or development. Included among these entities are the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, the European Investment Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Supranational organizations have no taxing authority and are dependent on their members for payments of interest and principal. There is no guarantee that one or more members of a supranational organization will continue to make capital contributions. If such contributions are not made, the organization may be unable to pay interest or repay principal on its debt securities, and the Fund may lose money on such investments. Further, the lending activities of such entities are limited to a percentage of their total capital, reserves and net income.

Sovereign debt is subject to risks in addition to those relating to non-U.S. investments generally. As a sovereign entity, the issuing government may be immune from lawsuits in the event of its failure or refusal to pay the obligations when due. The debtor's willingness or ability to repay in a timely manner may be affected by, among other factors, its cash flow situation, the extent of its non-U.S. currency reserves, the availability of sufficient foreign currency exchange on the date a payment is due, the relative size of the debt service burden to the economy as a whole, the sovereign debtor's policy toward principal international lenders and the political constraints to which the sovereign debtor may be subject. Sovereign debtors may also be dependent on disbursements or assistance from non-U.S. governments or multinational agencies, the country's access to trade and other international credits, and the country's balance of trade. Assistance may be dependent on a country's implementation of austerity measures and reforms, economic performance and/or the timely service of such debtor's obligations. Failure to implement such reforms, achieve such levels of economic performance or repay principal or interest when due may result in the cancellation of such third parties' commitments to lend funds to the governmental entity, which may further impair such debtor's ability or willingness to service its debts in a timely manner. Some sovereign debtors have rescheduled their debt payments, declared moratoria on payments or restructured their debt to effectively eliminate portions of it, and similar occurrences may happen in the future. There is no bankruptcy proceeding by which sovereign debt on which governmental entities have defaulted may be collected in whole or in part.

### **High Yield ("Junk") Bonds**

High yield securities are medium or lower rated securities and unrated securities of comparable quality, sometimes referred to as "high yield" or "junk" bonds. Generally, such securities offer a higher current yield than is offered by higher rated securities, but also are predominantly speculative with respect to the issuer's capacity to pay interest and repay principal in accordance with the terms of the securities. The market values of certain of these securities also tend to be more sensitive to individual corporate developments and changes in economic conditions than higher quality bonds. In addition, medium and lower

rated securities and comparable unrated securities generally present a higher degree of credit risk. The risk of loss because of default by issuers of these securities is significantly greater because medium and lower rated securities generally are unsecured and frequently subordinated to senior indebtedness. In addition, the market value of securities in lower rated categories is generally more volatile than that of higher quality securities, and the markets in which medium and lower rated securities are traded are more limited than those in which higher rated securities are traded. The existence of limited markets may make it more difficult for the Fund to obtain accurate market quotations for purposes of valuing its securities and calculating its net asset value. Moreover, the lack of a liquid trading market may restrict the availability of securities for the Fund to purchase and may also limit the ability of the Fund to sell securities at their fair value either to meet redemption requests or to respond to changes in the economy or the financial markets.

Lower rated debt obligations often have redemption features that permit an issuer to repurchase the security from the Fund before it matures. If an issuer exercises that right, the Fund may have to replace the security with a lower yielding security, resulting in a decreased return for investors. If the Fund experiences unexpected net redemptions, it may be forced to sell its higher rated bonds, resulting in a decline in the overall credit quality of the securities held by the Fund and increasing the exposure of the Fund to the risks of lower rated securities. Investments in lower rated zero coupon bonds may be more speculative and subject to greater fluctuations in value because of changes in interest rates than lower rated bonds that pay interest currently.

Subsequent to its purchase by the Fund, an issue of securities may cease to be rated or its rating may be reduced below the minimum required for purchase by the Fund (if applicable). Neither event will require sale of these securities by the Fund, but the portfolio manager will consider the event in determining whether the Fund should continue to hold the security.

### **Illiquid Investments and Restricted Securities**

The Fund may invest up to 15% of its net assets in illiquid investments. An illiquid security is any security which the Fund reasonably expects cannot be sold or disposed of in current market conditions in seven calendar days or less without the sale or disposition significantly changing the market value of the security. To the extent required by applicable law and SEC guidance, the Fund will not acquire an illiquid security if such acquisition would cause the aggregate value of illiquid securities to exceed 15% of the Fund's net assets. If at any time the portfolio manager determines that the value of illiquid securities held by the Fund exceeds 15% of the Fund's net assets, the portfolio manager will take such steps as it considers appropriate to reduce the percentage within a reasonable period of time consistent with applicable regulatory requirements. Because illiquid investments may not be readily marketable, the Fund may not be able to dispose of them in a timely manner. As a result, the Fund may be forced to hold illiquid investments while their price depreciates. Depreciation in the price of illiquid investments may cause the net asset value of the Fund to decline.

Restricted securities are securities subject to legal or contractual restrictions on their resale, such as private placements. Such restrictions might prevent the sale of restricted securities at a time when the sale would otherwise be desirable. Under SEC regulations, certain restricted securities acquired through private placements can be traded freely among qualified purchasers. While restricted securities are generally presumed to be illiquid, it may be determined that a particular restricted security is liquid. Investing in these restricted securities could have the effect of increasing the Fund's illiquidity if qualified purchasers become, for a time, uninterested in buying these securities.

Restricted securities may be sold only (1) pursuant to SEC Rule 144A or another exemption, (2) in privately negotiated transactions or (3) in public offerings with respect to which a registration statement is in effect under the 1933 Act. Rule 144A securities, although not registered in the U.S., may be sold to qualified institutional buyers in accordance with Rule 144A under the 1933 Act. As noted above, the Fund may determine that some Rule 144A securities are liquid. Where registration is required, the Fund may be obligated to pay all or part of the registration expenses and a considerable period may elapse between the time of the decision to sell and the time the Fund may be permitted to sell a restricted security under an effective registration statement. If, during such a period, adverse market conditions were to develop, the Fund might obtain a less favorable price than prevailed when it decided to sell.

Illiquid securities may be difficult to value, and the Fund may have difficulty disposing of such securities promptly. The Fund does not consider non-U.S. securities to be restricted if they can be freely sold in the principal markets in which they are traded, even if they are not registered for sale in the U.S.

*Liquidity Risk Management.* Rule 22e-4 under the 1940 Act requires, among other things, that the Fund and other Franklin Templeton ETFs and open-end funds establish a liquidity risk management program (“LRMP”) that is reasonably designed to assess and manage liquidity risk. Rule 22e-4 defines “liquidity risk” as the risk that a fund could not meet requests to redeem shares issued by the fund without significant dilution of the remaining investors’ interests in the fund. The Fund has implemented a LRMP designed to meet the relevant requirements. Additionally, the Board, including a majority of the Independent Trustees, approved the designation of the Fund’s LRMP administrator to administer such program and review no less frequently than annually a written report prepared by the LRMP administrator that addresses the operation of the LRMP and assesses its adequacy and effectiveness of implementation. There is no guarantee the LRMP will be effective in its operations, and complying with Rule 22e-4 or any amendment thereto, including bearing related costs, could impact the Fund’s performance and its ability to achieve its investment objective.

## **Inflation Indexed Securities**

Inflation indexed bonds are fixed income securities whose principal value or coupon (interest payment) is periodically adjusted according to the rate of inflation. Two structures are common. The U.S. Treasury and some other issuers use a structure that accrues inflation into the principal value of the bond. Most other issuers pay out the index-based accruals as part of a semiannual coupon. The Fund may also invest in inflation-indexed securities with other structures or characteristics as such securities become available in the market. It is currently expected that other types of inflation-indexed securities would have characteristics similar to those described below.

U.S. Treasury Inflation Protected Securities (“U.S. TIPS”) are fixed income securities issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury, the principal amounts of which are adjusted daily based upon changes in the rate of inflation (currently represented by the non-seasonally adjusted Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (“CPI-U”), calculated with a three-month lag). The U.S. Department of Treasury issues U.S. TIPS in maturities of five, ten and thirty years, although it is possible that securities with other maturities will be issued in the future. U.S. TIPS pay interest on a semi-annual basis, equal to a fixed percentage of the inflation-adjusted principal amount. The interest rate on these bonds is fixed at issuance, but over the life of the bond this interest may be paid on an increasing or decreasing principal value that has been adjusted for inflation.

Repayment of the original bond principal upon maturity (as adjusted for inflation) is guaranteed for U.S. TIPS, even during a period of deflation. However, because the principal amount of U.S. TIPS would be adjusted downward during a period of deflation, the Fund will be subject to deflation risk with respect to its investments in these securities. In addition, the current market value of the bonds is not guaranteed, and will fluctuate. If the Fund purchases U.S. TIPS in the secondary market whose principal values have been adjusted upward due to inflation since issuance, the Fund may experience a loss if there is a subsequent period of deflation. The Fund may also invest in other inflation-related bonds which may or may not provide a guarantee of principal.

The value of inflation-indexed bonds is expected to fluctuate in response to changes in real interest rates, which are in turn tied to the relationship between nominal interest rates and the rate of inflation. Therefore, if inflation were to rise at a faster rate than nominal interest rates, real interest rates might decline, leading to an increase in value of inflation indexed bonds. In contrast, if nominal interest rates increased at a faster rate than inflation, real interest rates might rise, leading to a decrease in value of inflation indexed bonds. If inflation is lower than expected during the period the Fund holds the security, the Fund may earn less on the security than on a conventional bond. Any increase in principal value is taxable in the year the increase occurs, even though holders do not receive cash representing the increase at that time. As a result, if the Fund invests in inflation-indexed securities, it could be required at times to liquidate other investments, including when it is not advantageous to do so, in order to satisfy its distribution requirements as a regulated investment company and to eliminate any fund-level income tax liability under the Code.

While these securities are expected to be protected from long-term inflationary trends, short-term increases in inflation may lead to a decline in value. If interest rates rise due to reasons other than inflation (for example, due to changes in currency exchange rates), investors in these securities may not be protected to the extent that the increase is not reflected in the bond’s inflation measure.

The U.S. Treasury began issuing inflation-indexed bonds in 1997. Certain non-U.S. governments, such as the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, have a longer history of issuing inflation indexed bonds, and there may be a more liquid market in certain of these countries for these securities. The Fund may invest in inflation-indexed securities issued in any country.

The periodic adjustment of U.S. TIPS is currently tied to the CPI-U, which is calculated by the U.S. Department of Treasury. The CPI-U is a measurement of changes in the cost of living, made up of components such as housing, food, transportation and energy. Inflation-indexed bonds issued by a non-U.S. government are generally adjusted to reflect an inflation index, calculated by that government. There can be no assurance that the CPI-U or any non-U.S. inflation index will accurately measure the real rate of inflation in the prices of goods and services. In addition, there can be no assurance that the rate of inflation in a non-U.S. country will be correlated to the rate of inflation in the United States. The three-month lag in calculating the CPI-U for purposes of adjusting the principal value of U.S. TIPS may give rise to risks under certain circumstances.

### **Investments by Other Funds and by Other Significant Investors**

Certain investment companies, including those that are affiliated with the Fund because they are managed by the Manager or an affiliate of the Manager, may invest in the Fund and may at times have substantial investments in one or more funds. Other investors also may at times have substantial investments in one or more funds.

From time to time, the Fund may experience relatively large redemptions or investments due to transactions in Fund shares by a fund or other significant investor. In addition, a large number of shareholders collectively may purchase or redeem Fund shares in large amounts rapidly or unexpectedly (collectively, such transactions are referred to as "large shareholder transactions"). The effects of these transactions could adversely affect the Fund's performance. In the event of such redemptions or investments, the Fund could be required to sell securities or to invest cash at a time when it is not advantageous to do so. Such transactions may increase brokerage and/or other transaction costs of the Fund. A large redemption could cause the Fund's expenses to increase and could result in the Fund becoming too small to be economically viable. Large redemptions of Fund shares may indirectly result in required distributions to non-redeeming shareholders, and those distributions would generally be taxable to shareholders who do not hold their Fund shares in an IRA, 401(k) plan or other tax-advantaged plan. Redemptions may result in the recognition of short-term capital gains by the Fund, and distributions of short-term capital gains will generally be taxed at ordinary income tax rates for shareholders who hold Fund shares in a taxable account. Redemptions may directly or indirectly result from actions taken (or not taken) by the Trust, the Manager, the Subadviser, a fund, or an affiliate. A number of circumstances may cause the Fund to experience large redemptions, such as changes in the eligibility criteria for the Fund or share class of the Fund; liquidations, reorganizations, repositionings, or other announced Fund events; or changes in investment objectives, strategies, policies, risks, or investment personnel.

The Manager and the Subadviser are subject to potential conflicts of interest in connection with investments in the Fund by an affiliated fund due to their affiliation. For example, the Manager or the Subadviser could have the incentive to permit an affiliated fund to become a more significant shareholder (with the potential to cause greater disruption) than would be permitted for an unaffiliated investor. Investments by an affiliated fund may also give rise to conflicts in connection with the voting of fund shares. The Manager, the Subadviser and/or its advisory affiliates intend to seek to address these potential conflicts of interest in the best interests of the Fund's shareholders, although there can be no assurance that such efforts will be successful. The Manager and the Subadviser will consider how to minimize potential adverse impacts of affiliated fund investments, and, may take such actions as each deems appropriate to address potential adverse impacts, including redemption of shares in-kind, rather than in cash.

### **Investments in Other Investment Companies**

Subject to applicable statutory and regulatory limitations described below, the Fund may invest in shares of other investment companies, including shares of open-end and closed-end investment companies affiliated or unaffiliated with the Fund, business development companies, exchange-traded funds and unregistered investment companies.

An investment in an investment company is subject to the risks associated with that investment company's portfolio securities. Investments in closed-end funds may entail the additional risk that the market value of such investments may be substantially less than their net asset value. To the extent the Fund invests in shares of another investment company, the Fund will indirectly bear a proportionate share of that investment company's advisory fees and other operating expenses. These fees are in addition to the advisory fees and other operational expenses incurred directly by the Fund. In addition, the Fund could incur a sales charge in connection with purchasing an investment company security or a redemption fee upon the redemption of such security.

Section 12(d)(1)(A) of the 1940 Act provides that a fund may not purchase or otherwise acquire the securities of other investment companies if, as a result of such purchase or acquisition, it would own: (i) more than 3% of the total outstanding

voting stock of the acquired investment company; (ii) securities issued by any one investment company having a value in excess of 5% of the fund's total assets; or (iii) securities issued by all investment companies having an aggregate value in excess of 10% of the fund's total assets. These limitations are subject to certain statutory and regulatory exemptions including Rule 12d1-4, which permits the Fund to invest in other investment companies beyond the statutory limits, subject to certain conditions. Among other conditions, the Rule prohibits a fund from acquiring control of another investment company (other than an investment company in the same group of investment companies), including by acquiring more than 25% of its voting securities. In addition, the Rule imposes certain voting requirements when a fund's ownership of another investment company exceeds particular thresholds. If shares of a fund are acquired by another investment company, the "acquired" fund may not purchase or otherwise acquire the securities of an investment company or private fund if immediately after such purchase or acquisition, the securities of investment companies and private funds owned by that acquired fund have an aggregate value in excess of 10% of the value of the total assets of the acquired fund, subject to certain exceptions. These restrictions may limit the Fund's ability to invest in other investment companies to the extent desired. In addition, other unaffiliated investment companies may impose other investment limitations or redemption restrictions which may also limit the Fund's flexibility with respect to making investments in those unaffiliated investment companies.

### Private Investment Companies

The Fund may also invest in the securities of private investment companies, including "hedge funds" and private equity funds, subject to applicable law (including the limits described above with respect to investments in other investment companies) and the Fund's policy prohibiting it from purchasing or otherwise acquiring such securities if, as a result, more than 15% of its net assets would be invested in securities that are illiquid. As with investments in other investment companies, if the Fund invests in a private investment company, the Fund will be charged its proportionate share of the advisory fees including incentive compensation and other operating expenses of such company. These fees, which can be substantial, would be in addition to the advisory fees and other operating expenses incurred by the Fund. In addition, private investment companies are not registered with the SEC and may not be registered with any other regulatory authority. Accordingly, they are not subject to certain regulatory requirements and oversight to which registered issuers are subject. There may be very little public information available about their investments and performance. Moreover, because sales of shares of private investment companies are generally restricted to certain qualified purchasers, such shares may be illiquid and it could be difficult for the Fund to sell its shares at an advantageous price and time. Finally, because shares of private investment companies are not publicly traded, a fair value for the Fund's investment in these companies typically will be determined by the Manager in accordance with the Fund's valuation policy.

### Investment in Money Market Funds

The Fund may invest in money market instruments, including money market funds managed by the Manager or its affiliates and money market funds managed by unaffiliated advisers. Money market funds invest in high-quality, U.S. dollar-denominated short-term debt securities and must follow strict rules as to the credit quality, liquidity, diversification and maturity of their investments. The Fund may lose money on its investment in money market funds. If the Fund invests in money market funds it will indirectly bear its proportionate share of the management fees and other expenses that are charged by the money market fund in addition to the management fees and other expenses paid by the Fund. If the Fund invests in money market funds that are managed by the Manager or its affiliates, it is possible that a conflict of interest among the Fund and the affiliated funds could affect how the Fund's Manager and its affiliates fulfill their fiduciary duty to the Fund and the affiliated funds.

### **Leverage**

The Fund may employ "leverage" by borrowing money and using it to purchase additional securities. Leverage increases both investment opportunity and investment risk. If the investment gains on the securities purchased with borrowed money exceed the interest and other costs of borrowing, the net asset value of the Fund's shares will rise faster than would otherwise be the case. On the other hand, if the investment gains fail to cover the cost of borrowings, or if there are losses, the net asset value of the Fund's shares will decrease faster than would otherwise be the case. To reduce its borrowing, the Fund might be required to sell securities at a disadvantageous time. The Fund will incur interest expense on any money borrowed, and the Fund may therefore have little or no investment income during periods of substantial borrowings. The Fund may leverage its assets when, in the portfolio manager's judgment, the potential benefits of the borrowing outweigh the risk and expense of the borrowing.

## Loans

Loans are negotiated and underwritten by a bank or syndicate of banks and other institutional investors. The Fund may acquire an interest in loans through the primary market by acting as one of a group of lenders of a loan. The primary risk in an investment in loans is that the borrower may be unable to meet its interest and/or principal payment obligations. The occurrence of such a default with regard to a loan in which the Fund had invested would have an adverse effect on the Fund's net asset value. In addition, a sudden and significant increase in market interest rates may cause a decline in the value of these investments and in the Fund's net asset value. Other factors, such as rating downgrades, credit deterioration, or large downward movement in stock prices, a disparity in supply and demand of certain securities or market conditions that reduce liquidity could reduce the value of loans, impairing the Fund's net asset value. Loans may not be considered "securities" for certain purposes and purchasers, such as the Fund, therefore may not be entitled to rely on the anti-fraud protections of the federal securities laws.

Loans in which the Fund may invest may be collateralized or uncollateralized and senior or subordinate. Investments in uncollateralized and/or subordinate loans entail a greater risk of nonpayment than do investments in loans which hold a more senior position in the borrower's capital structure or that are secured with collateral. In the case of collateralized senior loans, however, there is no assurance that sale of the collateral would raise enough cash to satisfy the borrower's payment obligation or that the collateral can or will be liquidated. As a result, the Fund might not receive payments to which it is entitled and thereby may experience a decline in the value of its investment and its net asset value. In the event of bankruptcy, liquidation may not occur and the court may not give lenders the full benefit of their senior positions. If the terms of a senior loan do not require the borrower to pledge additional collateral, the Fund will be exposed to the risk that the value of the collateral will not at all times equal or exceed the amount of the borrower's obligations under the senior loans. To the extent that a senior loan is collateralized by stock in the borrower or its subsidiaries, such stock may lose all of its value in the event of bankruptcy of the borrower.

The Fund may also acquire an interest in loans by purchasing participations ("Participations") in and/or assignments ("Assignments") of portions of loans from third parties. By purchasing a Participation, the Fund acquires some or all of the interest of a bank or other lending institution in a loan to a borrower. Participations typically will result in the Fund's having a contractual relationship only with the lender and not the borrower. The Fund will have the right to receive payments of principal, interest and any fees to which it is entitled only from the lender selling the Participation and only upon receipt by the lender of the payments from the borrower. In connection with purchasing Participations, the Fund generally will have no right to enforce compliance by the borrower with the terms of the loan agreement relating to the loan, nor any rights of set-off against the borrower, and the Fund may not directly benefit from any collateral supporting the loan in which it has purchased the Participation. As a result, the Fund will assume the credit risk of both the borrower and the lender that is selling the Participation.

When the Fund purchases Assignments from lenders, the Fund will acquire direct rights against the borrower on the loan. However, since Assignments are arranged through private negotiations between potential assignees and assignors, the rights and obligations acquired by the Fund as the purchaser of an Assignment may differ from, and be more limited than, those held by the lender from which the Fund is purchasing the Assignments. Certain of the Participations or Assignments acquired by the Fund may involve unfunded commitments of the lenders or revolving credit facilities under which a borrower may from time to time borrow and repay amounts up to the maximum amount of the facility. In such cases, the Fund would have an obligation to advance its portion of such additional borrowings upon the terms specified in the loan documentation.

The Fund may acquire loans of borrowers that are experiencing, or are more likely to experience, financial difficulty, including loans of borrowers that have filed for bankruptcy protection. Although loans in which the Fund will invest generally will be secured by specific collateral, there can be no assurance that liquidation of such collateral would satisfy the borrower's obligation in the event of nonpayment of scheduled interest or principal, or that such collateral could be readily liquidated. In the event of bankruptcy of a borrower, the Fund could experience delays or limitations with respect to its ability to realize the benefits of the collateral securing a senior loan.

In addition, the Fund may have difficulty disposing of its investments in loans. The liquidity of such securities is limited and the Fund anticipates that such securities could be sold only to a limited number of institutional investors. The lack of a liquid secondary market could have an adverse impact on the value of such securities and on the Fund's ability to dispose of particular loans or Assignments or Participations when necessary to meet the Fund's liquidity needs or in response to a specific economic event, such as a deterioration in the creditworthiness of the borrower. The lack of a liquid secondary market for loans may also

make it more difficult for the Fund to assign a value to those securities for purposes of valuing the Fund's investments and calculating its net asset value.

The issuer of a loan may offer to provide material, non-public information about the issuer to investors, such as the Fund. The Fund's portfolio manager may avoid receiving this type of information about the issuer of a loan either held by or considered for investment by the Fund, because of prohibitions on trading in securities of issuers while in possession of such information. The decision not to receive material, non-public information may place the Fund at a disadvantage, relative to other loan investors, in assessing a loan or the loan's issuer.

### Covenant Lite Loans

Loan agreements, which set forth the terms of a loan and the obligations of the borrower and lender, contain certain covenants that mandate or prohibit certain borrower actions, including financial covenants that dictate certain minimum and maximum financial performance levels. Covenants that require the borrower to maintain certain financial metrics during the life of the loan (such as maintaining certain levels of cash flow and limiting leverage) are known as "maintenance covenants." These covenants are included to permit the lender to monitor the performance of the borrower and declare an event of default if breached, allowing the lender to renegotiate the terms of the loan based upon the elevated risk levels or take other actions to help mitigate losses. Covenant lite loans contain fewer maintenance covenants than traditional loans, or no maintenance covenants at all, and may not include terms that allow the lender to monitor the financial performance of the borrower and declare a default if certain criteria are breached. This may expose the Fund to greater credit risk associated with the borrower and reduce the Fund's ability to restructure a problematic loan and mitigate potential loss. As a result, the Fund's exposure to losses on such investments may be increased, especially during a downturn in the credit cycle.

### **Mortgage-Backed and Other Asset-Backed Securities – Generally**

An asset-backed security is a fixed income security that derives its value primarily from cash flows relating to a pool of assets. There are a number of different types of asset-backed and related securities, including mortgage-backed securities, securities backed by other pools of collateral (such as automobile loans, student loans, sub-prime mortgages, and credit card receivables), collateralized mortgage obligations, and collateralized debt obligations.

Asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities differ from conventional bonds in that principal is paid over the life of the securities rather than at maturity. As a result, payments of principal and interest on mortgage-backed securities and asset-backed securities are made more frequently than are payments on conventional debt securities. The average life of asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities is likely to be substantially less than the original maturity of the underlying asset pools as a result of prepayments or foreclosures of mortgages, as applicable. In addition, holders of mortgage-backed securities and of certain asset-backed securities (such as asset-backed securities backed by home equity loans) may receive unscheduled payments of principal at any time representing prepayments on the underlying mortgage loans or financial assets. When the holder of the security attempts to reinvest prepayments or even the scheduled payments of principal and interest, it may receive a rate of interest that is higher or lower than the rate on the mortgage-backed security or asset-backed security originally held. To the extent that mortgage-backed securities or asset-backed securities are purchased by the Fund at a premium, mortgage foreclosures and principal prepayments may result in a loss to the extent of the premium paid. To the extent the loans underlying a security representing an interest in a pool of mortgages or other assets are prepaid, the Fund may experience a loss (if the price at which the respective security was acquired by the Fund was at a premium over par, which represents the price at which the security will be redeemed upon prepayment) or a gain (if the price at which the respective security was acquired by the Fund was at a discount from par). In addition, prepayments of such securities held by the Fund will reduce the share price of the Fund to the extent the market value of the securities at the time of prepayment exceeds their par value, and will increase the share price of the Fund to the extent the par value of the securities exceeds their market value at the time of prepayment. Prepayments may occur with greater frequency in periods of declining interest rates because, among other reasons, it may be possible for borrowers to refinance their outstanding obligation at lower interest rates. When market interest rates increase, the market values of asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities decline. At the same time, however, refinancing slows, which lengthens the effective maturities of these securities. As a result, the negative effect of the rate increase on the market value of asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities is usually more pronounced than it is for other types of fixed income securities.

Changes in the market's perception of the mortgages or assets backing the security, the creditworthiness of the servicing agent for the loan pool, the originator of the loans, or the financial institution providing any credit enhancement, will all affect the value of an asset-backed or mortgage-backed security, as will the exhaustion of any credit enhancement.

The risks of investing in asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities ultimately depend upon the payment of the underlying loans by the individual borrowers. In its capacity as purchaser of an asset-backed security or mortgage-backed security, the Fund would generally have no recourse to the entity that originated the loans in the event of default by the borrower. The risk of non-payment is greater for asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities that are backed by pools that contain subprime loans, but a level of risk exists for all loans. Market factors adversely affecting loan repayments may include a general economic downturn and high unemployment. Mortgage-backed securities may be adversely affected by a general slowdown in the real estate market, a drop in the market prices of real estate, or an increase in interest rates resulting in higher mortgage payments by holders of adjustable rate mortgages. Developments following the onset of COVID-19 have adversely impacted the commercial real estate markets, causing the deferral of mortgage payments, renegotiated commercial mortgage loans, commercial real estate vacancies or outright mortgage defaults, and potential acceleration of macro trends such as work from home and online shopping which may negatively impact certain industries, such as brick-and-mortar retail.

Additional information regarding different types of asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities is provided below. Governmental, government-related or private entities may create pools of loan assets offering pass-through investments in addition to those described below. As new types of asset-backed or mortgage-backed securities are developed and offered to investors, the portfolio manager may, consistent with the Fund's investment objective and policies, consider making investments in such new types of securities.

*Mortgage-backed securities.* Mortgage-backed securities ("MBS") represent interests in pools of mortgage loans made by lenders such as savings and loan institutions, mortgage bankers, commercial banks and others, to finance purchases of homes, commercial buildings or other real estate. The individual mortgage loans are assembled for sale to investors (such as the Fund) by various governmental or government-related agencies and private organizations, such as dealers.

*Government-sponsored MBS.* Some government sponsored mortgage-related securities are backed by the full faith and credit of the United States. The Government National Mortgage Association ("Ginnie Mae"), the principal guarantor of such securities, is a wholly-owned United States government corporation within the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Other government-sponsored mortgage-related securities are not backed by the full faith and credit of the United States government. Issuers of such securities include Fannie Mae (formally known as the Federal National Mortgage Association) and Freddie Mac (formally known as the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation). Fannie Mae is a government-sponsored corporation which is subject to general regulation by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Pass-through securities issued by Fannie Mae are guaranteed as to timely payment of principal and interest by Fannie Mae. Freddie Mac is a stockholder-owned corporation chartered by Congress and subject to general regulation by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Participation certificates representing interests in mortgages from Freddie Mac's national portfolio are guaranteed as to the timely payment of interest and ultimate collection of principal by Freddie Mac. The U.S. government has provided financial support to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in the past, but there can be no assurances that it will support these or other government-sponsored entities in the future.

*Privately issued MBS.* Unlike MBS issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government or certain government-sponsored entities, MBS issued by private issuers do not have a government or government-sponsored entity guarantee, but may have credit enhancement provided by external entities such as banks or financial institutions or achieved through the structuring of the transaction itself.

In addition, MBS that are issued by private issuers are not subject to the underwriting requirements for the underlying mortgages that are applicable to those MBS that have a government or government-sponsored entity guarantee. As a result, the mortgage loans underlying private MBS may, and frequently do, have less favorable collateral, credit risk or other underwriting characteristics than government or government-sponsored MBS and have wider variances in a number of terms including interest rate, term, size, purpose and borrower characteristics. Privately issued pools more frequently include second mortgages, high loan-to-value mortgages and manufactured housing loans. The coupon rates and maturities of the underlying mortgage loans in a private-label MBS pool may vary to a greater extent than those included in a government guaranteed pool, and the pool may include subprime mortgage loans. Subprime loans refer to loans made to borrowers with weakened credit histories or with a

lower capacity to make timely payments on their loans. For these reasons, the loans underlying these securities have had in many cases higher default rates than those loans that meet government underwriting requirements.

Privately issued mortgage-backed securities are not traded on an exchange and there may be a limited market for the securities, especially when there is a perceived weakness in the mortgage and real estate market sectors. Without an active trading market, mortgage-backed securities held in the Fund's portfolio may be particularly difficult to value because of the complexities involved in assessing the value of the underlying mortgage loans.

*Credit risk transfer securities.* Another type of mortgage security is one issued by agencies or instrumentalities of the U.S. Government, such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, but without any government guaranty, including "credit risk transfer securities." Credit risk transfer securities are fixed- or floating rate unsecured general obligation mortgage securities issued from time to time by Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae or other government sponsored entities (each, a "GSE"). Typically, such securities are issued at par and have stated final maturities. The credit risk transfer securities are structured so that: (i) interest is paid directly by the issuing GSE; and (ii) principal is paid by the issuing GSE in accordance with the principal payments and default performance of a certain pool of residential mortgage loans acquired by the GSE. The issuing GSE selects the pool of mortgage loans based on that GSE's eligibility criteria. The performance of the credit risk transfer securities will be directly affected by the selection of the underlying mortgage loans by the GSE. Credit risk transfer securities are issued in tranches to which are allocated certain principal repayments and credit losses corresponding to the seniority of the particular tranche. Each tranche will have credit exposure to the underlying mortgage loans and the yield to maturity will be directly related to the amount and timing of certain defined credit events on the underlying mortgage loans, any prepayments by borrowers and any removals of a mortgage loan from the pool.

Credit risk transfer securities are unguaranteed and unsecured debt securities issued by the GSE and therefore are not directly linked to or backed by the underlying mortgage loans. Thus, although the payment of principal and interest on such securities is tied to the performance of the pool of underlying mortgage loans, the holders of the credit risk transfer securities will have no interest in the underlying mortgage loans. As a result, in the event that a GSE fails to pay principal or interest on its credit risk transfer securities or goes through a bankruptcy, insolvency or similar proceeding, holders of such credit risk transfer securities have no direct recourse to the underlying mortgage loans. Such holders will receive recovery on par with other unsecured note holders (agency debentures) in such a scenario.

The Fund may also invest in credit risk transfer securities that are issued by private entities, such as banks or other financial institutions. Credit risk transfer securities issued by private entities are structured similarly to those issued by a GSE and are generally subject to the same types of risks, including credit (risk of non-payment of principal and interest when due), prepayment, extension, interest rate and market risks.

The risks associated with an investment in credit risk transfer securities will be different than the risks associated with an investment in mortgage-backed securities issued by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, or other GSEs or issued by a private issuer because some or all of the mortgage default or credit risk associated with the underlying mortgage loans is transferred to investors, such as the Fund. As a result, investors in these securities could lose some or all of their investment in these securities if the underlying mortgage loans default.

*Adjustable rate mortgage-backed securities.* Adjustable rate mortgage-backed securities ("ARMBS") are pass-through securities collateralized by mortgages with adjustable rather than fixed rates. Adjustable rate mortgages eligible for inclusion in a mortgage pool generally provide for a fixed initial mortgage interest rate for a set number of scheduled monthly payments. After that schedule of payments has been completed, the interest rates of the adjustable rate mortgages are subject to periodic adjustment based on changes to a designated benchmark index.

Mortgages underlying most ARMBS may contain maximum and minimum rates beyond which the mortgage interest rate may not vary over the lifetime of the mortgage. In addition, certain adjustable rate mortgages provide for additional limitations on the maximum amount by which the mortgage interest rate may adjust for any single adjustment period. In the event that market rates of interest rise more rapidly to levels above that of the maximum rate for the adjustable rate mortgages underlying an ARMBS, the ARMBS' coupon may represent a below market rate of interest. In these circumstances, the market value of the ARMBS will likely have fallen. During periods of declining interest rates, income to the Fund derived from adjustable rate mortgages that remain in the mortgage pool underlying the ARMBS may decrease in contrast to the income on fixed rate mortgages, which will remain constant. Adjustable rate mortgages also have less potential for appreciation in value as interest

rates decline than do fixed rate investments. In addition, the current yields on ARMBS may be different than market yields during interim periods between coupon reset dates.

*Stripped mortgage-backed securities.* Stripped mortgage-backed securities (“SMBS”) are structured with two or more classes of securities that receive different proportions of the interest and principal distributions on a pool of mortgage assets. A common type of SMBS will have at least one class receiving only a small portion of the principal. In the most extreme case, one class will receive all of the interest (“IO” or interest-only class), while the other class will receive all of the principal (“PO” or principal-only class). The yield to maturity on IOs, POs and other mortgage-backed securities that are purchased at a substantial premium or discount generally are extremely sensitive not only to changes in prevailing interest rates but also to the rate of principal payments (including prepayments) on the related underlying mortgage assets, and a rapid rate of principal payments may have a material adverse effect on such securities’ yield to maturity. If the underlying mortgage assets experience greater than anticipated prepayments of principal, the Fund may fail to fully recoup its initial investment in these securities even if the securities have received the highest rating by a NRSRO.

SMBS have greater volatility than other types of securities. Although SMBS are purchased and sold by institutional investors through several investment banking firms acting as brokers or dealers, the market for such securities has not yet been fully developed. Accordingly, the secondary market for SMBS may be more volatile and have lower liquidity than that for other MBS, potentially limiting the Fund’s ability to buy or sell SMBS at any particular time.

*Collateralized mortgage obligations.* Another type of security representing an interest in a pool of mortgage loans is known as a collateralized mortgage obligation (“CMO”). CMOs represent interests in a short-term, intermediate-term or long-term portion of a mortgage pool. Each portion of the pool receives monthly interest payments, but the principal repayments pass through to the short-term CMO first and to the long-term CMO last. A CMO permits an investor to more accurately predict the rate of principal repayments. CMOs are issued by private issuers, such as broker-dealers, and by government agencies, such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Investments in CMOs are subject to the same risks as direct investments in the underlying mortgage-backed securities. In addition, in the event of a bankruptcy or other default of a broker that issued the CMO held by the Fund, the Fund could experience delays in liquidating both its position and losses. The Fund may invest in CMOs in any rating category of the recognized rating services and may invest in unrated CMOs. The Fund may also invest in “stripped” CMOs, which represent only the income portion or the principal portion of the CMO. The values of stripped CMOs are very sensitive to interest rate changes; accordingly, these instruments present a greater risk of loss than conventional mortgage-backed securities.

*Tiered index bonds.* Tiered index bonds are relatively new forms of mortgage-related securities. The interest rate on a tiered index bond is tied to a specified index or market rate. So long as this index or market rate is below a predetermined “strike” rate, the interest rate on the tiered index bond remains fixed. If, however, the specified index or market rate rises above the “strike” rate, the interest rate of the tiered index bond will decrease. Thus, under these circumstances, the interest rate on a tiered index bond, like an inverse floater, will move in the opposite direction of prevailing interest rates, with the result that the price of the tiered index bond would decline and may be considerably more volatile than that of a fixed-rate bond.

#### Other Asset-Backed Securities – Additional Information

Similar to mortgage-backed securities, other types of asset-backed securities may be issued by agencies or instrumentalities of the U.S. government (including those whose securities are neither guaranteed nor insured by the U.S. government), foreign governments (or their agencies or instrumentalities), or non-governmental issuers. These securities include securities backed by pools of automobile loans, educational loans, home equity loans, and credit card receivables. The underlying pools of assets are securitized through the use of trusts and special purpose entities. These securities may be subject to the risks described above under “Mortgage-Backed and Other Asset-Backed Securities — Generally,” including risks associated with changes in interest rates and prepayment of underlying obligations.

Certain types of asset-backed securities present additional risks that are not presented by mortgage-backed securities. In particular, certain types of asset-backed securities may not have the benefit of a security interest in the related assets. For example, many securities backed by credit card receivables are unsecured. Even when security interests are present, the ability of an issuer of certain types of asset-backed securities to enforce those interests may be more limited than that of an issuer of mortgage-backed securities. For instance, automobile receivables generally are secured by automobiles rather than by real property. Most issuers of automobile receivables permit loan servicers to retain possession of the underlying assets. In addition, because of the large number of underlying vehicles involved in a typical issue of asset-backed securities and technical

requirements under state law, the trustee for the holders of the automobile receivables may not have a proper security interest in all of the automobiles. Therefore, recoveries on repossessed automobiles may not be available to support payments on these securities.

In addition, certain types of asset-backed securities may experience losses on the underlying assets as a result of certain rights provided to consumer debtors under federal and state law. In the case of certain consumer debt, such as credit card debt, debtors are entitled to the protection of a number of state and federal consumer credit laws, many of which give such debtors the right to set off certain amounts owed on their credit cards (or other debt), thereby reducing their balances due. For instance, a debtor may be able to offset certain damages for which a court has determined that the creditor is liable to the debtor against amounts owed to the creditor by the debtor on his or her credit card.

Additionally, an asset-backed security is subject to risks associated with the servicing agent's or originator's performance. For example, a servicing agent or originator's mishandling of documentation related to the underlying collateral (e.g., failure to properly document a security interest in the underlying collateral) may affect the rights of the security holders in and to the underlying collateral.

