

# **RIVERNORTH FUNDS**

## **RiverNorth/DoubleLine Strategic Income Fund**

Class I Ticker Symbol: RNSIX

Class R Ticker Symbol: RNDLX

### **STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**January 28, 2025**

This Statement of Additional Information (“SAI”) is not a prospectus. It should be read in conjunction with the prospectus for the RiverNorth/DoubleLine Strategic Income Fund dated January 28, 2025 (the “Prospectus”). The Fund’s Annual Report to shareholders dated September 30, 2024 has been incorporated by reference into this SAI. A copy of the Prospectus and shareholder reports can be obtained at no charge by writing the transfer agent, ALPS Fund Services, Inc., PO Box 219427, Kansas City, MO 64121-9427, or by calling 1-888-848-7569. The Fund’s Prospectus is incorporated by reference into this SAI.

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## DESCRIPTION OF THE TRUST AND FUND

The RiverNorth/DoubleLine Strategic Income Fund (the “Fund”) is a diversified series of RiverNorth Funds (the “Trust”). The Trust is an open-end investment company established under the laws of the state of Ohio by an Agreement and Declaration of Trust dated July 18, 2006 (the “Trust Agreement”). The Trust Agreement permits the Board of Trustees (the “Board” or the “Trustees”) to authorize and issue an unlimited number of shares of beneficial interest of separate series without par value. There are three series currently authorized by the Board of Trustees. The investment adviser to the Fund is RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC (the “Adviser”). The Fund’s sub-adviser is DoubleLine Capital, LP (the “Sub-Adviser”).

The Fund does not issue share certificates. All shares are held in non-certificated form registered on the books of the Fund and the transfer agent for the account of the shareholder. Each share of a series represents an equal proportionate interest in the assets and liabilities belonging to that series with each other share of that series and is entitled to such dividends and distributions out of income belonging to the series as are declared by the Trustees. The shares do not have cumulative voting rights or any preemptive or conversion rights, and the Trustees have the authority from time to time to divide or combine the shares of any series into a greater or lesser number of shares of that series so long as the proportionate beneficial interest in the assets belonging to that series and the rights of shares of any other series are in no way affected. In case of any liquidation of a series, the holders of shares of the series being liquidated will be entitled to receive as a class a distribution out of the assets, net of the liabilities, belonging to that series. Expenses attributable to any series are borne by that series. Any general expenses of the Trust not readily identifiable as belonging to a particular series are allocated by or under the direction of the Trustees in such manner as the Trustees determine to be fair and equitable. No shareholder is liable to further calls or to assessment by the Trust without his or her express consent.

Any Trustee of the Trust may be removed by vote of the shareholders holding not less than two-thirds of the outstanding shares of the Trust. The Trust does not hold an annual meeting of shareholders. When matters are submitted to shareholders for a vote, each shareholder is entitled to one vote for each whole share he or she owns and fractional votes for fractional shares he or she owns. All shares of the Fund have equal voting rights and liquidation rights. The Trust Agreement can be amended by the Trustees, except that any amendment that adversely affects the rights of shareholders must be approved by the shareholders affected. All shares of the Fund are subject to involuntary redemption if the Trustees determine to liquidate the Fund. An involuntary redemption will create a capital gain or a capital loss, which may have tax consequences about which you should consult your tax adviser.

For information concerning the purchase and redemption of shares of the Fund, see “How to Buy Shares” and “How to Redeem Shares” in the Prospectus. For a description of the methods used to determine the share price and value of the Fund’s assets, see “How to Buy Shares – Purchasing Shares” and “Valuing the Fund’s Assets” in the Prospectus and “Determination of Share Price” in this SAI.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUND’S INVESTMENTS

### Investment Strategies and Risks

All principal investment strategies and risks are discussed in the Prospectus. This section contains a more detailed discussion of some of the investments the Fund may make and some of the techniques it may use, as described in the Prospectus. These same investments and techniques may be used by the underlying funds (“Underlying Funds”) in which the Fund invests. Additional non-principal strategies and risks also are discussed here.

## **Asset-Backed Securities, Collateralized Debt Obligations and Collateralized Loan Obligations**

The Fund may invest in asset-backed securities, collateralized debt obligations (“CDOs”) and collateralized loan obligations (“CLOs”). Asset-backed securities and CDOs are created by the grouping of certain governmental, government related and private loans, receivables and other non-mortgage lender assets/collateral into pools. CLOs are similar to CDOs, but are typically collateralized by a pool of loans, which may include, among others, domestic and foreign senior secured loans, senior unsecured loans, and subordinate corporate loans, including loans that may be related below investment grade. A sponsoring organization establishes a special purpose vehicle to hold the assets/collateral and issue securities. Interests in these pools are sold as individual securities. Payments of principal and interest are passed through to investors and are typically supported by some form of credit enhancement, such as a letter of credit, surety bond, limited guaranty or senior/subordination. Payments from the asset pools may be divided into several different tranches of debt securities, offering investors various maturity and credit risk characteristics. Some tranches are entitled to receive regular installments of principal and interest, other tranches are entitled to receive regular installments of interest, with principal payable at maturity or upon specified call dates, and other tranches are only entitled to receive payments of principal and accrued interest at maturity or upon specified call dates. Different tranches of securities will bear different interest rates, which may be fixed or floating. Payments or distributions of principal and interest may be guaranteed up to certain amounts and for a certain time period by a letter of credit or a pooled insurance policy issued by a financial institution, or by other credit enhancements.

Investors in asset-backed securities and CDOs/CLOs bear the credit risk of the assets/collateral. Tranches are categorized as senior, mezzanine, and subordinated/equity, according to their degree of credit risk. If there are defaults or the CDO’s/CLO’s collateral otherwise underperforms, scheduled payments to senior tranches take precedence over those of mezzanine tranches, and scheduled payments to mezzanine tranches take precedence over those to subordinated/equity tranches. Senior and mezzanine tranches are typically rated, with the former receiving ratings of A to AAA and the latter receiving ratings of B to BBB by S&P Global Ratings (“S&P”). The ratings reflect both the credit quality of underlying collateral as well as how much protection a given tranche is afforded by tranches that are subordinate to it.

Because the loans held in the pool often may be prepaid without penalty or premium, asset-backed securities and CDOs/CLOs can be subject to higher prepayment risks than most other types of debt instruments. Prepayments may result in a capital loss to the Fund to the extent that the prepaid securities purchased at a market discount from their stated principal amount will accelerate the recognition of interest income by the Fund, which would be taxed as ordinary income when distributed to the shareholders.

The credit characteristics of asset-backed securities and CDOs/CLOs also differ in a number of respects from those of traditional debt securities. The credit quality of most asset-backed securities and CDOs/CLOs depends primarily upon the credit quality of the assets/collateral underlying such securities, how well the entity issuing the securities is insulated from the credit risk of the originator or any other affiliated entities, and the amount and quality of any credit enhancement to such securities.

Asset-backed securities are subject to the risk of default on the underlying asset, particularly during periods of economic downturn. Any economic downturn could increase the risk that such assets underlying asset-backed securities purchased by the Fund will also suffer greater levels of default than were historically experienced. In addition, the liquidity of asset-backed securities (particularly below investment grade asset-backed securities) may change over time. During periods of deteriorating economic conditions, such as recessions, or periods of rising unemployment, delinquencies and losses generally increase, sometimes dramatically, with respect to securitizations involving loans, sales contracts, receivables and other obligations underlying asset-backed securities.

CDOs and CLOs can be less liquid than other publicly held debt issues, and require additional structural analysis. Typically, CLOs are privately offered and sold, and thus, are not registered under the securities laws. As a result, investments in CLOs may be illiquid and may have limited independent pricing transparency. Although a secondary market in CLOs may develop, there can be no assurance that it would provide the holders of the CLOs like the Fund with liquidity of investment or will continue for the life of the CLO.

### **Business Development Companies (“BDCs”)**

BDCs are a type of closed-end investment company regulated under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the “1940 Act”), whose shares are typically listed for trading on a U.S. securities exchange. BDCs are publicly-traded funds that typically invest in and lend to small and medium-sized private and certain public companies that may not have access to public equity markets for capital raising. BDCs invest in such diverse industries as healthcare, chemical and manufacturing, technology and service companies. At least 70% of a BDC’s investments must be made in private and certain public U.S. businesses, and BDCs are required to make available significant managerial assistance to their portfolio companies. Unlike corporations, BDCs are not taxed on income distributed to their shareholders provided they comply with the requirements of Subchapter M of Subtitle A, Chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “Code”).

The Fund’s investment in securities of BDCs, which are required to distribute substantially all of their income to investors in order to not be subject to entity level taxation, often offer a yield advantage over other types of securities. The Fund intends to primarily invest in BDC shares which are trading in the secondary market on a U.S. securities exchange but may, in certain circumstances, invest in an initial public offering of BDC shares or invest in certain debt instruments issued by BDCs. The Fund will indirectly bear its proportionate share of any management and other operating expenses, and of any performance-based or incentive fees, charged by the BDCs in which it invests, in addition to the expenses paid by the Fund.

Investments in closed-end funds that elect to be regulated as BDCs may be subject to a high degree of risk. BDCs typically invest in small and medium-sized private and certain public companies that may not have access to public equity markets or capital raising. As a result, a BDC’s portfolio typically will include a substantial amount of securities purchased in private placements, and its portfolio may carry risks similar to those of a private equity or venture capital fund. Securities that are not publicly registered may be difficult to value and may be difficult to sell at a price representative of their intrinsic value. Small and medium-sized companies also may have fewer lines of business so that changes in any one line of business may have a greater impact on the value of their stock than is the case with a larger company. To the extent a BDC focuses its investments in a specific sector, the BDC will be susceptible to adverse conditions and economic or regulatory occurrences affecting the specific sector or industry group, which tends to increase volatility and result in higher risk. Investments in BDCs are subject to various risks, including management’s ability to meet the BDC’s investment objective, and to manage the BDC’s portfolio when the underlying securities are redeemed or sold, during periods of market turmoil and as investors’ perceptions regarding a BDC or its underlying investments change. BDC shares are not redeemable at the option of the BDC shareholder and, as with shares of other closed-end funds, they may trade in the market at a discount to their net asset value (“NAV”).

Certain BDCs in which the Fund may invest may use leverage in their portfolios through borrowings or the issuance of preferred stock. While leverage may increase the yield and total return of a BDC, it also subjects the BDC to increased risks, including magnification of any investment losses and increased volatility. In addition, a BDC’s common share income may fall if the dividend rate on any preferred shares or the interest rate on any borrowings of the BDC rises.