*Asset-backed commercial paper.* The Fund may purchase commercial paper, including asset-backed commercial paper ("ABCP") that is issued by structured investment vehicles or other conduits. These conduits may be sponsored by mortgage companies, investment banking firms, finance companies, hedge funds, private equity firms and special purpose finance entities. ABCP typically refers to a debt security with an original term to maturity of up to 270 days, the payment of which is supported by cash flows from underlying assets, or one or more liquidity or credit support providers, or both. Assets backing ABCP, which may be included in revolving pools of assets with large numbers of obligors, include credit card, car loan and other consumer receivables and home or commercial mortgages, including subprime mortgages. The repayment of ABCP issued by a conduit depends primarily on the cash collections received from the conduit's underlying asset portfolio and the conduit's ability to issue new ABCP. Therefore, there could be losses to the Fund investing in ABCP in the event of credit or market value deterioration in the conduit's underlying portfolio, mismatches in the timing of the cash flows of the underlying asset interests and the repayment obligations of maturing ABCP, or the conduit's inability to issue new ABCP. To protect investors from these risks, ABCP programs may be structured with various protections, such as credit enhancement, liquidity support, and commercial paper stop-issuance and wind-down triggers. However there can be no guarantee that these protections will be sufficient to prevent losses to investors in ABCP.

Some ABCP programs provide for an extension of the maturity date of the ABCP if, on the related maturity date, the conduit is unable to access sufficient liquidity through the issue of additional ABCP. This may delay the sale of the underlying collateral and the Fund may incur a loss if the value of the collateral deteriorates during the extension period. Alternatively, if collateral for ABCP deteriorates in value, the collateral may be required to be sold at inopportune times or at prices insufficient to repay the principal and interest on the ABCP. ABCP programs may provide for the issuance of subordinated notes as an additional form of credit enhancement. The subordinated notes are typically of a lower credit quality and have a higher risk of default. A fund purchasing these subordinated notes will therefore have a higher likelihood of loss than investors in the senior notes.

*Collateralized debt obligations.* The Fund may invest in collateralized debt obligations ("CDOs"), which include collateralized bond obligations ("CBOs"), collateralized loan obligations ("CLOs") and other similarly structured securities. CDOs are types of asset-backed securities. A CBO is a trust or other special purpose entity ("SPE") which is typically backed by a diversified pool of fixed income securities (which may include high risk, below investment grade securities). A CLO is a trust or other SPE that is typically collateralized by a pool of loans, which may include, among others, domestic and non-U.S. senior secured loans, senior unsecured loans, and subordinate corporate loans, including loans that may be rated below investment grade or equivalent unrated loans. Although certain CDOs may receive credit enhancement in the form of a senior-subordinate structure, over-collateralization or bond insurance, such enhancement may not always be present, and may fail to protect the Fund against the risk of loss on default of the collateral. Certain CDOs may use derivatives contracts to create "synthetic" exposure to assets rather than holding such assets directly, which entails the risks of derivative instruments described elsewhere in this SAI. CDOs may charge management fees and administrative expenses, which are in addition to those of the Fund.

For both CBOs and CLOs, the cashflows from the SPE are split into two or more portions, called tranches, varying in risk and yield. The riskiest portion is the "equity" tranche, which bears the first loss from defaults from the bonds or loans in the SPE and serves to protect the other, more senior tranches from default (though such protection is not complete). Since it is partially protected from defaults, a senior tranche from a CBO or CLO typically has higher ratings and lower yields than its underlying

securities, and may be rated investment grade. Despite the protection from the equity tranche, CBO or CLO tranches can experience substantial losses due to actual defaults, increased sensitivity to defaults due to collateral default and disappearance of protecting tranches, market anticipation of defaults, as well as investor aversion to CBO or CLO securities as a class. Interest on certain tranches of a CDO may be paid in kind (paid in the form of obligations of the same type rather than cash), which involves continued exposure to default risk with respect to such payments.

The risks of an investment in a CDO depend largely on the type of the collateral securities and the class of the CDO in which the Fund invests. Normally, CBOs, CLOs and other CDOs are privately offered and sold, and thus, are not registered under the securities laws. As a result, investments in CDOs may be characterized by the Fund as illiquid securities. However, an active dealer market may exist for CDOs, allowing a CDO to qualify for Rule 144A transactions. In addition to the normal risks associated with fixed income securities discussed elsewhere in this SAI and the Prospectus (e.g., interest rate risk and credit risk), CDOs carry additional risks including, but not limited to: (i) the possibility that distributions from collateral securities will not be adequate to make interest or other payments; (ii) the collateral may decline in value or default or its credit rating may be downgraded, if rated by a nationally recognized statistical rating organization; (iii) the Fund may invest in tranches of CDOs that are subordinate to other tranches; (iv) the complex structure of the security may not be fully understood at the time of investment and may produce disputes with the issuer or unexpected investment results; and (v) the CDO's manager may perform poorly.

### Forward Roll Transactions

In a forward roll transaction, also known as a mortgage dollar roll, the Fund sells MBS for delivery in the current month and simultaneously contracts to repurchase substantially similar (same type, coupon and maturity) MBS on a specified future date. The Fund may enter into a forward roll transaction commitment with the intention of entering into an offsetting transaction whereby, rather than accepting delivery of the security on the specified future date, the Fund sells the security and then agrees to repurchase a similar security at a later time. In this case, the Fund forgoes interest on the security during the roll period and is compensated by the interest earned on the cash proceeds of the initial sale of the security and by the difference between the sale price and the lower repurchase price at the future date.

Forward roll transactions involve the risk that the market value of the securities the Fund is obligated to repurchase under the agreement may decline below the repurchase price. In the event the buyer of securities under a forward roll transaction files for bankruptcy or becomes insolvent, the Fund's use of proceeds of the forward roll transaction may be restricted pending a determination by the other party, or its trustee or receiver, whether to enforce the Fund's obligation to repurchase the securities.

Forward roll transactions may have a leveraging effect on the Fund, making the value of an investment in the Fund more volatile and increasing the Fund's overall investment exposure. Successful use of forward roll transactions may depend on the portfolio manager's ability to correctly predict interest rates and prepayments. There is no assurance that forward roll transactions can be successfully employed.

### **Municipal Securities**

Municipal securities (which are also referred to herein as "municipal obligations" or "municipal bonds") generally include debt obligations (including, but not limited to bonds, notes or commercial paper) issued by or on behalf of any of the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia and their political subdivisions, agencies and public authorities, certain other governmental issuers (such as Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam) or other qualifying issuers, participations or other interests in these securities and other related investments. The interest paid on municipal securities is generally excluded from gross income for regular U.S. federal income tax purposes, although it may be subject to a U.S. federal alternative minimum tax ("AMT"). To the extent the Fund invests in municipal securities, it does not anticipate holding municipal securities in sufficient quantities to qualify to pay exempt-interest dividends. As a result, distributions to Fund shareholders are expected to be treated for federal income tax purposes as ordinary dividends without regard to the character of any interest that was received on municipal securities.

Municipal securities are issued to obtain funds for various public purposes, including the construction of a wide range of public facilities, such as airports, bridges, highways, housing, hospitals, mass transportation, schools, streets, water and sewer works, gas, and electric utilities. They may also be issued to refund outstanding obligations, to obtain funds for general operating expenses, or to obtain funds to loan to other public institutions and facilities and in anticipation of the receipt of revenue or the issuance of other obligations.

The two principal classifications of municipal securities are “general obligation” securities and “limited obligation” or “revenue” securities. General obligation securities are secured by a municipal issuer’s pledge of its full faith, credit, and taxing power for the payment of principal and interest. Accordingly, the capacity of the issuer of a general obligation bond to pay interest and repay principal when due is affected by the issuer’s maintenance of its tax base. Revenue securities are payable only from the revenues derived from a particular facility or class of facilities or, in some cases, from the proceeds of a special excise tax or other specific revenue source. Accordingly, the timely payment of interest and the repayment of principal in accordance with the terms of the revenue security is a function of the economic viability of the facility or revenue source. Revenue securities include private activity bonds which are not payable from the unrestricted revenues of the issuer. Consequently, the credit quality of private activity bonds is usually directly related to the credit standing of the corporate user of the facility involved. Municipal securities may also include “moral obligation” bonds, which are normally issued by special purpose public authorities. If the issuer of moral obligation bonds is unable to meet its debt service obligations from current revenues, it may draw on a reserve fund the restoration of which is a moral commitment but not a legal obligation of the state or municipality which created the issuer.

*Municipal Leases.* Municipal leases or installment purchase contracts are issued by a U.S. state or local government to acquire equipment or facilities. Municipal leases frequently have special risks not normally associated with general obligation bonds or revenue bonds. Many leases include “non-appropriation” clauses that provide that the governmental issuer has no obligation to make future payments under the lease or contract unless money is appropriated for such purpose by the appropriate legislative body on a yearly or other periodic basis. Although the obligations are typically secured by the leased equipment or facilities, the disposition of the property in the event of non-appropriation or foreclosure might, in some cases, prove difficult or, if sold, may not fully cover the Fund’s exposure.

*Participation Interests.* Tax-exempt participation interests in municipal obligations (such as private activity bonds and municipal lease obligations) are typically issued by a financial institution. A participation interest gives the Fund an undivided interest in the municipal obligation in the proportion that the Fund’s participation interest bears to the total principal amount of the municipal obligation. Participation interests in municipal obligations may be backed by an irrevocable letter of credit or guarantee of, or a right to put to, a bank (which may be the bank issuing the participation interest, a bank issuing a confirming letter of credit to that of the issuing bank, or a bank serving as agent of the issuing bank with respect to the possible repurchase of the participation interest) or insurance policy of an insurance company. The Fund has the right to sell the participation interest back to the institution or draw on the letter of credit or insurance after a specified period of notice, for all or any part of the full principal amount of the Fund’s participation in the security, plus accrued interest.

Issuers of participation interests will retain a service and letter of credit fee and a fee for providing the liquidity feature, in an amount equal to the excess of the interest paid on the instruments over the negotiated yield at which the participations were purchased on behalf of the Fund. The issuer of the participation interest may bear the cost of insurance backing the participation interest, although the Fund may also purchase insurance, in which case the cost of insurance will be an expense of the Fund. Participation interests may be sold prior to maturity. Participation interests may include municipal lease obligations. Purchase of a participation interest may involve the risk that the Fund will not be deemed to be the owner of the underlying municipal obligation for purposes of the ability to claim tax exemption of interest paid on that municipal obligation.

#### Municipal Obligations of Other U.S. Territories

Municipal securities include the obligations of the governments of Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories and their political subdivisions (such as the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam). Payment of interest and preservation of principal is dependent upon the continuing ability of such issuers and/or obligors of territorial, municipal and public authority debt obligations to meet their obligations thereunder. The sources of payment for such obligations and the marketability thereof may be affected by financial and other difficulties experienced by such issuers.

*Puerto Rico.* Municipal securities of issuers located in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico may be affected by political, social and economic conditions in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico’s economy has been in a recession since late 2006, which has contributed to a steep increase in unemployment rates, funding shortfalls of state employees’ retirement systems, a budget deficit resulting from a structural imbalance, and reduced government revenues. In May 2017, Puerto Rico made a filing in the U.S. District Court in Puerto Rico to commence a debt restructuring process similar to that of a traditional municipal bankruptcy. Puerto Rico had previously defaulted on certain agency debt payments and the Governor had warned of its inability to meet additional pending obligations, including under general obligation bonds.

On March 15, 2022, Puerto Rico's government formally exited bankruptcy, completing the largest public debt restructuring in U.S. history. Puerto Rico's debt restructuring plan was approved by a federal judge in January 2022, and reduced claims against Puerto Rico's general obligation bonds from \$33 billion to just over \$7.4 billion. The restructuring did not resolve the bankruptcy proceedings for Puerto Rico's Electric Power Authority ("PREPA"), which owed nearly \$9 billion, the largest debt of any government agency. Since 2024, multiple amended restructuring proposals for PREPA have been filed, and negotiations have involved ongoing litigation among creditors, the Puerto Rico Oversight Board and other stakeholders. In March 2025, the Oversight Board filed its Fifth Amended Plan of Adjustment, seeking to cut PREPA's debt by nearly 80%, a plan which is heavily disputed by some bondholders. The PREPA restructuring remains unresolved and the timing and outcome remain uncertain. The continued debt restructuring process could adversely affect the value of Puerto Rico municipal securities, including Puerto Rico municipal securities that are not subject to the debt restructuring process. In addition, Puerto Rico municipal securities remain subject to all of the other risks applicable to fixed income securities, including the risk of non-payment. To the extent that the Fund holds any Puerto Rico municipal securities, the Fund may lose some or all of the value of those investments.

Additionally, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have also caused unprecedented damage to Puerto Rico's economy. Because of Puerto Rico's close ties to the United States' mainland economy, a downturn in the U.S. economy indirectly affects Puerto Rico. These indirect impacts stem from the slowdown of the overall U.S. economy and the continued threat of a prolonged recession that will affect many industries, including retail, manufacturing, oil and gas, tourism, gaming and lodging, transportation, healthcare, and education, to name a few. Government revenue collections have been materially adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, Puerto Rico has faced significant out-migration relating to its economic difficulties, eroding the Commonwealth's economic base and creating additional further uncertainty regarding its ability to meet its future repayment obligations. The Puerto Rican constitution prioritizes general obligation bonds over revenue bonds, so that all tax revenues, even those pledged to revenue bondholders, can be applied first to general obligation bonds and other Commonwealth-guaranteed debt if other revenues are insufficient to satisfy such obligations.

The following is a brief summary of certain factors affecting Puerto Rico's economy and does not purport to be a complete description of such factors.

The dominant sectors of the Puerto Rico economy are manufacturing and services. The manufacturing sector has undergone fundamental changes over the years as a result of increased emphasis on higher wage, high technology industries, such as pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, computers, microprocessors, professional and scientific instruments, and certain high technology machinery and equipment. The services sector, including finance, insurance, real estate, wholesale and retail trade, transportation, communications and public utilities and other services, also plays a major role in the economy. It ranks second only to manufacturing in contribution to the gross domestic product and leads all sectors in providing employment.

Most external factors that affect the Puerto Rico economy are determined by the policies and performance of the United States. These external factors include exports, direct investment, the amount of federal transfer payments, the level of interest rates, the rate of inflation, and tourist expenditures.

*Guam.* General obligations and/or revenue bonds of issuers located in Guam may be affected by political, social and economic conditions in Guam. The following is a brief summary of factors affecting the economy of Guam and does not purport to be a complete description of such factors.

Guam, the westernmost territory of the U.S., is located 3,800 miles to the west-southwest of Honolulu, Hawaii and approximately 1,550 miles south-southeast of Tokyo, Japan. The population of Guam was estimated to be 168,999 in July 2025. Guam's unemployment rate was at 3.2% as of June 2025.

Guam's economy depends in large measure on tourism and the U.S. military presence, each of which is subject to uncertainties as a result of global economic, social and political events. Tourism, particularly from Japan, which has been a source of a majority of visitors to Guam, represents the primary source of income for Guam's economy. A weak economy, war, severe weather, epidemic outbreaks or the threat of terrorist activity, among other influences that are beyond Guam's control, can adversely affect its tourism industry. Guam is also exposed to periodic typhoons, tropical storms, super typhoons and earthquakes, such as the Super Typhoon Mawar in May 2023, which caused widespread damage and disruptions across the island. The U.S. military presence also affects economic activity on Guam in various ways and recently has been a positive contributor to the economy. The U.S. Department of Defense recently opened a third U.S. military base in Guam. Nevertheless,

economic, geopolitical, and other influences which are beyond Guam's control could cause the U.S. military to reduce its existing presence on Guam or forgo any planned enhancements to its presence on Guam. Any reduction in tourism or the U.S. military presence could adversely affect Guam's economy.

*United States Virgin Islands.* General obligations and/or revenue bonds of issuers located in the U.S. Virgin Islands may be affected by political, social and economic conditions in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The territory has experienced high levels of debt, increasing pension obligations and a declining population. The credit rating of certain bonds issued by the territory are rated below investment grade due to a perceived increased possibility that the territory may be forced to restructure its debts to address its financial problems.

In September 2017, the territory was hit by two hurricanes within the span of two weeks. Together, the hurricanes caused significant damage to the most populated islands, including to their infrastructure, hospitals, homes and other structures.

The following is a brief summary of factors affecting the economy of the U.S. Virgin Islands and does not purport to be a complete description of such factors.

The U.S. Virgin Islands consists of four main islands: St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John, and Water Island and approximately 70 smaller islands, islets and cays. The total land area is about twice the size of Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Virgin Islands is located 60 miles east of Puerto Rico and 1,075 miles south of Miami, Florida in the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The population of the U.S. Virgin Islands was estimated to be 84,138 in July 2025.

Tourism, trade, and other services, including manufacturing (rum distilling, watch assembly, pharmaceuticals, and electronics), are the primary economic activities, accounting for a substantial portion of the Virgin Islands' gross domestic product and civilian employment. The agricultural sector is small, with most of the islands' food being imported. A weak economy, severe weather, war, epidemic outbreaks or the threat of terrorist activity, among other influences that are beyond the control of the territory, can adversely affect its tourism and other industries. The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a significant effect on the tourism industry in the Virgin Islands. The coastal and marine communities of the U.S. Virgin Islands are susceptible to climate change, including warming water temperatures, increasing storm intensity, beach erosion, ocean acidification, increasing hazardous coastal conditions, and loss of life-sustaining marine, coastal and island resources. Climate change is anticipated to add to the stresses of coastal environments by altering temperatures and precipitation patterns, increasing the likelihood of extreme precipitation events, and accelerating rates of sea level rise.

## **Preferred Securities**

There are two basic types of preferred securities: traditional and hybrid-preferred securities. Traditional preferred securities consist of preferred stock issued by an entity taxable as a corporation. Preferred stocks, which may offer fixed or floating rate dividends, are perpetual instruments and considered equity securities. Preferred stocks are subordinated to debt instruments in a company's capital structure, in terms of priority to corporate income and claim to corporate assets, and therefore will be subject to greater credit risk than debt instruments. Alternatively, hybrid-preferred securities may be issued by corporations, generally in the form of interest-bearing notes with preferred securities characteristics, or by an affiliated trust or partnership of the corporation, generally in the form of preferred interests in subordinated debentures or similarly structured securities. The hybrid-preferred securities market consists of both fixed and adjustable coupon rate securities that are either perpetual in nature or have stated maturity dates.

*Traditional Preferred Securities.* Traditional preferred securities pay fixed or floating dividends to investors and have "preference" over common stock in the payment of dividends and the liquidation of a company's assets. This means that a company must pay dividends on preferred stock before paying any dividends on its common stock. In order to be payable, distributions on such preferred securities must be declared by the issuer's board of directors. Income payments on preferred securities may be cumulative, causing dividends and distributions to accumulate even if not declared by the board of directors or otherwise made payable. In such a case, all accumulated dividends must be paid before any dividend on the common stock can be paid. However, many traditional preferred stocks are non-cumulative, in which case dividends do not accumulate and need not ever be paid. There is no assurance that dividends or distributions on the traditional preferred securities in which the Fund invests will be declared or otherwise made payable. Preferred securities may also contain provisions under which payments must be stopped (i.e., stoppage is compulsory, not discretionary). The conditions under which this occurs may relate to, for instance, capitalization levels. Hence, if a company incurs significant losses that deplete retained earnings automatic payment stoppage

could occur. In some cases the terms of the preferred securities provide that the issuer would be obligated to attempt to issue common shares to raise funds for the purpose of making the preferred payments. However, there is no guarantee that the issuer would be successful in placing common shares.

Preferred stockholders usually have no right to vote for corporate directors or on other matters. Shares of traditional preferred securities have a liquidation preference that generally equals the original purchase price at the date of issuance. The market value of preferred securities may be affected by, among other factors, favorable and unfavorable changes impacting the issuer or industries in which they operate, movements in interest rates and inflation, and the broader economic and credit environments, and by actual and anticipated changes in tax laws, such as changes in corporate and individual income tax rates. Because the claim on an issuer's earnings represented by traditional preferred securities may become onerous when interest rates fall below the rate payable on such securities, the issuer may redeem the securities. Thus, in declining interest rate environments in particular, the Fund's holdings of higher rate-paying fixed rate preferred securities may be reduced, and the Fund may be unable to acquire securities of comparable credit quality paying comparable rates with the redemption proceeds.

*Hybrid-Preferred Securities.* Hybrid-preferred securities are typically junior and fully subordinated liabilities of an issuer or the beneficiary of a guarantee that is junior and fully subordinated to the other liabilities of the guarantor. In addition, hybrid-preferred securities typically permit an issuer to defer the payment of income for eighteen months or more without triggering an event of default. Generally, the maximum deferral period is five years. Because of their subordinated position in the capital structure of an issuer, the ability to defer payments for extended periods of time without default consequences to the issuer, and certain other features (such as restrictions on common dividend payments by the issuer or ultimate guarantor when full cumulative payments on the hybrid preferred securities have not been made), these hybrid-preferred securities are often treated as close substitutes for traditional preferred securities, both by issuers and investors. Hybrid-preferred securities have many of the key characteristics of equity due to their subordinated position in an issuer's capital structure and because their quality and value are heavily dependent on the profitability of the issuer rather than on any legal claims to specific assets or cash flows. Hybrid-preferred securities include, but are not limited to, trust preferred securities (TRUPS<sup>®</sup>); enhanced trust preferred securities (Enhanced TRUPS<sup>®</sup>); trust-originated preferred securities (TOPrS<sup>®</sup>); monthly-income preferred securities (MIPS<sup>®</sup>); quarterly-income bond securities (QUIBS<sup>®</sup>); quarterly-income debt securities (QUIDS<sup>®</sup>); quarterly-income preferred securities (QUIPS<sup>SM</sup>); corporate trust securities (CorTS<sup>®</sup>); public income notes (PINES<sup>®</sup>); and other hybrid-preferred securities. Hybrid-preferred securities are typically issued with a final maturity date. In certain instances, a final maturity date may be extended and/or the final payment of principal may be deferred at the issuer's option for a specified time without default. No redemption can typically take place unless all cumulative payment obligations have been met, although issuers may be able to engage in open-market repurchases without regard to whether all payments have been paid.

Many hybrid-preferred securities are issued by trusts or other special purpose entities established by operating companies and are not a direct obligation of an operating company. At the time the trust or special purpose entity sells such preferred securities to investors, it purchases debt of the operating company (with terms comparable to those of the trust or special purpose entity securities), and the operating company deducts for tax purposes the interest paid on the debt held by the trust or special purpose entity. The trust or special purpose entity is generally required to be treated as transparent for U.S. federal income tax purposes such that the holders of the trust preferred securities are treated as owning beneficial interests in the underlying debt of the operating company. Accordingly, payments on the hybrid-preferred securities are generally treated as interest rather than dividends for U.S. federal income tax purposes and, as such, are not eligible for the dividends-received deduction for corporate taxpayers or the reduced rates of tax that apply to qualified dividend income for non-corporate taxpayers. The trust or special purpose entity in turn is a holder of the operating company's debt and has priority with respect to the operating company's earnings and profits over the operating company's common stockholders, but is typically subordinated to other classes of the operating company's debt. Typically a preferred security has a credit rating that is lower than that of its corresponding operating company's senior debt securities.

Within the category of hybrid-preferred securities are senior debt instruments that trade in the broader preferred securities market. These debt instruments, which are sources of long-term capital for the issuers, have structural features similar to other preferred securities such as maturities ranging from 30 years to perpetuity, call features, quarterly payments, exchange listings and the inclusion of accrued interest in the trading price. Preferred securities may be subject to changes in regulations and there can be no assurance that the current regulatory treatment of preferred securities will continue.

## **Ratings as Investment Criteria**

In general, the ratings of NRSROs represent the opinions of these agencies as to the quality of securities that they rate. Such ratings, however, are relative and subjective, are not absolute standards of quality and do not evaluate the market value risk of the securities. These ratings will be used by the Fund as initial criteria for the selection of portfolio securities, but the Fund also will rely upon the independent advice of the portfolio manager to evaluate potential investments. Among the factors that will be considered are the long-term ability of the issuer to pay principal and interest and general economic trends. Appendix B to this SAI contains further information concerning the rating categories of NRSROs and their significance.

If a security is rated by different agencies and receives different ratings from these agencies, the Fund will consider bonds to be below investment grade if they are rated below Baa/BBB by all three NRSROs, or, if unrated, determined by the Subadviser to be of comparable quality. The Subadviser will consider a security's quality and credit rating when determining whether such security is an appropriate investment. Subject to its investment objective, policies and applicable law, the Fund may purchase a security with the lowest rating.

In addition to ratings assigned to individual bond issues, the Subadviser will analyze interest rate trends and developments that may affect individual issuers, including factors such as liquidity, profitability and asset quality. The yields on bonds and other debt securities in which the Fund invests are dependent on a variety of factors, including general money market conditions, general conditions in the bond market, the financial conditions of the issuer, the size of the offering, the maturity of the obligation and its rating. There may be a wide variation in the quality of bonds, both within a particular classification and between classifications. A bond issuer's obligations are subject to the provisions of bankruptcy, insolvency and other laws affecting the rights and remedies of bond holders or other creditors of an issuer; litigation or other conditions may also adversely affect the power or ability of bond issuers to meet their obligations for the payment of principal and interest. Regardless of rating levels, all debt securities considered for purchase (whether rated or unrated) are analyzed by the Subadviser to determine, to the extent possible, that the planned investment is sound.

If an investment grade security purchased by the Fund is subsequently given a rating below investment grade, the Subadviser will consider that fact in determining whether to retain that security in the Fund's portfolio, but is not required to dispose of it.

## **Repurchase Agreements**

Under the terms of a typical repurchase agreement, the Fund would acquire one or more underlying debt securities from a counterparty (typically a bank or a broker-dealer), subject to the counterparty's obligation to repurchase, and the Fund to resell, the securities at an agreed-upon time and price. The Fund may enter into repurchase agreements where the underlying collateral consists entirely of cash items and/or securities of the U.S. Government, its agencies, its instrumentalities, or U.S. Government sponsored enterprises. The Fund may also enter into repurchase agreements where the underlying collateral consists of other types of securities, including securities the Fund could not purchase directly. For such repurchase agreements, the underlying securities which serve as collateral may include, but are not limited to, U.S. government securities, municipal securities, corporate debt obligations, asset-backed securities (including collateralized mortgage obligations ("CMOs")), convertible securities and common and preferred stock and may be of below investment grade quality. The repurchase price is typically greater than the purchase price paid by the Fund, thereby determining the Fund's yield. A repurchase agreement is similar to, and may be treated as, a secured loan, where the Fund loans cash to the counterparty and the loan is secured by the underlying securities as collateral. All repurchase agreements entered into by the Fund are required to be collateralized so that at all times during the term of a repurchase agreement, the value of the underlying securities is at least equal to the amount of the repurchase price. Also, the Fund or its custodian is required to have control of the collateral, which the portfolio manager believes will give the Fund a valid, perfected security interest in the collateral.

Repurchase agreements could involve certain risks in the event of default or insolvency of the counterparty, including possible delays or restrictions upon the Fund's ability to dispose of the underlying securities, the risk of a possible decline in the value of the underlying securities during the period in which the Fund seeks to assert its right to them, the risk that there may be a limited market or no market for disposition of such underlying securities, the risk of incurring expenses associated with asserting those rights and the risk of losing all or part of the income from the agreement. The Fund will seek to mitigate these risks but there is no guarantee that such efforts will be successful. If the Fund enters into a repurchase agreement involving securities the Fund could not purchase directly, and the counterparty defaults, the Fund may become the holder of such securities. Repurchase agreements collateralized by securities other than U.S. government securities may be subject to greater

risks and are more likely to have a term to maturity of longer than seven days. Repurchase agreements with a maturity of more than seven days are considered to be illiquid.

Repurchase agreements may be entered into or novated with a financial clearinghouse, which would become the Fund's counterparty. The Fund would then become subject to the rules of the clearinghouse, which may limit the Fund's rights and remedies (including recourse to collateral) or delay or restrict the rights and remedies, and expose the Fund to the risks of the clearinghouses' insolvency.

Pursuant to an exemptive order issued by the SEC, the Fund, along with other affiliated entities managed by the Manager, may transfer uninvested cash balances into one or more joint accounts for the purpose of entering into repurchase agreements secured by cash and U.S. government securities, subject to certain conditions.

### **Reverse Repurchase Agreements**

The Fund may enter into reverse repurchase agreements. A reverse repurchase agreement has the characteristics of a secured borrowing by the Fund and creates leverage in the Fund's portfolio. In a reverse repurchase transaction, the Fund sells a portfolio instrument to another person, such as a financial institution or broker-dealer, in return for cash. At the same time, the Fund agrees to repurchase the instrument at an agreed-upon time and at a price that is greater than the amount of cash that the Fund received when it sold the instrument, representing the equivalent of an interest payment by the Fund for the use of the cash. During the term of the transaction, the Fund will continue to receive any principal and interest payments (or the equivalent thereof) on the underlying instruments.

The Fund may engage in reverse repurchase agreements as a means of raising cash to satisfy redemption requests or for other temporary or emergency purposes. Unless otherwise limited in the Fund's Prospectus or this SAI, the Fund may also engage in reverse repurchase agreements to the extent permitted by its fundamental investment policies in order to raise additional cash to be invested by the Fund's portfolio manager in other securities or instruments in an effort to increase the Fund's investment returns.

During the term of the transaction, the Fund will remain at risk for any fluctuations in the market value of the instruments subject to the reverse repurchase agreement as if it had not entered into the transaction. When the Fund reinvests the proceeds of a reverse repurchase agreement in other securities, the Fund will also be at risk for any fluctuations in the market value of the securities in which the proceeds are invested. Like other forms of leverage, this makes the value of an investment in the Fund more volatile and increases the Fund's overall investment exposure. In addition, if the Fund's return on its investment of the proceeds of the reverse repurchase agreement does not equal or exceed the implied interest that it is obligated to pay under the reverse repurchase agreement, engaging in the transaction will lower the Fund's return.

When the Fund enters into a reverse repurchase agreement, it is subject to the risk that the buyer under the agreement may file for bankruptcy, become insolvent or otherwise default on its obligations to the Fund. In the event of a default by the counterparty, there may be delays, costs and risks of loss involved in the Fund's exercising its rights under the agreement, or those rights may be limited by other contractual agreements or obligations or by applicable law.

In addition, the Fund may be unable to sell the instruments subject to the reverse repurchase agreement at a time when it would be advantageous to do so, or may be required to liquidate portfolio securities at a time when it would be disadvantageous to do so in order to make payments with respect to its obligations under a reverse repurchase agreement. This could adversely affect the Fund's strategy and result in lower fund returns.

The Fund will treat reverse repurchase agreements and similar financing transactions either (i) consistently with Section 18 of the 1940 Act by maintaining asset coverage of at least 300% of the value of such transactions or (ii) as derivatives transactions for purposes of Rule 18f-4, including, as applicable, the value-at-risk based limit on leverage risk.

### **Securities Lending**

The Fund may lend its portfolio securities, provided that cash or equivalent collateral, equal to at least 100% of the market value of such securities, is continuously maintained by the other party with the Fund. During the pendency of the transaction, the other party will pay the Fund an amount equivalent to any dividends or interest paid on such securities, and the Fund may invest the cash collateral and earn additional income, or it may receive an agreed upon amount of interest income from the other party who has delivered equivalent collateral. These transactions are subject to termination at the option of the Fund or

the other party. The Fund may pay administrative and custodial fees in connection with these transactions and may pay a negotiated portion of the interest earned on the cash or equivalent collateral to the other party or placing agent or broker. Although voting rights or rights to consent with respect to the relevant securities generally pass to the other party, the Fund will make arrangements to vote or consent with respect to a material event affecting such securities. The risks in lending portfolio securities include possible delays in recovering or the failure to recover the securities and possible loss of rights in the collateral should the borrower fail financially. The Fund runs the risk that the counterparty to a loan transaction will default on its obligation and that the value of the collateral received may decline before the Fund can dispose of it. If the Fund receives cash as collateral and invests that cash, the Fund is subject to the risk that the collateral will decline in value before the Fund must return it to the counterparty. Subject to the foregoing, loans of fund securities are effectively borrowings by the Fund and have economic characteristics similar to reverse repurchase agreements. The Fund does not currently intend to engage in securities lending, although it may engage in transactions (such as reverse repurchase agreements) which have similar characteristics.

### **Structured Notes and Related Instruments**

"Structured" notes and other related instruments, including indexed securities, are derivative debt instruments, the interest rate or principal of which is determined by an unrelated underlying instrument (for example, a currency, security, commodity or index thereof). Structured instruments are generally privately negotiated debt obligations issued by corporations, including banks, as well as by governmental agencies and frequently are assembled in the form of medium-term notes, but a variety of forms are available and may be used in particular circumstances. The terms of such structured instruments normally provide that their principal and/or interest payments are to be adjusted upwards or downwards (but ordinarily not below zero) to reflect changes in the underlying instrument while the instruments are outstanding. As a result, the interest and/or principal payments that may be made on a structured product may vary widely. The rate of return on structured notes may be determined by applying a multiplier to the performance or differential performance of the underlying instrument or other asset(s). Application of a multiplier involves leverage that will serve to magnify the potential for gain and the risk of loss. Investment in indexed securities and structured notes involves certain risks, including the credit risk of the issuer and the normal risks of price changes in response to changes in interest rates. Further, in the case of certain indexed securities or structured notes, a decline in the underlying instrument may cause the interest rate to be reduced to zero, and any further declines in the underlying instrument may then reduce the principal amount payable on maturity. Finally, these securities may have lower liquidity than other types of securities and may be more volatile than their underlying instruments. Subordinated "structured" notes, which are subordinated to the right of payment of another class of the structured note, typically have higher yields and present greater risks than unsubordinated "structured" notes.

### **Temporary Defensive Investing**

The Fund may depart from its principal investment strategies in response to adverse market, economic or political conditions by taking temporary defensive positions, including by investing in any type of investment grade, government, corporate and money market instruments and short-term debt securities or holding cash without regard to any percentage limitations. If a significant amount of the Fund's assets is used for defensive investing purposes, the Fund will be less likely to achieve its investment objective. Although the portfolio manager has the ability to take defensive positions, they may choose not to do so for a variety of reasons, even during volatile market conditions.

### **Trade Policy**

The U.S. government has indicated its intent to alter its approach to international trade policy and, in some cases, to renegotiate or potentially terminate certain existing bilateral or multilateral trade agreements and treaties with foreign countries and has made proposals and taken actions related thereto. In addition, the U.S. government has recently imposed tariffs on certain foreign goods and has indicated a willingness to impose tariffs on imports of other products. Some foreign governments have instituted retaliatory tariffs on certain U.S. goods and have indicated a willingness to impose additional tariffs on U.S. products. Other countries have threatened retaliatory tariffs on certain U.S. products.

Global trade disruption, significant introductions of trade barriers, and bilateral trade frictions, together with any future downturns in the global economy resulting therefrom, could adversely affect the financial performance of the Fund and its investments. Trade policy may be an ongoing source of instability, potentially resulting in significant currency fluctuations and/or having other adverse effects on international markets, international trade agreements, and/or other existing cross-border cooperation arrangements (whether economic, tax, fiscal, legal, regulatory, or otherwise). To the extent trade disputes escalate

globally, there could be additional significant impacts on the sectors or industries in which the Fund invests and other adverse impacts on the Fund's overall performance.

## **U.S. Government Securities**

U.S. Government securities include (1) U.S. Treasury bills (maturity of one year or less), U.S. Treasury notes (maturity of one to ten years) and U.S. Treasury bonds (maturities generally greater than ten years); (2) obligations issued or guaranteed by U.S. Government agencies or instrumentalities which are supported by any of the following: (a) the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government (such as certificates issued by the Government National Mortgage Association ("Ginnie Mae")); (b) the right of the issuer to borrow an amount limited to a specific line of credit from the U.S. Government (such as obligations of the Federal Home Loan Banks); (c) the discretionary authority of the U.S. Government to purchase certain obligations of agencies or instrumentalities (such as securities issued by the Federal National Mortgage Association); or (d) only the credit of the agency or instrumentality (such as securities issued by the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation); and (3) obligations issued by non-governmental entities (like financial institutions) that carry direct guarantees from U.S. government agencies as part of government initiatives in response to a market crisis or otherwise. Agencies and instrumentalities of the U.S. Government include but are not limited to: Farmers Home Administration, Export-Import Bank of the United States, Federal Housing Administration, Federal Land Banks, Federal Financing Bank, Central Bank for Cooperatives, Federal Intermediate Credit Banks, Farm Credit Bank System, Federal Home Loan Banks, Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, Federal National Mortgage Association, General Services Administration, Government National Mortgage Association, Student Loan Marketing Association, United States Postal Service, Maritime Administration, Small Business Administration, Tennessee Valley Authority, Washington D.C. Army Board and any other instrumentality established or sponsored by the U.S. Government.

In the case of obligations not backed by the full faith and credit of the United States, the Fund must look principally to the agency or instrumentality issuing or guaranteeing the obligation for ultimate repayment and may not be able to assert a claim against the United States itself in the event the agency or instrumentality does not meet its commitments. Neither the U.S. Government nor any of its agencies or instrumentalities guarantees the market value of the securities they issue. Therefore, the market value of such securities will fluctuate in response to changes in interest rates and other factors. In addition, any downgrade of the credit rating of the securities issued by the U.S. Government may result in a downgrade of securities issued by its agencies or instrumentalities, including government-sponsored entities. From time to time, uncertainty regarding the status of negotiations in the U.S. government to increase the statutory debt ceiling could increase the risk that the U.S. government may default on payments on certain U.S. government securities, cause the credit rating of the U.S. government to be downgraded, increase volatility in the stock and bond markets, result in higher interest rates, reduce prices of U.S. Treasury securities, and/or increase the costs of various kinds of debt. If a U.S. Government-sponsored entity is negatively impacted by legislative or regulatory action (or lack thereof), is unable to meet its obligations, or its creditworthiness declines, the performance of a fund that holds securities of the entity will be adversely impacted.

## **Variable and Floating Rate Securities**

Variable and floating rate securities provide for a periodic adjustment in the interest rate paid on the obligations. The terms of such obligations provide that interest rates are adjusted periodically based upon an interest rate adjustment index as provided in the respective obligations. The adjustment intervals may be regular, and range from daily up to annually, or may be event-based, such as based on a change in the prime rate.