The 1940 Act generally limits the amount the Fund can invest in any one closed-end fund, including BDCs, to 3% of the closed-end fund's total outstanding stock. As a result, the Fund may hold a smaller position in a BDC than if it were not subject to this restriction. To comply with the 1940 Act, the Adviser may be required to vote shares of a BDC held by the Fund in the same general proportion as shares held by other shareholders of the BDC. Please see "Investment Company Securities" below for additional information.

### **Brady Bonds**

Brady bonds are securities created through the exchange of existing commercial bank loans to public and private entities in certain emerging markets for new bonds in connection with debt restructurings. Brady bonds have been issued since 1989 and do not have a long payment history. In light of the history of defaults of countries issuing Brady bonds on their commercial bank loans, investments in Brady bonds may be viewed as speculative. Brady bonds may be fully or partially collateralized or uncollateralized, are issued in various currencies (but primarily the U.S. dollar) and are actively traded in over-the-counter secondary markets. Incomplete collateralization of interest or principal payment obligations results in increased credit risk. Dollar-denominated collateralized Brady bonds, which may be fixed-rate bonds or floating-rate bonds, are generally collateralized by U.S. Treasury zero coupon bonds having the same maturity as the Brady bonds.

### **Certificates of Deposit and Bankers' Acceptances**

Certificates of deposit are receipts issued by a depository institution in exchange for the deposit of funds. The issuer agrees to pay the amount deposited plus interest to the bearer of the receipt on the date specified on the certificate. The certificate usually can be traded in the secondary market prior to maturity. Bankers' acceptances typically arise from short-term credit arrangements designed to enable businesses to obtain funds to finance commercial transactions. Generally, an acceptance is a time draft drawn on a bank by an exporter or an importer to obtain a stated amount of funds to pay for specific merchandise. The draft is then "accepted" by a bank that, in effect, unconditionally guarantees to pay the face value of the instrument on its maturity date. The acceptance may then be held by the accepting bank as an earning asset or it may be sold in the secondary market at the going rate of discount for a specific maturity. Although maturities for acceptances can be as long as 270 days, most acceptances have maturities of six months or less.

### **Closed-End Investment Companies**

The Fund invests in closed-end investment companies or funds. Shares of closed-end funds are typically offered to the public in a one-time initial public offering by a group of underwriters who retain a spread or underwriting commission generally between 4% and 6% of the initial public offering price (for many initial public offerings since 2018, this commission has been paid by the closed-end fund's sponsor). Such securities are then listed for trading on the New York Stock Exchange ("NYSE"), NYSE American (formerly, the American Stock Exchange), the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation System (commonly known as "NASDAQ") and, in some cases, may be traded in other over-the-counter markets. Because the shares of closed-end funds cannot be redeemed upon demand to the issuer like the shares of an open-end investment company (such as the Fund), investors seek to buy and sell shares of closed-end funds in the secondary market.

The Fund generally will purchase shares of closed-end funds only in the secondary market. The Fund will incur normal brokerage costs on such purchases similar to the expenses the Fund would incur for the purchase of securities of any other type of issuer in the secondary market. The Fund may, however, also purchase securities of a closed-end fund in an initial public offering when, in the opinion of the Adviser, based on a consideration of the nature of the closed-end fund's proposed investments, the prevailing market conditions and the level of demand for such securities, they represent an attractive opportunity for growth of capital. The initial offering price typically will include a dealer spread, which may be higher than the applicable brokerage cost if the Fund purchased such securities in the secondary market.

The shares of many closed-end funds, after their initial public offering, frequently trade at a price per share that is less than the NAV per share, the difference representing the “market discount” of such shares. This market discount may be due in part to the investment objective of long-term appreciation, which is sought by many closed-end funds, as well as to the fact that the shares of closed-end funds are not redeemable by the holder upon demand to the issuer at the next determined NAV, but rather, are subject to supply and demand in the secondary market. A relative lack of secondary market purchasers of closed-end fund shares also may contribute to such shares trading at a discount to their NAV.

The Fund may invest in shares of closed-end funds that are trading at a discount to NAV or at a premium to NAV. There can be no assurance that the market discount on shares of any closed-end fund purchased by the Fund will ever decrease. In fact, it is possible that this market discount may increase and the Fund may suffer realized or unrealized capital losses due to further decline in the market price of the securities of such closed-end funds, thereby adversely affecting the NAV of the Fund’s shares. Similarly, there can be no assurance that any shares of a closed-end fund purchased by the Fund at a premium will continue to trade at a premium or that the premium will not decrease subsequent to a purchase of such shares by the Fund.

Closed-end funds may issue senior securities (including preferred stock and debt obligations) for the purpose of leveraging the closed-end fund’s common shares in an attempt to enhance the current return to such closed-end fund’s common shareholders. The Fund’s investment in the common shares of closed-end funds that are financially leveraged may create an opportunity for greater total return on its investment, but at the same time may be expected to exhibit more volatility in market price and NAV than an investment in shares of investment companies without a leveraged capital structure. Please see “Investment Company Securities” below for additional information.