The Fund may invest in floating rate debt instruments ("floaters") and engage in credit spread trades. The interest rate on a floater is a variable rate which is tied to another interest rate, such as a corporate bond index or U.S. Treasury bill rate. The interest rate on a floater resets periodically, typically every six months. While, because of the interest rate reset feature, floaters may provide the Fund with a certain degree of protection against rising interest rates, the Fund will participate in any declines in interest rates as well. A credit spread trade is an investment position relating to a difference in the prices or interest rates of two bonds or other securities or currencies, where the value of the investment position is determined by movements in the difference between the prices or interest rates, as the case may be, of the respective securities or currencies.

The Fund may also invest in inverse floating rate debt instruments ("inverse floaters"). The interest rate on an inverse floater resets in the opposite direction from the market rate of interest to which the inverse floater is indexed. An inverse floating rate security may exhibit greater price volatility than a fixed rate obligation of similar credit quality.

A floater may be considered to be leveraged to the extent that its interest rate varies by a magnitude that exceeds the magnitude of the change in the index rate of interest. The higher degree of leverage inherent in some floaters is associated with greater volatility in their market values.

The Fund may also invest in variable amount master demand notes, which permit the indebtedness thereunder to vary in addition to providing for periodic adjustments in the interest rate. The absence of an active secondary market with respect to particular variable and floating rate instruments could make it difficult for the Fund to dispose of a variable or floating rate note if the issuer were to default on its payment obligation or during periods that the Fund is not entitled to exercise its demand rights, and the Fund could, for these or other reasons, suffer a loss with respect to such instruments. In determining average-weighted portfolio maturity, an instrument will be deemed to have a maturity equal to either the period remaining until the next interest rate adjustment or the time the Fund can recover payment of principal as specified in the instrument, depending on the type of instrument involved.

### **When-Issued Securities and Forward Commitments**

Securities may be purchased on a “when-issued” or “to be announced” or “forward delivery” basis. The payment obligation and the interest rate that will be received on the “when-issued” securities are fixed at the time the buyer enters into the commitment although settlement, i.e., delivery of and payment for the securities, takes place at a later date. In a “to be announced” transaction, the Fund commits to purchase securities for which all specific information is not known at the time of the trade.

Securities purchased on a “when-issued” or “forward delivery” basis are subject to changes in value based upon the market’s perception of the creditworthiness of the issuer and changes, real or anticipated, in the level of interest rates. The value of these securities experiences appreciation when interest rates decline and depreciation when interest rates rise. Purchasing securities on a “when-issued” or “forward delivery” basis can involve a risk that the yields available in the market on the settlement date may actually be higher or lower than those obtained in the transaction itself.

An increase in the percentage of the Fund’s assets committed to the purchase of securities on a “when-issued” basis may increase the volatility of its net asset value.

### **Zero Coupon, Pay-In-Kind and Deferred Interest Securities**

*Zero Coupon Bond.* A zero coupon bond is a security that makes no fixed interest payments but instead is sold at a discount from its face value. The bond is redeemed at its face value on the specified maturity date. Zero coupon bonds may be issued as such, or they may be created by a broker who strips the coupons from a bond and separately sells the rights to receive principal and interest. The prices of zero coupon bonds tend to fluctuate more in response to changes in market interest rates than do the prices of interest-paying debt securities with similar maturities. Zero coupon bonds with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance will be treated as debt obligations that are issued originally at a discount for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Generally, the original issue discount (“OID”) is treated as interest income and is included in the Fund’s income and required to be distributed by the Fund over the term of the bond, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, upon partial or full repayment or disposition of the bond. The Fund may thus be required to pay out as an income distribution each year an amount which is greater than the total amount of cash the Fund actually received, and may have to dispose of other securities, including at times when it may be disadvantageous to do so, to generate the cash necessary for the distribution of income attributable to its zero coupon bonds.

*Pay-In-Kind Securities.* Pay-in-kind securities are bonds which pay interest through the issuance of additional debt or equity securities. Pay-in-kind securities have characteristics similar to those of zero coupon securities, but interest on such securities may be paid in the form of obligations of the same type rather than cash. Similar to zero coupon obligations, pay-in-kind bonds also carry additional risk as holders of these types of securities realize no cash until the cash payment date unless a portion of such securities is sold and, if the issuer defaults, the Fund may obtain no return at all on its investment. The market price of pay-in-kind bonds is affected by interest rate changes to a greater extent, and therefore tends to be more volatile, than that of securities which pay interest in cash. Similar to zero coupon bonds, current U.S. federal income tax law requires the holder of pay-in-kind bonds to accrue income with respect to these securities prior to the receipt of cash payments. To maintain its qualification as a regulated investment company and avoid liability for U.S. federal income and excise taxes, the Fund may be required to distribute income accrued with respect to these securities and may have to dispose of portfolio securities under disadvantageous circumstances in order to generate cash to satisfy these distribution requirements.

*Deferred Interest Bonds.* Deferred interest bonds are debt obligations that generally provide for a period of delay before the regular payment of interest begins and that are issued at a significant discount from face value. The original discount approximates the total amount of interest the bonds will accrue and compound over the period until the first interest accrual date at a rate of interest reflecting the market rate of the security at the time of issuance. Although this period of delay is different for each deferred interest bond, a typical period is approximately one-third of the bond's term to maturity. Such investments benefit the issuer by mitigating its initial need for cash to meet debt service, but some also provide a higher rate of return to attract investors who are willing to defer receipt of such cash.

Zero-coupon, pay-in-kind and deferred interest securities may be subject to greater fluctuation in value and lesser liquidity in the event of adverse market conditions than comparably rated securities paying cash interest at regular interest payment periods.

## MANAGEMENT

### Trustees and Officers

The business and affairs of the Fund are conducted by management under the supervision and subject to the direction of its Board. The business address of each Trustee (including each Independent Trustee) is c/o Jane Trust, Franklin Templeton, 100 International Drive, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. The tables below provide information about each of the Trustees and officers of the Trust.

#### Independent Trustees<sup>#</sup>:

Name and Year of Birth	Position(s) with Trust	Term of Office* and Year Service Began**	Principal Occupation(s) During the Past Five Years	Number of Funds in the Franklin Templeton Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee***	Other Board Memberships Held by Trustee During the Past Five Years
Andrew L. Breech Born 1952	Trustee	Since 1991	President, Dealer Operating Control Service, Inc. (automotive retail management) (since 1985)	48	None
Stephen R. Gross Born 1947	Trustee	Since 1986	Chairman Emeritus (since 2011) and formerly, Chairman, HLB Gross Collins, P.C. (accounting and consulting firm) (1979 to 2011); Principal, Gross Consulting Group, LLC (since 2011); CEO, Gross Capital Partners, LLC (since 2014); Chief Financial Officer, Hegemon Holdings LLC (insurance) (since 2019); formerly, CEO, Trusted CFO Solutions, LLC (2011 to 2024)	48	None
Susan M. Heilbron Born 1945	Trustee	Since 1991	Retired; formerly, President, Lacey & Heilbron (communications consulting) (1990 to 2002); General Counsel and Executive Vice President, The Trump Organization (1986 to 1990); Senior Vice President, New York State Urban Development Corporation (1984 to 1986); Associate, Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP (1980 to 1984 and 1977 to 1979)	48	None

Arnold L. Lehman Born 1944	Trustee	Since 1982	Consultant; formerly, Senior Advisor, Phillips (auction house) (2015 to 2023); Fellow Ford Foundation (2015 to 2016); Director of the Brooklyn Museum (1997 to 2015)	48	Trustee of American Federation of Arts (since 2002)
Robin J.W. Masters Born 1955	Trustee	Since 2002	Retired; formerly, Chief Investment Officer of ACE Limited (insurance) (1986 to 2000)	48	Director of HSBC Corporate Money Funds Limited, HSBC Managed Portfolios Limited and HSBC Specialist Funds Limited (since 2020); formerly, Director of Cheyne Capital International Limited (investment advisory firm) (2005 to 2020)
G. Peter O'Brien Born 1945	Trustee and Chair of the Board	Since 1999 (Chair of the Board since 2024)	Retired; Trustee Emeritus of Colgate University (since 2005); Board Member, Hill House, Inc. (residential home care) (since 1999); formerly, Board Member, Bridges School (pre-school) (2006 to 2017); Managing Director, Equity Capital Markets Group of Merrill Lynch & Co. (1971 to 1999)	48	Formerly, Director and Trustee of the Royce Family of Funds (15 funds) (2001 to 2025); Director of TICC Capital Corp. (2003 to 2017)
Thomas F. Schlafly Born 1948	Trustee	Since 1983	Chairman, The Saint Louis Brewery, LLC (brewery) (since 2012); formerly, President, The Saint Louis Brewery, Inc. (1989 to 2012); Senior Counsel (since 2017) and formerly, Partner (2009 to 2016), Thompson Coburn LLP (law firm)	48	Director, CNB St. Louis Bank (since 2020); formerly, Director, Citizens National Bank of Greater St. Louis (2006 to 2020)

#### Interested Trustee and Officer:

Jane Trust, CFA <sup>†</sup> Born 1962	Trustee, President and Chief Executive Officer	Since 2015	Senior Vice President, Fund Board Management, Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Officer and/or Trustee/Director of 118 funds associated with FTFA or its affiliates (since 2015); President and Chief Executive Officer of FTFA (since 2015); formerly, Senior Managing Director (2018 to 2020) and Managing Director (2016 to 2018) of Legg Mason & Co., LLC ("Legg Mason & Co."); Senior Vice President of FTFA (2015)	Trustee/Director of Franklin Templeton funds consisting of 118 portfolios; Trustee of Putnam Family of Funds consisting of 99 portfolios	None
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# Trustees who are not "interested persons" of the Trust within the meaning of Section 2(a)(19) of the 1940 Act.

\* Each Trustee serves until his or her respective successor has been duly elected and qualified or until his or her earlier death, resignation, retirement or removal.

\*\* Indicates the earliest year in which the Trustee became a board member for a fund in the Franklin Templeton fund complex.

\*\*\* Information is for the calendar year ended December 31, 2025, except as otherwise noted.

† Ms. Trust is an "interested person" of the Trust, as defined in the 1940 Act, because of her position with FTFA and/or certain of its affiliates.

## Additional Officers:

<b>Name, Year of Birth and Address</b>	<b>Position(s) with Trust</b>	<b>Term of Office* and Year Service Began**</b>	<b>Principal Occupation(s) During the Past Five Years</b>
Ted P. Becker Born 1951 Franklin Templeton One Madison Avenue New York, NY 10010	Chief Compliance Officer	Since 2007	Vice President, Global Compliance of Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Chief Compliance Officer of FTFA (since 2006); Chief Compliance Officer of certain funds associated with Legg Mason & Co. or its affiliates (since 2006); formerly, Director of Global Compliance at Legg Mason (2006 to 2020); Managing Director of Compliance of Legg Mason & Co. (2005 to 2020)
Christopher Berarducci Born 1974 Franklin Templeton One Madison Avenue New York, NY 10010	Treasurer and Principal Financial Officer	Since 2010 and 2019	Vice President, Fund Administration and Reporting, Franklin Templeton (since 2020), Treasurer (since 2010) and Principal Financial Officer (since 2019) of certain funds associated with Legg Mason & Co. or its affiliates; formerly, Managing Director (2020), Director (2015 to 2020), and Vice President (2011 to 2015) of Legg Mason & Co.
Marc A. De Oliveira Born 1971 Franklin Templeton 100 First Stamford Place 6th Floor Stamford, CT 06902	Secretary and Chief Legal Officer	Since 2020	Associate General Counsel of Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Secretary and Chief Legal Officer (since 2020) and Assistant Secretary of certain funds in the Franklin Templeton fund complex (since 2006); formerly, Managing Director (2016 to 2020) and Associate General Counsel of Legg Mason & Co. (2005 to 2020)
Jeanne Kelly Born 1951 Franklin Templeton One Madison Avenue New York, NY 10010	Senior Vice President	Since 2007	U.S. Fund Board Team Manager, Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Senior Vice President of certain funds associated with Legg Mason & Co. or its affiliates (since 2007); Senior Vice President of FTFA (since 2006); President and Chief Executive Officer of LM Asset Services, LLC ("LMAS") and Legg Mason Fund Asset Management, Inc. ("LMFAM") (formerly registered investment advisers) (since 2015); formerly, Managing Director of Legg Mason & Co. (2005 to 2020), and Senior Vice President of LMFAM (2013 to 2015)
Susan Kerr Born 1949 Franklin Templeton One Madison Avenue New York, NY 10010	Chief Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer	Since 2013	Senior Compliance Analyst, Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Chief Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer of certain funds associated with Legg Mason & Co. or its affiliates (since 2013) and Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer (since 2012), Senior Compliance Officer (since 2011) and Assistant Vice President (since 2010) of the Distributor; formerly, Assistant Vice President of Legg Mason & Co. (2010 to 2020)
Thomas C. Mandia Born 1962 Franklin Templeton 100 First Stamford Place 6th Floor Stamford, CT 06902	Senior Vice President	Since 2020	Senior Associate General Counsel to Franklin Templeton (since 2020); Senior Vice President (since 2020) and Assistant Secretary of certain funds in the Franklin Templeton fund complex (since 2006); Secretary of FTFA (since 2006); Secretary of LMAS (since 2002) and LMFAM (formerly registered investment advisers) (since 2013); formerly, Managing Director and Deputy General Counsel of Legg Mason & Co. (2005 to 2020)

\* Each officer serves until his or her respective successor has been duly elected and qualified or until his or her earlier death, resignation, retirement or removal.

\*\* Indicates the earliest year in which the officer took such office.

## **Qualifications of Trustees, Board Leadership Structure and Oversight and Standing Committees**

The Independent Trustees were selected to join the Board based upon the following as to each Trustee: character and integrity; service as a board member of predecessor funds and/or other Franklin Templeton (previously, Legg Mason) funds; willingness to serve and willingness and ability to commit the time necessary to perform the duties of a Trustee; such person's skills, experience, judgment, analytical ability, intelligence, and common sense; their current or previous profit and non-profit board membership; such person's considerable familiarity with the special regulatory requirements governing regulated investment companies and the special responsibilities of investment company trustees; and the Trustee's status as not being an "interested person" of the Fund, as defined in the 1940 Act. Ms. Trust was selected to join the Board based upon her investment management and risk oversight experience as an executive and portfolio manager and leadership roles with Franklin Templeton and affiliated entities. The Board also considered her character and integrity, her willingness to serve and willingness and ability to commit the time necessary to perform the duties of a Trustee, her skills, experience, judgment, analytical ability, intelligence, and common sense, her considerable familiarity with the special regulatory requirements governing regulated investment companies and the special responsibilities of investment company trustees, and her status as a representative of Franklin Templeton. Ms. Trust is an interested person of the Fund. Mr. O'Brien serves as Chair of the Board and is an Independent Trustee. Independent Trustees constitute more than 75% of the Board.

The Board believes that each Trustee's experience, qualifications, attributes or skills on an individual basis and in combination with those of the other Trustees lead to the conclusion that the Board possesses the requisite attributes and skills. The Board believes that the Trustees' ability to review critically, evaluate, question and discuss information provided to them, to interact effectively with the Manager, the Subadviser(s), other service providers, counsel and the independent registered public accounting firm, and to exercise effective business judgment in the performance of their duties support this conclusion. In addition, the following specific experience, qualifications, attributes and/or skills apply to each Trustee.

Each Trustee has served as a board member of the Fund and/or other Franklin Templeton funds for at least ten years. Mr. Breech has substantial experience as the chief executive of a private corporation. Mr. Gross has a substantial accounting background and experience as an officer, trustee and board member of various organizations. Ms. Heilbron has substantial legal background and experience, business and consulting experience, and experience as a board member of public companies. Dr. Lehman has experience as chief executive officer of major museums and other entities involved in the arts, has previously served as a lead independent trustee and board chair for certain Franklin Templeton funds and has experience as a founding director of certain Franklin Templeton funds. Ms. Masters has investment management experience as chief investment officer, as a director of an investment advisory firm and from her service on the boards of other investment companies. Mr. O'Brien has experience at senior levels of a large financial services company and has experience from his service on the boards of academic institutions and a residential home care company. Mr. Schlafly has substantial experience practicing law and also serves as the non-executive Chairman of a private corporation and as director of a bank. Ms. Trust has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust and other funds in the fund complex since 2015 and has investment management and risk oversight experience as an executive and portfolio manager and in leadership roles with Franklin Templeton (and before that, Legg Mason) and affiliated entities. References to the experience, qualifications, attributes and skills of Trustees are pursuant to requirements of the Securities and Exchange Commission, do not constitute holding out of the Board or any Trustee as having any special expertise, and shall not impose any greater responsibility or liability on any such person or on the Board.

The Board has five standing committees: the Audit Committee, the Contract Committee, the Performance Committee, the Governance Committee, and the Compensation and Nominating Committee (which is a sub-committee of the Governance Committee). Each Committee is chaired by an Independent Trustee. The Audit Committee and the Governance Committee are each composed of all of the Independent Trustees. The Contract Committee and the Performance Committee are each composed of four Independent Trustees. The Compensation and Nominating Committee is composed of three Independent Trustees. Where deemed appropriate, the Board may constitute ad hoc committees.

The Chair of the Board and the chairs of the Audit and Performance Committees work with the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust to set the agendas for Board and committee meetings. The Chair of the Board also serves as a key point person for interaction between management and the other Independent Trustees. Through the committees the Independent Trustees consider and address important matters involving the Fund, including those presenting conflicts or potential conflicts of interest for management. The Independent Trustees also regularly meet outside the presence of management and are advised by independent legal counsel. The Board has determined that its committees help ensure that the Fund has effective and independent governance and oversight. The Board also has determined that its leadership structure, in which the Chair of the

Board is not affiliated with Franklin Templeton, is appropriate. The Board also believes that its leadership structure facilitates the orderly and efficient flow of information between the Independent Trustees and management, including the Fund's Subadviser.

The Audit Committee oversees the scope of the Fund's audit, the Fund's accounting and financial reporting policies and practices and its internal controls. The Audit Committee assists the Board in fulfilling its responsibility for oversight of the integrity of the Fund's accounting, auditing and financial reporting practices, the qualifications and independence of the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm and the Fund's compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. The Audit Committee approves, and recommends to the Board for ratification, the selection, appointment, retention or termination of the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm and approves the compensation of the independent registered public accounting firm. The Audit Committee also approves all audit and permissible non-audit services provided to the Fund by the independent registered public accounting firm and all permissible non-audit services provided by the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm to the Manager and any affiliated service providers if the engagement relates directly to the Fund's operations and financial reporting.

The Contract Committee is charged with assisting the Board in requesting and evaluating such information from the Manager and the Subadviser as may reasonably be necessary to evaluate the terms of the Fund's investment management agreement, subadvisory arrangements and distribution arrangements.

The Performance Committee is charged with assisting the Board in carrying out its oversight responsibilities over the Fund and fund management with respect to investment management, objectives, strategies, policies and procedures, performance and performance benchmarks, and the applicable risk management process.

The Governance Committee is charged with overseeing Board governance and related Trustee practices, including selecting and nominating persons for election or appointment by the Board as Trustees of the Trust. The Governance Committee has formed the Compensation and Nominating Committee, the function of which is to recommend to the Board the appropriate compensation for serving as a Trustee on the Board. In addition, the Compensation and Nominating Committee is responsible for, among other things, selecting and recommending candidates to fill vacancies on the Board. The Committee may consider nominees recommended by a shareholder. In evaluating potential nominees, including any nominees recommended by shareholders, the Committee takes into consideration various factors, including, among any others it may deem relevant, character and integrity, business and professional experience, and whether the committee believes the person has the ability to apply sound and independent business judgment and would act in the interest of the Fund and its shareholders. Shareholders who wish to recommend a nominee should send recommendations to the Trust's Secretary that include all information relating to such person that is required to be disclosed in solicitations of proxies for the election of Trustees. A recommendation must be accompanied by a written consent of the individual to stand for election if nominated by the Board and to serve if elected by the shareholders.

Service providers to the Fund, primarily the Fund's Manager, the Subadviser and, as appropriate, their affiliates, have responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Fund, which includes responsibility for risk management. As an integral part of its responsibility for oversight of the Fund, the Board oversees risk management of the Fund's investment program and business affairs. Oversight of the risk management process is part of the Board's general oversight of the Fund and its service providers. The Board has emphasized to the Fund's Manager and the Subadviser the importance of maintaining vigorous risk management. The Board exercises oversight of the risk management process primarily through the Audit Committee and the Performance Committee, and through oversight by the Board itself.

The Fund is subject to a number of risks, including investment risk, counterparty risk, valuation risk, reputational risk, cybersecurity risk, risk of operational failure or lack of business continuity, and legal, compliance and regulatory risk. Risk management seeks to identify and address risks, i.e., events or circumstances that could have material adverse effects on the business, operations, shareholder services, investment performance or reputation of the Fund. The Fund's Manager and the Subadviser, the affiliates of the Manager and the Subadviser, or various service providers to the Fund employ a variety of processes, procedures and controls to identify various of those possible events or circumstances, to lessen the probability of their occurrence and/or to mitigate the effects of such events or circumstances if they do occur. Different processes, procedures and controls are employed with respect to different types of risks. Various personnel, including the Fund's and the Manager's Chief Compliance Officer and the Manager's chief risk officer, as well as personnel of the Subadviser and other service providers, such as the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm, make periodic reports to the Audit Committee, the Performance Committee or to the Board with respect to various aspects of risk management, as well as events and circumstances that have

arisen and responses thereto. The Board recognizes that not all risks that may affect the Fund can be identified, that it may not be practical or cost-effective to eliminate or mitigate certain risks, that it may be necessary to bear certain risks (such as investment-related risks) to achieve the Fund's goals, and that the processes, procedures and controls employed to address certain risks may be limited in their effectiveness. Moreover, reports received by the Trustees as to risk management matters are typically summaries of the relevant information. As a result of the foregoing and other factors, the Board's risk management oversight is subject to inherent limitations.

During the fiscal year ended October 31, 2025, the Board met 5 times, the Audit Committee met 4 times, the Governance Committee met 4 times, the Performance Committee met 4 times, the Compensation and Nominating Committee met 1 time, and the Contract Committee met 3 times.

### Trustee Ownership of Securities

The following tables show the dollar range of equity securities owned by the Trustees in the Fund and other investment companies in the Franklin Templeton fund complex overseen by the Trustees as of December 31, 2025.

Name of Trustee	Dollar Range of Equity Securities in the Fund (\$)	Aggregate Dollar Range of Equity Securities in All Registered Investment Companies in Franklin Templeton Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee (\$)
<b>Independent Trustees:</b>		
Andrew L. Breech	None	Over 100,000
Stephen R. Gross	None	Over 100,000
Susan M. Heilbron	None	Over 100,000
Arnold L. Lehman	1 to 10,000	Over 100,000
Robin J.W. Masters	None	Over 100,000
G. Peter O'Brien	None	Over 100,000
Thomas F. Schlafly	None	Over 100,000
<b>Interested Trustee:</b>		
Jane Trust	None	Over 100,000

As of December 31, 2025, none of the Independent Trustees or their immediate family members owned beneficially or of record any securities of the Manager, the Subadviser, or the Distributor of the Fund, or of a person (other than a registered investment company) directly or indirectly controlling, controlled by or under common control with the Manager, the Subadviser, or the Distributor of the Fund.

For serving as a Trustee of the Trust, each Independent Trustee receives an annual retainer plus fees for attending each regularly scheduled meeting and special Board meeting they attend in person or by telephone. Each Independent Trustee is also reimbursed for all out-of-pocket expenses relating to attendance at such meetings. Those Independent Trustees who serve in leadership positions of the Board or Board committees, and members of the Contract Committee, the Performance Committee, and the Compensation and Nominating Committee, receive additional compensation. The Board reviews the level of Trustee compensation periodically and Trustee compensation may change from time to time. Ms. Trust, an "interested person" of the Trust, as defined in the 1940 Act, does not receive compensation from the Fund for her service as Trustee. The Fund pays its pro rata share of the fees and expenses of the Trustees based upon asset size.

Officers of the Trust receive no compensation from the Fund, although they may be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket travel expenses for attending Board meetings.

### Trustee Compensation

Information regarding compensation paid to the Trustees is shown below.

<b>Name of Trustee</b>	<b>Aggregate Compensation from the Fund*(\$)</b>	<b>Total Pension or Retirement Benefits Paid as Part of Fund Expenses* (\$)</b>	<b>Total Compensation from Franklin Templeton Fund Complex Paid to Trustee** (\$)</b>
<b>Independent Trustees:</b>			
Andrew L. Breech	669	None	504,000
Stephen R. Gross	683	None	514,500
Susan M. Heilbron	653	None	492,000
Arnold L. Lehman	647	None	487,000
Robin J.W. Masters	653	None	492,000
Ken Miller***	653	None	492,000
G. Peter O'Brien	739	None	780,500
Thomas F. Schlafly	647	None	487,000
<b>Interested Trustee:</b>			
Jane Trust†	None	None	None

\* Information is for the fiscal year ended October 31, 2025.

\*\* Information is for the calendar year ended December 31, 2025.

\*\*\* Mr. Miller retired from the Board effective December 31, 2025.

† Ms. Trust is not compensated by the Trust for her services as a Trustee because of her affiliations with the Manager.

## **INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE PROVIDER INFORMATION**

### **Manager**

The Manager, a limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of Delaware, serves as investment manager to the Fund and provides administrative and certain oversight services to the Fund, pursuant to an investment management agreement (the "Management Agreement"). The Manager has offices at One Madison Avenue, New York, New York, 10010 and also serves as the investment manager of other Franklin Templeton funds. The Manager is an indirect, wholly-owned subsidiary of Franklin Resources, a Delaware corporation. Franklin Resources, whose principal executive offices are at One Franklin Parkway, San Mateo, California 94403, is a global investment management organization operating, together with its subsidiaries, as Franklin Templeton.

The Manager has agreed, under the Management Agreement, subject to the supervision of the Board, to provide the Fund with investment research, advice, management and supervision, furnish a continuous investment program for the Fund's portfolio of securities and other investments consistent with the Fund's investment objectives, policies and restrictions, and place orders pursuant to its investment determinations. The Manager is permitted to enter into contracts with subadvisers or subadministrators, subject to the Board's approval. The Manager has entered into subadvisory agreements, as described below.

As compensation for services performed, facilities furnished and expenses assumed by the Manager, the Fund pays the Manager a fee computed daily at an annual rate of the Fund's average daily net assets as described below. The Manager also performs administrative and management services as reasonably requested by the Fund necessary for the operation of the Fund, such as (i) supervising the overall administration of the Fund, including negotiation of contracts and fees with, and monitoring of performance and billings of, the Fund's transfer agent, shareholder servicing agents, custodian and other independent contractors or agents; (ii) providing certain compliance, fund accounting, regulatory reporting and tax reporting services; (iii) preparing or participating in the preparation of Board materials, registration statements, proxy statements and reports and

other communications to shareholders; (iv) maintaining the Fund's existence; and (v) maintaining the registration or qualification of the Fund's shares under federal and state laws.

The Management Agreement will continue in effect for its initial term and thereafter from year to year, provided continuance is specifically approved at least annually (a) by the Board or by a 1940 Act Vote, and (b) in either event, by a majority of the Independent Trustees casting votes in accordance with applicable law.

The Management Agreement provides that the Manager may render services to others. The Management Agreement is terminable without penalty by the Board or by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund on not more than 60 days' nor less than 30 days' written notice to the Manager, or by the Manager on not less than 90 days' written notice to the Fund as applicable, and will automatically terminate in the event of its assignment (as defined in the 1940 Act) by the Manager. No Management Agreement is assignable by the Trust except with the consent of the Manager.

The Management Agreement provides that the Manager, its affiliates performing services contemplated by the Management Agreement, and the partners, shareholders, directors, officers and employees of the Manager and such affiliates, will not be liable for any error of judgment or mistake of law, for any loss arising out of any investment, or for any act or omission in the execution of securities transactions for the Fund, but the Manager is not protected against any liability to the Fund to which the Manager would be subject by reason of willful misfeasance, bad faith or gross negligence in the performance of its duties or by reason of its reckless disregard of its obligations and duties under the Management Agreement.

For its services under the Fund's Management Agreement, the Manager receives an investment management fee that is calculated daily and payable monthly at an annual rate according to the following schedule:

<b>Average Daily Net Assets</b>	<b>Investment Management Fee Rate* (% of Average Daily Net Assets)</b>
First \$2 billion	0.60
Next \$3 billion	0.58
Next \$5 billion	0.56
Over \$10 billion	0.55

\* Prior to July 29, 2025, the Fund paid a management fee at an annual rate as follows: 0.65% of the first \$1 billion of average daily net assets; 0.625% of the next \$1 billion of average daily net assets; 0.60% of the next \$3 billion of average daily net assets; 0.575% of the next \$5 billion of average daily net assets; and 0.55% of average daily net assets over \$10 billion.

The table below sets forth the management fees paid by the Fund to the Manager (waived/reimbursed amounts are in parentheses), with respect to the fiscal periods indicated:

<b>For the Fiscal Period Ended October 31,</b>	<b>Gross Management Fees (\$)</b>	<b>Management Fees Waived/Expenses Reimbursed (\$)</b>	<b>Net Management Fees (After Waivers/Expense Reimbursements) (\$)</b>
2025	620,783	(233,495)	387,288
2024*	1,322,204	(176,787)	1,145,417
2023*	2,400,787	(22,115)	2,378,672

\* For the fiscal periods ended October 31, 2024 and 2023, the Manager recaptured \$4,163 and \$7,044, respectively, of fees previously waived.

Any expense limitation arrangements in place during the Fund's past three fiscal periods can be found in the Fund's Prospectus in effect (as amended or supplemented from time to time) for such year.

## **Subadviser**

Brandywine Global Investment Management, LLC serves as the subadviser to the Fund (the "Subadviser") pursuant to a subadvisory agreement between the Manager and the Subadviser (the "Subadvisory Agreement"). The Subadviser has offices at 1735 Market Street, 18th Floor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103. The Subadviser is an indirect, wholly-owned subsidiary of Franklin Resources, a global investment management organization.

Under the Subadvisory Agreement, subject to the supervision of the Board and the Manager, the Subadviser regularly provides with respect to the portion of the Fund's assets allocated to it by the Manager, investment research, advice, management and supervision; furnishes a continuous investment program for the allocated assets consistent with the Fund's investment objectives, policies and restrictions; and places orders pursuant to its investment determinations. The Subadviser may delegate to companies that the Subadviser controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with, certain of the Subadviser's duties under a Subadvisory Agreement, subject to the Subadviser's supervision, provided the Subadviser will not be relieved of its duties or obligations under the Subadvisory Agreement as a result of any delegation.

The Subadvisory Agreement will continue in effect for its initial term and thereafter from year to year provided such continuance is specifically approved at least annually (a) by the Board or by a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund (as defined in the 1940 Act), and (b) in either event, by a majority of the Independent Trustees casting votes in accordance with applicable law. The Board or a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund (as defined in the 1940 Act) may terminate the Subadvisory Agreement without penalty, in each case on not more than 60 days' nor less than 30 days' written notice to the Subadviser. The Subadviser may terminate the respective Subadvisory Agreement, on 90 days' written notice to the Fund and the Manager. The Subadvisory Agreement may be terminated upon the mutual written consent of the Manager and the Subadviser. The Subadvisory Agreement will terminate automatically in the event of assignment (as defined in the 1940 Act) by the applicable Subadviser, and shall not be assignable by the Manager without the consent of the Subadviser.

The Subadvisory Agreement provides that the Subadviser, its affiliates performing services contemplated by the Subadvisory Agreement, and the partners, shareholders, directors, officers and employees of the Subadviser and such affiliates will not be liable for any error of judgment or mistake of law, for any loss arising out of any investment, or for any act or omission in the execution of securities transactions for the Fund, but the Subadviser is not protected against any liability to the Fund or the Manager to which the Subadviser would be subject by reason of willful misfeasance, bad faith or gross negligence in the performance of its duties or by reason of its reckless disregard of its obligations and duties under the Subadvisory Agreement.

As compensation for its services, the Manager pays to the Subadviser a fee equal to 70% of the management fee paid to the Manager by the Fund, net of any waivers and expense reimbursements.

## **Expenses**

In addition to amounts payable under the Management Agreement and the 12b-1 Plan (as discussed in this SAI), the Fund is responsible for its own expenses, including, among other things: interest; taxes; governmental fees; voluntary assessments and other expenses incurred in connection with membership in investment company organizations; organizational costs of the Fund; costs (including interest, brokerage commissions, transaction fees or charges or acquired fund fees and expenses, if any) in connection with the purchase or sale of the Fund's securities and other investments and any losses in connection therewith; fees and expenses of custodians, transfer agents, registrars, independent pricing vendors or other agents; legal expenses; loan commitment fees; expenses relating to the issuance and redemption or repurchase of the Fund's shares and servicing shareholder accounts; expenses of registering and qualifying the Fund's shares for sale under applicable federal and state law; expenses of preparing, setting in print, printing and distributing prospectuses and statements of additional information and any supplements thereto, reports, proxy statements, notices and dividends to the Fund's shareholders; costs of stationery; website costs; costs of meetings of the Board or any committee thereof, meetings of shareholders and other meetings of the Fund; Board fees; audit fees; travel expenses of officers, Trustees and employees of the Fund, if any; the Fund's pro rata portion of premiums on any fidelity bond and other insurance covering the Fund and its officers, Trustees and employees; and litigation expenses and any non-recurring or extraordinary expenses as may arise, including, without limitation, those relating to actions, suits or proceedings to which the Fund is a party and any legal obligation which the Fund may have to indemnify the Fund's Trustees and officers with respect thereto.

Management may agree to implement an expense cap, waive fees and/or reimburse operating expenses for one or more classes of shares. Any such expense caps, waived fees and/or reimbursed expenses are described in the Fund's Prospectus. The expense caps, waived fees and/or reimbursed expenses do not cover extraordinary expenses, such as (a) any expenses or charges related to litigation, derivative actions, demands related to litigation, regulatory or other government investigations and proceedings, "for cause" regulatory inspections and indemnification or advancement of related expenses or costs, to the extent any such expenses are considered extraordinary expenses for the purposes of fee disclosure in Form N-1A as the same may be amended from time to time; (b) transaction costs (such as brokerage commissions and dealer and underwriter spreads) and taxes; (c) other extraordinary expenses as determined for the purposes of fee disclosure in Form N-1A, as the same may be amended from time to time; and (d) any other exclusions enumerated in the Fund's particular expense cap. Without limiting the foregoing, extraordinary expenses are generally those that are unusual or expected to recur only infrequently, and may include such expenses, by way of illustration, as (i) expenses of the reorganization, restructuring, redomiciling or merger of the Fund or class or the acquisition of all or substantially all of the assets of another fund or class; (ii) expenses of holding, and soliciting proxies for, a meeting of shareholders of the Fund or class (except to the extent relating to routine items such as the election of Trustees or the approval of the independent registered public accounting firm); and (iii) expenses of converting to a new custodian, transfer agent or other service provider, in each case to the extent any such expenses are considered extraordinary expenses for the purposes of fee disclosure in Form N-1A as the same may be amended from time to time. In order to implement an expense limitation, the Manager will, as necessary, waive management fees or reimburse operating expenses. However, the Manager is permitted to recapture amounts waived and/or reimbursed to a class within three years after the fiscal year in which the Manager earned the fee or incurred the expense if the class' total annual fund operating expenses have fallen to a level below the class' expense limitation. In no case will the Manager recapture any amount that would result, on any particular business day of the Fund, in the class' total annual fund operating expenses exceeding such expense limitation or any other lower limit then in effect. These arrangements may be reduced or terminated under certain circumstances.

## Portfolio Managers

### Other Accounts Managed by the Portfolio Managers

The table below identifies the portfolio managers, the number of accounts (other than the Fund) for which the portfolio managers have day-to-day management responsibilities and the total assets in such accounts, within each of the following categories: registered investment companies, other pooled investment vehicles, and other accounts. For each category, the number of accounts and total assets in the accounts where fees are based on performance are also indicated, as applicable. Unless noted otherwise, all information is provided as of October 31, 2025.

Portfolio Managers	Type of Account	Number of Accounts Managed	Total Assets Managed (Billions) (\$)	Number of Accounts Managed for which Advisory Fee is Performance-Based	Assets Managed for which Advisory Fee is Performance-Based (Billions) (\$)
<b>Brian L. Kloss</b>	Registered Investment Companies	11	3.808	None	None
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	44	10.417	2	0.264
	Other Accounts	50	23.693	8	8.710
<b>Charles Minor*</b>	Registered Investment	None	None	None	None

	Companies				
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	None	None	None	None
	Other Accounts	None	None	None	None
<b>Jack Parker</b>	Registered Investment Companies	2	5.827	None	None
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	5	0.278	None	None
	Other Accounts	8	1.204	None	None
<b>William Zox</b>	Registered Investment Companies	2	5.827	None	None
	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	5	0.278	None	None
	Other Accounts	8	1.204	None	None

\* Mr. Minor joined the Fund's portfolio management team on December 31, 2025.

### Portfolio Managers Securities Ownership

The table below identifies ownership of equity securities of the Fund by the portfolio managers responsible for the day-to-day management of the Fund as of October 31, 2025.

Portfolio Managers	Dollar Range of Ownership of Securities (\$)
Brian L. Kloss	None
Charles Minor*	100,001-500,000
Jack Parker	None
William Zox	None

\* Mr. Minor joined the Fund's portfolio management team on December 31, 2025.

## Conflicts of Interest

The Subadviser maintains policies and procedures reasonably designed to detect and minimize material conflicts of interest inherent in circumstances when a portfolio manager has day-to-day portfolio management responsibilities for multiple portfolios. Nevertheless, no set of policies and procedures can possibly anticipate or relieve all potential conflicts of interest. These conflicts may be real, potential, or perceived; certain of these conflicts are described in detail below.

*Allocation of Limited Investment Opportunities.* If a portfolio manager identifies a limited investment opportunity (including initial public offerings) that may be suitable for multiple portfolios, the investment opportunity may be allocated among these several portfolios, which may limit a portfolio's ability to take full advantage of the investment opportunity, due to liquidity constraints or other factors.

The Subadviser has adopted trade allocation procedures designed to ensure that allocations of limited investment opportunities are conducted in a fair and equitable manner between portfolios. Nevertheless, investment opportunities may be allocated differently among portfolios due to the particular characteristics of a portfolio, such as the size of the portfolio, cash position, investment guidelines and restrictions or its sector/ country/region exposure or other risk controls, market restrictions or for other reasons.

*Similar Investment Strategies.* The Subadviser and its portfolio management team may manage multiple portfolios with similar investment strategies. Investment decisions for each portfolio are generally made based on each portfolio's investment objectives and guidelines, cash availability, and current holdings. Purchases or sales of securities for the portfolios may be appropriate for other portfolios with like objectives and may be bought or sold in different amounts and at different times in multiple portfolios. Purchase and sale orders for a portfolio may be combined with those of other portfolios in the interest of achieving the most favorable net results for all portfolios.

*Differences in Financial Incentives.* A conflict of interest may arise where the financial or other benefits available to a portfolio manager or an investment adviser differ among the portfolios under management. For example, when the structure of an investment adviser's management fee differs among the portfolios under its management (such as where certain portfolios pay higher management fees or performance-based management fees), a portfolio manager might be motivated to favor certain portfolios over others. Performance-based fees could also create an incentive for an investment adviser to make investments that are riskier or more speculative. In addition, a portfolio manager might be motivated to favor portfolios in which he or she or the investment adviser and/or its affiliates have a financial interest. Similarly, the desire to maintain or raise assets under management or to enhance the portfolio manager's performance record in a particular investment strategy or to derive other rewards, financial or otherwise, could influence a portfolio manager to lend preferential treatment to those portfolios that could most significantly benefit the portfolio manager.

To manage conflicts that may arise from management of portfolios with performance-based fees, the Subadviser has developed trade allocation procedures as described above and the Subadviser periodically reviews the performance and trading in portfolios with like strategies to seek to ensure that no portfolio or group of portfolios receives preference in the trading process.

*Personal Account Trading.* The Subadviser may, from time to time, recommend to clients that they buy or sell securities in which employees have a financial interest. These types of transactions may present a conflict of interest in that employees might benefit from market activity by a client in a security held by an employee. In order to prevent conflicts of interest between the Subadviser and its client, employee trading is monitored under the Code of Ethics (the "Code"). The Code includes policies and procedures (a) restricting personal trading, (b) requiring the pre-clearance of most types of personal securities transactions, (c) requiring the reporting to the Subadviser of all required personal securities holdings and transactions, and (d) mandating blackout periods during which employees are prohibited from making personal transactions in certain securities.

The Subadviser and its employees may also invest in mutual funds and other pooled investment vehicles, including private investment vehicles that are managed by the Subadviser. This may result in a potential conflict of interest since the Subadviser employees have knowledge of such funds' investment holdings, which is non-public information.

*Broker Selection and Soft Dollar Usage.* Investment professionals may be able to influence the selection of broker-dealers that are used to execute securities transactions for the portfolios they manage. In addition to executing trades, some brokers and dealers provide brokerage and research services, which may result in the payment of higher brokerage commissions than might otherwise be available and may provide an incentive to increase trading with such brokers. All soft dollar arrangements in which

the Subadviser is involved are subject to the Subadviser's policy of seeking best execution and are structured to comply with the safe harbor of Section 28(e) of the 1934 Act, and the rules and interpretations thereof as issued by the SEC. Nonetheless, the research services obtained from brokers and dealers may be used to service portfolios other than those paying commissions to the broker-dealers providing the research services, and also may benefit some portfolios more than others.

### **Portfolio Manager Compensation**

All portfolio managers receive a competitive base salary. In addition, from the firm's profits, a bonus is paid quarterly and based in part on the performance of the portfolio managers' investment strategies relative to a relevant peer-group universe over one-quarter, one-, three- and five-year time periods. More subjective measurements of an individual's contributions to the success of their product group and to the overall success of the firm are also considered as part of the individual allocation decision. After this performance-based incentive compensation is allocated, profits associated with individual product groups are allocated as follows: a majority is retained within the product group and the remainder is allocated to a pool shared by all product groups. The Subadviser believes this system achieves the goal of retaining top-quality investment professionals, as it provides extremely competitive compensation with entrepreneurial potential, and of fostering excellent performance, growth, and teamwork.

### **Custodian and Transfer Agent**

The Fund has entered into an agreement with The Bank of New York Mellon ("BNY Mellon"), 240 Greenwich Street, New York, New York 10286, to serve as custodian of the Fund. BNY Mellon, among other things, maintains a custody account or accounts in the name of the Fund, receives and delivers all assets for the Fund upon purchase and upon sale or maturity, collects and receives all income and other payments and distributions on account of the assets of the Fund and makes disbursements on behalf of the Fund. BNY Mellon neither determines the Fund's investment policies nor decides which securities the Fund will buy or sell. For its services, BNY Mellon receives a monthly fee based upon the daily average market value of securities held in custody and also receives securities transaction charges, including out-of-pocket expenses. The Fund may also periodically enter into arrangements with other qualified custodians with respect to certain types of securities or other transactions such as repurchase agreements or derivatives transactions. BNY Mellon may also act as the Fund's securities lending agent and in that case would receive a share of the income generated by such activities.

Franklin Templeton Investor Services, LLC ("Investor Services") is the Fund's shareholder servicing agent and acts as the Fund's transfer agent and dividend-paying agent. Investor Services is located at 3344 Quality Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-7313. Please send all correspondences relating to the Fund to Investor Services at P.O. Box 33030, St. Petersburg, FL 33733-8030.

Investor Services receives a fee for servicing Fund shareholder accounts. The Fund also will reimburse Investor Services for certain out-of-pocket expenses necessarily incurred in servicing the shareholder accounts in accordance with the terms of its servicing contract with the Fund.

In addition, Investor Services may make payments (or cause payments to be made) to financial intermediaries that provide administrative services to defined benefit plans. Investor Services does not seek reimbursement by the Fund for such payments.

For all classes of shares of the Fund, except for Class IS shares, Investor Services may also pay servicing fees, that will be reimbursed by the Fund, in varying amounts to certain financial institutions (to help offset their costs associated with client account maintenance support, statement preparation and transaction processing) that (i) maintain omnibus accounts with the Fund in the institution's name on behalf of numerous beneficial owners of Fund shares who are either direct clients of the institution or are participants in an IRS-recognized tax-advantaged savings plan (including Employer Sponsored Retirement Plans and Section 529 Plans) for which the institution, or its affiliate, provides participant level recordkeeping services (called "Beneficial Owners"); or (ii) provide support for Fund shareholder accounts by sharing account data with Investor Services through the National Securities Clearing Corporation (NSCC) networking system. In addition to servicing fees received from the Fund, these financial institutions also may charge a fee for their services directly to their clients. Investor Services will also receive a fee from the Fund (other than for Class IS shares) for services provided in support of Beneficial Owners and NSCC networking system accounts.

**Fund Counsel**

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP, located at One Federal Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02110, serves as legal counsel to the Trust and the Fund.

**Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm**

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 100 East Pratt Street, Suite 2600, Baltimore, Maryland 21202, serves as the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm.

**PORTFOLIO TRANSACTIONS AND BROKERAGE****Portfolio Transactions**

Pursuant to the Subadvisory Agreement and subject to the general supervision of the Board and in accordance with the Fund's investment objectives and strategies, the Subadviser is responsible for the execution of the Fund's portfolio transactions with respect to assets allocated to the Subadviser. The Subadviser is authorized to place orders pursuant to its investment determinations for the Fund either directly with the issuer or with any broker or dealer, foreign currency dealer, futures commission merchant or others selected by it.

In certain instances, there may be securities that are suitable as an investment for the Fund as well as for one or more of the other clients of the Subadviser. Investment decisions for the Fund and for the Subadviser's other clients are made with a view to achieving their respective investment objectives. It may develop that a particular security is bought or sold for only one client even though it might be held by, or bought or sold for, other clients. Likewise, a particular security may be bought for one or more clients when one or more clients are selling the same security. Some simultaneous transactions are inevitable when several clients receive investment advice from the same investment adviser, particularly when the same security is suitable for the investment objectives of more than one client. When two or more clients are simultaneously engaged in the purchase or sale of the same security, the securities are allocated among clients in a manner believed to be equitable to each. It is recognized that in some cases this system could adversely affect the price of or the size of the position obtainable in a security for the Fund. When purchases or sales of the same security for the Fund and for other portfolios managed by the Subadviser occur contemporaneously, the purchase or sale orders may be aggregated in order to obtain any price advantages available to large volume purchases or sales.

Transactions on stock exchanges and other agency transactions involve the payment of negotiated brokerage commissions by the Fund. Transactions in foreign securities often involve the payment of brokerage commissions that may be higher than those in the United States. Fixed income securities are generally traded on a net basis (i.e., without a commission) through dealers acting as principal for their own account and not as brokers. This means that a dealer makes a market for securities by offering to buy at one price and selling the security at a slightly higher price. The difference between the prices is known as a "spread." Other portfolio transactions may be executed through brokers acting as agents and the Fund will pay a spread or commission in connection with such transactions. The cost of securities purchased from underwriters includes an underwriting commission, concession or a net price. The Fund may also purchase securities directly from the issuer. The aggregate brokerage commissions paid by the Fund for the three most recent fiscal years or periods, as applicable, are set forth below under "Aggregate Brokerage Commissions Paid."

**Brokerage and Research Services**

The general policy of the Subadviser in selecting brokers and dealers is to obtain the best results achievable in the context of a number of factors which are considered both in relation to individual trades and broader trading patterns. The Fund may not always pay the lowest commission or spread available. Rather, in placing orders on behalf of the Fund, the Subadviser also takes into account other factors bearing on the overall quality of execution, such as size of the order, difficulty of execution, the reliability of the broker/dealer, the competitiveness of the price and the commission, the research services received and whether the broker/dealer commits its own capital.

In connection with the selection of such brokers or dealers and the placing of such orders, subject to applicable law, brokers or dealers may be selected who also provide brokerage and research services (as those terms are defined in Section 28(e) of the 1934 Act) to the Fund and/or the other accounts over which the Subadviser or its affiliates exercise investment discretion. The Subadviser is authorized to pay a broker or dealer that provides such brokerage and research services a

commission for executing a portfolio transaction for the Fund which is in excess of the amount of commission another broker or dealer would have charged for effecting that transaction if the Subadviser determines in good faith that such amount of commission is reasonable in relation to the value of the brokerage and research services provided by such broker or dealer. Investment research services include information and analysis on particular companies and industries as well as market or economic trends and portfolio strategy, market quotations for portfolio evaluations, analytical software and similar products and services. If a research service also assists the Subadviser in a non-research capacity (such as bookkeeping or other administrative functions), then only the percentage or component that provides assistance to the Subadviser in the investment decision making process may be paid in commission dollars. This determination may be viewed in terms of either that particular transaction or the overall responsibilities that the Subadviser and its affiliates have with respect to accounts over which they exercise investment discretion. The Subadviser may also have arrangements with brokers pursuant to which such brokers provide research services to the Subadviser in exchange for a certain volume of brokerage transactions to be executed by such brokers. While the payment of higher commissions increases the Fund's costs, the Subadviser does not believe that the receipt of such brokerage and research services significantly reduces its expenses as Subadviser. Arrangements for the receipt of research services from brokers (so-called "soft dollar" arrangements) may create conflicts of interest. Although the Subadviser is authorized to use soft dollar arrangements in order to obtain research services, it is not required to do so, and the Subadviser may not be able or may choose not to use soft dollar arrangements because of regulatory restrictions, operational considerations or for other reasons.

Research services furnished to the Subadviser by brokers that effect securities transactions for the Fund may be used by the Subadviser in servicing other investment companies and accounts which the Subadviser manages. Similarly, research services furnished to the Subadviser by brokers that effect securities transactions for other investment companies and accounts which the Subadviser manages may be used by the Subadviser in servicing the Fund. Not all of these research services are used by the Subadviser in managing any particular account, including the Fund.

Firms that provide research and brokerage services to the Subadviser may also promote the sale of the Fund or other pooled investment vehicles advised by the Subadviser, and the Subadviser and/or its affiliates may separately compensate them for doing so. Such brokerage business is placed on the basis of brokerage and research services provided by the firm and is not based on any sales of the Fund or other pooled investment vehicles advised by the Subadviser.

The Fund contemplates that, consistent with the policy of obtaining the best net results, brokerage transactions may be conducted through "affiliated broker/dealers," as defined in the 1940 Act. The Fund's Board has adopted procedures in accordance with Rule 17e-1 under the 1940 Act to ensure that all brokerage commissions paid to such affiliates are reasonable and fair in the context of the market in which such affiliates operate. For the three most recent fiscal periods (as applicable), the Fund did not pay any brokerage commission to its affiliates.

### **Aggregate Brokerage Commissions Paid**

The table below shows the aggregate brokerage commissions paid by the Fund during the periods indicated.

<u>For the Fiscal Period Ended October 31,</u>	<u>Aggregate Brokerage Commissions Paid (\$)</u>
2025	11,475
2024	10,482
2023	19,907

For the fiscal period ended October 31, 2025, the Fund did not direct any brokerage transactions related to research services and did not pay any brokerage commissions related to research services.

### **Securities of Regular Broker/Dealers**

As of October 31, 2025, the value of the Fund's holdings of the securities of its regular broker/dealers (as defined in Rule 10b-1 under the 1940 Act) were as follows:

<u>Broker/Dealer</u>	<u>Type of Security Owned D=Debt E=Equity</u>	<u>Market Value (000's) (\$)</u>
Citigroup Global Markets Inc.	D	1,582
Wells Fargo Securities LLC	D	735

### Portfolio Turnover

For reporting purposes, the Fund's portfolio turnover rate is calculated by dividing the lesser of purchases or sales of portfolio securities for the fiscal year by the monthly average of the value of the portfolio securities owned by the Fund during the fiscal year. In determining such portfolio turnover, all securities whose maturities at the time of acquisition were one year or less are excluded. A 100% portfolio turnover rate would occur, for example, if all of the securities in the Fund's investment portfolio (other than short-term money market securities) were replaced once during the fiscal year.

In the event that portfolio turnover increases, this increase necessarily results in correspondingly greater transaction costs which must be paid by the Fund. To the extent the portfolio trading results in recognition of net short-term capital gains, shareholders that hold their shares in a taxable account will generally be taxed on distributions of such gains at ordinary tax rates.

Portfolio turnover will not be a limiting factor should the Subadviser deem it advisable to purchase or sell securities.

<u>For the Fiscal Period Ended 2025 (%)</u>	<u>For the Fiscal Period Ended 2024 (%)</u>
190	138

## SHARE OWNERSHIP

### Principal Shareholders

As of January 31, 2026, to the knowledge of the Trust, the following shareholders owned of record or beneficially 5% or more of the outstanding shares of the classes of the Fund as set forth below:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Name and Address</u>	<u>Percent of Class (%)</u>
A	NATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LLC FOR THE EXCLUSIVE BENEFIT OF OUR CUSTOMERS ATTN MUTUAL FUNDS DEPARTMENT 4TH FL 499 WASHINGTON BLVD JERSEY CITY NJ 07310	12.19
A	MORGAN STANLEY SMITH BARNEY LLC FOR THE EXCLUSIVE BENEFIT OF ITS CUSTOMERS 1 NEW YORK PLAZA FL 12 NEW YORK NY 10004-1901	11.79
A	AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INVESTMENT SVC 707 2ND AVE S MINNEAPOLIS MN 55402-2405	11.24

Class	Name and Address	Percent of Class (%)
A	MLPF&S FOR THE SOLE BENEFIT OF ITS CUSTOMERS ATTN: FUND ADMINISTRATION 4800 DEER LAKE DRIVE EAST 3RD FLOOR JACKSONVILLE FL 32246-6484	5.26
C	AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INVESTMENT SVC 707 2ND AVE S MINNEAPOLIS MN 55402-2405	78.14
C	PHILIP CUNNINGHAM TOD 926 SOUTHWICK CT OAKLAND MI 48363-2379	12.72
FI	VANGUARD BROKERAGE SERVICES A C 3084 4524 P O BOX 982901 EL PASO TX 799982901	73.70
FI	VANGUARD BROKERAGE SERVICES A C 4470 9886 PO BOX 1170 VALLEY FORGE PA 194821170	26.29
I	AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INVESTMENT SVC 707 2ND AVE S MINNEAPOLIS MN 55402-2405	30.26
I	CHARLES SCHWAB & CO INC SPECIAL CUSTODY ACCT FBO CUSTOMERS ATTN MUTUAL FUNDS 211 MAIN STREET SAN FRANCISCO CA 94105-1905	28.07
I	MORGAN STANLEY SMITH BARNEY LLC FOR THE EXCLUSIVE BENEFIT OF ITS CUSTOMERS 1 NEW YORK PLAZA FL 12 NEW YORK NY 10004-1901	24.71
IS	IMMACULATE HEART MISSIONS INC 4651 25TH ST N ARLINGTON VA 22207-3518	58.14
IS	PERSHING LLC 1 PERSHING PLZ JERSEY CITY NJ 07399-0001	17.67

Class	Name and Address	Percent of Class (%)
IS	MLPF&S FOR THE SOLE BENEFIT OF ITS CUSTOMERS ATTN: FUND ADMINISTRATION 4800 DEER LAKE DRIVE EAST 3RD FLOOR JACKSONVILLE FL 32246-6484	5.94
R	LEGG MASON INC 100 INTERNATIONAL DR FL 10 BALTIMORE MD 21202-4673	63.14
R	CHARLES SCHWAB & CO INC SPECIAL CUSTODY ACCT FBO CUSTOMERS ATTN MUTUAL FUNDS 211 MAIN STREET SAN FRANCISCO CA 94105-1905	36.80

As of January 31, 2026, the Trustees and officers of the Trust, as a group, owned less than 1% of the outstanding shares of each class of the Fund.

### DISTRIBUTOR

Franklin Distributors, LLC, an indirect, wholly-owned broker/dealer subsidiary of Franklin Resources, located at One Franklin Parkway, San Mateo, CA 94403-1906, serves as the sole and exclusive distributor of the Fund pursuant to a written agreement (as amended, the "Distribution Agreement").

Under the Distribution Agreement, the Distributor is appointed as principal underwriter and distributor in connection with the offering and sale of shares of the Fund. The Distributor offers the shares on an agency or "best efforts" basis under which the Fund issues only the number of shares actually sold. Shares of the Fund are continuously offered by the Distributor.

The Distribution Agreement is renewable from year to year with respect to the Fund if approved (a) by the Board or by a vote of a majority of the Fund's outstanding voting securities, and (b) by the affirmative vote of a majority of Trustees who are not parties to such agreement or interested persons of any party by votes cast in person at a meeting called for such purpose.

The Distribution Agreement is terminable with respect to the Fund without penalty by the Board or by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund, or by the Distributor, on not less than 60 days' written notice to the other party (unless the notice period is waived by mutual consent). The Distribution Agreement will automatically and immediately terminate in the event of its assignment.

The Distributor may be deemed to be an underwriter for purposes of the 1933 Act. Dealer reallowances, if any, are described in the Fund's Prospectus.

The Distributor, the Manager, their affiliates and their personnel have interests in promoting sales of Franklin Templeton funds, including remuneration, fees and profitability relating to services to and sales of the funds. Associated persons of the Manager, the Distributor or their affiliates (including wholesalers registered with the Distributor) may receive additional compensation related to the sale of individual Franklin Templeton funds or categories of Franklin Templeton funds. The Manager, the Subadviser, and their advisory or other personnel may also benefit from increased amounts of assets under management.

Service Agents also may benefit from the sales of shares of funds sold by the Distributor. For example, in connection with such sales, Service Agents may receive compensation from the Fund (with respect to the Fund as a whole or a particular class of shares) and/or from the Manager, the Distributor, and/or their affiliates, as further described below. The structure of these compensation arrangements, as well as the amounts paid under such arrangements, vary and may change from time to

time. In addition, new compensation arrangements may be negotiated at any time. The compensation arrangements described in this section are not mutually exclusive, and a single Service Agent may receive multiple types of compensation.

The Distributor has agreements in place with Service Agents defining how much each firm will be paid for the sale of the Fund from sales charges, if any, paid by Fund shareholders and from 12b-1 Plan fees, if any, paid to the Distributor by the Fund. These Service Agents then pay their employees or associated persons who sell such fund shares from the sales charges and/or fees they receive. The Service Agent, and/or its employees or associated persons may receive a payment when a sale is made and will, in most cases, continue to receive ongoing payments while you are invested in the Fund. In other cases, the Distributor may retain all or a portion of such fees and sales charges.

In addition, the Distributor, the Manager and/or certain of their affiliates may make additional payments (which are often referred to as "revenue sharing" payments) to the Service Agents from their past profits and other available sources, including profits from their relationships with the Fund. Revenue sharing payments are a form of compensation paid to a Service Agent in addition to the sales charges paid by Fund shareholders or 12b-1 Plan fees paid by the Fund. The Manager, the Distributor and/or certain of its affiliates may revise the terms of any existing revenue sharing arrangement and may enter into additional revenue sharing arrangements with other Service Agents.

Revenue sharing arrangements are intended, among other things, to foster the sale of Fund shares and/or to compensate financial services firms for assisting in marketing or promotional activities in connection with the sale of Fund shares. In exchange for revenue sharing payments, the Manager and the Distributor generally expect to receive the opportunity for the Fund to be sold through the Service Agents' sales forces or to have access to third-party platforms or other marketing programs, including but not limited to mutual fund "supermarket" platforms or other sales programs. To the extent that Service Agents receiving revenue sharing payments sell more shares of the Fund, the Manager and the Distributor and/or their affiliates benefit from the increase in Fund assets as a result of the fees they receive from the Fund. The Distributor, FTA or their affiliates consider revenue sharing arrangements based on a variety of factors and services to be provided.

Revenue sharing payments are usually calculated based on a percentage of Fund sales and/or Fund assets attributable to a particular Service Agent. Payments are at times based on other criteria or factors such as, for example, a fee per each transaction. Specific payment formulas are negotiated based on a number of factors, including, but not limited to, reputation in the industry, ability to attract and retain assets, target markets, customer relationships and scope and quality of services provided. In addition, the Distributor, the Manager and/or certain of their affiliates may pay flat fees on a one-time or irregular basis for the initial set-up of the Fund on a Service Agent's systems, participation or attendance at a Service Agent's meetings, or for other reasons. Furthermore, the Distributor, the Manager and/or certain of their affiliates at times pay certain education and training costs of Service Agents (including, in some cases, travel expenses) to train and educate the personnel of the Service Agents. In addition, the Distributor, the Manager and/or certain of their affiliates at times may provide access to technology and other tools and support services that facilitate the marketing and promotion of investment management portfolios sponsored by Franklin Templeton and/or its affiliates. It is likely that Service Agents that execute portfolio transactions for the Fund will include those firms with which the Manager, the Distributor and/or certain of their affiliates have entered into revenue sharing arrangements.

The Fund generally pays the transfer agent for certain recordkeeping and administrative services. In addition, the Fund may pay Service Agents for certain recordkeeping, administrative, sub-accounting and networking services. These services include maintenance of shareholder accounts by the firms, such as recordkeeping and other activities that otherwise would be performed by the Fund's transfer agent. Administrative fees may be paid to a firm that undertakes, for example, shareholder communications on behalf of the Fund. Networking services are services undertaken to support the electronic transmission of shareholder purchase and redemption orders through the National Securities Clearing Corporation ("NSCC"). These payments are generally based on either (1) a percentage of the average daily net assets of Fund shareholders serviced by a Service Agent or (2) a fixed dollar amount for each account serviced by a Service Agent. The Distributor, the Manager and/or their affiliates may make all or a portion of these payments.

In addition, the Fund reimburses the Distributor for NSCC fees that are invoiced to the Distributor as the party to the agreement with NSCC for the administrative services provided by NSCC to the Fund and its shareholders. These services include transaction processing and settlement through Fund/SERV, electronic networking services to support the transmission of shareholder purchase and redemption orders to and from Service Agents, and related recordkeeping provided by NSCC to the Fund and its shareholders.

If your Fund shares are purchased through a retirement plan, the Distributor, the Manager or certain of their affiliates at times also make similar payments to those described in this section to the plan's recordkeeper or an affiliate.

Revenue sharing payments, as well as the other types of compensation arrangements described in this section, create an incentive for Service Agents and their employees or associated persons to recommend the Fund over other investments or sell shares of the Fund to customers and in doing so may create conflicts of interest between the firms' financial interests and the interests of their customers. The total amount of these payments is substantial, may be substantial to any given recipient and may exceed the costs and expenses incurred by the recipient for any Fund-related marketing or shareholder servicing activities.

As of December 31, 2025, the Distributor, the Manager or their affiliates made revenue sharing payments to the Service Agents listed below (or their affiliates or successors). It is possible that each Service Agent listed is not receiving payments with respect to each fund sold by the Distributor. This list of intermediaries will change over time, and any additions, modifications or deletions thereto that have occurred since December 31, 2025 are not reflected.

ADP Retirement Services	Allianz Life Insurance Company
Allstate Life Insurance Company	American Enterprise Investment Services Inc.
American General Life Insurance Co of DE	American General Life Insurance Co.
American United Life Insurance Company	Ameriprise Financial, Inc
Ameritas Life Insurance Corporation	Annuity Investors Life Insurance Company
Ascensus, Inc.	Atria Wealth Solutions
AuguStar Life Insurance Company	Avantax Investment Services, Inc.
Axelus Financial	Benjamin F. Edwards & Company, Inc.
BlackRock Inc	Brighthouse Financial
Brighthouse Life Insurance Company	Brighthouse Life Insurance Company of NY
CAIS LLC	Cambridge Investment Research, Inc
Cetera Financial Group	Charles Schwab & Co.
Citigroup Global Markets Inc.	Citizens Securities, Inc.
CMFG Life Insurance Company	Columbia ThreadNeedle
Commonwealth Annuity & Life Insurance Company	Commonwealth Financial Network
Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company	Corebridge Insurance Company of Bermuda, Ltd
Delaware Life Insurance Co	Delaware Life Insurance Co of NY
Deutsche Bank	DWC-The 401(K) Experts
Edward D. Jones & Co., L.P.	Empire Fidelity Investments Life
Empower Annuity Insurance Company of America	Empower Financial Services
Empower Life & Annuity Insurance Company of New York	Envestnet
Equitable Advisors, LLC	Equitable Financial Life Insurance
Equitable Life Insurance Company	Everlake Services Company
Fidelity Investments	Fidelity Investments Life Insurance Co
First Allmerica Financial Life Insurance Company	First Command
First Security Benefit Life Insurance and Annuity Company of NY	Forethought Distributors, LLC
Forethought Life Insurance Company	FTMF Consulting
Genworth Life & Annuity Insurance Company	Genworth Life Insurance
Genworth Life Insurance Company of NY	Goldman Sachs
Guardian Insurance & Annuity Company	Hantz Financial Services
Integrity Life Insurance Company	J.P. Morgan Securities LLC
Janney Montgomery Scott LLC	John Hancock
Kestra Investment Services, LLC	Lincoln Benefit Life Company
Lincoln Investment Planning, Inc.	Lincoln Life & Annuity Company of NY
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company	Lincoln Retirement Services Co
LPL Financial LLC	Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company
Members Life Insurance Company	Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, Inc.
MetLife Insurance Company USA	Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
Midland National	Midland National Life Insurance Company

Minnesota Life Insurance Company  
 MONY Life Insurance Company of America (Equitable)  
 Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC  
 Nassau Life Insurance Company  
 National Integrity Life Insurance Company  
 National Security Life & Annuity Company  
 Nationwide Life Insurance Company  
 Northwestern Mutual Investment Svcs LLC  
 Osaic Wealth, Inc.  
 Pacific Life Insurance Company  
 PCS Retirement  
 PHL Variable Insurance Company  
 Phoenix Life Insurance Company  
 Primerica  
 Principal Life Insurance Company  
 Protective Life and Annuity Insurance Company  
 Pruco Life Insurance  
 Pruco Life Insurance Company of NJ  
 Raymond James & Associates, Inc.  
 RBC Capital Markets LLC  
 ReliaStar Life Insurance Company of NY  
 Riversource Life Insurance Company of New York  
 Rockefeller Capital  
 Sanctuary Wealth  
 Security Benefit Life Insurance Company  
 Stifel Financial Corporation  
 Symetra Life Insurance Company  
 Talcott Resolution Life Insurance Company  
 The Guardian Insurance & Annuity Company, Inc.  
 Thrivent Financial for Lutherans  
 TIAA-CREF Life Insurance Company  
 Transamerica Financial Life Insurance Company  
 Transamerica Premier Life Insurance Company  
 UBS Financial Services, Inc.  
 USI Consulting Group  
 Vanguard Marketing Corporation  
 Voya Financial Advisors, LLC  
 Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC  
 Western National Life Insurance Company

MML Investors Services, LLC  
 MONY Life Insurance Company of America (Protective Life)  
 MSCS  
 National Financial Services LLC  
 National Life Insurance Company  
 Nationwide Financial Services, Inc.  
 New York Life Insurance and Annuity Corporation  
 Osaic Services, Inc  
 Pacific Life and Annuity Company  
 Paychex Securities Corp  
 Pershing  
 Phoenix Life & Annuity Company  
 PNC Investments LLC  
 Principal Financial Services  
 Principal National Life Insurance Company  
 Protective Life Insurance Company  
 Pruco Life Insurance Company of AZ  
 Prudential Insurance Company of America  
 Raymond James Financial Services, Inc.  
 ReliaStar Life Insurance Company  
 Riversource Life Insurance Company  
 Robert W. Baird & Co., Inc.  
 Sammons Financial Network  
 Securian Financial Group, Inc  
 Standard Insurance Company  
 SunAmerica Annuity and Life Assurance Company  
 Talcott Resolution Life and Annuity Insurance Company  
 TFS Securities, Inc.  
 The Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company (VALIC)  
 TIAA-CREF Individual & Institutional Services, LLC  
 TIFIN Wealth  
 Transamerica Life Insurance Company  
 U.S. Bancorp Investments  
 United States Life Insurance Co in the City of NY  
 (fka First SunAmerica)  
 Valor Financial Securities, LLC  
 Venerable Insurance and Annuity Company  
 Voya Retirement Insurance and Annuity Company  
 Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC  
 Wilton Reassurance Life Company of New York

The Distributor, the Manager or their affiliates may also pay fees, from their own assets, to Service Agents for providing other distribution-related services as well as recordkeeping, administrative, subaccounting, and networking services (or portions thereof), and other shareholder or administrative services in connection with investments in the Fund. These payments may be considered revenue sharing payments. The Service Agents receiving such payments may not be listed above.

You should assume that your Service Agent receives revenue sharing payments and/or other compensation described in this SAI. Please contact your Service Agent for details about any payments it (and its employees) may receive from the Fund and/or from the Distributor, the Manager and/or their affiliates. You should review your Service Agent's disclosure and/or talk to your Service Agent to obtain more information on how this compensation may have influenced your Service Agent's recommendation of the Fund.

## Dealer Commissions and Concessions

From time to time, the Distributor or the Manager, at its expense, may provide compensation or promotional incentives (“concessions”) to dealers that sell or arrange for the sale of shares of the Fund or a managed account strategy of which the Fund is part. Such concessions provided by the Distributor or the Manager may include financial assistance to dealers in connection with preapproved conferences or seminars, sales or training programs for invited registered representatives and other employees, payment for travel expenses, including lodging, incurred by registered representatives and other employees for such seminars or training programs, seminars for the public, advertising and sales campaigns regarding one or more funds, and/or other dealer-sponsored events. From time to time, the Distributor or the Manager may make expense reimbursements for special training of a dealer’s registered representatives and other employees in group meetings or to help pay the expenses of sales contests. Other concessions may be offered to the extent not prohibited by applicable laws or any self-regulatory agency, such as the FINRA.

## Sales Charges

The following expenses were incurred during the fiscal periods indicated:

### Initial Sales Charges

The aggregate dollar amounts of initial sales charges received on Class A shares and the amounts retained by the Distributor were as follows:

#### Class A Shares

<b>For the Fiscal Period Ended October 31,</b>	<b>Total Commissions (\$)</b>	<b>Amounts Retained by Distributor (\$)</b>
2025	5,764	764
2024	1,197	136
2023	1,552	177

### Contingent Deferred Sales Charges

The aggregate dollar amounts of contingent deferred sales charges on Class A and Class C shares received and retained by the Distributor were as follows:

#### Class A Shares

<b>For the Fiscal Period Ended October 31,</b>	<b>Amounts Retained by Distributor (\$)</b>
2025	0
2024	0
2023	0

#### Class C Shares

<b>For the Fiscal Period Ended October 31,</b>	<b>Amounts Retained by Distributor (\$)</b>
2025	0
2024	0
2023	0

## Services and Distribution Plan

The Trust, on behalf of the Fund, has adopted a 12b-1 Plan in accordance with Rule 12b-1 under the 1940 Act. Under the 12b-1 Plan, the Fund may pay monthly fees to the Distributor at up to the annual rates set forth below (as a percentage of the average daily net assets of the Fund attributable to the applicable share class).

<b>Class</b>	<b>Rate (%)</b>
Class A	0.25
Class C	1.00
Class FI	0.25
Class R	0.50

The Fund will provide the Board with periodic reports of amounts expended under the 12b-1 Plan and the purposes for which such expenditures were made. Fees under the 12b-1 Plan may be used to make payments to the Distributor, Service Agents and other parties with respect to the sale of Fund shares for advertising, marketing or other promotional activity, and payments for preparation, printing, and distribution of prospectuses, statements of additional information and reports for recipients other than existing shareholders. The Fund also may make payments to the Distributor, Service Agents and others for providing personal service or the maintenance of shareholder accounts. The amounts paid to each recipient may vary based upon certain factors, including, among other things, the levels of sales of shares and/or shareholder services; provided, however, that the fees paid to a recipient with respect to a particular class that may be used to cover expenses primarily intended to result in the sale of shares of that class, or that may be used to cover expenses primarily intended for personal service and/or maintenance of shareholder accounts, may not exceed the maximum amounts, if any, as may from time to time be permitted for such services under FINRA Conduct Rule 2341 or any successor rule, in each case as amended or interpreted by FINRA.

Since fees paid under the 12b-1 Plan are not tied directly to expenses incurred by the Distributor (or others), the amount of the fees paid by a class of the Fund during any year may be more or less than actual expenses incurred by the Distributor (or others). This type of distribution fee arrangement is characterized by the staff of the SEC as being of the "compensation variety" (in contrast to "reimbursement" arrangements by which a distributor's payments are directly linked to its expenses). Thus, even if the Distributor's expenses exceed the fees provided for by the 12b-1 Plan, the Fund will not be obligated to pay more than those fees and, if expenses incurred by the Distributor (or others) are less than the fees paid to the Distributor and others, they will realize a profit.

The 12b-1 Plan recognizes that various service providers to the Fund, such as the Manager, may make payments for distribution, marketing or sales-related expenses out of their own resources of any kind, including profits or payments received from the Fund for other purposes, such as management fees. The 12b-1 Plan provides that, to the extent that such payments might be deemed to be indirect financing of any activity primarily intended to result in the sale of shares of the Fund, the payments are deemed to be authorized by the 12b-1 Plan.

Under its terms, the 12b-1 Plan continues in effect for successive annual periods, provided continuance is specifically approved at least annually by vote of the Board, including a majority of the Independent Trustees who have no direct or indirect financial interest in the operation of the 12b-1 Plan or in any agreements related to it ("Qualified Trustees"). The 12b-1 Plan may not be amended to increase the amount of the service and distribution fees without shareholder approval, and all amendments of the 12b-1 Plan also must be approved by the Trustees, including the Qualified Trustees, in the manner described above. The 12b-1 Plan may be terminated with respect to a class of the Fund at any time, without penalty, by vote of a majority of the Qualified Trustees or by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of that class (as defined in the 1940 Act).

The following service and distribution fees were incurred by the Fund pursuant to the 12b-1 Plan in effect during the fiscal period ended October 31, 2025:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Service and Distribution Fees Incurred (\$)</b>	<b>Service and Distribution Fees Waived/Reimbursed (\$)</b>
Class A	17,636	0
Class C	2,752	0
Class FI	235	0
Class R	300	0

For the fiscal period ended October 31, 2025, the Distributor incurred distribution expenses for advertising, printing and mailing prospectuses, support service and overhead expenses and compensation to Service Agents and third parties as expressed in the following table. The Distributor may have made revenue sharing payments in addition to the expenses shown here.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Third Party Fees (\$)</b>	<b>Financial Consultant Compensation (Amortized) (\$)</b>	<b>Marketing (\$)</b>	<b>Printing (\$)</b>	<b>Total Expenses (\$)</b>
Class A	17,636	1,017	6,758	0	25,411
Class C	2,752	559	264	0	3,574
Class FI	235	0	60	0	295
Class R	300	0	57	0	356

## PURCHASE OF SHARES

Purchases of Fund shares are discussed under the “Buying shares” and “Exchanging shares” sections of the Fund’s Prospectus; this information is incorporated herein by reference. See the Fund’s Prospectus for a discussion of which share classes of the Fund are available for purchase, who is eligible to purchase shares of each class, and applicable investment minimums.

Investors may purchase shares from a Service Agent. However, Service Agents may not offer all classes of shares. In addition, certain investors, including retirement plans purchasing through certain Service Agents, may purchase shares directly from the Fund. When purchasing shares of the Fund, investors must specify the class of shares being purchased. Payment must be made with the purchase order. Service Agents may charge their customers an annual account maintenance fee in connection with a brokerage or other financial account through which an investor purchases or holds shares. Accounts held directly at the transfer agent are not subject to a maintenance fee.

Purchase orders received by the Fund prior to the scheduled close of regular trading on the NYSE on any day the Fund calculates its NAV are priced according to the NAV determined on that day (the “trade date”). Orders received by a Service Agent prior to the scheduled close of regular trading on the NYSE on any day the Fund calculates its NAV are priced according to the NAV determined on that day, provided the order is transmitted by the Service Agent to the Fund’s transfer agent in accordance with their agreed-upon procedures. See “Valuation of Shares” below for additional information about the NYSE’s holiday schedule. NAV is calculated separately for each share class.

*Class A Shares.* Class A shares are sold to investors at the public offering price, which is the NAV plus an initial sales charge, as described in the Fund’s Prospectus. The sales charge is waived for shareholders purchasing Class A shares through accounts where the Distributor is the broker-dealer of record (“Distributor Accounts”). Shareholders purchasing Class A shares through certain Service Agents or in certain types of accounts may be eligible for a waiver of the initial sales charge. For more information, see the appendix to the Prospectus titled “Appendix: Waivers and Discounts Available from Certain Service Agents.”

The Distributor and Service Agents may receive a portion of the sales charge as described in the Fund’s Prospectus and may be deemed to be underwriters of the Fund as defined in the 1933 Act. Sales charges are calculated based on the aggregate of purchases of Class A shares of the Fund made at one time by any “person,” which includes an individual and his or her spouse

and children, or a trustee or other fiduciary of a single trust estate or single fiduciary account. For additional information regarding sales charge reductions, see "Sales Charge Waivers and Reductions for Class A Shares" below.