### **Commercial Paper**

The Fund may purchase commercial paper. Commercial paper consists of short-term (usually from 1 to 270 days) unsecured promissory notes issued by corporations in order to finance current operations. Such investments are generally unsecured and usually discounted from their value at maturity. The value of commercial paper may be affected by changes in the credit rating or financial condition of the issuing entities and will tend to fall when interest rates rise and rise when interest rates fall. Asset-backed commercial paper may be issued by structured investment vehicles or other conduits that are organized to issue the commercial paper and to purchase trade receivables or other financial assets. The repayment of asset-backed commercial paper depends primarily on the cash collections received from such an issuer’s underlying asset portfolio and the issuer’s ability to issue new asset-backed commercial paper (See also “Asset-Backed Securities, Collateralized Debt Obligations and Collateralized Loan Obligations” above).

Investments in commercial paper are subject to the risk that the issuer cannot issue enough new commercial paper to satisfy its obligations with respect to its outstanding commercial paper, also known as rollover risk. Commercial paper is also susceptible to changes in the issuer’s financial condition or credit quality. In addition, under certain circumstances commercial paper may become illiquid or may suffer from reduced liquidity. Commercial paper is generally unsecured, which increases the credit risk associated with this type of investment.

## **Commodities**

The Fund may invest indirectly (usually through exchange-traded funds that track commodity-related indices) in commodities (such as precious metals or natural gas). Commodity prices can be more volatile than prices of other types of investments and can be affected by a wide range of factors, including changes in overall market movements, speculative investors, real or perceived inflationary trends, commodity index volatility, changes in interest rates or currency exchange rates, population growth and changing demographics, nationalization, expropriation, or other confiscation, international or local regulatory, political, and economic developments (e.g., regime changes and changes in economic activity levels), and developments affecting a particular industry or commodity, such as drought, floods, or other weather conditions, livestock disease, trade embargoes, competition from substitute products, transportation bottlenecks or shortages, fluctuations in supply and demand, and tariffs. The Fund may also directly or indirectly use commodity-related derivatives. The values of these derivatives may fluctuate more than the relevant underlying commodity or commodities or commodity index.

## **Convertible Securities**

Convertible securities include fixed-income securities that may be exchanged or converted into a predetermined number of shares of the issuer's underlying common stock at the option of the holder during a specified period. Convertible securities may take the form of convertible preferred stock, convertible bonds or debentures, units consisting of "usable" bonds and warrants or a combination of the features of several of these securities. Convertible securities are senior to common stocks in an issuer's capital structure, but are usually subordinated to similar non-convertible securities. While providing a fixed-income stream (generally higher in yield than the income derivable from common stock but lower than that afforded by a similar nonconvertible security), a convertible security also gives an investor the opportunity, through its conversion feature, to participate in the capital appreciation of the issuing company depending upon a market price advance in the convertible security's underlying common stock.

## **Corporate Debt**

Corporate debt securities are long and short-term debt obligations issued by companies (such as publicly issued and privately placed bonds, notes and commercial paper). The Adviser or Sub-Adviser considers corporate debt securities to be of investment grade quality if they are rated BBB or higher by S&P or Baa or higher by Moody's Investor Services, Inc. ("Moody's"), or if unrated, determined by the Adviser or Sub-Adviser to be of comparable quality. Investment grade debt securities generally have adequate to strong protection of principal and interest payments. In the lower end of this category, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity to pay interest and repay principal than in higher rated categories. The Fund may invest in both secured and unsecured corporate bonds. A secured bond is backed by collateral and an unsecured bond is not. Therefore an unsecured bond may have a lower recovery value than a secured bond in the event of a default by its issuer. The Adviser or Sub-Adviser may incorrectly analyze the risks inherent in corporate bonds, such as the issuer's ability to meet interest and principal payments, resulting in a loss to the Fund.

## **Cyber Security Risk**

The Fund and its service providers may be prone to operational and information security risks resulting from breaches in cyber security. A breach in cyber security refers to both intentional and unintentional events that may cause the Fund to lose proprietary information, suffer data corruption, or lose operational capacity. Breaches in cyber security include, among other behaviors, stealing or corrupting data maintained online or digitally, denial of service attacks on websites, the unauthorized release of confidential information or various other forms of cyber-attacks. Cyber security breaches affecting the Fund or its adviser, custodian, transfer agent, intermediaries and other third-party service providers may adversely impact the Fund. For instance, cyber security breaches may interfere with the processing of shareholder transactions, impact the Fund's ability to calculate its NAVs, cause the release of private shareholder information or confidential business information, impede trading, subject the Fund to regulatory fines or financial losses and/or cause reputational damage. The Fund may also incur additional costs for cyber security risk management purposes. Similar types of cyber security risks are also present for issuers of securities in which the Fund may invest, which could result in material adverse consequences for such issuers and may cause the Fund's investment in such companies to lose value. The Fund and the Adviser have limited ability to prevent or mitigate cybersecurity incidents affecting third party service providers, and such third-party service providers may have limited indemnification obligations to the Fund or the Adviser. There can be no assurance that the Fund or its service providers, or the issuers of the

securities in which the Fund invests, will not suffer losses relating to cybersecurity breaches in the future. Despite reasonable precautions, the risk remains that such incidents could occur, and that such incidents could cause damage to individual investors due to the risk of exposing confidential personal data about investors to unintended parties.