*Class A Shares.* Purchases of Class A shares of \$500,000 or more will be made at NAV without any initial sales charge on purchases but are subject to a contingent deferred sales charge on redemptions made within 18 months of purchase (except for purchases made through Distributor Accounts). The contingent deferred sales charge is waived in the same circumstances in which the contingent deferred sales charge applicable to Class C shares is waived. See "Contingent Deferred Sales Charge Provisions" and "Waivers of Contingent Deferred Sales Charge" below.

*Class C Shares.* Class C shares are not available for purchase through Distributor Accounts. Class C shares are sold at NAV without an initial sales charge on purchases but are subject to a contingent deferred sales charge payable upon certain redemptions. See "Contingent Deferred Sales Charge Provisions."

*Class C1 Shares.* Class C1 shares are not available for purchase by new or existing investors (except for certain retirement plan programs authorized by the Distributor prior to August 1, 2012). Class C1 shares will continue to be available for dividend reinvestment and incoming exchanges. Class C1 shares are sold at NAV without an initial sales charge on purchases but are subject to a contingent deferred sales charge payable upon certain redemptions. See "Contingent Deferred Sales Charge Provisions."

*Class D Shares.* Class D shares are offered to a limited group of investors who invest in the Fund through certain financial intermediary and retirement plan programs. Service Agents selling Class D shares may in the future discontinue offering Class D shares to clients of financial intermediaries. A Service Agent or financial intermediary may impose investment minimums. For more information about these programs, contact a Service Agent.

*Class FI, Class R, Class I and Class IS Shares.* Class FI shares are not available for purchase through Distributor Accounts. Class FI, Class R, Class I and Class IS shares are sold at NAV with no initial sales charge on purchases and no contingent deferred sales charge upon redemption.

Class I shares may be purchased directly from the Fund by the following persons: (i) current employees of the Manager and its affiliates; (ii) former employees of the Manager and its affiliates with existing accounts; (iii) current and former board members of investment companies managed by affiliates of Franklin Resources; (iv) current and former board members of Franklin Resources; and (v) the "immediate families" of such persons. "Immediate families" are such person's spouse (including the surviving spouse of a deceased board member), parents, grandparents, and children and grandchildren (including step-relationships). For such investors, the minimum initial investment is \$1,000 and the minimum for each purchase of additional shares is \$50. Current employees may purchase additional Class I shares through a systematic investment plan.

Class IS shares may be purchased only by retirement plans with omnibus accounts held on the books of the Fund, certain rollover IRAs and Institutional Investors, Clients of Eligible Financial Intermediaries and other investors authorized by the Distributor. In order to purchase Class IS shares, an investor must hold its shares in an account that is not subject to payment of fees for recordkeeping services, account servicing, networking, or similar services to Service Agents.

*Class 1 Shares.* Class 1 shares are closed to all purchases and incoming exchanges. Investors owning Class 1 shares may continue to maintain their then-current Class 1 shares but are no longer permitted to add to their Class 1 share positions, except through reinvestments of dividends.

\* \* \* \* \*

Under certain circumstances, an investor who purchases Fund shares pursuant to a fee-based advisory account program of an Eligible Financial Intermediary as authorized by the Distributor may be afforded an opportunity to make a conversion between one or more share classes owned by the investor in the same Fund to Class I shares of that Fund. Such a conversion in these particular circumstances does not cause the investor to realize taxable gain or loss.

For additional information regarding applicable investment minimums and eligibility requirements for purchases of Fund shares, please see the Fund's Prospectus.

## **Systematic Investment Plan**

Shareholders may make additions to their accounts at any time by purchasing shares through a service known as the Systematic Investment Plan. Under the Systematic Investment Plan, shareholders may arrange for automatic periodic investments of \$25 or more in certain share classes by authorizing the Distributor or the transfer agent to charge the shareholder's account held with a bank or other financial institution, as indicated by the shareholder, to provide for systematic additions to the shareholder's Fund account. Shareholders have the option of selecting the frequency of the investment as long as the investment equals a minimum of \$25 per month. Shareholders may terminate participation in the Systematic Investment Plan at any time without charge or penalty. Additional information is available from the Fund or your Service Agent.

## **Sales Charge Waivers and Reductions for Class A Shares**

*Initial Sales Charge Waivers.* Purchases of Class A shares may be made at NAV without an initial sales charge in the following circumstances:

- i. sales to (a) current and retired board members, (b) current employees of Franklin Resources and its subsidiaries, (c) the "immediate families" of such persons, as defined above, and (d) a pension, profit-sharing or other benefit plan for the benefit of such persons;
- ii. sales to employees of certain Service Agents having dealer, service or other selling agreements with the Distributor or otherwise having an arrangement with any such Service Agent with respect to sales of Fund shares, and by the immediate families of such persons or by a pension, profit-sharing or other benefit plan for the benefit of such persons (providing the purchase is made for investment purposes and such securities will not be resold except through redemption or repurchase);
- iii. offers of Class A shares to any other investment company to effect the combination of such company with the Fund by merger, acquisition of assets or otherwise;
- iv. purchases by shareholders who have redeemed Class A shares in the Fund (or Class A shares of another fund sold by the Distributor (excluding Putnam Investments Funds) that is offered with a sales charge) and who wish to reinvest their redemption proceeds in the Fund, provided the reinvestment is made within 90 calendar days of the redemption;
- v. purchases by certain separate accounts used to fund unregistered variable annuity contracts;
- vi. purchases by investors participating in "wrap fee" or asset allocation programs or other fee-based arrangements sponsored by broker/dealers and other financial institutions that have entered into agreements with the Distributor;
- vii. purchases by direct retail investment platforms through mutual fund "supermarkets," where the sponsor links its client's account (including IRA accounts on such platforms) to a master account in the sponsor's name;
- viii. sales through Service Agents who have entered into an agreement with the Distributor to offer shares to self-directed investment brokerage accounts that may or may not charge a transaction fee to their customers;
- ix. purchases of Class A shares by shareholders investing through Distributor Accounts;
- x. investors investing through certain retirement plans;
- xi. investors who rollover Fund shares from an employer-sponsored retirement plan into an individual retirement account administered on the same retirement plan platform; and
- xii. purchases by or through a Franklin Templeton donor-advised fund (such as the Franklin or Fiduciary Trust Charitable Programs).

In order to obtain such discounts, the purchaser must provide sufficient information at the time of purchase to permit verification that the purchase qualifies for the elimination of the initial sales charge.

All existing retirement plan shareholders who purchased Class A shares at NAV prior to November 20, 2006, are permitted to purchase additional Class A shares at NAV. Certain existing programs for current and prospective retirement plan investors sponsored by Service Agents approved by the Distributor prior to November 20, 2006 will also remain eligible to purchase Class A shares at NAV.

There are several ways you can combine multiple purchases of Class A shares of funds sold by the Distributor (excluding Putnam Investments Funds) or units of a Section 529 college savings plan managed by a Franklin Templeton affiliate (a "Section 529 plan"), to take advantage of the breakpoints in the Class A shares sales charge schedule. In order to take advantage of reductions in sales charges that may be available to you when you purchase Fund shares, you must inform your Service Agent or the Fund if you believe you are eligible for a Letter of Intent or a right of accumulation. Whether you purchased shares of funds and/or units of a Section 529 Plan through one or more Service Agents, directly from the Fund or through a combination of the foregoing, it is your responsibility to inform your Service Agent or the Fund if you own shares of other funds or units of a Section 529 plan that you believe are eligible to be aggregated with your purchases. **If you do not do so, you may not receive all sales charge reductions for which you are eligible.** Account statements may be necessary in order to verify your eligibility for a reduced sales charge.

*Accumulation Privilege.* The accumulation privilege allows you to combine the dollar amount of your next purchase of Class A shares of the Fund, as applicable, with the current or cost value, whichever is higher, of shares of other funds sold by the Distributor held in Eligible Accounts (as defined below), for purposes of calculating the initial sales charges.

If you hold fund shares or units of a Section 529 plan in accounts at two or more Service Agents, please contact your Service Agents to determine whether your shares or units may be combined.

Shares of certain money market funds sold by the Distributor may be combined for purposes of the accumulation privilege. Please contact your Service Agent or the Fund for additional information.

Certain trustees and other fiduciaries may be entitled to combine accounts in determining their sales charge.

*Letter of Intent.* A Letter of Intent allows you to combine the current or cost value, whichever is higher, of Eligible Fund Purchases in Eligible Accounts with the value that you intend to purchase within the next 13-months, which would, if bought all at once, qualify you for a reduced Class A sales charge. In addition, current holdings under the accumulation privilege (as described above) may be included in the Letter of Intent. See the Fund's Prospectus for the sales charges and breakpoints applicable to Class A shares of the Fund. Sales charges and breakpoints vary among the funds sold by the Distributor.

Purchases of Class A shares or units of a Section 529 plan may be aggregated for purposes of calculating each breakpoint. You may purchase Class A shares of funds sold by the Distributor (excluding Putnam Investments Funds) or units of a Section 529 plan managed by a Franklin Templeton affiliate over a 13-month period and pay the same sales charge, if any, as if all shares or units had been purchased at once.

At the time you enter into a Letter of Intent, you select your asset goal amount. Each time you make a Class A purchase under a Letter of Intent, you will be entitled to pay the sales charge that is applicable to the amount of your asset goal amount. For example, if your asset goal amount is \$100,000, any Class A investments you make under a Letter of Intent would be subject to the sales charge of the specific fund you are investing in for purchases of \$100,000.

When you enter into a Letter of Intent, you agree to purchase in Eligible Accounts over a 13-month period Eligible Fund Purchases in an amount equal to the asset goal amount you have selected. You may also credit towards your asset goal amount any Eligible Fund Purchases made in Eligible Accounts at any time prior to entering into the Letter of Intent that have not been sold or redeemed, based on the current value or cost value, whichever is higher, of those shares as of the date of calculation. The current value of shares is determined by multiplying the number of shares as of the day prior to your current purchase by their public offering price. The cost value of shares is determined by aggregating the amount of Eligible Fund Purchases in Eligible Accounts (including reinvested dividends and capital gains, but excluding capital appreciation), less any withdrawals, as of the date prior to your current purchase. The cost value of Eligible Fund Purchases in Eligible Accounts, however, may only be aggregated for share purchases that took place within 18 months of the Letter of Intent start date.

Your commitment will be met if at any time during the 13-month period the value, as so determined, of eligible holdings is at least equal to your asset goal amount. All reinvested dividends and distributions on shares acquired under the Letter of Intent will be credited towards your asset goal amount. You may include any Eligible Fund Purchases toward the asset goal amount, including shares of classes other than Class A shares. However, a Letter of Intent will not entitle you to a reduction in the sales charge payable on any shares other than Class A shares, and if any shares, including Class A shares, are subject to a contingent deferred sales charge, you will still be subject to that contingent deferred sales charge with respect to those shares. You must make reference to the Letter of Intent each time you make a purchase under the Letter of Intent.

*Eligible Fund Purchases.* Eligible Fund Purchases include: (i) any class of shares of any other Legg Mason or Franklin Templeton fund other than shares of such funds offered through separately managed accounts that are managed by a Franklin Templeton affiliate; and (ii) units of a Section 529 Plan managed by a Franklin Templeton affiliate. Shares of certain money market funds sold by the Distributor may be combined for purposes of the Letter of Intent. Eligible funds may change from time to time, investors should check with their Service Agent to see which funds or Section 529 plans may be eligible.

For purposes of a letter of intent and the accumulation privilege, Legg Mason and Franklin Templeton funds include BrandywineGLOBAL funds, ClearBridge Investments funds, and Western Asset funds. They do not include the funds in the Franklin Templeton Variable Insurance Products Trust, Legg Mason Partners Variable Equity Trust, Legg Mason Partners Variable Income Trust or Legg Mason Partners Money Market Trust (except for shares held in Distributor Accounts). Please contact your Service Agent or the Fund for more information.

*Eligible Accounts.* Eligible Accounts include shares of Legg Mason or Franklin Templeton funds registered to (or held by a financial intermediary for):

- You, individually;
- Your "family member" defined as your spouse or domestic partner, as recognized by applicable state law, or your children under the age of 21;
- You jointly with one or more family members;
- You jointly with one or more persons who are not family members if that other person has not included the value of the jointly-owned shares for purposes of the accumulation privilege for that person's separate investments in Legg Mason or Franklin Templeton fund shares;
- A Coverdell Education Savings account for which you or a family member is the identified responsible person;
- A trustee/custodian of an IRA (which includes a Roth IRA and an employer sponsored IRA such as a SIMPLE IRA) or your non-ERISA covered 403(b) plan account, if the shares are registered/recorded under your or a family member's Social Security number;
- A 529 college savings plan over which you or a family member has investment discretion and control;
- Any entity over which you or a family member has individual or shared authority, as principal, has investment discretion and control (for example, an UGMA/UTMA account for a child on which you or a family member is the custodian, a trust on which you or a family member is the trustee, a business account (not to include retirement plans) for your solely owned business (or the solely owned business of a family member) on which you or a family member is the authorized signer); or
- A trust established by you or a family member as grantor.

You may need to provide certain records, such as account statements, in order to verify your eligibility for reduced sales charges. Contact your Service Agent to see which accounts may be credited toward your asset goal amount. A Letter of Intent is not available to Distributor Accounts.

*Increasing the Amount of the Letter of Intent.* You may at any time increase your asset goal amount. You must, however, contact your Service Agent, or if you purchase your shares directly through the transfer agent, contact the transfer agent, prior to making any purchases in an amount in excess of your current asset goal amount. Upon such an increase, you will be credited by way of additional shares at the then-current offering price for the difference between:

- i. the aggregate sales charges actually paid for shares already purchased under the Letter of Intent; and
- ii. the aggregate applicable sales charges for the increased asset goal amount.

However, you must contact your Service Agent before purchasing shares in excess of the asset goal amount as no retroactive adjustments can be made. The 13-month period during which the asset goal amount must be achieved will remain unchanged.

*Sales and Exchanges.* Shares acquired pursuant to a Letter of Intent, other than Escrowed Shares as defined below, may be redeemed or exchanged at any time, although any shares that are redeemed prior to meeting your asset goal amount will no longer count towards meeting your asset goal amount. However, complete liquidation of purchases made under a Letter of Intent prior to meeting the asset goal amount will result in the cancellation of the Letter of Intent. See "Failure to Meet Asset Goal Amount" below. Exchanges in accordance with the Fund's Prospectus are permitted, and shares so exchanged will continue to count towards your asset goal amount, as long as the exchange results in an Eligible Fund Purchase.

*Cancellation of the Letter of Intent.* You may cancel a Letter of Intent by notifying your Service Agent, or if you purchase your shares directly through the transfer agent, by notifying the transfer agent. The Letter of Intent will be automatically cancelled if all shares are sold or redeemed as set forth above. See "Failure to Meet Asset Goal Amount" below.

*Escrowed Shares.* Shares equal in value to five percent (5%) of your asset goal amount as of the date your Letter of Intent (or the date of any increase in the amount of the Letter of Intent) is accepted will be held in escrow during the term of your Letter of Intent. The Escrowed Shares will be included in the total shares owned as reflected in your account statement and any dividends and capital gains distributions applicable to the Escrowed Shares will be credited to your account and counted towards your asset goal amount or paid in cash upon request. The Escrowed Shares will be released from escrow if all the terms of your Letter of Intent are met.

*Failure to Meet Asset Goal Amount.* If the total assets under your Letter of Intent within its 13-month term are less than your asset goal amount whether because you made insufficient Eligible Fund Purchases, redeemed all of your holdings or otherwise cancelled the Letter of Intent before reaching your asset goal amount, you will be liable for the difference between: (a) the sales charge actually paid and (b) the sales charge that would have applied if you had not entered into the Letter of Intent. You may, however, be entitled to any breakpoints that would have been available to you under the accumulation privilege. An appropriate number of shares in your account will be redeemed to realize the amount due. For these purposes, by entering into a Letter of Intent, you irrevocably appoint your Service Agent, or if you purchase your shares directly through the transfer agent, the transfer agent, as your attorney-in-fact for the purposes of holding the Escrowed Shares and surrendering shares in your account for redemption. If there are insufficient assets in your account, you will be liable for the difference. Any Escrowed Shares remaining after such redemption will be released to your account.

## **Contingent Deferred Sales Charge Provisions**

### *Class A Shares.*

- *Class A shares that were purchased without an initial sales charge but are subject to a contingent deferred sales charge.* A contingent deferred sales charge may be imposed on certain redemptions of these shares. Class A shares that are contingent deferred sales charge shares are subject to a contingent deferred sales charge if redeemed within 18 months of purchase.
- *Class A shares that are not subject to a contingent deferred sales charge.* If Class A shares of the Fund are exchanged for shares of another fund sold by the Distributor that are subject to a contingent deferred sales charge, you may pay a contingent deferred sales charge if the shares acquired by exchange are redeemed within 18 months of purchase.

### *Class C Shares.*

- *Class C shares that are subject to a contingent deferred sales charge.* A contingent deferred sales charge will be imposed if shares are redeemed within 12 months of purchase.
- *Class C shares that are not subject to a contingent deferred sales charge.* If Class C shares of the Fund are exchanged for shares of another fund sold by the Distributor that are subject to a contingent deferred sales charge, you may pay a contingent deferred sales charge if the shares acquired by exchange are redeemed within 12 months from the date of such exchange.

### *Class C1 Shares.*

- *Class C1 shares that are subject to a contingent deferred sales charge.* A contingent deferred sales charge will be imposed if shares are redeemed within 12 months of purchase. If Class C1 shares of the Fund are exchanged for Class C1 shares (or, if not available, Class C shares) of another fund sold by the Distributor, any contingent deferred sales

charge that applies to the Class C1 shares of the other fund will apply to the Class C1 shares (or Class C shares, as applicable) acquired in exchange for the Class C1 shares of the Fund, and that contingent deferred sales charge will be measured from the date the shares exchanged were initially acquired.

*Class C1 shares that are not subject to a contingent deferred sales charge.* Class C1 shares of the Fund are not subject to a contingent deferred sales charge, but if Class C1 shares of the Fund are exchanged for Class C1 shares (or, if not available, Class C shares) of another fund sold by the Distributor that are subject to a contingent deferred sales charge, any contingent deferred sales charge that applies to the Class C1 shares of the other fund will apply to the Class C1 shares (or Class C shares, as applicable) acquired in exchange for the Class C1 shares of the Fund, and that contingent deferred sales charge will be measured from the date of such exchange.

Any applicable contingent deferred sales charge will be assessed on the NAV at the time of purchase or redemption, whichever is less.

In determining the applicability of any contingent deferred sales charge, it will be assumed that a redemption is made first of shares representing capital appreciation, next of shares representing the reinvestment of dividends and capital gain distributions, next of shares that are not subject to the contingent deferred sales charge and finally of other shares held by the shareholder for the longest period of time. Unless otherwise noted above, the length of time that contingent deferred sales charge shares acquired through an exchange have been held will be calculated from the date the shares exchanged were initially acquired in one of the other funds sold by the Distributor. For U.S. federal income tax purposes, the amount of the contingent deferred sales charge will reduce the gain or increase the loss, as the case may be, on the amount realized on redemption. The Distributor receives contingent deferred sales charges in partial consideration for its expenses in selling shares.

### **Waivers of Contingent Deferred Sales Charge**

The contingent deferred sales charge will be waived on:

- i. exchanges (see "Exchange of Shares");
- ii. redemptions through a systematic withdrawal plan, up to 1% monthly, 3% quarterly, 6% semiannually or 12% annually of your account's net asset value depending on the frequency of your plan (see "Systematic Withdrawal Plan");
- iii. redemptions of shares within 12 months following the death or disability (as defined by the Code) of the shareholder;
- iv. mandatory post-retirement distributions from retirement plans or IRAs commencing on or after attainment of a specific age required by law (except that shareholders of certain retirement plans or IRAs established prior to May 23, 2005 will be eligible to obtain a waiver of the contingent deferred sales charge on all funds held in those accounts at age 59 1/2 and may be required to demonstrate such eligibility at the time of redemption);
- v. involuntary redemptions;
- vi. redemptions of shares to effect a combination of the Fund with any investment company by merger, acquisition of assets or otherwise;
- vii. effective May 1, 2020, on redemptions with respect to investors where the Distributor did not pay the Service Agent a commission;
- viii. tax-free returns of an excess contribution to any retirement plan;
- ix. certain redemptions of shares of the Fund in connection with lump-sum or other distributions made by eligible retirement plans or redemption of shares by participants in certain "wrap fee" or asset allocation programs sponsored by broker/dealers and other financial institutions that have entered into agreements with the Distributor or the Manager;
- x. Class A shares held through Distributor Accounts; and
- xi. redemptions of Class A shares purchased by or through a Franklin Templeton donor-advised fund (such as the Franklin or Fiduciary Trust Charitable Programs).

The contingent deferred sales charge is also waived on Class C and Class C1 shares purchased by retirement plans with omnibus accounts held on the books of the Fund. Different Service Agents may offer different contingent deferred sales charge waivers. For more information, see the appendix to the Prospectus titled "Appendix: Waivers and Discounts Available from Certain Service Agents."

A shareholder who has redeemed shares from another fund sold by the Distributor (excluding Putnam Investments Funds) may, under certain circumstances, reinvest all or part of the redemption proceeds within 90 days in another fund sold by the Distributor (excluding Putnam Investments Funds) and receive pro rata credit for any contingent deferred sales charge imposed on the prior redemption.

To have a contingent deferred sales charge waived, you or your Service Agent must let the Fund know at the time you redeem shares that you qualify for such a waiver. Contingent deferred sales charge waivers will be granted subject to confirmation by the Distributor or the transfer agent of the shareholder's status or holdings, as the case may be.

### **Grandfathered Retirement Program with Exchange Features**

Certain retirement plan programs with exchange features in effect prior to November 20, 2006 (collectively, the "Grandfathered Retirement Program") that are authorized by the Distributor to offer eligible retirement plan investors the opportunity to exchange all of their Class C shares or Class C1 shares, if applicable, for Class A shares of the same fund, are permitted to maintain such share class exchange features for current and prospective retirement plan investors.

Under the Grandfathered Retirement Program, Class C shares and Class C1 shares of the Fund may be purchased by plans investing less than \$3,000,000. Class C shares and Class C1 shares are eligible for exchange into Class A shares not later than eight years after the plan joins the program. They are eligible for exchange in the following circumstances: For participating plans established with the Fund or another fund for which FTFA or any predecessor serves or has served as investment manager or administrator (each a "Grandfathered Retirement Program Fund") prior to June 2, 2003, if such plan's total Class C and Class C1 holdings in all Grandfathered Retirement Program Funds (excluding money market funds) equal at least \$1,000,000 at the end of the fifth year after the date the participating plan enrolled in the Grandfathered Retirement Program, the participating plan will be permitted to exchange all of its Class C shares and Class C1 shares for Class A shares of the Fund. For participating plans established with the Fund or another Grandfathered Retirement Program Fund on or after June 2, 2003, if such plan's total Class C and Class C1 holdings in all Grandfathered Retirement Program Funds (excluding money market funds) equal at least \$3,000,000 at the end of the fifth year after the date the participating plan enrolled in the Grandfathered Retirement Program, the participating plan will be permitted to exchange all of its Class C shares and Class C1 shares for Class A shares of the Fund.

Unless the exchange offer has been rejected in writing, the exchange will automatically occur within approximately 30 days after the fifth anniversary date. If the participating plan does not qualify for the five-year exchange to Class A shares, a review of the participating plan's holdings will be performed each quarter until either the participating plan qualifies or the end of the eighth year.

Any participating plan that has not previously qualified for an exchange into Class A shares will be offered the opportunity to exchange all of its Class C shares and Class C1 shares for Class A shares of the same fund regardless of asset size at the end of the eighth year after the date the participating plan enrolled in the Grandfathered Retirement Program. Unless the exchange has been rejected in writing, the exchange will automatically occur on or about the eighth anniversary date. Once an exchange has occurred, a participating plan will not be eligible to acquire additional Class C shares and Class C1 shares but instead may acquire Class A shares of the same fund. Any Class C shares and Class C1 shares not converted will continue to be subject to the distribution fee.

For further information regarding the Grandfathered Retirement Program, contact your Service Agent or the transfer agent. Participating plans that enrolled in the Grandfathered Retirement Program prior to June 2, 2003 should contact the transfer agent for information regarding Class C shares and Class C1 shares exchange privileges applicable to their plan.

### **Determination of Public Offering Price**

The Fund offers its shares to the public on a continuous basis. The public offering price for each class of shares of the Fund is equal to the net asset value per share at the time of purchase, plus for Class A shares, an initial sales charge based on the aggregate amount of the investment.

Set forth below is an example of the method of computing the offering price of the Class A shares of the Fund based on the net asset value of a share of the Fund as of October 31, 2025:

Class A

Net Asset Value Per Share (\$)	11.11
Maximum Initial Sales Charge	
Percentage (%)	2.25
Offering Price (\$)	11.37

## REDEMPTION OF SHARES

Redemptions of Fund shares are discussed under the “Exchanging shares” and “Redeeming shares” sections of the Fund’s Prospectus; this information is incorporated herein by reference.

The right of redemption may be suspended or the date of payment postponed:

- i. for any period during which the NYSE is closed (other than for customary weekend and holiday closings);
- ii. when trading in the markets the Fund normally utilizes is restricted, or an emergency exists, as determined by the SEC, so that disposal of the Fund’s investments or determination of NAV is not reasonably practicable; or
- iii. for such other periods as the SEC by order may permit for protection of the Fund’s shareholders.

In the case of any such suspension, you may either withdraw your request for redemption or receive payment based upon the NAV next determined after the suspension is lifted.

The Fund’s transfer agent, acting on behalf of the Fund, may place a temporary hold for up to 25 business days on the disbursement of redemption proceeds from an account held directly with the Fund if the transfer agent, in consultation with the Fund, reasonably believes that financial exploitation of a Specified Adult (as defined below) has occurred, is occurring, has been attempted, or will be attempted. In order to delay payment of redemption proceeds under these circumstances, the Fund and the transfer agent must adopt certain policies and procedures and otherwise comply with the terms and conditions of no-action relief provided by the SEC staff. Financial exploitation means: (i) the wrongful or unauthorized taking, withholding, appropriation, or use of a Specified Adult’s funds or securities; or (ii) any act or omission by a person, including through the use of a power of attorney, guardianship, or any other authority regarding a Specified Adult, to (a) obtain control, through deception, intimidation or undue influence, over the Specified Adult’s money, assets or property, or (b) convert the Specified Adult’s money, assets or property. The transfer agent and/or the Fund may not be aware of factors suggesting financial exploitation of a Specified Adult and may not be able to identify Specified Adults in all circumstances. Furthermore, the transfer agent is not required to delay the disbursement of redemption proceeds and does not assume any obligation to do so. For purposes of this paragraph, the term “Specified Adult” refers to an individual who is a natural person (i) age 65 and older, or (ii) age 18 and older and whom the Fund’s transfer agent reasonably believes has a mental or physical impairment that renders the individual unable to protect his or her own interests.

Unless otherwise instructed, redemption proceeds will be mailed to an investor’s address of record. The transfer agent may require additional supporting documents for redemptions made by corporations, executors, administrators, trustees or guardians. A redemption request will not be deemed properly received until the transfer agent receives all required documents in proper form.

If a shareholder holds shares in more than one class, any request for redemption must specify the class being redeemed. In the event of a failure to specify which class, or if the investor owns fewer shares of the class than specified, the redemption request will be delayed until the transfer agent receives further instructions. Redemption proceeds for shares purchased by check, other than a certified or official bank check, will be remitted upon clearance of the check, which may take up to ten days. Each Service Agent is responsible for transmitting promptly orders for its customers.

The Service Agent may charge you a fee for executing your order. The amount and applicability of such a fee is determined and should be disclosed to its customers by each Service Agent.

The Fund reserves the right to modify or terminate telephonic, electronic or other redemption services described in the Prospectus and this SAI at any time.

## **Systematic Withdrawal Plan**

The Systematic Withdrawal Plan permits you to have a specified dollar amount automatically withdrawn from your account on a regular basis (i.e., on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis). The Systematic Withdrawal Plan is available to those shareholders who own shares directly with the Fund. You should contact your Service Agent to determine if it offers a similar service.

*Class A, Class C, Class C1 and Class D Shareholders.* Class A, Class C, Class C1 and Class D shareholders having an account with a balance of \$5,000 or more may elect to make withdrawals of a minimum of \$50 per transaction per month. For retirement plans subject to mandatory distribution requirements, the minimum withdrawal amounts will not apply. There are two ways to receive payment of proceeds of redemptions made through the Systematic Withdrawal Plan: (1) Check mailed by the Fund's transfer agent—Fund shares will be redeemed on the day of the month indicated on your account application, (or if no day is indicated, on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month) or the next business day and a check for the proceeds will be mailed within three business days. Available processing dates currently are the 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> days of the month; or (2) electronic transfer (ACH) to checking or savings account—redemptions of Fund shares may occur on any business day of the month and the checking or savings account will be credited with the proceeds in approximately two business days. You may change the amount to be paid to you or terminate the Systematic Withdrawal Plan at any time, without charge or penalty, by contacting the Fund or your Service Agent. The Fund, its transfer agent, and the Distributor also reserve the right to modify or terminate the Systematic Withdrawal Plan at any time. See "Waivers of Contingent Deferred Sales Charge," above, for information about application of the contingent deferred sales charge to withdrawals under the Systematic Withdrawal Plan.

*Class FI, Class I and Class IS Shareholders.* Certain shareholders of the Fund's Class FI, Class I and Class IS shares with an initial NAV of \$1,000,000 or more, or certain other shareholders authorized by the Distributor, may be eligible to participate in the Systematic Withdrawal Plan. Receipt of payment of proceeds of redemptions made through the Systematic Withdrawal Plan will be wired through electronic transfer (ACH) to your checking or savings account—redemptions of Fund shares may occur on any business day of the month and the checking or savings account will be credited with the proceeds in approximately two business days. Requests to change or discontinue the Systematic Withdrawal Plan may be made at the Fund's website, [www.franklintempleton.com/prospectus](http://www.franklintempleton.com/prospectus), by calling the Fund at 877-6LM-FUND/656-3863, or by writing to the Fund or your Service Agent. You may change the amount to be paid to you or terminate the Systematic Withdrawal Plan at any time, without charge or penalty, by notifying the Fund or your Service Agent. The Fund, its transfer agent, and the Distributor also reserve the right to modify or terminate the Systematic Withdrawal Plan at any time.

*In General.* The amounts paid to you each redemption period are obtained by redeeming sufficient shares from your account to provide the withdrawal amount that you have specified.

Redemptions will be made at the NAV per share, determined as of the scheduled close of regular trading on the NYSE (normally 4:00 p.m., Eastern time) on the day corresponding to the redemption option designated by the investor, less any applicable contingent deferred sales charge. If the NYSE is not open for business on that day, the shares will be redeemed at the per share NAV determined as of the scheduled close of regular trading on the NYSE on the next day the NYSE is open, less any applicable contingent deferred sales charge. See "Valuation of Shares" below for additional information about the NYSE's holiday schedule.

Withdrawal payments are treated as a sale of shares rather than as a dividend or other distribution. A payment is taxable to the extent that the total amount of the payment exceeds the tax basis in the shares deemed sold. Other taxes or tax-related consequences may apply, and you should consult your tax professional before establishing a Systematic Withdrawal Plan. If the periodic withdrawals exceed reinvested dividends and other distributions, the amount of your original investment may be correspondingly reduced.

Ordinarily, you should not purchase additional shares of a fund in which you have an account if you maintain a Systematic Withdrawal Plan because there are tax disadvantages associated with such purchases and withdrawals.

## **Redemptions In Kind**

The Fund reserves the right, under certain conditions, to honor any request for a redemption by making payment in whole or in part by delivering securities valued in accordance with the procedures described under "Share price" in the Fund's Prospectus. Because redemption in kind may be used at times of unusual illiquidity in the markets, these valuation methods may include fair value estimations. If payment is made in securities, a shareholder should expect to incur brokerage expenses in

converting those securities into cash, and the market price of those securities will be subject to fluctuation until they are sold. In addition, a redemption is generally a taxable event for shareholders, regardless of whether the redemption is satisfied in cash or in kind. The securities delivered may not be representative of the entire Fund portfolio, may represent only one issuer or a limited number of issuers and may be securities that the Fund would otherwise sell. The Fund will not use securities to pay redemptions by the Distributor or other affiliated persons of the Fund, except as permitted by law, SEC rules or orders, or interpretive guidance from the SEC staff or other proper authorities.

### **Shares Purchased and Redeemed Through Another Service Agent**

The Fund has authorized certain Service Agents to receive on its behalf purchase and redemption orders. Such Service Agents are authorized to designate plan administrator intermediaries to receive purchase and redemption orders on the Fund's behalf. The Fund will be deemed to have received a purchase or redemption order when an authorized Service Agent or, if applicable, a Service Agent's authorized designee, receives the order. Orders will be priced at the Fund's NAV next computed after they are received by an authorized Service Agent or the Service Agent's authorized designee and accepted by the Fund.

### **Transferring Fund Shares to Another Service Agent**

You may transfer Fund shares only to a Service Agent that has entered into an agreement with the Distributor or one of its affiliates with respect to the Fund. Some Service Agents may have agreements with the Distributor or one of its affiliates with respect to some funds and not others. Depending on the Service Agent to which you transfer the shares, certain shareholder services may not be available for the transferred shares. After the transfer, you may purchase additional Fund shares. All future trading of Fund shares, including exchanges, is subject to the rules of the Service Agent and its continued agreement with the Distributor that permits such trading.

You should contact your Service Agent or the appropriate fund for further information on transferring Fund shares.

## **EXCHANGE OF SHARES**

Exchanges of Fund shares are discussed under the "Buying shares," "Exchanging shares," and "Redeeming shares" sections of the Fund's Prospectus; this information is incorporated herein by reference. The exchange privilege enables shareholders to acquire shares of the same class in another fund sold by the Distributor (excluding Putnam Investments Funds). If the fund into which you wish to exchange your shares does not offer the class of shares in which you are currently invested, you may be able to exchange for a different share class (see the Fund's Prospectus for more information). This privilege is available to shareholders residing in any state in which the Fund shares being acquired may legally be sold. Prior to any exchange, the shareholder should obtain and review a copy of the current prospectus of each fund into which an exchange is being considered. The Prospectus describes the requirements for exchanging shares of the Fund and may be obtained as described on the cover page of this SAI.

Upon receipt of proper instructions and all necessary supporting documents, shares submitted for exchange are redeemed at the then-current NAV, and the proceeds, net of any applicable sales charge, are immediately invested in shares of the fund being acquired at that fund's then current NAV. The Distributor reserves the right to reject any exchange request. The exchange privilege may be modified or terminated at any time after written notice to shareholders.

*Class A, Class FI, Class R, Class I and Class IS Exchanges.* Class A, Class FI, Class R, Class I and Class IS shareholders of the Fund who wish to exchange all or a portion of their shares for shares of the respective class in another fund may do so without imposition of any initial sales charge (if shares being exchanged were subject to an initial sales charge) but subject to a contingent deferred sales charge, if applicable. An exchange of shares that were not subject to any sales charge will be subject to any applicable initial sales charge or contingent deferred sales charge upon exchange.

*Class C Exchanges.* Class C shares of the Fund may be exchanged for other Class C shares without imposition of any charge but subject to a contingent deferred sales charge, if applicable. Upon an exchange, the new Class C shares will be deemed to have been purchased on the same date as the Class C shares of the Fund that have been exchanged.

*Class C1 Exchanges.* Investors that hold Class C1 shares may exchange those shares for Class C1 shares of another fund, or if a fund does not offer Class C1, for Class C shares, in each case without imposition of any charge but subject to a

contingent deferred sales charge, if applicable. However, once an investor exchanges Class C1 shares for Class C shares, the investor would not be permitted to exchange from Class C shares back to Class C1 shares.

*Class D Exchanges.* Class D shares of the Fund may not be exchanged.

*Class 1 Exchanges.* Class 1 shareholders who wish to exchange all or a portion of their shares may exchange Class 1 shares for Class A shares of certain funds available for exchange. Ask your Service Agent about the funds available for exchange.

Certain retirement plan programs with exchange features in effect prior to November 20, 2006, as approved by the Distributor, will remain eligible for exchange from Class C shares or Class C1 shares to Class A shares in accordance with the program terms. See "Grandfathered Retirement Program with Exchange Features" for additional information.

### **Additional Information Regarding the Exchange Privilege**

The Fund is not designed to provide investors with a means of speculation on short-term market movements. A pattern of frequent exchanges by investors can be disruptive to efficient portfolio management and, consequently, can be detrimental to the Fund and its shareholders. See "Frequent trading of fund shares" in the Prospectus.

During times of drastic economic or market conditions, the Fund may suspend the exchange privilege temporarily without notice and treat exchange requests based on their separate components—redemption orders with a simultaneous request to purchase the other fund's shares. In such a case, the redemption request would be processed at the Fund's next determined NAV but the purchase order would be effective only at the NAV next determined after the fund being purchased formally accepts the order, which may result in the purchase being delayed.

Certain shareholders may be able to exchange shares by telephone. See the Fund's Prospectus for additional information. Exchanges will be processed at the NAV next determined. Redemption procedures discussed above are also applicable for exchanging shares, and exchanges will be made upon receipt of all supporting documents in proper form. If the account registration of the shares of the fund being acquired is identical to the registration of the shares of the fund exchanged, no signature guarantee is required.

The exchange privilege may be modified or terminated at any time and is available only in those jurisdictions where such exchanges legally may be made. An exchange is treated as a sale of the shares exchanged and could result in taxable gain or loss to the shareholder making the exchange. Other taxes or tax-related consequences may apply, and you should consult your tax professional before requesting an exchange.

### **UNCLAIMED SHARE ACCOUNTS**

The Fund may be required to close your account after a period of inactivity, as determined by applicable U.S. state or territory abandoned or unclaimed property laws and regulations, and transfer your shares to the appropriate U.S. state or territory. Please be advised that abandoned or unclaimed property laws and regulations for certain U.S. states or territories require financial organizations to transfer (escheat) unclaimed property to the appropriate U.S. state or territory if no activity occurs in an account for a period of time as specified by applicable laws and regulations. These laws and regulations may require the transfer of shares of the Fund, including shares held through a traditional or Roth IRA account. For traditional IRA accounts escheated to a U.S. state or territory under these abandoned or unclaimed property laws and regulations, the escheatment will generally be treated as a taxable distribution from your IRA to you; U.S. federal and any applicable state income tax may be withheld. This may apply to Roth IRA accounts in addition to traditional IRA accounts. For more information on unclaimed property and how to maintain an active account, please contact your Service Agent or the Fund's transfer agent.