## **Depository Receipts**

Sponsored and unsponsored American Depositary Receipts (“ADRs”) are receipts issued by an American bank or trust company evidencing ownership of underlying securities issued by a foreign issuer. ADRs, in sponsored form, are designed for use in U.S. securities markets. A sponsoring company provides financial information to the bank and may subsidize administration of the ADR. Unsponsored ADRs may be created by a broker-dealer or depository bank without the participation of the foreign issuer. Holders of these ADRs generally bear all the costs of the ADR facility, whereas foreign issuers typically bear certain costs in a sponsored ADR. The bank or trust company depository of an unsponsored ADR may be under no obligation to distribute shareholder communications received from the foreign issuer or to pass through voting rights. Unsponsored ADRs may carry more risk than sponsored ADRs because of the absence of financial information provided by the underlying company. Many of the risks described below regarding foreign securities apply to investments in ADRs.

## **Emerging Markets Securities**

Investing in emerging market securities involves risks different from, and potentially greater than, risks of investing in foreign developed countries. These risks include (i) the smaller market capitalizations of emerging securities markets, which may suffer periods of relative illiquidity, (ii) significant price volatility, (iii) restrictions on foreign investment, and (iv) possible limits on repatriation of investment income and capital. In addition, foreign investors may be required to register the proceeds of sales, and future economic or political crises could lead to price controls, forced mergers, expropriation or confiscatory taxation, seizure, nationalization, or the creation of government monopolies. The currencies of emerging market countries may experience significant declines against the U.S. dollar, and devaluation may occur subsequent to investments in these currencies by the Fund. Inflation and rapid fluctuations in inflation rates have had, and may continue to have, negative effects on the economies and securities markets of certain emerging market countries.

Certain emerging markets limit, or require governmental approval prior to, investments by foreign persons. Repatriation of investment income and capital from certain emerging markets is subject to certain governmental consents. Even where there is no outright restriction on repatriation of capital, the mechanics of repatriation may affect the operation of the Fund.

Additional risks of emerging markets securities may include (i) greater social, economic and political uncertainty and instability, (ii) more substantial governmental involvement in the economy, (iii) less governmental supervision and regulation, (iv) the unavailability of currency hedging technique, (v) companies that are newly organized and small, (vi) differences in auditing and financial reporting standards, or in the accuracy of such reporting which may result in unavailability of material information about issuers, and (vii) less developed legal systems. In addition, emerging securities markets may have different clearance and settlement procedures, which may be unable to keep pace with the volume of securities transactions or otherwise make it difficult to engage in such transactions. Settlement problems may cause the Fund or an Underlying Fund to miss attractive investment opportunities, hold a portion of its assets in cash pending investment, or be delayed in disposing of a portfolio security. Such a delay could result in possible liability to a purchaser of the security. Additionally, the legal remedies for investors in emerging markets may be more limited than the remedies available in the U.S. and the ability of U.S. authorities (e.g., the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”) and the U.S. Department of Justice) to bring actions against bad actors may be limited.

In addition, Chinese companies are required to follow Chinese accounting standards and practices, which only follow international accounting standards to a certain extent. However, the accounting, auditing and financial reporting standards and practices applicable to Chinese companies may be less rigorous, and there may be significant differences between financial statements prepared in accordance with Chinese accounting standards and those prepared in accordance with international accounting standards. In particular, the assets and profits appearing on the financial statements of a Chinese issuer may not reflect its financial position or results of operations in the way they would be reflected had such statements been prepared in accordance with U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Consequently, the quality of audits in China may be unreliable, which may require enhanced procedures. Consequently, the Fund may not be provided with the same level of protection or information as would generally apply in developed countries, and the Fund may be exposed to significant losses.

### **Equity Securities**

Equity securities consist of common stock, convertible preferred stock, rights and warrants. Common stocks, the most familiar type, represent an equity (ownership) interest in a corporation. Warrants are options to purchase equity securities at a specified price for a specific time period. Rights are similar to warrants, but normally have a short duration and are distributed by the issuer to its shareholders.

Investing in equity securities involves market risk. Market risk is the risk that the value of the Fund's investments may increase or decrease in response to expected, real or perceived economic, political or financial events in the U.S. or global markets. The frequency and magnitude of such changes in value cannot be predicted. Certain securities and other investments held by the Fund may experience increased volatility, illiquidity, or other potentially adverse effects in response to changing market conditions, inflation, changes in interest rates, lack of liquidity in the bond or equity markets, volatility in the equity markets, market disruptions caused by local or regional events such as war, acts of terrorism, the spread of infectious illness (including epidemics and pandemics) or other public health issues, recessions or other events or adverse investor sentiment or other political, regulatory, economic and social developments, and developments that impact specific economic sectors, industries or segments of the market. These risks may be magnified if certain events or developments adversely interrupt the global supply chain; in these and other circumstances, such risks might affect companies worldwide due to increasingly interconnected global economies and financial markets. Market risk also includes the risk that a particular style of investing, such as growth or value, may underperform the market generally.

### **Event-Linked Bonds**

The Fund may purchase event-linked bonds or "catastrophe bonds." Event-linked bonds are asset-backed securities generally issued by special purpose vehicles organized by insurance companies, with interest payments tied to the insurance losses of casualty insurance contracts. Large insurance losses, such as those caused by a trigger event, such as a hurricane, earthquake or other physical or weather-related phenomenon, will reduce the interest payments and, accordingly, the Fund may lose a portion or all of its principal invested in the bond or suffer a reduction in credited interest. Small losses will lead to above-market interest payments. Generally, event-linked bonds are issued as Rule 144A securities (*i.e.*, securities which are not registered under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended ("1933 Act"), but which can be sold to certain institutional buyers in accordance with Rule 144A under the 1933 Act). If a trigger event causes losses exceeding a specific amount in the geographic region and time period specified in a bond, liability under the terms of the bond is limited to the principal and accrued interest of the bond. If no trigger event occurs, the Fund will recover its principal plus interest. Often, event-linked bonds provide for extensions of maturity that are mandatory, or optional at the discretion of the issuer, in order to process and audit loss claims in those cases where a trigger event has, or possibly has, occurred. An extension of maturity may increase volatility. In addition to the specified trigger events, event-linked bonds may also expose the Fund to certain unanticipated risks including but not limited to issuer risk, credit risk, liquidity risk, counterparty risk, adverse regulatory or jurisdictional interpretations and adverse tax consequences.

## Exchange-Traded Funds

The Fund may invest in a range of exchange-traded funds (“ETFs”).

When the Fund invests in sector ETFs, there is a risk that securities within the same group of industries will decline in price due to sector-specific market or economic developments. If the Fund invests more heavily in a particular sector, the value of its shares may be especially sensitive to factors and economic risks that specifically affect that sector. As a result, the Fund’s share price may fluctuate more widely than the value of shares of a mutual fund that invests in a broader range of industries. Additionally, some sectors could be subject to greater government regulation than other sectors. Therefore, changes in regulatory policies for those sectors may have a material effect on the value of securities issued by companies in those sectors. The sectors in which the Fund may be more heavily invested will vary.

The shares of an ETF may be assembled in a block (typically 25,000 or 50,000 shares) known as a creation unit and redeemed in-kind for a portfolio of the underlying securities (based on the ETF’s NAV) together with a cash payment generally equal to accumulated dividends as of the date of redemption. Conversely, a creation unit may be purchased from the ETF by depositing a specified portfolio of the ETF’s underlying securities, as well as a cash payment generally equal to accumulated dividends of the securities (net of expenses) up to the time of deposit. The Fund may redeem creation units for the underlying securities (and any applicable cash), and may assemble a portfolio of the underlying securities and use it (and any required cash) to purchase creation units, if the Adviser or Sub-Adviser believes it is in the Fund’s interest to do so. The Fund’s ability to redeem creation units may be limited by the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the “1940 Act”), which provides that the ETFs will not be obligated to redeem shares held by the Fund in an amount exceeding one percent of their total outstanding securities during any period of less than 30 days.

There is a risk that the underlying ETFs in which the Fund invests may terminate due to extraordinary events that may cause any of the service providers to the ETFs, such as the trustee or sponsor, to close or otherwise fail to perform their obligations to the ETF. Also, because the ETFs in which the Fund intends to invest may be granted licenses by agreement to use the indices as a basis for determining their compositions and/or otherwise to use certain trade names, the ETFs may terminate if such license agreements are terminated. In addition, an ETF may terminate if its entire NAV falls below a certain amount. Although the Fund believes that, in the event of the termination of an underlying ETF, it would be able to invest instead in shares of an alternate ETF tracking the same market index or another market index with the same general market, there is no guarantee that shares of an alternate ETF would be available for investment at that time. The existence of extreme market volatility or potential lack of an active trading market for an ETF’s shares could result in such shares trading at a significant premium or discount to its NAV. To the extent the Fund invests in a sector product, the Fund will be subject to the risks associated with that sector. Actively managed ETFs are subject to risk of poor investment, and the individual investments of an actively managed ETF may not perform as well as its investment adviser and/or sub-advisers expect, and/or the actively managed ETF’s portfolio management practices do not work to achieve their desired result. Please see “Investment Company Securities” below for additional information.

## Exchange-Traded Notes

The Fund may invest in exchange-traded notes (“ETNs”), which are a type of unsecured, unsubordinated debt security. ETNs combine certain aspects of bonds and ETFs. Similar to ETFs, ETNs are traded on a major exchange (e.g., NYSE) during normal trading hours. However, investors can also hold the ETN until maturity. At maturity, the issuer pays to the investor a cash amount equal to the principal amount, subject to the day’s index factor. ETN returns are based upon the performance of a market index minus applicable fees. ETNs do not make periodic coupon payments and provide no principal protection. The value of an ETN may be influenced by time to maturity, level of supply and demand for the ETN, volatility and lack of liquidity in underlying markets, changes in the applicable interest rates, changes in the issuer’s credit rating and economic, legal, political or geographic events that affect the referenced index. The value of the ETN may drop due to a downgrade in the issuer’s credit rating, despite the underlying index remaining unchanged.

## Foreign Currency Exchange Transactions

The Fund may, directly or through investments in Underlying Funds, engage in foreign currency exchange transactions. The Fund or the Underlying Funds enter into these transactions either on a spot (*i.e.* cash) basis at the spot rate prevailing in the foreign currency exchange market or use forward contracts to purchase or sell foreign currencies. The cost of the spot currency exchange transactions is generally the difference between the bid and offer spot rate of the currency being purchased or sold.