### **VALUATION OF SHARES**

The NAV per share of each class of the Fund is generally calculated as of the close of regular trading (normally 4:00 p.m., Eastern time) on each day on which the NYSE is open. As of the date of this SAI, the NYSE is normally open for trading every weekday except in the event of an emergency or for the following holidays (or the days on which they are observed): New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth National Independence Day,

Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Because of the differences in distribution fees and class specific expenses, the per share NAV of each class of the Fund will differ. Please see the Fund's Prospectus for a description of the procedures used by the Fund in valuing its assets.

## **PROXY VOTING GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

The Manager delegates to the Subadviser the responsibility for voting proxies for the Fund through its contracts with the Subadviser. The Subadviser may use its own proxy voting policies and procedures to vote proxies of the Fund if the Fund's Board reviews and approves the use of those policies and procedures. Accordingly, the Manager does not expect to have proxy-voting responsibility for the Fund.

Should the Manager become responsible for voting proxies for any reason, such as the inability of the Subadviser to provide investment advisory services, the Manager shall utilize the proxy voting guidelines established by the most recent Subadviser to vote proxies until a new subadviser is retained and the use of its proxy voting policies and procedures is authorized by the Board. In the case of a material conflict between the interests of the Manager (or its affiliates if such conflict is known to persons responsible for voting at the Manager) and any fund, the Board of Directors of the Manager shall consider how to address the conflict and/or how to vote the proxies. The Manager shall maintain records of all proxy votes in accordance with applicable securities laws and regulations.

The Manager shall be responsible for gathering relevant documents and records related to proxy voting from the Subadviser and providing them to the Fund as required for the Fund to comply with applicable rules under the 1940 Act. The Manager shall also be responsible for coordinating the provision of information to the Board with regard to the proxy voting policies and procedures of the Subadviser, including the actual proxy voting policies and procedures of the Subadviser, changes to such policies and procedures, and reports on the administration of such policies and procedures.

The Subadviser's proxy voting policies and procedures govern in determining how proxies relating to the Fund's portfolio securities are voted. A copy of the proxy voting policies and procedures is attached as Appendix A to this SAI. Information regarding how the Fund voted proxies (if any) relating to portfolio securities during the most recent twelve month period ended June 30 is available without charge (1) by calling 877-6LM-FUND/656-3863, (2) on [www.franklintempleton.com/prospectus](http://www.franklintempleton.com/prospectus) (click on the name of the Fund), and (3) on the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>.

## **DISCLOSURE OF PORTFOLIO HOLDINGS**

The Fund's Board has adopted policies and procedures (the "policy") developed by the Manager with respect to the disclosure of the Fund's portfolio securities and any ongoing arrangements to make available information about the Fund's portfolio securities. The Manager believes the policy is in the best interests of the Fund and its shareholders and that it strikes an appropriate balance between the desire of investors for information about fund portfolio holdings and the need to protect the Fund from potentially harmful disclosures.

### **General Rules/Website Disclosure**

The policy provides that information regarding the Fund's portfolio holdings may be shared at any time with employees of the Manager, the Fund's Subadviser and other affiliated parties involved in the management, administration or operations of the Fund (referred to as fund-affiliated personnel). With respect to non-money market funds, the Fund's complete list of holdings (including the size of each position) may be made available to investors, potential investors, third parties and Franklin Templeton personnel that are not fund-affiliated personnel (i) upon the filing of portfolio holdings reports in accordance with SEC rules, provided that such filings are not made until 15 calendar days following the end of the period covered by the applicable holdings report or (ii) no sooner than 8 business days after month end, provided that such information has been made available through public disclosure. Typically, public disclosure is achieved by required filings with the SEC and/or posting the information to the Fund's Internet site that is accessible by the public, or through public release by a third party vendor.

The Fund currently discloses its complete portfolio holdings 14 calendar days after month-end. The Fund discloses this information on the Fund's website: [www.franklintempleton.com/prospectus](http://www.franklintempleton.com/prospectus) (click on the name of the Fund).

## Ongoing Arrangements

Under the policy, the Fund may release portfolio holdings information on a regular basis to a custodian, sub-custodian, fund accounting agent, proxy voting provider, rating agency or other vendor or service provider for a legitimate business purpose, where the party receiving the information is under a duty of confidentiality, including a duty to prohibit the sharing of non-public information with unauthorized sources and trading upon non-public information. The Fund may enter into other ongoing arrangements for the release of portfolio holdings information, but only if such arrangements serve a legitimate business purpose and are with a party who is subject to a confidentiality agreement and restrictions on trading upon non-public information. None of the Fund, Franklin Templeton or any other affiliated party may receive compensation or any other consideration in connection with such arrangements. Ongoing arrangements to make available information about the Fund's portfolio securities will be reviewed at least annually by the Fund's Board.

Set forth below is a list, as of December 1, 2025, of those parties with whom the Manager, on behalf of the Fund, has authorized ongoing arrangements that include the release of portfolio holdings information in accordance with the policy, as well as the maximum frequency of the release under such arrangements, and the minimum length of the lag, if any, between the date of the information and the date on which the information is disclosed. The ongoing arrangements may vary for each party, and it is possible that not every party will receive information for the Fund. The parties identified below as recipients are service providers, fund rating agencies, consultants and analysts.

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Delay Before Dissemination</b>
Barclays Bank PLC	Daily	None
Bloomberg AIM	Daily	None
Bloomberg L.P.	Daily	None
Bloomberg Portfolio Analysis	Daily	None
Brown Brothers Harriman	Daily	None
Charles River	Daily	None
Citco	Daily	None
Eagle Investment Systems Corp	Daily	None
Emerging Portfolio Fund Research, Inc. (EPFR), an Informa Company	Monthly	None
Enfusion Systems	Daily	None
ENSO LP	Daily	None
eVestment Alliance	Quarterly	8-10 Days
FactSet	Daily	None
HSBC Global Asset Management	Daily	None
Institutional Shareholder Services	Daily	None
ITG	Daily	None
Kailash Concepts	Monthly	None
Middle Office Solutions, LLC	Daily	None
Morgan Stanley Capital Inc.	Daily	None
Morningstar	Daily	None

NaviSite, Inc.	Daily	None
StarCompliance	Daily	None
State Street Bank and Trust Company	Daily	None
STP Investments	Daily	None
SunGard/Protegent (formerly Dataware)	Daily	None
The Bank of New York Mellon	Daily	None
The Northern Trust Company	Daily	None
The Northern Trust Melbourne	Daily	None
Thomson	Semi-annually	None
Thomson Reuters	Daily	None
VPD Financial Software Consulting	Daily	None
Wilshire Analytics (Axiom and Compass)	Daily	None

Portfolio holdings information for the Fund may also be released from time to time pursuant to ongoing arrangements with the following parties:

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Delay Before Dissemination</b>
Broadridge	Daily	None
Deutsche Bank	Monthly	6-8 Business Days
DST International plc (DSTi)	Daily	None
Electra Information Systems	Daily	None
Fidelity	Quarterly	5 Business Days
Fitch	Monthly	6-8 Business Days
Frank Russell	Monthly	1 Day
Glass Lewis & Co.	Daily	None
Informa Investment Solutions	Quarterly	8-10 Days
Interactive Data Corp	Daily	None
Liberty Hampshire	Weekly and Month End	None
RBC Investor and Treasury Services	Daily	None
S&P (Rating Agency)	Weekly Tuesday Night	1 Business Day
SunTrust	Weekly and Month End	None

Excluded from the lists of ongoing arrangements set forth above are ongoing arrangements where either (i) the disclosure of portfolio holdings information occurs concurrently with or after the time at which the portfolio holdings information is included in a public filing with the SEC that is required to include the information, or (ii) the Fund's portfolio holdings information is made available no earlier than the day next following the day on which the Fund makes the information available

on its website, as disclosed in the Fund's Prospectus. The approval of the Fund's Chief Compliance Officer, or designee, must be obtained before entering into any new ongoing arrangement or altering any existing ongoing arrangement to make available portfolio holdings information, or with respect to any exceptions from the policy.

### **Release of Limited Portfolio Holdings Information**

In addition to the ongoing arrangements described above, the Fund's complete or partial list of holdings (including size of positions) may be released to another party on a one-time basis, provided the party receiving the information has executed a non-disclosure and confidentiality agreement and provided that the specific release of information has been approved by the Fund's Chief Compliance Officer or designee as consistent with the policy. By way of illustration and not of limitation, release of non-public information about the Fund's portfolio holdings may be made (i) to a proposed or potential adviser or Subadviser(s) or other investment manager asked to provide investment management services to the Fund, or (ii) to a third party in connection with a program or similar trade.

In addition, the policy permits the release to investors, potential investors, third parties and Franklin Templeton personnel that are not fund-affiliated personnel of limited portfolio holdings information in other circumstances, including:

- The Fund's top ten securities, current as of month-end, and the individual size of each such security position may be released at any time following month-end with simultaneous public disclosure.
- The Fund's top ten securities positions (including the aggregate but not individual size of such positions) may be released at any time with simultaneous public disclosure.
- A list of securities (that may include fund holdings together with other securities) followed by an investment professional (without position sizes or identification of particular funds) may be disclosed to sell-side brokers at any time for the purpose of obtaining research and/or market information from such brokers.
- A trade in process may be discussed only with counterparties, potential counterparties and others involved in the transaction (i.e., brokers and custodians).
- The Fund's sector weightings, yield and duration (for fixed income and money market funds), performance attribution (e.g., analysis of the Fund's out-performance or underperformance of its benchmark based on its portfolio holdings) and other summary and statistical information that does not include identification of specific portfolio holdings may be released, even if non-public, if such release is otherwise in accordance with the policy's general principles.
- A small number of the Fund's portfolio holdings (including information that the Fund no longer holds a particular holding) may be released, but only if the release of the information could not reasonably be seen to interfere with current or future purchase or sales activities of the Fund and is not contrary to law.
- The Fund's portfolio holdings may be released on an as-needed basis to its legal counsel, counsel to its Independent Trustees and its independent public accounting firm, in required regulatory filings or otherwise to governmental agencies and authorities.

### **Exceptions to the Policy**

The Fund's Chief Compliance Officer, or designee, may, as is deemed appropriate, approve exceptions from the policy. Exceptions are granted only after a thorough examination and consultation with the Manager's legal department, as necessary. Exceptions from the policy are reported annually to the Fund's Board.

### **Limitations of Policy**

The Fund's portfolio holdings policy is designed to prevent sharing of portfolio information with third parties that have no legitimate business purpose for accessing the information. The policy may not be effective to limit access to portfolio holdings information in all circumstances, however. For example, the Manager or the Subadviser may manage accounts other than the Fund that have investment objectives and strategies similar to those of the Fund. Because these accounts, including the Fund, may be similarly managed, portfolio holdings may be similar across the accounts. In that case, an investor in another account managed by the Manager or the Subadviser may be able to infer the portfolio holdings of the Fund from the portfolio holdings in that investor's account.

## THE TRUST

The certificate of trust to establish the Trust was filed with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation of Maryland on October 7, 2009. The Fund is a series of the Trust. Prior to December 29, 2017, the Fund was named "Legg Mason BW Absolute Return Opportunities Fund". Prior to July 29, 2025, the Fund was named "BrandywineGLOBAL — Global Unconstrained Bond Fund".

The Trust is a Maryland statutory trust. A Maryland statutory trust is an unincorporated business association that is established under, and governed by, Maryland law. Maryland law provides a statutory framework for the powers, duties, rights and obligations of the trustees and shareholders of a statutory trust, while the more specific powers, duties, rights and obligations of the trustees and the shareholders are determined by the trustees as set forth in a trust's declaration of trust. The Trust's Declaration of Trust (the "Declaration") provides that by becoming a shareholder of the Fund, each shareholder shall be expressly held to have agreed to be bound by the provisions of the Declaration and any other governing instrument of the Trust, such as the by-laws of the Trust, which contain additional rules governing the conduct of the business of the Trust.

Some of the more significant provisions of the Declaration are summarized below. The following summary is qualified in its entirety by reference to the applicable provisions of the Declaration.

### Shareholder Voting

Under the Declaration, the Trustees have broad authority to direct the business and affairs of the Trust. The Declaration provides for shareholder voting as required by the 1940 Act or other applicable laws but otherwise permits, consistent with Maryland law, actions by the Trustees without seeking the consent of shareholders. For example, the Trustees are empowered to amend the Declaration or authorize the merger or consolidation of the Trust into another trust or entity, reorganize the Trust or any series or class into another trust or entity or a series or class of another entity, sell all or substantially all of the assets of the Trust or any series or class to another entity, or a series or class of another entity, terminate the Trust or any series or class, or adopt or amend the by-laws of the Trust, in each case without shareholder approval if the 1940 Act would not require such approval.

The Fund is not required to hold an annual meeting of shareholders, but the Fund will call special meetings of shareholders whenever required by the 1940 Act or by the terms of the Declaration. The Declaration provides for "dollar-weighted voting" which means that a shareholder's voting power is determined, not by the number of shares he or she owns, but by the dollar value of those shares determined on the record date. All shareholders of record of all series and classes of the Trust vote together, except where required by the 1940 Act to vote separately by series or by class, or when the Trustees have determined that a matter affects only the interests of one or more series or classes of shares. There is no cumulative voting on any matter submitted to a vote of the shareholders.

### Election and Removal of Trustees

The Declaration provides that the Trustees may establish the number of Trustees and that vacancies on the Board may be filled by the remaining Trustees, except when election of Trustees by the shareholders is required under the 1940 Act. When a vote of shareholders is required to elect Trustees, the Declaration provides that such Trustees shall be elected by a plurality of votes cast by shareholders at a meeting at which a quorum is present. The Declaration also provides that a mandatory retirement age may be set by action of two-thirds of the Trustees and that Trustees may be removed, with or without cause, by a vote of shareholders holding two-thirds of the voting power of the Trust, or by a vote of two-thirds of the remaining Trustees. The provisions of the Declaration relating to the election and removal of Trustees may not be amended without the approval of two-thirds of the Trustees.

### Amendments to the Declaration

The Trustees are authorized to amend the Declaration without the vote of shareholders, but no amendment may be made that impairs the exemption from personal liability granted in the Declaration to persons who are or have been shareholders, Trustees, officers or, employees of the Trust or that limits the rights to indemnification, advancement of expenses or insurance provided in the Declaration with respect to actions or omissions of persons entitled to indemnification, advancement of expenses or insurance under the Declaration prior to the amendment.

## **Issuance and Redemption of Shares**

The Fund may issue an unlimited number of shares for such consideration and on such terms as the Trustees may determine. All shares offered pursuant to the Prospectus of the Fund, when issued, will be fully paid and non-assessable. Shareholders are not entitled to any appraisal rights with respect to their shares and, except as the Trustees may determine, shall have no preemptive, conversion, exchange or similar rights. The Fund may involuntarily redeem a shareholder's shares upon certain conditions as may be determined by the Trustees, including, for example, if the shareholder fails to provide the Fund with identification required by law, or if the Fund is unable to verify the information received from the shareholder. Additionally, as discussed below, shares may be redeemed in connection with the closing of small accounts.

## **Disclosure of Shareholder Holdings**

The Declaration specifically requires shareholders, upon demand, to disclose to the Fund such information with respect to their ownership of shares of the Fund, whether direct or indirect, as the Trustees may deem necessary in order to comply with various laws or regulations or for such other purpose as the Trustees may decide. The Fund may disclose such ownership information if required by law or regulation, or as the Trustees otherwise decide.

## **Small Accounts**

The Declaration provides that the Fund may close out a shareholder's account by redeeming all of the shares in the account if the account falls below a minimum account size (which may vary by class) that may be set by the Trustees from time to time. Alternately, the Declaration permits the Fund to assess a fee for small accounts (which may vary by class) and redeem shares in the account to cover such fees, or convert the shares into another share class that is geared to smaller accounts.

## **Series and Classes**

The Declaration provides that the Trustees may establish series and classes in addition to those currently established and that the Trustees may determine the rights and preferences, limitations and restrictions, including qualifications for ownership, conversion and exchange features, minimum purchase and account size, expenses and charges, and other features of the series and classes. The Trustees may change any of those features, terminate any series or class, combine series with other series in the Trust, combine one or more classes of a series with another class in that series or convert the shares of one class into shares of another class.

Each share of the Fund, as a series of the Trust, represents an interest in the Fund only and not in the assets of any other series of the Trust.

## **Shareholder, Trustee and Officer Liability**

The Declaration provides that shareholders are not personally liable for the obligations of the Fund and requires the Fund to indemnify a shareholder against any loss or expense claimed solely because of the shareholder's being or having been a shareholder. The Fund will assume the defense of any claim against a shareholder for personal liability at the request of the shareholder. The Declaration further provides that a Trustee acting in his or her capacity as a Trustee is not personally liable to any person, other than the Trust or its shareholders, in connection with the affairs of the Trust. Each Trustee is required to perform his or her duties in good faith and in a manner he or she believes to be in the best interests of the Trust. All actions and omissions of Trustees are presumed to be in accordance with the foregoing standard of performance, and any person alleging the contrary has the burden of proving that allegation.

The Declaration limits a Trustee's liability to the Trust or any shareholder to the fullest extent permitted under current Maryland law by providing that a Trustee is liable to the Trust or its shareholders for monetary damages only (a) to the extent that it is proved that he or she actually received an improper benefit or profit in money, property, or services or (b) to the extent that a judgment or other final adjudication adverse to the Trustee is entered in a proceeding based on a finding in the proceeding that the Trustee's action, or failure to act, was the result of active and deliberate dishonesty and was material to the cause of action adjudicated in the proceeding. The Declaration requires the Trust to indemnify any persons who are or who have been Trustees, officers or employees of the Trust to the fullest extent permitted by law against liability and expenses in connection with any claim or proceeding in which he or she is involved by virtue of having been a Trustee, officer or employee. Subject to applicable federal law, expenses related to the defense against any claim to which indemnification may apply shall be advanced by the Trust upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the recipient of those expenses to repay the advanced amount if it

is ultimately found that he or she is not entitled to indemnification. In making any determination as to whether a person has engaged in conduct for which indemnification is not available, or as to whether there is reason to believe that such person ultimately will be found entitled to indemnification, such person shall be afforded a rebuttable presumption that he or she did not engage in conduct for which indemnification is not available.

The Declaration provides that any Trustee who serves as chair of the Board, a member or chair of a committee of the Board, lead independent Trustee, audit committee financial expert, or in any other similar capacity will not be subject to any greater standard of care or liability because of such position.

### **Derivative Actions**

The Declaration provides a detailed process for the bringing of derivative actions by shareholders in order to permit legitimate inquiries and claims while avoiding the time, expense, distraction, and other harm that can be caused to the Fund or its shareholders as a result of spurious shareholder demands and derivative actions. Prior to bringing a derivative action, a demand by no fewer than three unrelated shareholders must be made on the Trustees. The Declaration details information, certifications, undertakings and acknowledgements that must be included in the demand. The Trustees are not required to consider a demand that is not submitted in accordance with the requirements contained in the Declaration. The Declaration also requires that, in order to bring a derivative action, the complaining shareholders must be joined in the action by shareholders owning, at the time of the alleged wrongdoing, at the time of demand, and at the time the action is commenced, shares representing at least 5% of the voting power of the affected funds. The Trustees have a period of 90 days, which may be extended for an additional period not to exceed 60 days, to consider the demand. If a majority of the Trustees who are considered independent for the purposes of considering the demand determine that a suit should be maintained, then the Trust will commence the suit and the suit will proceed directly and not derivatively. If a majority of the independent Trustees determines that maintaining the suit would not be in the best interests of the Fund, the Trustees are required to reject the demand and the complaining shareholders may not proceed with the derivative action unless the shareholders are able to sustain the burden of proof to a court that the decision of the Trustees not to pursue the requested action was not consistent with the standard of performance required of the Trustees in performing their duties. If a demand is rejected, the complaining shareholders will be responsible for the costs and expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred by the Trust in connection with the consideration of the demand, if, in the judgment of the independent Trustees, the demand was made without reasonable cause or for an improper purpose. If a derivative action is brought in violation of the Declaration, the shareholders bringing the action may be responsible for the Fund's costs, including attorneys' fees.

The Declaration further provides that the Fund shall be responsible for payment of attorneys' fees and legal expenses incurred by a complaining shareholder only if required by law, and any attorneys' fees that the Fund is obligated to pay shall be calculated using reasonable hourly rates. The Declaration also requires that actions by shareholders against the Trust or the Fund be brought only in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland (Baltimore Division), or if such action may not be brought in that court, then such action shall be brought in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City and that the right to jury trial be waived to the fullest extent permitted by law.

The Declaration further provides that no provision of the Declaration will be effective to require a waiver of compliance with any provision of the 1933 Act, the 1934 Act or the 1940 Act, or of any valid rule, regulation or order of the Commission thereunder.

### **TAXES**

The following is a summary of certain material U.S. federal (and, where noted, state and local) income tax considerations affecting the Fund and its shareholders. This discussion is very general and does not address all the potential U.S. federal income tax consequences that may be applicable to the Fund or to all categories of investors, some of which may be subject to special tax rules. This summary is based upon the Code, its legislative history, Treasury regulations (including temporary and proposed regulations), published rulings, and court decisions, each as of the date of this SAI and all of which are subject to change, possibly with retroactive effect, which could affect the continuing accuracy of this discussion. This discussion assumes that each shareholder holds its shares of the Fund as capital assets for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Current and prospective shareholders are urged to consult their own tax professionals with respect to the specific U.S. federal, state, local, and non-U.S. tax consequences of investing in the Fund.

## Tax Treatment of the Fund

The Fund has elected to be treated, and intends to qualify each year, as a “regulated investment company” under Subchapter M of the Code. To qualify as such, the Fund must, among other things: (a) derive at least 90% of its gross income in each taxable year from dividends, interest, payments with respect to certain securities loans, gains from the sale or other disposition of stock, securities or foreign currencies, other income (including, but not limited to, gains from options, futures, or forward contracts) derived with respect to its business of investing in such stock, securities or currencies, and net income derived from interests in “qualified publicly traded partnerships” (*i.e.*, partnerships (x) the interests in which are traded on an established securities market or are readily tradable on a secondary market or the substantial equivalent thereof, and (y) that derive less than 90% of their income from sources described in this subparagraph (a) other than qualified publicly traded partnerships); and (b) diversify its holdings so that, at the end of each quarter of the Fund’s taxable year, (i) at least 50% of the market value of the Fund’s assets consists of cash and cash items (including receivables), securities of other regulated investment companies, U.S. government securities, and other securities, with such other securities limited, in respect of any one issuer, to an amount not greater than 5% of the value of the Fund’s assets and not more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of such issuer and (ii) not more than 25% of the value of the Fund’s assets is invested, including through corporations in which the Fund owns a 20% or larger voting stock interest, (x) in the securities (other than U.S. government securities or securities of other regulated investment companies) of any one issuer, (y) in the securities (other than the securities of other regulated investment companies) of any two or more issuers that the Fund controls and that are treated as engaged in the same, similar, or related trades or businesses, or (z) in the securities of one or more “qualified publicly traded partnerships,” which generally include master limited partnerships.

In general, for purposes of the 90% gross income test described above, income derived from a partnership will be treated as qualifying income only to the extent such income is attributable to items of income of the partnership which would be qualifying income if realized directly by the Fund. However, 100% of the net income derived from an interest in a qualified publicly traded partnership will be treated as qualifying income. In general, qualified publicly traded partnerships will be treated as partnerships for U.S. federal income tax purposes because they meet a passive income requirement under the Code. In addition, although in general the passive loss rules of the Code do not apply to regulated investment companies, such rules do apply to a regulated investment company with respect to items attributable to interests in qualified publicly traded partnerships. The Fund’s investments in partnerships, if any, including in qualified publicly traded partnerships, may result in the Fund being subject to U.S. federal, state, local, or non-U.S. income, franchise, or withholding tax liabilities.

For purposes of the diversification test described above, the term “outstanding voting securities of such issuer” will include the equity securities of a qualified publicly traded partnership. Also, for purposes of the diversification test, the identification of the issuer (or, in some cases, issuers) of a particular Fund investment can depend on the terms and conditions of that investment. In some cases, identification of the issuer (or issuers) is uncertain under current law, and an adverse determination or future guidance by the IRS with respect to issuer identification for a particular type of investment may adversely affect the Fund’s ability to meet the diversification test.

As a regulated investment company, the Fund will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax on the portion of its taxable investment income and capital gains that it distributes, provided that it satisfies a minimum distribution requirement. To satisfy the minimum distribution requirement, the Fund must distribute at least the sum of (i) 90% of its “investment company taxable income” (*i.e.*, generally, its taxable income other than the excess of its net long-term capital gain over its net short-term capital loss, plus or minus certain other adjustments, and calculated without regard to the deduction for dividends paid), and (ii) 90% of its net tax-exempt income for the taxable year. The Fund will be subject to income tax at the regular corporate tax rate on any taxable income or gains that it does not distribute.

If, for any taxable year, the Fund were to fail to qualify as a regulated investment company under the Code or were to fail to meet the distribution requirement, it would be taxed in the same manner as an ordinary corporation, and distributions would not be deductible by the Fund in computing its taxable income. In addition, in the event of a failure to qualify, the Fund’s distributions, including any distributions of net tax-exempt income and net long-term capital gains, would be taxable to shareholders as ordinary dividend income for U.S. federal income tax purposes to the extent of the Fund’s current and accumulated earnings and profits. However, such dividends would be eligible, subject to any generally applicable limitations, (i) to be treated as qualified dividend income in the case of shareholders taxed as individuals and (ii) for the dividends-received deduction in the case of corporate shareholders. Moreover, if the Fund were to fail to qualify as a regulated investment company in any year, it would be required to pay out its earnings and profits accumulated in that year in order to qualify again as a

regulated investment company. If the Fund were to fail to meet the income, diversification, or distribution test described above, the Fund could in some cases cure such failure, including by paying a Fund-level tax, paying interest, making additional distributions, or disposing of certain assets. In particular, if in the first instance, the Fund does not satisfy the diversification test as of a particular quarter end, it will have up to 30 days after that quarter end to adjust its holdings in order to comply with the test retroactively. Portfolio transactions executed by the Fund in order to comply with the diversification test will increase the Fund's portfolio turnover and trading costs and may increase the amount of taxes payable by shareholders to the extent any capital gains are realized as a result of such transactions. If the Fund were to fail to qualify as a regulated investment company for a period greater than two taxable years, the Fund would generally be required to recognize any net built-in gains with respect to certain of its assets upon a disposition of such assets within five years of qualifying as a regulated investment company in a subsequent year.

Certain commodity-linked investments do not or may be determined not to give rise to qualifying income. If the Fund's non-qualifying income from any source including such commodity-linked investments were to exceed 10% of its gross income for any taxable year, the Fund would fail to qualify as a regulated investment company for that year, unless the Fund cured such failure by paying the Fund-level tax equal to the full amount of such excess.

If the Fund were to fail to distribute in a calendar year at least the sum of (i) 98% of its ordinary income for that year and (ii) 98.2% of its capital gain net income (*i.e.*, the excess of all gains from sales or exchanges of capital assets over the losses from such sales or exchanges) for the one-year period ending October 31 of that year (or November 30 or December 31 of that year if the Fund is permitted to elect and so elects), it would be subject to a 4% nondeductible excise tax. For this purpose, however, any ordinary income or capital gain net income that is retained by the Fund and subject to corporate income tax will be considered to have been distributed by year end. In addition, the minimum amounts that must be distributed in any year to avoid the excise tax will be increased or decreased to reflect any under-distribution or overdistribution, as the case may be, from the previous year. For purposes of the required excise tax distribution, a regulated investment company's ordinary gains and losses from the sale, exchange or other taxable disposition of property that would otherwise be taken into account after October 31 of a calendar year (or November 30 of that year if the regulated investment company makes the election described above) generally are treated as arising on January 1 of the following calendar year; in the case of a fund with a December 31 year end that makes the election described above, no such gains or losses will be so treated. The Fund anticipates that it will pay such dividends and will make such distributions as are necessary to avoid the application of this excise tax, but there can be no assurance that it will be able to do so. In determining its net capital gain (*i.e.*, net realized long-term capital gains in excess of net realized short-term capital losses, including any capital loss carryforwards), its taxable income, and its earnings and profits, a regulated investment company generally is permitted to elect to treat part or all of any post-October capital loss (defined as any net capital loss attributable to the portion of the taxable year after October 31, or if there is no such loss, the net long-term capital loss or net short-term capital loss attributable to such portion of the taxable year), or late-year ordinary loss (generally, the sum of its (i) net ordinary loss from the sale, exchange or other taxable disposition of property, attributable to the portion of the taxable year after October 31 and its (ii) other net ordinary loss attributable to the portion of the taxable year after December 31) as if incurred in the succeeding taxable year.

### **Tax Treatment of the Fund's Investments**

The Fund's transactions in zero coupon securities, foreign currencies, forward contracts, options, and futures contracts (including options and futures contracts on foreign currencies), if any, will be subject to special provisions of the Code (including provisions relating to "hedging transactions" and "straddles") that, among other things, may affect the character of gains and losses realized by the Fund (*i.e.*, may affect whether gains or losses are ordinary or capital), accelerate recognition of income to the Fund, and defer Fund losses. These rules could therefore affect the character, amount, and timing of distributions to shareholders. These provisions also (a) will require the Fund to "mark to market" certain types of the positions in its portfolio (*i.e.*, require the Fund to treat all unrealized gains and losses with respect to those positions as though they were realized at the end of each year) and (b) may cause the Fund to recognize income prior to or without receiving cash with which to pay dividends or make distributions in amounts necessary to satisfy the distribution requirements for avoiding income and excise taxes. In order to distribute this income and avoid a tax at the Fund level, the Fund might be required to sell portfolio securities that it might otherwise have continued to hold, potentially resulting in additional taxable gain or loss.

As a result of entering into swap contracts, if any, the Fund may make or receive periodic net payments. The Fund may also make or receive a payment when a swap is terminated prior to maturity through an assignment of the swap or other closing

transaction. Periodic net payments will generally constitute ordinary income or deductions, while termination of a swap will generally result in capital gain or loss (which will be a long-term capital gain or loss if the Fund has been a party to the swap for more than one year). With respect to certain types of swaps, the Fund may be required to recognize currently income or loss with respect to future payments on such swaps or may elect under certain circumstances to mark such swaps to market annually for tax purposes as ordinary income or loss.

Any investments by the Fund in so-called "section 1256 contracts," such as regulated futures contracts, most foreign currency forward contracts traded in the interbank market, and non-equity options written or purchased by the Fund on U.S. exchanges (including options on broad-based equity indices and debt securities), are subject to special tax rules. Any section 1256 contracts held by the Fund at the end of its taxable year (and, for purposes of the 4% excise tax, on certain later dates as prescribed under the Code) are required to be marked to their market value, and any unrealized gain or loss on those positions will be included in the Fund's income as if each position had been sold for its fair market value at the end of the taxable year. The resulting gain or loss will be combined with any gain or loss realized by the Fund from positions in section 1256 contracts closed during the taxable year. Provided such positions were held as capital assets and were neither part of a "hedging transaction" nor part of a "straddle," 60% of the resulting net gain or loss will be treated as long-term capital gain or loss, and 40% of such net gain or loss will be treated as short-term capital gain or loss, regardless of the period of time the positions were actually held by the Fund. Section 1256 contracts do not include any interest rate swap, currency swap, basis swap, interest rate cap, interest rate floor, commodity swap, equity swap, equity index swap, credit default swap, or similar agreement.

In general, option premiums received by the Fund are not immediately included in the income of the Fund. Instead, the premiums are recognized when the option contract expires, the option is exercised by the holder, or the Fund transfers or otherwise terminates the option (e.g., through a closing transaction). If a call option written by the Fund is exercised and the Fund sells or delivers the underlying security, the Fund generally will recognize capital gain or loss equal to (a) the sum of the strike price and the option premium received by the Fund minus (b) the Fund's basis in the security. Such gain or loss generally will be short-term or long-term depending upon the holding period of the underlying security. If securities are purchased by the Fund pursuant to the exercise of a put option written by it, the Fund generally will subtract the premium received for purposes of computing its cost basis in the securities purchased. Gain or loss arising in respect of a termination of the Fund's obligation under an option other than through the exercise of the option will be short-term gain or loss depending on whether the premium income received by the Fund is greater or less than the amount paid by the Fund (if any) in terminating the transaction. Thus, for example, if an option written by the Fund expires unexercised, the Fund generally will recognize short-term gain equal to the premium received.

In general, gain or loss on a short sale is recognized when the Fund closes the sale by delivering the borrowed property to the lender, not when the borrowed property is sold. Gain or loss from a short sale is generally considered as capital gain or loss to the extent that the property used to close the short sale constitutes a capital asset in the Fund's hands. Except with respect to certain situations where the property used by the Fund to close a short sale has a long-term holding period on the date of the short sale, special rules generally treat the gains on short sales as short-term capital gains. These rules may also terminate the running of the holding period of "substantially identical property" held by the Fund. Moreover, a loss on a short sale will be treated as a long-term capital loss if, on the date of the short sale, "substantially identical property" has been held by the Fund for more than one year.

The Fund may purchase debt obligations with original issue discount ("OID"), market discount, or acquisition discount. Some debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance (and all zero-coupon debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance) will be treated as debt obligations that are issued with OID. Generally, the amount of the OID is treated as interest income and is included in taxable income (and is accordingly required to be distributed by the Fund) over the term of the debt security, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, usually when the debt security matures. Periodic adjustments for inflation in the principal value of inflation-indexed bonds also may be treated as OID that is includible in the Fund's gross income on a current basis.

Some debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of more than one year from the date of issuance that are acquired in the secondary market may be treated as having "market discount." Very generally, market discount is the excess of the stated redemption price of a debt obligation (or in the case of an obligation issued with OID, its "revised issue price") over the purchase price of such obligation. Under the Code, generally, any gain recognized on the disposition of, and any partial payment of principal on, a debt security having market discount is treated as ordinary income to the extent the gain, or principal payment,

does not exceed the "accrued market discount" on such debt security. Alternatively, the Fund may elect to accrue market discount currently, in which case the Fund will be required to include the accrued market discount in the Fund's income (as ordinary income) and thus distribute it over the term of the debt security, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, upon partial or full repayment or disposition of the debt security. If the Fund elects to accrue market discount currently, the rate at which the market discount accrues, and thus is included in the Fund's income, will depend upon which of the permitted accrual methods the Fund elects.

Some debt obligations with a fixed maturity date of one year or less from the date of issuance that are acquired by the Fund may be treated as having OID or, in certain cases, "acquisition discount" (very generally, the excess of the stated redemption price over the purchase price). The Fund will be required to include the OID or acquisition discount in income (as ordinary income) and thus distribute it over the term of the debt security, even though payment of that amount is not received until a later time, upon partial or full repayment or disposition of the debt security. The rate at which OID or acquisition discount accrues, and thus is included in the Fund's income, will depend upon which of the permitted accrual methods the Fund elects.

Because the OID, market discount, or acquisition discount earned by the Fund in a taxable year may exceed the total amount of cash interest the Fund receives from the relevant debt obligations, the Fund may have to dispose of one or more of its investments, including at a time when it is not advantageous to do so, and use the proceeds thereof to make distributions in amounts necessary to satisfy the distribution requirements. The Fund may realize capital gains or losses from such dispositions, which would increase or decrease the Fund's investment company taxable income and/or net capital gain.

In addition, payment-in-kind securities held by the Fund, if any, will give rise to income which is required to be distributed and is taxable even though the Fund receives no interest payment in cash on the security during the year.

Very generally, where the Fund purchases a bond at a price that exceeds the redemption price at maturity (*i.e.*, a premium), the premium is amortizable over the remaining term of the bond. In the case of a taxable bond, if the Fund makes an election applicable to all such bonds it purchases, which election is irrevocable without consent of the IRS, the Fund reduces the current taxable income from the bond by the amortized premium and reduces its tax basis in the bond by the amount of such offset; upon the disposition or maturity of such bonds acquired on or after January 4, 2013, the Fund is permitted to deduct any remaining premium allocable to a prior period. In the case of a tax-exempt bond, tax rules require the Fund to reduce its tax basis by the amount of amortized premium.

The Fund may invest in debt obligations that are in the lowest rating categories or are unrated, including debt obligations of issuers not currently paying interest or that are in default. Investments in debt obligations that are at risk of or in default present special tax issues for the Fund. Tax rules are not entirely clear about issues such as when the Fund may cease to accrue interest, OID or market discount, when and to what extent deductions may be taken for bad debts or worthless securities, and how payments received on obligations in default should be allocated between principal and income. These and other related issues will be addressed by the Fund when, as, and if it invests in such securities, in order to seek to ensure that it distributes sufficient income to preserve its eligibility for treatment as a regulated investment company and does not become subject to U.S. federal income or excise tax.

A portion of the interest paid or accrued on high yield obligations may not (and interest paid on debt obligations, if any, that are considered for tax purposes to be payable in the equity of the issuer or a related party will not) be deductible to the issuer. If a portion of the interest paid or accrued on certain high yield discount obligations is not deductible by the issuer, that portion will be treated as a dividend for purposes of the corporate dividends-received deduction. In such cases, if the issuer of the high yield discount obligations is a domestic corporation, dividend payments by the Fund may be eligible for the dividends-received deduction to the extent of the deemed dividend portion of such accrued interest.

The Fund may be required to treat amounts as taxable income or gain, subject to the distribution requirements referred to above, even though no corresponding amounts of cash are received concurrently, as a result of (1) mark-to-market rules, constructive sale rules or rules applicable to passive foreign investment companies ("PFICs"), to partnerships or trusts in which the Fund invests or to certain options, futures, or forward contracts, or "appreciated financial positions," (2) the inability to obtain cash distributions or other amounts due to currency controls or restrictions on repatriation imposed by a non-U.S. country with respect to the Fund's investments (including through depositary receipts) in issuers in such country, or (3) tax rules applicable to debt obligations acquired with OID, including zero-coupon or deferred payment bonds and pay-in-kind debt obligations, or to market discount if the Fund elects to accrue such market discount currently. In order to distribute this income and avoid a tax on

the Fund, the Fund might be required to liquidate portfolio securities that it might otherwise have continued to hold, potentially resulting in additional taxable gain or loss. The Fund might also meet the distribution requirements by borrowing the necessary cash, thereby incurring interest expenses.