A forward foreign currency exchange contract is an obligation by the Fund or an Underlying Fund to purchase or sell a specific currency at a future date, which may be any fixed number of days from the date of the contract. Forward foreign currency exchange contracts establish an exchange rate at a future date. These contracts are derivative instruments, as their value derives from the spot exchange rates of the currencies underlying the contract. These contracts are entered into in the interbank market directly between currency traders (usually large commercial banks) and their customers. A forward foreign currency exchange contract generally has no deposit requirement and is traded at a net price without commission. Neither spot transactions nor forward foreign currency exchange contracts eliminate fluctuations in the prices of the Fund’s or an Underlying Fund’s securities or in foreign exchange rates, or prevent loss if the prices of these securities should decline.

The Fund or an Underlying Fund may enter into foreign currency exchange transactions in an attempt to protect against changes in foreign currency exchange rates between the trade and settlement dates of specific securities transactions or anticipated securities transactions. The Fund or an Underlying Fund also may enter into forward contracts to hedge against a change in foreign currency exchange rates that would cause a decline in the value of existing investments denominated or principally traded in a foreign currency. To do this, the Fund or an Underlying Fund would enter into a forward contract to sell the foreign currency in which the investment is denominated or principally traded in exchange for U.S. dollars or in exchange for another foreign currency.

Although these transactions are intended to minimize the risk of loss due to a decline in the value of the hedged currency, at the same time they limit any potential gain that might be realized should the value of the hedged currency increase. In addition, forward contracts that convert a foreign currency into another foreign currency will cause the Fund or an Underlying Fund to assume the risk of fluctuations in the value of the currency purchased against the hedged currency and the U.S. dollar. The precise matching of the forward contract amounts and the value of the securities involved will not generally be possible because the future value of such securities in foreign currencies will change as a consequence of market movements in the value of such securities between the date the forward contract is entered into and the date it matures. The projection of currency market movements is extremely difficult, and the successful execution of a hedging strategy is highly uncertain.

Please see “Restrictions on the Use of Derivatives and Other Transactions” below for additional information regarding the Fund’s use of derivatives.

### **Foreign Custody**

The Fund may hold foreign securities and cash with foreign banks, agents, and securities depositories appointed by the Fund’s custodian (each a “Foreign Custodian”). Some Foreign Custodians may be recently organized or new to the foreign custody business. In some countries, Foreign Custodians may be subject to little or no regulatory oversight over or independent evaluation of their operations. Further, the laws of certain countries may place limitations on the Fund’s ability to recover its assets if a Foreign Custodian enters bankruptcy.

### **Foreign Securities**

The Fund may invest in foreign securities, either directly or by purchasing ADRs. The Fund may also invest in Underlying Funds and other investment companies that hold foreign securities or ADRs. Purchases of foreign equity securities entail certain risks. For example, there may be less information publicly available about a foreign company than about a U.S. company, and foreign companies generally are not subject to accounting, auditing and financial reporting standards and practices comparable to those in the U.S. Other risks associated with investments in foreign securities include changes in restrictions on foreign currency transactions and rates of exchanges, changes in the administrations or economic and monetary policies of foreign governments, the imposition of exchange control regulations, the possibility of expropriation decrees and other adverse foreign governmental action, the imposition of foreign taxes, less liquid markets, less government supervision of exchanges, brokers and issuers, difficulty in enforcing contractual obligations, delays in settlement of securities transactions and greater price volatility. In addition, investing in foreign securities will generally result in higher commissions than investing in similar domestic securities. Further, the imposition of economic or other sanctions on the United States by a foreign country, or on a foreign country or issuer by the United States, could impair the Fund’s ability to buy, sell, hold, receive, deliver, or otherwise transact in certain investment securities or obtain exposure to foreign securities and assets. Foreign securities in which the Fund invests may be traded in markets that close before the time that the Fund calculates its NAV. Furthermore, certain foreign securities in which the Fund invests may be listed on foreign exchanges that trade on weekends or other days when the Fund does not calculate its NAV. As a result, the value of the Fund’s holdings may change on days when shareholders are not able to purchase or redeem the Fund’s shares.

The United Kingdom (“UK”) left the European Union (“EU”) on January 31, 2020, and a transition period during which the UK and EU negotiated terms of departure ended on December 31, 2020. The departure is commonly referred to as “Brexit.” The UK and EU reached an agreement, effective January 1, 2021, on the terms of their future trading relationship, which principally relates to the trading of goods. Further discussions are expected to be held between the UK and the EU in relation to matters not covered by the trade agreement, such as financial services. While the long-term effects of Brexit are currently unknown, Brexit has already resulted in volatility in European and global markets. Securities issued by companies domiciled in the UK could be subject to changing regulatory and tax regimes. Banking and financial services companies that operate in the UK or EU could be disproportionately impacted by these actions. Further insecurity in EU membership or the abandonment of the euro could exacerbate market and currency volatility and negatively impact investments in securities issued by companies located in EU countries. Brexit also may cause additional member states to contemplate departing the EU, which would likely perpetuate political and economic instability in the region and cause additional market disruption in global financial markets. As a result, markets in the UK, Europe and globally could experience increased volatility and illiquidity, and potentially lower economic growth which in return could potentially have an adverse effect on the value of the Fund’s investments. Market disruption in the EU and globally may have a negative effect on the value of the Fund’s investments. Additionally, there could be additional risks if one or more additional EU member states seek to leave the EU.