### **Mortgage-Related Securities**

The Fund may invest directly or indirectly in residual interests in real estate mortgage investment conduits ("REMICs") (including by investing in residual interests in CMOs with respect to which an election to be treated as a REMIC is in effect) or equity interests in taxable mortgage pools ("TMPs"). Under a notice issued by the IRS in October 2006 and Treasury regulations that have yet to be issued but may apply retroactively, a portion of the Fund's income (including income allocated to the Fund from an entity treated as a REIT or other pass-through entity) that is attributable to a residual interest in a REMIC or an equity interest in a TMP may be an "excess inclusion" under the Code, which will be subject to U.S. federal income tax in all events. This notice also provides, and the regulations are expected to provide, that excess inclusion income of a regulated investment company will be allocated to shareholders of the regulated investment company in proportion to the dividends received by such shareholders, with the same general consequences as if the shareholders held the related interest directly. As a result, a fund investing in such interests may not be a suitable investment for certain investors, as noted below.

In general, excess inclusion income allocated to shareholders (i) cannot be offset by net operating losses (subject to a limited exception for certain thrift institutions), (ii) will constitute unrelated business taxable income ("UBTI") to entities (including qualified pension plans, individual retirement accounts, 401(k) plans, Keogh plans and certain other tax-exempt entities) subject to tax on UBTI, thereby potentially requiring such an entity that is allocated excess inclusion income, and otherwise might not be required to file a tax return, to file a tax return and pay tax on such income and (iii) in the case of a non-U.S. shareholder, will not qualify for any reduction in U.S. federal withholding tax. Charitable remainder trusts are generally subject to a 100% federal excise tax on UBTI, which may include excess inclusion income allocated to them. A shareholder will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on such inclusions notwithstanding any exemption from such income tax otherwise available under the Code.

### **Non-U.S. Investments**

Dividends, interest or other income (including, in some cases, capital gains) received by the Fund from investments in non-U.S. securities may be subject to withholding and other taxes imposed by non-U.S. countries. Even if the Fund is entitled to seek a refund in respect of such taxes, it may choose not to. Tax conventions between certain countries and the United States may reduce or eliminate such taxes in some cases. The Fund does not expect to be eligible to elect to pass non-U.S. taxes through to its shareholders, who therefore will not be entitled to credits or deductions on their own tax returns for non-U.S. taxes paid by the Fund. Non-U.S. taxes paid by the Fund may reduce the return from the Fund's investments.

Under certain circumstances, if the Fund receives a refund of non-U.S. taxes paid in respect of a prior year, the value of Fund shares could be affected or any foreign tax credits or deductions passed through to shareholders in respect of the Fund's non-U.S. taxes for the current year could be reduced.

Under Section 988 of the Code, gains or losses attributable to fluctuations in exchange rates between the time the Fund accrues income or receivables or expenses or other liabilities denominated in a foreign currency and the time the Fund actually collects such income or pays such liabilities are generally treated as ordinary income or ordinary loss. Similarly, gains or losses on foreign currency, foreign currency forward contracts, certain foreign currency options or futures contracts and the disposition of debt securities denominated in foreign currency, to the extent attributable to fluctuations in exchange rates between the acquisition and disposition dates, are also treated as ordinary income or loss unless the Fund were to elect otherwise.

*Passive Foreign Investment Companies.* If the Fund purchases equity interests (including certain interests treated as equity interests) in non-U.S. entities treated as PFICs for U.S. federal income tax purposes, and does not timely make certain elections, it may be subject to U.S. federal income tax on a portion of any "excess distribution" or gain from the disposition of such shares even if such income is distributed as a taxable dividend by the Fund to its shareholders. Additional charges in the nature of interest may be imposed on the Fund in respect of deferred taxes arising from such distributions or gains.

In general, a PFIC is any non-U.S. corporation in which (i) 75% or more of the gross income for the taxable year is passive income, or (ii) the average percentage of the assets (generally by value, but by adjusted tax basis in certain cases) that

produce, or are held for the production of, passive income is at least 50%. Generally, passive income for this purpose means dividends, interest (including income equivalent to interest), royalties, rents, annuities, the excess of gains over losses from certain property transactions and commodities transactions, income from certain notional principal contracts, and foreign currency gains. Passive income for this purpose does not include certain types of passive income excepted by the Code and other guidance.

If the Fund were to invest in a PFIC and timely elect to treat the PFIC as a "qualified electing fund" under the Code for the first year of its holding period in the PFIC stock, in lieu of the foregoing requirements, the Fund would generally be required to include in income each year a portion of the ordinary earnings and net capital gains of the qualified electing fund, even if not distributed to the Fund. The Fund might have to distribute such amounts to satisfy the 90% distribution requirement and to avoid imposition of the 4% excise tax. In order to distribute this income and avoid a tax at the Fund level, the Fund might be required to liquidate portfolio securities that it might otherwise have continued to hold, potentially resulting in additional taxable gain or loss. In order to make the "qualified electing fund" election, the Fund would be required to obtain certain annual information from the PFICs in which it invests, which may be difficult or impossible to obtain. Dividends paid by PFICs will not be eligible to be treated as "qualified dividend income."

If the Fund were to invest in a PFIC and make a mark-to-market election, the Fund would be treated as if it had sold and repurchased its stock in that PFIC at the end of each year. In such case, the Fund would report any such gains as ordinary income and would deduct any such losses as ordinary losses to the extent of previously recognized gains. Such an election must be made separately for each PFIC owned by the Fund and, once made, would be effective for all subsequent taxable years of the Fund, unless revoked with the consent of the IRS. By making the election, the Fund could potentially ameliorate the adverse tax consequences with respect to its ownership of shares in a PFIC, but in any particular year might be required to recognize income in excess of the distributions it receives from PFICs and its proceeds from dispositions of PFIC stock. The Fund might have to distribute such excess income and gain to satisfy the 90% distribution requirement and to avoid imposition of the 4% excise tax. In order to distribute this income and avoid a tax at the Fund level, the Fund might be required to liquidate portfolio securities that it might otherwise have continued to hold, potentially resulting in additional taxable gain or loss.

### **Capital Loss Carryforwards**

As of October 31, 2025, as set forth below, the listed capital losses may be carried forward indefinitely to offset future taxable capital gains. These capital losses have been deferred as either short-term or long-term losses and will be deemed to occur on the first day of the next taxable year in the same character as they were originally deferred.

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#### **Amount of Capital Loss Carryforward (\$)**

126,418,511

### **Taxation of U.S. Shareholders**

*Dividends and Distributions.* Dividends and other distributions by the Fund are generally treated under the Code as received by the shareholders at the time the dividend or distribution is made. However, if any dividend or distribution is declared by the Fund in October, November, or December of any calendar year and payable to shareholders of record on a specified date in such a month but is actually paid during the following January, such dividend or distribution will be deemed to have been received by each shareholder on December 31 of the year in which the dividend was declared.

The Fund intends to distribute annually substantially all of its investment company taxable income (determined without regard to the dividends-paid deduction), and any net capital gain. However, if the Fund retains for investment an amount equal to all or a portion of its net capital gain, it will be subject to a corporate tax on the amount retained. In that event, the Fund may designate such retained amounts as undistributed capital gains in a notice to its shareholders who, in turn, (a) will be required to include in income for U.S. federal income tax purposes, as long-term capital gains, their proportionate shares of the undistributed amount, (b) will be entitled to credit their proportionate shares of the income tax paid by the Fund on the undistributed amount against their U.S. federal income tax liabilities, if any, and to claim refunds on a properly filed U.S. tax return to the extent their credits exceed their liabilities, if any, and (c) will be entitled to increase their tax basis, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, in their shares by an amount equal to their share of the excess of the amount of undistributed net capital gain included in their income over the income tax paid by the Fund on the undistributed amount. Organizations or persons not subject to U.S. federal

income tax on such capital gains will be entitled to a refund of their pro rata share of such taxes paid by the Fund upon timely filing appropriate returns or claims for refund with the IRS.

Distributions of net investment income and of net realized short-term capital gains, whether paid in cash or in shares, are taxable to a U.S. shareholder as ordinary income or, if certain conditions are met, as "qualified dividend income," taxable to individual and certain other non-corporate shareholders at the rates applicable to long-term capital gain. Distributions of net capital gain, if any, that the Fund reports as capital gain dividends ("Capital Gain Dividends") are taxable as long-term capital gains, whether paid in cash or in shares, and regardless of how long a shareholder has held shares of the Fund. The IRS and the Department of the Treasury have issued regulations that impose special reporting of Capital Gain Dividends by the Fund in order to allow Capital Gain Dividends to be taxable at reduced rates in the hands of certain non-corporate taxpayers who hold shares of the Fund through entities treated as partnerships.

In general, dividends may be reported by the Fund as qualified dividend income if they are attributable to qualified dividend income received by the Fund. Qualified dividend income generally means dividend income received from the Fund's investments in common and preferred stock of U.S. corporations and stock of certain qualified foreign corporations, provided that certain holding period and other requirements are met by both the Fund and the shareholders. If 95% or more of the Fund's gross income (calculated without taking into account net capital gain derived from sales or other dispositions of stock or securities) consists of qualified dividend income, the Fund may report all distributions of such income as qualified dividend income.

A non-U.S. corporation is treated as a qualified foreign corporation for this purpose if it is incorporated in a possession of the United States or it is eligible for the benefits of certain income tax treaties with the United States and meets certain additional requirements. Certain non-U.S. corporations that are not otherwise qualified foreign corporations will be treated as qualified foreign corporations with respect to dividends paid by them if the stock with respect to which the dividends are paid is readily tradable on an established securities market in the United States. PFCs are not qualified foreign corporations for this purpose.

A dividend that is attributable to qualified dividend income of the Fund that is paid by the Fund to a shareholder will not be taxable as qualified dividend income to such shareholder (1) if the dividend is received with respect to any share of the Fund held for fewer than 61 days during the 121-day period beginning on the date that is 60 days before the date on which such share became ex-dividend with respect to such dividend, (2) to the extent that the shareholder is under an obligation (whether pursuant to a short sale or otherwise) to make related payments with respect to positions in substantially similar or related property, or (3) if the shareholder elects to have the dividend treated as investment income for purposes of the limitation on deductibility of investment interest. The "ex-dividend" date is the date on which the owner of the share at the commencement of such date is entitled to receive the next issued dividend payment for such share even if the share is sold by the owner on that date or thereafter.

Certain dividends received by the Fund from U.S. corporations (generally, dividends received by the Fund in respect of any share of stock (1) with a tax holding period of at least 46 days during the 91-day period beginning on the date that is 45 days before the date on which the stock becomes ex-dividend as to that dividend and (2) that is held in an unleveraged position) and distributed and appropriately so reported by the Fund may be eligible for the dividends-received deduction generally available to corporations under the Code. Certain preferred stock must have a holding period of at least 91 days during the 181-day period beginning on the date that is 90 days before the date on which the stock becomes ex-dividend as to that dividend in order to be eligible. In order to qualify for the deduction, corporate shareholders must meet the minimum holding period requirement stated above with respect to their Fund shares, taking into account any holding period reductions from certain hedging or other transactions or positions that diminish their risk of loss with respect to their Fund shares, and, if they borrow to acquire or otherwise incur debt attributable to Fund shares, they may be denied a portion of the dividends-received deduction with respect to those shares. Any corporate shareholder should consult its tax professional regarding the possibility that its tax basis in its shares may be reduced, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, by reason of "extraordinary dividends" received with respect to the shares and, to the extent such basis would be reduced below zero, current recognition of income may be required.

The Fund does not anticipate that any of its dividends paid will qualify for the dividends-received deduction or be treated as qualified dividend income.

Under Section 163(j) of the Code, a taxpayer's business interest expense is generally deductible to the extent of the taxpayer's business interest income plus certain other amounts. If the Fund earns business interest income, it may report a

portion of its dividends as "Section 163(j) interest dividends," which its shareholders may be able to treat as business interest income for purposes of Section 163(j) of the Code. The Fund's "Section 163(j) interest dividend" for a tax year will be limited to the excess of its business interest income over the sum of its business interest expense and other deductions properly allocable to its business interest income. In general, the Fund's shareholders may treat a distribution reported as a Section 163(j) interest dividend as interest income only to the extent the distribution exceeds the sum of the portions of the distribution reported as other types of tax-favored income. To be eligible to treat a Section 163(j) interest dividend as interest income, a shareholder may need to meet certain holding period requirements in respect of the Fund shares and must not have hedged its position in the Fund shares in certain ways.

The Code generally imposes a 3.8% Medicare contribution tax on the net investment income of U.S. individuals to the extent their income exceeds certain threshold amounts. The 3.8% tax also applies to all or a portion of the undistributed net investment income of certain shareholders that are estates and trusts. For these purposes, "net investment income" generally includes, among other things, (i) distributions paid by the Fund of net investment income and capital gains as described above, and (ii) any net gain from the sale, redemption, exchange or other taxable disposition of Fund shares.

Certain tax-exempt educational institutions will be subject to an excise tax on net investment income. For these purposes, certain dividends and capital gain distributions, and certain gains from the disposition of Fund shares (among other categories of income), are generally taken into account in computing a shareholder's net investment income.

Distributions in excess of the Fund's current and accumulated earnings and profits will, as to each shareholder, be treated as a tax-free return of capital to the extent of the shareholder's basis in shares of the Fund, and as a capital gain thereafter (assuming the shareholder holds shares of the Fund as capital assets). One or more of the Fund's distributions during the year may include such a return of capital distribution. Shareholders who receive taxable distributions in the form of additional shares will be treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes as if receiving distributions of cash in amounts equal to the amounts they would have received if they had instead elected to receive cash distributions. Those shareholders' aggregate tax basis in shares of the Fund will be increased by those amounts.

Investors considering buying shares just prior to a dividend or capital gain distribution should be aware that, although the price of shares purchased at that time may reflect the amount of the forthcoming distribution, such dividend or distribution may nevertheless be taxable to them.

If Fund shares are held through a qualified retirement plan entitled to tax-advantaged treatment for U.S. federal income tax purposes, distributions will generally not be taxable currently but may be subject to U.S. federal income taxes upon a later withdrawal of monies from the plan. Special tax rules apply to such retirement plans. You should consult your tax professional regarding the tax treatment of distributions (which may include amounts attributable to Fund distributions) which may be taxable when distributed from the retirement plan.

*Sale, Exchange or Other Taxable Disposition of Shares.* Upon the sale or exchange of a shareholder's shares, the shareholder will generally recognize a taxable gain or loss equal to the difference between the amount realized and the shareholder's basis in the shares. A redemption of shares by the Fund will be treated as a sale for this purpose. Such gain or loss will be treated as capital gain or loss if the shares are capital assets in the shareholder's hands, and will be long-term capital gain or loss if the shareholder held such shares for more than one year and short-term capital gain or loss if the shareholder held such shares for one year or less. Any loss realized on a sale, exchange or other taxable disposition will be disallowed to the extent the shares disposed of are replaced, including by reinvesting dividends or capital gains distributions in the Fund, within a 61-day period beginning 30 days before and ending 30 days after the disposition of the shares. In such a case, the basis of the shares acquired will be increased to reflect the disallowed loss. Any loss realized by a shareholder on the sale of Fund shares held by the shareholder for six months or less will be treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a long-term capital loss to the extent of any distributions or deemed distributions of long-term capital gains received by the shareholder (including amounts credited to the shareholder as undistributed capital gains) with respect to such shares during that six-month period.

If a shareholder incurs a sales charge in acquiring shares of the Fund, disposes of those shares within 90 days and then by January 31 of the calendar year following the year of disposition acquires shares in a mutual fund for which the otherwise applicable sales charge is reduced by reason of a reinvestment right (*e.g.*, an exchange privilege), the original sales charge will not be taken into account in computing gain or loss on the original shares to the extent the subsequent sales charge is reduced. Instead, the disregarded portion of the original sales charge will be added to the tax basis of the newly acquired shares.

Furthermore, the same rule also applies to a disposition of the newly acquired shares made within 90 days of the second acquisition. This provision prevents a shareholder from immediately deducting the sales charge by shifting his or her investment within a family of mutual funds.

If a shareholder recognizes a loss with respect to the Fund's shares of at least \$2 million in any single taxable year or \$4 million in any combination of taxable years for an individual shareholder or at least \$10 million in any taxable year or \$20 million in any combination of taxable years for a corporate shareholder, the shareholder must file with the IRS a disclosure statement on IRS Form 8886. Direct shareholders of portfolio securities are in many cases excepted from this reporting requirement, but under current guidance, shareholders of a regulated investment company are not excepted. The fact that a loss is so reportable does not affect the legal determination of whether the taxpayer's treatment of the loss is proper.

If a shareholder's shares are redeemed to pay a fee because the shareholder's account balance is less than a certain threshold, the redemption will be treated as a taxable sale or exchange of shares, as described above. Such a fee generally will not be deductible by a shareholder that is an individual.

*Basis Reporting.* The Fund, or, in the case of a shareholder holding shares through a Service Agent, the Service Agent, will report to the IRS the amount of proceeds that a shareholder receives from a redemption or exchange of Fund shares. For redemptions or exchanges of shares acquired on or after January 1, 2012, the Fund will also report the shareholder's cost basis in those shares and the character of any gain or loss (i.e., short-term or long-term) that the shareholder realizes on the redemption or exchange, and certain related tax information. If a shareholder has a different cost basis for different shares of the Fund in the same account (e.g., if a shareholder purchased Fund shares held in the same account when the shares were at different prices), the Fund will by default report the cost basis of the shares redeemed or exchanged using the average basis method, under which the cost basis per share is the average of the cost bases of all the shareholder's Fund shares in the account. For these purposes, shares acquired prior to January 1, 2012 and shares acquired on or after January 1, 2012 will generally be treated as held in separate accounts.

A shareholder may instruct the Fund to use a method other than average basis for an account. If redemptions, including in connection with payment of an account fee, or exchanges have occurred in an account to which the average basis method applied, the basis of the Fund shares remaining in the account will continue to reflect the average basis notwithstanding the shareholder's subsequent election of a different method. For further assistance, shareholders who hold their shares directly with the Fund may call the Fund at 877-6LM-FUND/656-3863. Shareholders who hold shares through a Service Agent should contact the Service Agent for further assistance or for information regarding the Service Agent's default method for calculating basis and procedures for electing to use an alternative method. Shareholders should consult their tax professionals concerning the tax consequences of applying the average basis method or electing another method of basis calculation and should consider electing such other method prior to making redemptions or exchanges in their accounts.

*Backup Withholding.* The Fund may be required in certain circumstances to apply backup withholding on dividends, distributions and redemption proceeds payable to non-corporate shareholders who fail to provide the Fund with their correct taxpayer identification numbers or to make required certifications, or who have been notified by the IRS that they are subject to backup withholding. Certain shareholders are exempt from backup withholding. Backup withholding is not an additional tax and any amount withheld may be credited against a shareholder's U.S. federal income tax liability, provided the appropriate information is furnished to the IRS.

*Notices.* Shareholders will receive, if appropriate, various written notices after the close of the Fund's taxable year regarding the U.S. federal income tax status of certain dividends, distributions and redemption proceeds that were paid (or that are treated as having been paid) by the Fund during the preceding taxable year. In certain cases, the Fund may be required to amend the tax information reported to you with respect to a particular year. In this event, you may be required to file amended U.S. federal income or other tax returns with respect to such amended information and, if applicable, to pay additional taxes (including potentially interest and penalties) or to seek a tax refund and may incur other related costs.

## **Other Taxes**

Dividends, distributions and redemption proceeds may also be subject to additional state, local and non-U.S. taxes depending on each shareholder's particular situation. Generally, shareholders will have to pay state or local taxes on Fund dividends and other distributions, although distributions derived from interest on U.S. government obligations (but not distributions of gain from the sale of such obligations) may be exempt from certain state and local taxes.

## Taxation of Non-U.S. Shareholders

Distributions by the Fund to shareholders that are not “U.S. persons” within the meaning of the Code (“non-U.S. shareholders”) properly reported by the Fund as (1) capital gain dividends, (2) short-term capital gain dividends, and (3) interest-related dividends, each as defined and subject to certain conditions described below, generally are not subject to withholding of U.S. federal income tax.

In general, the Code defines (1) “short-term capital gain dividends” as distributions of net short-term capital gains in excess of net long-term capital losses and (2) “interest-related dividends” as distributions derived from U.S.-source interest income of types similar to those not subject to U.S. federal income tax if earned directly by an individual non-U.S. shareholder, in each case to the extent such distributions are properly reported as such by the Fund in a written notice to shareholders. The exceptions to withholding for capital gain dividends and short-term capital gain dividends do not apply to (A) distributions to an individual non-U.S. shareholder who is present in the United States for a period or periods aggregating 183 days or more during the year of the distribution and (B) distributions attributable to gain that is treated as effectively connected with the conduct by the non-U.S. shareholder of a trade or business within the United States, under special rules regarding the disposition of “United States real property interests” (“USRPIs”) as described below. The exception to withholding for interest-related dividends does not apply to distributions to a non-U.S. shareholder (A) that has not provided a satisfactory statement that the beneficial owner is not a U.S. person, (B) to the extent that the dividend is attributable to certain interest on an obligation if the non-U.S. shareholder is the issuer or is a 10% shareholder of the issuer, (C) that is within certain non-U.S. countries that have inadequate information exchange with the United States, or (D) to the extent the dividend is attributable to interest paid by a person that is a related person of the non-U.S. shareholder and the non-U.S. shareholder is a controlled foreign corporation. Although the Fund may be eligible to report interest-related and/or short-term capital gain dividends, the Fund is not required to do so. In the case of shares held through an intermediary, the intermediary may withhold even if the Fund reports all or a portion of a payment as an interest-related or short-term capital gain dividend to shareholders. Non-U.S. shareholders should contact their intermediaries regarding the application of these rules to their accounts.

Distributions by the Fund to non-U.S. shareholders other than (1) capital gain dividends, (2) short-term capital gain dividends, and (3) interest-related dividends (e.g., dividends attributable to dividend and foreign-source interest income or to short-term capital gains or U.S. source interest income to which the exception from withholding described above does not apply) are generally subject to withholding of U.S. federal income tax at a rate of 30% (or lower applicable treaty rate).

If income from the Fund is treated as effectively connected with a trade or business conducted by a non-U.S. shareholder within the United States, the income will in general be subject to U.S. federal income tax at the rates applicable to U.S. citizens, residents or domestic corporations, as applicable, whether such income is received in cash or reinvested in shares of the Fund, and, in the case of a non-U.S. corporation, may also be subject to a branch profits tax. If a non-U.S. shareholder is eligible for the benefits of a tax treaty, the shareholder’s effectively connected income or gain will generally be subject to U.S. federal income tax on a net basis only if it is also attributable to a permanent establishment maintained by the shareholder in the United States. More generally, non-U.S. shareholders who are residents in a country with an income tax treaty with the United States may obtain different tax results than those described herein, and are urged to consult their tax professionals.

A non-U.S. shareholder is not, in general, subject to U.S. federal income tax on gains (and is not allowed a deduction for losses) realized on the sale of shares of the Fund unless (i) such gain is effectively connected with the conduct of a trade or business carried on by the non-U.S. shareholder within the United States, (ii) in the case of a non-U.S. shareholder that is an individual, the holder is present in the United States for a period or periods aggregating 183 days or more during the year of the sale and certain other conditions are met or (iii) the special rules relating to gain attributable to the sale, exchange or other taxable disposition of USRPIs apply to the non-U.S. shareholder’s sale of shares of the Fund.

Special rules would apply if the Fund were a qualified investment entity (“QIE”) because it is either a “United States real property holding corporation” (“USRPHC”) or would be a USRPHC but for the operation of certain exceptions to the definition of USRPIs described below. Very generally, a USRPHC is a domestic corporation that holds USRPIs the fair market value of which equals or exceeds 50% of the sum of the fair market values of the corporation’s USRPIs, interests in real property located outside the United States, and other trade or business assets. USRPIs are generally defined as any interest in U.S. real property and any interest (other than solely as a creditor) in a USRPHC or, very generally, an entity that has been a USRPHC in the last five years. A regulated investment company that holds, directly or indirectly, significant interests in real estate investment trusts (“REITs”) may be a USRPHC. Interests in domestically controlled QIEs, including REITs and regulated investment companies that are QIEs,

not-greater-than-10% interests in publicly traded classes of stock in REITs and not-greater-than-5% interests in publicly traded classes of stock in regulated investment companies generally are not USRPIs, but these exceptions do not apply for purposes of determining whether the Fund is a QIE. If an interest in the Fund were a USRPI, the Fund would be required to withhold U.S. tax on the proceeds of a share redemption by a greater-than-5% non-U.S. shareholder, in which case such non-U.S. shareholder generally would also be required to file U.S. federal income tax returns and pay any additional taxes due in connection with the redemption.

If the Fund were a QIE, under a special “look through” rule, any distributions by the Fund to a non-U.S. shareholder (including, in certain cases, distributions made by the Fund in redemption of its shares) attributable directly or indirectly to (i) distributions received by the Fund from a lower-tier regulated investment company or REIT that the Fund is required to treat as USRPI gain in its hands and (ii) gains realized on the disposition of USRPIs by the Fund would retain their character as gains realized from USRPIs in the hands of the non-U.S. shareholder and would be subject to U.S. tax withholding. In addition, such distributions could result in the non-U.S. shareholder being required to file a U.S. federal income tax return and pay tax on the distributions at regular U.S. federal income tax rates. The consequences to a non-U.S. shareholder, including the rate of such withholding and character of such distributions (*e.g.*, as ordinary income or USRPI gain), would vary depending upon the extent of the non-U.S. shareholder’s current and past ownership of the Fund.

In order to qualify for any exemptions from withholding described above or for lower withholding tax rates under income tax treaties, or to establish an exemption from backup withholding, a non-U.S. shareholder must comply with special certification and filing requirements relating to its non-U.S. status (including, in general, furnishing an IRS Form W-8BEN, W-8BEN-E or substitute form). Non-U.S. shareholders should consult their tax advisers in this regard. Special rules (including withholding and reporting requirements) apply to non-U.S. partnerships and those holding Fund shares through non-U.S. partnerships. Additional considerations may apply to non-U.S. trusts and estates. Investors holding Fund shares through non-U.S. entities should consult their tax advisers about their particular situation.

A non-U.S. shareholder may be subject to state and local tax and to the U.S. federal estate tax in addition to the U.S. federal income tax referred to above.

Under legislation commonly known as “FATCA,” the Fund is required to withhold 30% of certain ordinary dividends it pays to shareholders that fail to meet prescribed information reporting or certification requirements. In general, no such withholding will be required with respect to a U.S. person or non-U.S. individual that timely provides the certifications required by the Fund or its agent on a valid IRS Form W-9 or applicable IRS Form W-8, respectively. Shareholders potentially subject to withholding include foreign financial institutions (“FFIs”), such as non-U.S. investment funds, and non-financial foreign entities (“NFFEs”). To avoid withholding under FATCA, an FFI generally must enter into an information sharing agreement with the IRS in which it agrees to report certain identifying information (including name, address, and taxpayer identification number) with respect to its U.S. account holders (which, in the case of an entity shareholder, may include its direct and indirect U.S. owners), and an NFFE generally must identify and provide other required information to the Fund or other withholding agent regarding its U.S. owners, if any. Such non-U.S. shareholders also may fall into certain exempt, excepted or deemed compliant categories as established by regulations and other guidance. A non-U.S. shareholder in a country that has entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the U.S. to implement FATCA will be exempt from FATCA withholding provided that the shareholder and the applicable foreign government comply with the terms of such agreement.

A non-U.S. entity that invests in the Fund will need to provide the Fund with documentation properly certifying the entity’s status under FATCA in order to avoid FATCA withholding.

Non-U.S. investors should consult their own tax professionals regarding the impact of these requirements on their investment in the Fund.

## **CODES OF ETHICS**

Pursuant to Rule 17j-1 under the 1940 Act, the Fund, the Manager, the Subadviser and the Distributor each has adopted a code of ethics that permits its personnel to invest in securities for their own accounts, including securities that may be purchased or held by the Fund. All personal securities transactions by employees must adhere to the requirements of the codes of ethics. Copies of the codes of ethics applicable to personnel of the Fund, the Manager, the Subadviser, the Distributor and the Independent Trustees are on file with the SEC.

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The Fund's audited annual financial statements for the fiscal period ended October 31, 2025, including the accompanying notes and the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as filed on Form N-CSR, are incorporated by reference into this SAI ([https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0001474103/000113322825014139/bmsof-efp20715\\_ncsr.htm](https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0001474103/000113322825014139/bmsof-efp20715_ncsr.htm)). These audited financial statements are available free of charge upon request by calling the Fund at 877-6LM-FUND/656-3863.

## **Proxy Voting Policies**

### **Brandywine Global Investment Management, LLC**

#### **Proxy Voting**

##### **Responsibility to Vote Proxies**

As an investment adviser, Brandywine Global owes its clients a duty of care and loyalty with respect to services undertaken on their behalf, including proxy voting. Rule 206(4)-6 under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 requires an investment adviser who exercises voting authority with respect to client securities to adopt and implement written policies and procedures that are reasonably designed to ensure that the investment adviser votes proxies in the best interest of its clients.

##### **Client Accounts for which Brandywine Global Votes Proxies**

Brandywine Global votes proxies for each client account for which the client has specifically delegated to Brandywine Global the power to vote proxies in the applicable investment management agreement or other written document, or in instances where the client has assigned Brandywine Global investment discretion over their account. Brandywine Global also votes proxies for any employee benefit plan client subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended ("ERISA"), unless the applicable investment management agreement specifically reserves the responsibility for voting proxies to the plan trustees or other named fiduciary.

At or prior to the inception of each client account, Brandywine Global will determine whether it has proxy voting authority over such account. In instances where the client has retained proxy voting responsibility, Brandywine Global will have no involvement in the proxy voting process for that client.

##### **General Principles**

In exercising discretion to vote proxies for securities held in client accounts, Brandywine Global is guided by general fiduciary principles. Brandywine Global's goal in voting proxies is to act prudently and solely in the best economic interest of its clients. In furtherance of such goal, Brandywine Global will vote proxies in a manner that Brandywine Global believes will be consistent with efforts to maximize shareholder value and to protect shareholder interests.

Brandywine Global does not exercise its proxy voting discretion to further policy, political or other issues that have no connection to enhancing the economic value of a client's investment. As part of its fiduciary duty, Brandywine Global does consider environmental, social, and governance issues that may impact the value of an investment, through introducing opportunity or by creating risk, or both.

##### **How Brandywine Global Votes Proxies**

Appendix A sets forth general guidelines considered by Brandywine Global in voting common proxy items.

In the case of a proxy issue for which there is a stated position set forth in Appendix A, Brandywine Global generally votes in accordance with the stated position. In the case of a proxy issue for which there is no stated position set forth in Appendix A, Brandywine Global votes on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the General Principles.

The general guidelines set forth in Appendix A are not binding on Brandywine Global, but rather are intended to provide an analytical framework for the review and assessment of common proxy issues. Such guidelines can always be superseded based on an assessment of the proxy issue and determination that a vote that is contrary to such general guidelines is in the best economic interests of client accounts. Different portfolio management teams within Brandywine Global may vote differently on the same issue based on their respective assessments of the proxy issue and determinations as to what is in the best economic interests of client accounts for which they are responsible.

## **Use of an Independent Proxy Service Firm**

Brandywine Global may contract with an independent proxy service firm to provide Brandywine Global with certain services, including but not limited to, information or recommendations with regard to proxy votes or other administrative support. Brandywine Global is not required to follow any recommendation furnished by such service provider. The use of an independent proxy service firm to provide proxy voting information or recommendations does not relieve Brandywine Global of its responsibility for any proxy votes.

With respect to any independent proxy service firm engaged by Brandywine Global to provide Brandywine Global with information or recommendations with regard to proxy votes, Brandywine Global will periodically review and assess such firm's policies, procedures and practices including those with respect to the disclosure and handling of conflicts of interest.

## **Conflict of Interest Procedures**

In furtherance of Brandywine Global's goal to vote proxies in the best interests of clients, Brandywine Global follows procedures designed to identify and address material conflicts that may arise between the interests of Brandywine Global and its employees and those of its clients before voting proxies on behalf of such clients. Conflicts of interest may arise as a result of the firm's business or as a result of an employee's personal relationships or circumstances.

### **A. Procedures for Identifying Conflicts of Interest**

Brandywine Global relies on the procedures set forth below to seek to identify conflicts of interest with respect to proxy voting.

1. Brandywine Global's Compliance Department annually requires each Brandywine Global employee to complete a questionnaire designed to elicit information that may reveal potential conflicts between the employee's interests and those of Brandywine Global clients.
2. Brandywine Global treats client relationships as creating a material conflict of interest for Brandywine Global in voting proxies with respect to securities issued by such client or its known affiliates.
3. As a general matter, Brandywine Global takes the position that relationships between a non-Brandywine Global Franklin Resources business unit and an issuer (e.g., investment management relationship between an issuer and a non-Brandywine Global Franklin Resources-owned asset manager) do not present a conflict of interest for Brandywine Global in voting proxies with respect to such issuer because Brandywine Global operates as an independent business unit from other Franklin Resources business units and because of the existence of informational barriers between Brandywine Global and certain other Franklin Resources business units.

### **B. Procedures for Assessing Materiality of Conflicts of Interest**

1. All potential conflicts of interest identified must be brought to the attention of the Investment Committee for resolution.
2. The Investment Committee determines whether a conflict of interest is material. A conflict of interest will be considered material to the extent that it is determined that such conflict is likely to influence, or appear to influence, Brandywine Global's decision-making in voting the proxy. All materiality determinations will be based on an assessment of the particular facts and circumstances. A written record of all materiality determinations made by the Investment Committee will be maintained.
3. If it is determined by the Investment Committee that a conflict of interest is not material, Brandywine Global may vote proxies following normal processes notwithstanding the existence of the conflict.

### **C. Procedures for Addressing Material Conflicts of Interest**

1. With the exception of those material conflicts identified in A.2. which will be voted in accordance with paragraph C.1.b. below, if it is determined by the Investment Committee that a conflict of interest is material, the Investment Committee will determine an appropriate method or combination of methods to resolve such conflict of interest before the proxy affected by the conflict of interest is voted by Brandywine Global. Such determination will be based on the particular facts and circumstances, including the importance of the proxy issue, the nature of the conflict of interest, etc. Such methods may include:

- a. confirming that the proxy will be voted in accordance with the recommendations of an independent proxy service firm retained by Brandywine Global;
  - b. in the case of a conflict of interest resulting from a particular employee's personal relationships or circumstances, removing such employee from the decision-making process with respect to such proxy vote; or
  - c. such other method as is deemed appropriate given the particular facts and circumstances.
2. A written record of the method used to resolve a material conflict of interest will be maintained.

## **Other Considerations**

In certain situations, Brandywine Global may decide not to vote proxies on behalf of a client account for which it has discretionary voting authority because Brandywine Global believes that the expected benefit to the client account of voting shares is outweighed by countervailing considerations (excluding the existence of a potential conflict of interest). Examples of situations in which Brandywine Global may determine not to vote proxies are set forth below.

### **A. Share Blocking**

Proxy voting in certain countries requires "share blocking." This means that shareholders wishing to vote their proxies must deposit their shares shortly before the date of the meeting (e.g. one week) with a designated depository. During the blocking period, shares that will be voted at the meeting cannot be sold until the meeting has taken place and the shares have been returned to client accounts by the designated depository. In deciding whether to vote shares subject to share blocking, Brandywine Global may consider and weigh, based on the particular facts and circumstances, the expected benefit to client accounts of voting in relation to the potential detriment to clients of not being able to sell such shares during the applicable period.

### **B. Securities on Loan**

Certain clients of Brandywine Global, such as an institutional client or a registered investment company for which Brandywine Global acts as a sub-adviser, may engage in securities lending with respect to the securities in their accounts. Brandywine Global typically does not direct or oversee such securities lending activities. To the extent feasible and practical under the circumstances, Brandywine Global may request that the client recall shares that are on loan so that such shares can be voted if Brandywine Global believes that the expected benefit to the client of voting such shares outweighs the detriment to the client of recalling such shares (e.g., foregone income). The ability to timely recall shares for proxy voting purposes typically is not entirely within the control of Brandywine Global and requires the cooperation of the client and its other service providers. Under certain circumstances, the recall of shares in time for such shares to be voted may not be possible due to applicable proxy voting record dates and administrative considerations.

## **Proxy Voting-Related Disclosures**

### **A. Proxy Voting Independence and Intent**

Brandywine Global exercises its proxy voting authority independently of other Franklin Resources-owned asset managers. Brandywine Global and its employees will not consult with or enter into any formal or informal agreements with Brandywine Global's ultimate parent, Franklin Resources, Inc., any other Franklin Resources business unit, or any of their respective officers, directors or employees, regarding the voting of any securities by Brandywine Global on behalf of its clients.

Brandywine Global and its employees may not disclose to any person outside of Brandywine Global, including without limitation another investment management firm (affiliated or unaffiliated) how Brandywine Global intends to vote a proxy without prior approval from Brandywine Global's Chief Compliance Officer. Prior approval is not required in instances where Brandywine Global discloses directly to representatives of an issuer how Brandywine Global intends to vote a proxy so long as the disclosure is made solely to representatives of the issuer and Brandywine Global believes that the disclosure is in the best interests of its clients.

If a Brandywine Global employee receives a request to disclose Brandywine Global's proxy voting intentions to another person outside of Brandywine Global (including an employee of another Franklin Resources business unit) in connection with an upcoming proxy voting matter, the employee should immediately notify Brandywine Global's Chief Compliance Officer.

If a Brandywine Global portfolio manager wants to take a public stance with regards to a proxy, the portfolio manager must consult with and obtain the approval of Brandywine Global's Chief Compliance Officer before making or issuing a public statement.

## **B. Disclosure of Proxy Votes and Policy and Procedures**

Upon Brandywine Global's receipt of any oral or written client request for information on how Brandywine Global voted proxies for that client's account, Brandywine Global will promptly provide the client with such requested information in writing.

Brandywine Global will deliver to each client, for which it has proxy voting authority, no later than the time it accepts such authority, a written summary of this Proxy Voting policy and procedures. This summary must include information on how clients may obtain information about how Brandywine Global has voted proxies for their accounts and must also state that a copy of Brandywine Global's Proxy Voting policy and procedures is available upon request.

Brandywine Global must create and maintain a record of each written client request for proxy voting information. Such record must be created promptly after receipt of the request and must include the date the request was received, the content of the request, and the date of Brandywine Global's response. Brandywine Global must also maintain copies of written client requests and copies of all responses to such requests.

## **C. Delegation of Duties**

Brandywine Global may delegate to non-investment personnel the responsibility to vote proxies in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Appendix A. Such delegation of duties will only be made to employees deemed to be reasonably capable of performing this function in a satisfactory manner.

## **Proxy Engagement and Certain Non-Proxy Voting Matters**

Brandywine Global may determine that it is appropriate and beneficial to engage in a dialogue or written communication with a company or other shareholders regarding certain matters on a company's proxy statement from time to time, if and to the extent that Brandywine Global determines that doing so is consistent with law and applicable general fiduciary principles. A company or shareholder may also seek to engage with Brandywine Global in advance of the company's formal proxy solicitation to review issues more generally or gauge support for certain proposals.

Absent a specific contrary written agreement with a client or other legal obligation, Brandywine Global does not (1) render any advice to, or take any action on behalf of, clients with respect to any legal proceedings, including bankruptcies and shareholder litigation, to which any securities or other investments held in client accounts, or the issuers thereof, become subject, or (2) initiate or pursue legal proceedings, including without limitation shareholder litigation, on behalf of clients with respect to transactions or securities or other investments held in client accounts, or the issuers thereof. Except as otherwise agreed to in writing with a particular client, the right to take any action with respect to any legal proceeding, including without limitation bankruptcies and shareholder litigation, and the right to initiate or pursue any legal proceedings, including without limitation shareholder litigation, with respect to transactions or securities or other investments held in a client account is expressly reserved to the client.

## **Recordkeeping**

In addition to all other records required by this Policy and Procedures, Brandywine Global will maintain the following records relating to proxy voting:

- A. a copy of this Policy and Procedures, including any and all amendments that may be adopted;
- B. a copy of each proxy statement that Brandywine Global receives regarding client securities;
- C. a record of each vote cast by Brandywine Global on behalf of a client;

- D. documentation relating to the identification and resolution of conflicts of interest;
- E. any documents created by Brandywine Global that were material to a proxy voting decision or that memorialized the basis for that decision;
- F. a copy of each written client request for information on how Brandywine Global voted proxies on behalf of the client, and a copy of any written response by Brandywine Global to any (written or oral) client request for information on how Brandywine Global voted proxies on behalf of the requesting client; and
- G. records showing whether or not Brandywine Global has proxy voting authority for each client account.

All required records will be maintained and preserved in an easily accessible place for a period of not less than six years from the end of the fiscal year during which the last entry was made on such record, the first two years in an appropriate office of Brandywine Global. Brandywine Global also will maintain a copy of any proxy voting policies and procedures that were in effect at any time within the last five years.

To the extent that Brandywine Global is authorized to vote proxies for a United States registered investment company, Brandywine Global will maintain such records as are necessary to allow such fund to comply with its recordkeeping, reporting and disclosure obligations under applicable laws, rules and regulations.

In lieu of keeping copies of proxy statements, Brandywine Global may rely on proxy statements filed on the EDGAR system as well as on third party records of proxy statements if the third party provides an undertaking to provide copies of such proxy statements promptly upon request.

Brandywine Global may rely on a third party to make and retain, on Brandywine Global's behalf, records of votes cast by Brandywine Global on behalf of clients if the third party provides an undertaking to provide a copy of such records promptly upon request.

## **Appendix A**

### **Proxy Voting Guidelines**

Below are proxy voting guidelines that Brandywine Global generally follows when voting proxies for securities held in client accounts. One or more portfolio management teams may decide to deviate from these guidelines with respect to any one or more particular proxy votes, subject in all cases to the duty to act solely in the best interest of client accounts holding the applicable security.

#### I. Compensation

- A. We vote for non-employee director stock options, unless we consider the number of shares available for issue excessive.
- B. We vote for employee stock purchase programs.
- C. We vote for compensation plans that are tied to the company achieving set profitability hurdles.
- D. We vote against attempts to re-price options. Also, we vote against the re-election of incumbent Directors in the event of such a re-pricing proposal.
- E. We vote against attempts to increase incentive stock options available if they are excessive, either in total or for one individual.
- F. We vote against stock option plans allowing for stock options with exercise prices less than 100% of the stock's price at the time of the option grant.
- G. We vote for measures that give shareholders a vote on executive compensation.

#### II. Governance

- A. We vote for proposals to separate the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board positions.
- B. We vote against "catch-all" authorizations permitting proxy holders to conduct unspecified business that arises during shareholder meetings.

#### III. Anti-Takeover

We vote against anti-takeover measures, including without limitation:

- A. Staggered Boards of Directors (for example, where 1/3 of a company's Board is elected each year rather than the entire Board each year).
- B. Super-Majority Voting Measures (for example, requiring a greater than 50% vote to approve takeovers or make certain changes).
- C. Poison Pills, which are special stock rights that go into effect upon a takeover offer or an outsider acquiring more than a specified percentage of a company's outstanding shares.

#### IV. Capital Structure

We vote against attempts to increase authorized shares by more than twice the number of outstanding shares unless there is a specific purpose for such increase given, such as a pending stock split or a corporate purchase using shares, and we determine that increasing authorized shares for such purpose is appropriate.

## Credit Ratings

### DESCRIPTION OF RATINGS

The ratings of Moody's Investors Service, Inc., S&P Global Ratings and Fitch Ratings represent their opinions as to the quality of various debt obligations. It should be emphasized, however, that ratings are not absolute standards of quality. Consequently, debt obligations with the same maturity, coupon and rating may have different yields while debt obligations of the same maturity and coupon with different ratings may have the same yield. As described by the rating agencies, ratings are generally given to securities at the time of issuances. While the rating agencies may from time to time revise such ratings, they undertake no obligation to do so.

#### Moody's Investors Service, Inc. Global Rating Scales

Credit ratings are assigned on Moody's global long-term and short-term rating scales and are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial obligations issued by non-financial corporates, financial institutions, structured finance vehicles, project finance vehicles, and public sector entities. Moody's defines credit risk as the risk that an entity may not meet its contractual financial obligations as they come due and any estimated financial loss in the event of default or impairment. The contractual financial obligations<sup>1</sup> addressed by Moody's ratings are those that call for, without regard to enforceability, the payment of an ascertainable amount, which may vary based upon standard sources of variation (e.g., floating interest rates), by an ascertainable date. Moody's rating addresses the issuer's ability to obtain cash sufficient to service the obligation, and its willingness to pay.<sup>2</sup> Moody's ratings do not address non-standard sources of variation in the amount of the principal obligation (e.g., equity indexed), absent an express statement to the contrary in a press release accompanying an initial rating.<sup>3</sup> Long-term ratings are assigned to issuers or obligations with an original maturity of eleven months or more and reflect both on the likelihood of a default or impairment on contractual financial obligations and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default or impairment. Short-term ratings are assigned to obligations with an original maturity of thirteen months or less and reflect both on the likelihood of a default or impairment on contractual financial obligations and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default or impairment.<sup>4, 5, 6</sup> Moody's issues ratings at the issuer level and instrument level on both the long-term scale and the short-term scale. Typically, ratings are made publicly available although private and unpublished ratings may also be assigned.<sup>7</sup>

Moody's differentiates structured finance ratings from fundamental ratings (i.e., ratings on nonfinancial corporate, financial institution, and public sector entities) on the global long-term scale by adding (sf) to all structured finance ratings.<sup>8</sup> The addition of (sf) to structured finance ratings should eliminate any presumption that such ratings and fundamental ratings at the same letter grade level will behave the same.

<sup>1</sup> In the case of impairments, there can be a financial loss even when contractual obligations are met.

<sup>2</sup> In some cases the relevant credit risk relates to a third party, in addition to, or instead of the issuer. Examples include credit-linked notes and guaranteed obligations.

<sup>3</sup> Because the number of possible features or structures is limited only by the creativity of issuers, Moody's cannot comprehensively catalogue all the types of non-standard variation affecting financial obligations, but examples include equity indexed principal values and cash flows, prepayment penalties, and an obligation to pay an amount that is not ascertainable at the inception of the transaction.

<sup>4</sup> For certain preferred stock and hybrid securities in which payment default events are either not defined or do not match investors' expectations for timely payment, long-term and short-term ratings reflect the likelihood of impairment and financial loss in the event of impairment.

<sup>5</sup> Debts held on the balance sheets of official sector institutions – which include supranational institutions, central banks and certain government-owned or controlled banks – may not always be treated the same as debts held by private investors and lenders. When it is known that an obligation is held by official sector institutions as well as other investors, a rating (short-term or long-term) assigned to that obligation reflects only the credit risks faced by non-official sector investors.

<sup>6</sup> Where grace periods are disproportionately long relative to the stated maturity, Moody's may choose not to rate the Instrument. This is particularly relevant in the commercial paper market where maturities may be 30 days or less with strong investor expectation of prompt payment.

<sup>7</sup> For information on how to obtain a Moody's credit rating, including private and unpublished credit ratings, please see [Moody's Investors Service Products](#). Please note that Moody's always reserves the right to choose not to assign or maintain a credit rating for its own business reasons.

<sup>8</sup> Like other global scale ratings, (sf) ratings reflect both the likelihood of a default and the expected loss suffered in the event of default. Ratings are assigned based on a rating committee's assessment of a security's expected loss rate (default probability multiplied by expected loss severity), and may be subject to the constraint that the final expected loss rating assigned would not be more than a certain number of notches, typically three to five notches, above the rating that would be assigned based on an assessment of default probability alone. The magnitude of this constraint may vary with the level of the rating, the seasoning of the transaction, and the uncertainty around the assessments of expected loss and probability of default.

The (sf) indicator for structured finance security ratings indicates that otherwise similarly rated structured finance and fundamental securities may have different risk characteristics. Through its current methodologies, however, Moody's aspires to achieve broad expected equivalence in structured finance and fundamental rating performance when measured over a long period of time.

### **Description of Moody's Investors Service, Inc.'s Global Long-Term Ratings:**

**Aaa**—Obligations rated Aaa are judged to be of the highest quality, subject to the lowest level of credit risk.

**Aa**—Obligations rated Aa are judged to be of high quality and are subject to very low credit risk.

**A**—Obligations rated A are judged to be upper-medium grade and are subject to low credit risk.

**Baa**—Obligations rated Baa are judged to be medium-grade and subject to moderate credit risk and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics.

**Ba**—Obligations rated Ba are judged to be speculative and are subject to substantial credit risk.

**B**—Obligations rated B are considered speculative and are subject to high credit risk.

**Caa**—Obligations rated Caa are judged to be speculative of poor standing and are subject to very high credit risk.

**Ca**—Obligations rated Ca are highly speculative and are likely in, or very near, default, with some prospect of recovery of principal and interest.

**C**—Obligations rated C are the lowest rated and are typically in default, with little prospect for recovery of principal or interest.

**Note:** *Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa. The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category. Additionally, a "(hyb)" indicator is appended to all ratings of hybrid securities issued by banks, insurers, finance companies, and securities firms.\**

*\*By their terms, hybrid securities allow for the omission of scheduled dividends, interest, or principal payments, which can potentially result in impairment if such an omission occurs. Hybrid securities may also be subject to contractually allowable write-downs of principal that could result in impairment. Together with the hybrid indicator, the long-term obligation rating assigned to a hybrid security is an expression of the relative credit risk associated with that security.*

### **Description of Moody's Investors Service, Inc.'s Global Short-Term Ratings:**

**P-1**—Ratings of Prime-1 reflect a superior ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

**P-2**—Ratings of Prime-2 reflect a strong ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

**P-3**—Ratings of Prime-3 reflect an acceptable ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

**NP**—Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Not Prime do not fall within any of the Prime rating categories.

### **Description of Moody's Investors Service, Inc.'s US Municipal Ratings:**

*US Municipal Short-Term Debt and Demand Obligation Ratings:*

Moody's uses the global short-term Prime rating scale for commercial paper issued by US municipalities and nonprofits. These commercial paper programs may be backed by external letters of credit or liquidity facilities, or by an issuer's self-liquidity.

For other short-term municipal obligations, Moody's uses one of two other short-term rating scales, the Municipal Investment Grade (MIG) and Variable Municipal Investment Grade (VMIG) scales discussed below.

*MIG Ratings:*

Moody's uses the MIG scale for US municipal cash flow notes, bond anticipation notes and certain other short-term obligations, which typically mature in three years or less.

**MIG 1**—This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by established cash flows, highly reliable liquidity support, or demonstrated broad-based access to the market for refinancing.

**MIG 2**—This designation denotes strong credit quality. Margins of protection are ample, although not as large as in the preceding group.

**MIG 3**—This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Liquidity and cash-flow protection may be narrow, and market access for refinancing is likely to be less well-established.

**SG**—This designation denotes speculative grade credit quality. Debt instruments in this category may lack sufficient margins of protection.

#### *VMIG Ratings:*

For variable rate demand obligations (VRDOs), Moody's assigns both a long-term rating and a short-term payment obligation rating. The long-term rating addresses the issuer's ability to meet scheduled principal and interest payments. The short-term payment obligation rating addresses the ability of the issuer or the liquidity provider to meet any purchase price payment obligation resulting from optional tenders ("on demand") and/or mandatory tenders of the VRDO. The short-term payment obligation rating uses the VMIG scale. Transitions of VMIG ratings with conditional liquidity support differ from transitions of Prime ratings reflecting the risk that external liquidity support will terminate if the issuer's long-term rating drops below investment grade.

For VRDOs, Moody's typically assigns a VMIG rating if the frequency of the payment obligation is less than every three years. If the frequency of the payment obligation is less than three years, but the obligation is payable only with remarketing proceeds, the VMIG short-term rating is not assigned and it is denoted as "NR". Industrial development bonds in the US where the obligor is a corporate may carry a VMIG rating that reflects Moody's view of the relative likelihood of default and loss. In these cases, liquidity assessment is based on the liquidity of the corporate obligor.

**VMIG 1**—This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by the superior short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections.

**VMIG 2**—This designation denotes strong credit quality. Good protection is afforded by the strong short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections.

**VMIG 3**—This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Adequate protection is afforded by the satisfactory short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections.

**SG**—This designation denotes speculative-grade credit quality. Demand features rated in this category may be supported by a liquidity provider that does not have a sufficiently strong short-term rating or may lack the structural or legal protections.

#### **Description of Moody's Investors Service, Inc.'s National Scale Long-Term Ratings:**

Moody's long-term National Scale Ratings (NSRs) are opinions of the relative creditworthiness of issuers and financial obligations within a particular country. NSRs are not designed to be compared among countries; rather, they address relative credit risk within a given country. Moody's assigns national scale ratings in certain local capital markets in which investors have found the global rating scale provides inadequate differentiation among credits or is inconsistent with a rating scale already in common use in the country.

In each specific country, the last two characters of the rating indicate the country in which the issuer is located or the financial obligation was issued (e.g., Aaa.ke for Kenya).

#### **Long-Term NSR Scale**

**Aaa.n** Issuers or issues rated Aaa.n demonstrate the strongest creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

**Aa.n** Issuers or issues rated Aa.n demonstrate very strong creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

**A.n** Issuers or issues rated A.n demonstrate above-average creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

**Baa.n** Issuers or issues rated Baa.n demonstrate average creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

**Ba.n** Issuers or issues rated Ba.n demonstrate below-average creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

**B.n** Issuers or issues rated B.n demonstrate weak creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

**Caa.n** Issuers or issues rated Caa.n demonstrate very weak creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

**Ca.n** Issuers or issues rated Ca.n demonstrate extremely weak creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

**C.n** Issuers or issues rated C.n demonstrate the weakest creditworthiness relative to other domestic issuers and issuances.

*Note: Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa. The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category.*

#### **Description of S&P Global Ratings' Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings:**

Issue credit ratings are based, in varying degrees, on S&P Global Ratings' analysis of the following considerations:

- The likelihood of payment—the capacity and willingness of the obligor to meet its financial commitments on an obligation in accordance with the terms of the obligation;
- The nature and provisions of the financial obligation, and the promise S&P Global Ratings imputes; and
- The protection afforded by, and relative position of, the financial obligation in the event of a bankruptcy, reorganization, or other arrangement under the laws of bankruptcy and other laws affecting creditors' rights.

An issue rating is an assessment of default risk but may incorporate an assessment of relative seniority or ultimate recovery in the event of default. Junior obligations are typically rated lower than senior obligations, to reflect lower priority in bankruptcy, as noted above. (Such differentiation may apply when an entity has both senior and subordinated obligations, secured and unsecured obligations, or operating company and holding company obligations.)

**AAA**—An obligation rated "AAA" has the highest rating assigned by S&P Global Ratings. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is extremely strong.

**AA**—An obligation rated "AA" differs from the highest-rated obligations only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is very strong.

**A**—An obligation rated "A" is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher-rated categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is still strong.

**BBB**—An obligation rated "BBB" exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

**BB, B, CCC, CC, and C**—Obligations rated "BB", "B", "CCC", "CC", and "C" are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. "BB" indicates the least degree of speculation and "C" the highest. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions.

**BB**—An obligation rated “BB” is less vulnerable to nonpayment than other speculative issues. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions that could lead to the obligor’s inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

**B**—An obligation rated “B” is more vulnerable to nonpayment than obligations rated “BB”, but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor’s capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

**CCC**—An obligation rated “CCC” is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

**CC**—An obligation rated “CC” is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment.

The “CC” rating is used when a default has not yet occurred but S&P Global Ratings expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.

**C**—An obligation rated “C” is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, and the obligation is expected to have lower relative seniority or lower ultimate recovery compared with obligations that are rated higher.

**D**—An obligation rated “D” is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the “D” rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within the next five business days in the absence of a stated grace period or within the earlier of the stated grace period or the next 30 calendar days. The “D” rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. A rating on an obligation is lowered to “D” if it is subject to a distressed debt restructuring.

Note: The ratings from “AA” to “CCC” may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the rating categories.

#### **Description of S&P Global Ratings’ Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings:**

**A-1**—A short-term obligation rated “A-1” is rated in the highest category by S&P Global Ratings. The obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is strong. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitments on these obligations is extremely strong.

**A-2**—A short-term obligation rated “A-2” is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher rating categories. However, the obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is satisfactory.

**A-3**—A short-term obligation rated “A-3” exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken an obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

**B**—A short-term obligation rated “B” is regarded as vulnerable and has significant speculative characteristics. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties that could lead to the obligor’s inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.

**C**—A short-term obligation rated “C” is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

**D**—A short-term obligation rated “D” is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the “D” rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The “D” rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual

certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. A rating on an obligation is lowered to “D” if it is subject to a distressed debt restructuring.

### **Description of S&P Global Ratings’ Municipal Short-Term Note Ratings:**

An S&P Global Ratings U.S. municipal note rating reflects S&P Global Ratings’ opinion about the liquidity factors and market access risks unique to the notes. Notes due in three years or less will likely receive a note rating. Notes with an original maturity of more than three years will most likely receive a long-term debt rating. In determining which type of rating, if any, to assign, S&P Global Ratings’ analysis will review the following considerations:

- Amortization schedule—the larger the final maturity relative to other maturities, the more likely it will be treated as a note; and
- Source of payment—the more dependent the issue is on the market for its refinancing, the more likely it will be treated as a note.

**SP-1**—Strong capacity to pay principal and interest. An issue determined to possess a very strong capacity to pay debt service is given a plus (+) designation.

**SP-2**—Satisfactory capacity to pay principal and interest, with some vulnerability to adverse financial and economic changes over the term of the notes.

**SP-3**—Speculative capacity to pay principal and interest.

**D**—“D” is assigned upon failure to pay the note when due, completion of a distressed debt restructuring, or the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions.

### **Description of S&P Global Ratings’ Long-Term Issuer Credit Ratings**

**AAA** An obligor rated “AAA” has extremely strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. “AAA” is the highest issuer credit rating assigned by S&P Global Ratings.

**AA** An obligor rated “AA” has very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. It differs from the highest-rated obligors only to a small degree.

**A** An obligor rated “A” has strong capacity to meet its financial commitments but is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligors in higher-rated categories.

**BBB** An obligor rated “BBB” has adequate capacity to meet its financial commitments. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken the obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitments.

**BB, B, CCC, and CC** Obligor rated “BB”, “B”, “CCC”, and “CC” are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. “BB” indicates the least degree of speculation and “CC” the highest. While such obligors will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions.

**BB** An obligor rated “BB” is less vulnerable in the near term than other lower-rated obligors. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties and exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions that could lead to the obligor’s inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.

**B** An obligor rated “B” is more vulnerable than the obligors rated “BB”, but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor’s capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments.

**CCC** An obligor rated “CCC” is currently vulnerable and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions to meet its financial commitments.

**CC** An obligor rated “CC” is currently highly vulnerable. The “CC” rating is used when a default has not yet occurred but S&P Global Ratings expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.

**SD and D** An obligor is rated “SD” (selective default) or “D” if S&P Global Ratings considers there to be a default on one or more of its financial obligations, whether long- or short-term, including rated and unrated obligations but excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in nonpayment according to terms. A “D” rating is assigned when S&P Global Ratings believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. An “SD” rating is assigned when S&P Global Ratings believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. A rating on an obligor is lowered to “D” or “SD” if it is conducting a distressed debt restructuring.

Ratings from “AA” to “CCC” may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the rating categories.

### **Description of S&P Global Ratings’ Short-Term Issuer Credit Ratings**

**A-1** An obligor rated “A-1” has strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. It is rated in the highest category by S&P Global Ratings. Within this category, certain obligors are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitments is extremely strong.

**A-2** An obligor rated “A-2” has satisfactory capacity to meet its financial commitments. However, it is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligors in the highest rating category.

**A-3** An obligor rated “A-3” has adequate capacity to meet its financial obligations. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken the obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitments.

**B** An obligor rated “B” is regarded as vulnerable and has significant speculative characteristics. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties that could lead to the obligor’s inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.

**C** An obligor rated “C” is currently vulnerable to nonpayment that would result in an “SD” or “D” issuer rating and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions to meet its financial commitments.

**SD and D** An obligor is rated “SD” (selective default) or “D” if S&P Global Ratings considers there to be a default on one or more of its financial obligations, whether long- or short-term, including rated and unrated obligations but excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in nonpayment according to terms. A “D” rating is assigned when S&P Global Ratings believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. An “SD” rating is assigned when S&P Global Ratings believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. A rating on an obligor is lowered to “D” or “SD” if it is conducting a distressed debt restructuring.

### **Description of S&P Global Ratings’ Dual Ratings:**

Dual ratings may be assigned to debt issues that have a put option or demand feature. The first component of the rating addresses the likelihood of repayment of principal and interest as due, and the second component of the rating addresses only the demand feature. The first component of the rating can relate to either a short-term or long-term transaction and accordingly use either short-term or long-term rating symbols. The second component of the rating relates to the put option and is assigned a short-term rating symbol (for example, “AAA/A-1+” or “A-1+/A-1”). With U.S. municipal short-term demand debt, the U.S. municipal short-term note rating symbols are used for the first component of the rating (for example, “SP-1+/A-1+”).

### **Description of S&P Global Ratings’ Active Qualifiers:**

S&P Global Ratings uses the following qualifiers that limit the scope of a rating. The structure of the transaction can require the use of a qualifier such as a “p” qualifier, which indicates the rating addresses the principal portion of the obligation only. A qualifier appears as a suffix and is part of the rating.

**Federal deposit insurance limit:** “L” qualifier. Ratings qualified with “L” apply only to amounts invested up to federal deposit insurance limits.

**Principal:** “p” qualifier. This suffix is used for issues in which the credit factors, the terms, or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of payment of principal are different from the credit factors, terms, or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of interest on the obligation. The “p” suffix indicates that the rating addresses the principal portion of the obligation only and that the interest is not rated.

**Preliminary ratings:** “prelim” qualifier. Preliminary ratings, with the “prelim” suffix, may be assigned to obligors or obligations, including financial programs, in the circumstances described below. Assignment of a final rating is conditional on the receipt by S&P Global Ratings of appropriate documentation. S&P Global Ratings reserves the right not to issue a final rating. Moreover, if a final rating is issued, it may differ from the preliminary rating.

- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to obligations, most commonly structured and project finance issues, pending receipt of final documentation and legal opinions.
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to obligations that will likely be issued upon the obligor’s emergence from bankruptcy or similar reorganization, based on late-stage reorganization plans, documentation, and discussions with the obligor. Preliminary ratings may also be assigned to the obligors. These ratings consider the anticipated general credit quality of the reorganized or post-bankruptcy issuer as well as attributes of the anticipated obligation(s).
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to entities that are being formed or that are in the process of being independently established when, in S&P Global Ratings’ opinion, documentation is close to final. Preliminary ratings may also be assigned to the obligations of these entities.
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned when a previously unrated entity is undergoing a well-formulated restructuring, recapitalization, significant financing, or other transformative event, generally at the point that investor or lender commitments are invited. The preliminary rating may be assigned to the entity and to its proposed obligation(s). These preliminary ratings consider the anticipated general credit quality of the obligor, as well as attributes of the anticipated obligation(s), assuming successful completion of the transformative event. Should the transformative event not occur, S&P Global Ratings would likely withdraw these preliminary ratings.
- A preliminary recovery rating may be assigned to an obligation that has a preliminary issue credit rating.

**Termination structures:** “t” qualifier. This symbol indicates termination structures that are designed to honor their contracts to full maturity or, should certain events occur, to terminate and cash settle all their contracts before their final maturity date.

**Counterparty instrument rating:** “cir” qualifier. This symbol indicates a counterparty instrument rating (CIR), which is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an issuer in a securitization structure with respect to a specific financial obligation to a counterparty (including interest rate swaps, currency swaps, and liquidity facilities). The CIR is determined on an ultimate payment basis; these opinions do not take into account timeliness of payment.

### **Description of Fitch Ratings’ Corporate Finance Obligations:**

Ratings of individual securities or financial obligations of a corporate issuer address relative vulnerability to default on an ordinal scale. In addition, for financial obligations in corporate finance, a measure of recovery given default on that liability is also included in the rating assessment. This notably applies to covered bonds ratings, which incorporate both an indication of the probability of default and of the recovery given a default of this debt instrument. On the contrary, ratings of debtor-in-possession (DIP) obligations incorporate the expectation of full repayment.

The relationship between the issuer scale and obligation scale assumes a generic historical average recovery. Individual obligations can be assigned ratings higher, lower, or the same as that entity’s issuer rating or Issuer Default Rating (IDR), based on their relative ranking, relative vulnerability to default or based on explicit Recovery Ratings.

As a result, individual obligations of entities, such as corporations, are assigned ratings higher, lower, or the same as that entity's issuer rating or IDR, except DIP obligation ratings that are not based off an IDR and senior tranches of Enhanced Equipment Trust Certificates, for which IDRs are secondary dependencies, as Fitch focuses primarily on structure, collateral and legal protection.

At the lower end of the ratings scale, Fitch publishes explicit Recovery Ratings in many cases to complement issuer and obligation ratings.

**AAA:** Highest Credit Quality. "AAA" ratings denote the lowest expectation of credit risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

**AA:** Very High Credit Quality. "AA" ratings denote expectations of very low credit risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

**A:** High Credit Quality. "A" ratings denote expectations of low credit risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

**BBB:** Good Credit Quality. "BBB" ratings indicate that expectations of credit risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

**BB:** Speculative. "BB" ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to credit risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time; however, business or financial alternatives may be available to allow financial commitments to be met.

**B:** Highly Speculative. "B" ratings indicate that material credit risk is present.

**CCC:** Substantial Credit Risk. "CCC" ratings indicate that substantial credit risk is present.

**CC:** Very High Levels of Credit Risk. "CC" ratings indicate very high levels of credit risk.

**C:** Exceptionally High Levels of Credit Risk. "C" indicates exceptionally high levels of credit risk.

The ratings of corporate finance obligations are linked to IDRs (or sometimes Viability Ratings for banks and non-bank financial institutions) by i) recovery expectations, including as often indicated by Recovery Ratings assigned in the case of low speculative grade issuers and ii) for banks and non-bank financial institutions an assessment of nonperformance risk relative to the risk captured in the IDR or Viability Ratings (e.g. in respect of certain hybrid securities).

For performing obligations, the obligation rating represents the risk of default including the effect of expected recoveries on the credit risk should a default occur.

If the obligation rating is higher than the rating of the issuer, this indicates above average recovery expectations in the event of default. If the obligations rating is lower than the rating of the issuer, this indicates low expected recoveries should default occur.

Ratings in the categories of "CCC", "CC" and "C" can also relate to obligations or issuers that are in default. In this case, the rating does not opine on default risk but reflects the recovery expectation only.

#### **Description of Fitch Ratings' Issuer Default Ratings:**

Rated entities in several sectors, including financial and non-financial corporations, sovereigns, insurance companies and some sectors within public finance, are generally assigned IDRs. IDRs are also assigned to certain entities or enterprises in global infrastructure, project finance and public finance. IDRs opine on an entity's relative vulnerability to default – including by way of a distressed debt exchange (DDE) – on financial obligations. The threshold default risk addressed by the IDR is generally that of the financial obligations whose non-payment would best reflect the uncured failure of that entity. As such, IDRs also address relative vulnerability to bankruptcy, administrative receivership or similar concepts.

In aggregate, IDRs provide an ordinal ranking of issuers based on the agency's view of their relative vulnerability to default, rather than a prediction of a specific percentage likelihood of default.

**AAA:** Highest Credit Quality. "AAA" ratings denote the lowest expectation of default risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

**AA:** Very High Credit Quality. "AA" ratings denote expectations of very low default risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

**A:** High Credit Quality. "A" ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

**BBB:** Good Credit Quality. "BBB" ratings indicate that expectations of default risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

**BB:** Speculative. "BB" ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to default risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time; however, business or financial flexibility exists that supports the servicing of financial commitments.

**B:** Highly Speculative. "B" ratings indicate that material default risk is present, but a limited margin of safety remains. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.

**CCC:** Substantial Credit Risk. Default is a real possibility.

**CC:** Very High Levels of Credit Risk. Very low margin for safety. Default of some kind appears probable.

**C:** Near Default. A default or default-like process has begun, or for a closed funding vehicle, payment capacity is irrevocably impaired. Conditions that are indicative of a "C" category rating for an issuer include:

- The issuer has entered into a grace or cure period following non-payment of a material financial obligation;
- The formal announcement by the issuer or their agent of a distressed debt exchange ("DDE");
- A closed financing vehicle where payment capacity is irrevocably impaired such that it is not expected to pay interest and/or principal in full during the life of the transaction, but where no payment default is imminent

**RD:** Restricted Default. "RD" ratings indicate an issuer that in Fitch's opinion has experienced:

- An uncured payment default or DDE on a bond, loan or other material financial obligations, but has not entered into bankruptcy filing, administration, receivership, liquidation, or other formal winding-up procedure, and
- Has not otherwise ceased operating.

This would include:

- The selective payment default on a specific class or currency of debt;
- The uncured expiry of any applicable original grace period, cure period or default forbearance period following a payment default on a bank loan, capital markets security or other material financial obligation;

**D:** Default. "D" ratings indicate an issuer that in Fitch's opinion has entered into bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other formal winding-up procedure or which has otherwise ceased business.

Default ratings are not assigned prospectively to entities or their obligations; within this context, non-payment on an instrument that contains a deferral feature or grace period will generally not be considered a default until after the expiration of the deferral or grace period, unless a default is otherwise driven by bankruptcy or other similar circumstance, or by a distressed debt exchange.

In all cases, the assignment of a default rating reflects the agency's opinion as to the most appropriate rating category consistent with the rest of its universe of ratings and may differ from the definition of default under the terms of an issuer's financial obligations or local commercial practice.

## **Description of Fitch Ratings' Structured Finance Long-Term Obligation Ratings:**

Ratings of structured finance obligations on the long-term scale consider the obligations' relative vulnerability to default. These ratings are typically assigned to an individual security or tranche in a transaction and not to an issuer.

### **AAA: Highest Credit Quality.**

"AAA" ratings denote the lowest expectation of default risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

### **AA: Very High Credit Quality.**

"AA" ratings denote expectations of very low default risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

### **A: High Credit Quality.**

"A" ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

### **BBB: Good Credit Quality.**

"BBB" ratings indicate that expectations of default risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

### **BB: Speculative.**

"BB" ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to default risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time.

### **B: Highly Speculative.**

"B" ratings indicate that material default risk is present, but a limited margin of safety remains. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.

### **CCC: Substantial Credit Risk.**

Very low margin for safety. Default is a real possibility.

### **CC: Very High Levels of Credit Risk.**

Default of some kind appears probable.

### **C: Exceptionally High Levels of Credit Risk.**

Default appears imminent or inevitable.

### **D: Default.**

Indicates a default. Default generally is defined as one of the following:

- Failure to make payment of principal and/or interest under the contractual terms of the rated obligation;
- Bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other winding-up or cessation of the business of an issuer/obligor; or
- Distressed exchange of an obligation, where creditors were offered securities with diminished structural or economic terms compared with the existing obligation to avoid a probable payment default.

## **Description of Fitch Ratings' Country Ceilings Ratings:**

Country Ceilings are expressed using the symbols of the long-term issuer primary credit rating scale and relate to sovereign jurisdictions also rated by Fitch on the IDR scale. They reflect the agency's judgment regarding the risk of capital and exchange controls being imposed by the sovereign authorities that would prevent or materially impede the private sector's ability

to convert local currency into foreign currency and transfer to non-resident creditors — transfer and convertibility (T&C) risk. They are not ratings but expressions of a cap for the foreign currency issuer ratings of most, but not all, issuers in a given country. Intervention through capital or currency controls where an issuer is prevented comprehensively by its own government from paying out on cross-border bonds, held by investors both inside and outside its borders, would typically lead to a T&C default.

### **Description of Fitch Ratings' Sovereigns, Public Finance and Global Infrastructure Obligations:**

Ratings of public finance obligations, infrastructure and project finance obligations on the long-term scale, structured finance and fund finance obligations only consider the obligations' relative vulnerability to default.

In limited cases in U.S. public finance, where Chapter 9 of the Bankruptcy Code provides reliably superior prospects for ultimate recovery to local government obligations that benefit from a statutory lien on revenues, Fitch reflects this in a security rating with limited notching above the IDR. Recovery expectations can also be reflected in a security rating in the U.S. during the pendency of a bankruptcy proceeding under the Code if there is sufficient visibility on potential recovery prospects.

Recovery Ratings are only assigned to infrastructure and project finance obligations, to indicate likely recovery prospects upon request. They are assessed in parallel to instrument ratings and typically do not influence the obligation rating, which remains premised on vulnerability to default.

**AAA:** Highest Credit Quality. "AAA" ratings denote the lowest expectation of default risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

**AA:** Very High Credit Quality. "AA" ratings denote expectations of very low default risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

**A:** High Credit Quality. "A" ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

**BBB:** Good Credit Quality. "BBB" ratings indicate that expectations of default risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.

**BB:** Speculative. "BB" ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to default risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time.

**B:** Highly Speculative. "B" ratings indicate that material default risk is present, but a limited margin of safety remains. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.

**CCC:** Substantial Credit Risk. Very low margin for safety. Default is a real possibility.

**CC:** Very High Levels of Credit Risk. Default of some kind appears probable.

**C:** Exceptionally High Levels of Credit Risk. Default appears imminent or inevitable.

**D:** Default. Indicates a default. Default generally is defined as one of the following:

- Failure to make payment of principal and/or interest under the contractual terms of the rated obligation;
- Bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other winding-up or cessation of the business of an issuer/obligor where payment default on an obligation is a virtual certainty; or
- Distressed exchange of an obligation, where creditors were offered securities with diminished structural or economic terms compared with the existing obligation to avoid a probable payment default.

*Notes: In U.S. public finance, obligations may be pre-refunded, where funds sufficient to meet the requirements of the respective obligations are placed in an escrow account. When obligation ratings are maintained based on the escrowed funds and their structural elements, the ratings carry the suffix "pre" (e.g. "AAApre", "AA+pre").*

## Structured Finance Defaults

Imminent default, categorized under “C”, typically refers to the occasion where a payment default has been intimated by the issuer and is all but inevitable. This may, for example, be where an issuer has missed a scheduled payment but (as is typical) has a grace period during which it may cure the payment default. Another alternative would be where an issuer has formally announced a distressed debt exchange, but the date of the exchange still lies several days or weeks in the immediate future.

Additionally, in structured finance transactions, where analysis indicates that an instrument is irrevocably impaired such that it is not expected to pay interest and/or principal in full in accordance with the terms of the obligation’s documentation during the life of the transaction, but where no payment default in accordance with the terms of the documentation is imminent, the obligation will typically be rated in the “C” category.

## Structured Finance Write-downs

Where an instrument has experienced an involuntary and, in the agency’s opinion, irreversible write-down of principal (i.e. other than through amortization, and resulting in a loss to the investor), a credit rating of “D” will be assigned to the instrument. Where the agency believes the write-down may prove to be temporary (and the loss may be written up again in future if and when performance improves), then a credit rating of “C” will typically be assigned. Should the write-down then later be reversed, the credit rating will be raised to an appropriate level for that instrument. Should the write-down later be deemed as irreversible, the credit rating will be lowered to “D”.

### Notes:

*In the case of structured finance, while the ratings do not address the loss severity given default of the rated liability, loss severity assumptions on the underlying assets are nonetheless typically included as part of the analysis. Loss severity assumptions are used to derive pool cash flows available to service the rated liability.*

The suffix “sf” denotes an issue that is a structured finance transaction.

## Description of Fitch Ratings’ Short-Term Ratings Assigned to Issuers and Obligations:

A short-term issuer or obligation rating is based in all cases on the short-term vulnerability to default of the rated entity and relates to the capacity to meet financial obligations in accordance with the documentation governing the relevant obligation. Short-term deposit ratings may be adjusted for loss severity. Short-Term Ratings are assigned to obligations whose initial maturity is viewed as “short term” based on market convention (a long-term rating can also be used to rate an issue with short maturity). Typically, this means a timeframe of up to 13 months for corporate, sovereign, and structured obligations, and up to 36 months for obligations in U.S. public finance markets.

**F1:** Highest Short-Term Credit Quality. Indicates the strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments; may have an added “+” to denote any exceptionally strong credit feature.

**F2:** Good Short-Term Credit Quality. Good intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments.

**F3:** Fair Short-Term Credit Quality. The intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is adequate.

**B:** Speculative Short-Term Credit Quality. Minimal capacity for timely payment of financial commitments, plus heightened vulnerability to near term adverse changes in financial and economic conditions.

**C:** High Short-Term Default Risk. Default is a real possibility.

**RD:** Restricted Default. Indicates an entity that has defaulted on one or more of its financial commitments, although it continues to meet other financial obligations. Typically applicable to entity ratings only.

**D:** Default. Indicates a broad-based default event for an entity, or the default of a short-term obligation.