## **Futures Contracts**

Futures contracts provide for the future sale by one party and purchase by another party of a specified amount of a specific security, class of securities, or an index at a specified future time and at a specified price. Futures contracts may be issued with respect to fixed-income securities, foreign currencies, single stocks or financial indices, including indices of U.S. government securities, foreign government securities, and equity or fixed-income securities. U.S. futures contracts are traded on exchanges that have been designated “contract markets” by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (the “CFTC”) and must be executed through a futures commission merchant (“FCM”), or brokerage firm, which is a member of the relevant contract market. Through their clearing corporations, the exchanges guarantee performance of the contracts between the clearing members of the exchange. The Fund and Underlying Funds may invest in futures contracts only to the extent the Fund could invest in the underlying instrument directly.

The Fund may engage in futures transactions, primarily for hedging purposes, but for investment purposes as well. This means that the Fund’s primary purpose in entering into futures contracts is to protect the Fund from fluctuations in the value of securities or interest rates without actually buying or selling the underlying debt or equity security. For example, if the Fund anticipates an increase in the price of stocks, and it intends to purchase stocks at a later time, the Fund could enter into a futures contract to purchase a stock index as a temporary substitute for stock purchases. If an increase in the market occurs that influences the stock index as anticipated, the value of the futures contracts will increase, thereby serving as a hedge against the Fund not participating in a market advance. This technique is sometimes known as an anticipatory hedge. Conversely, if the Fund holds stocks and seeks to protect itself from a decrease in stock prices, the Fund might sell stock index futures contracts, thereby hoping to offset the potential decline in the value of its portfolio securities by a corresponding increase in the value of the futures contract position. The Fund could protect against a decline in stock prices by selling portfolio securities and investing in money market instruments, but the use of futures contracts enables it to maintain a defensive position without having to sell portfolio securities.

If the Fund owns Treasury bonds and the portfolio manager expects interest rates to increase, the Fund may take a short position in interest rate futures contracts. Taking such a position would have much the same effect as the Fund selling Treasury bonds in its portfolio. If interest rates increase as anticipated, the value of the Treasury bonds would decline, but the value of the Fund’s interest rate futures contract will increase, thereby keeping the NAV of the Fund from declining as much as it may have otherwise. If, on the other hand, a portfolio manager expects interest rates to decline, the Fund may take a long position in interest rate futures contracts in anticipation of later closing out the futures position and purchasing the bonds. Although the Fund can accomplish similar results by buying securities with long maturities and selling securities with short maturities, given the greater liquidity of the futures market than the cash market, it may be possible to accomplish the same result more easily and more quickly by using futures contracts as an investment tool to reduce risk.

The Fund may purchase and write call and put options on financial futures contracts. An option on a financial futures contract gives the purchaser the right, in return for the premium paid, to assume a position in an index futures contract (a long position if the option is a call and a short position if the option is a put) at a specified exercise price at any time during the period of the option. Upon exercise of the option, the holder would assume the underlying futures position and would receive a variation margin payment of cash or securities approximating the increase in the value of the holder's option position. If an option is exercised on the last trading day prior to the expiration date of the option, the settlement will be made entirely in cash based on the difference between the exercise price of the option and the closing level of the index on which the futures contract is based on the expiration date. Purchasers of options who fail to exercise their options prior to the exercise date suffer a loss of the premium paid.

#### *Risk Factors in Futures Transactions*

*Liquidity Risk.* Because futures contracts are generally settled within a day from the date they are closed out, compared with a settlement period of three days for some types of securities, the futures markets can provide superior liquidity to the securities markets. Nevertheless, there is no assurance that a liquid secondary market will exist for any particular futures contract at any particular time. In addition, futures exchanges may establish daily price fluctuation limits for futures contracts and may halt trading if a contract's price moves upward or downward more than the limit in a given day. On volatile trading days when the price fluctuation limit is reached, it may be impossible for the Fund to enter into new positions or close out existing positions. If the secondary market for a futures contract is not liquid because of price fluctuation limits or otherwise, the Fund may not be able to promptly liquidate unfavorable futures positions and potentially could be required to continue to hold a futures position until the delivery date, regardless of changes in its value. As a result, the Fund's access to other assets held to cover its futures positions also could be impaired.

*Risk of Loss.* Although the Adviser may believe that the use of such contracts will benefit the Fund, the Fund's overall performance could be worse than if the Fund had not entered into futures contracts if the Adviser's or Sub-Adviser's investment judgment proves incorrect. For example, if the Fund has hedged against the effects of a possible decrease in prices of securities held in its portfolio and prices increase instead, the Fund will lose part or all of the benefit of the increased value of these securities because of offsetting losses in its futures positions. In addition, if the Fund has insufficient cash, it may have to sell securities from its portfolio to meet daily variation margin requirements. Those sales may be, but will not necessarily be, at increased prices that reflect the rising market and may occur at a time when the sales are disadvantageous to the Fund.

The risk of loss in trading futures contracts in some strategies can be substantial, due both to the low margin deposits required, and the extremely high degree of leverage involved in futures pricing. Because the deposit requirements in the futures markets are less onerous than margin requirements in the securities market, there may be increased participation by speculators in the futures market that may also cause temporary price distortions. A relatively small price movement in a futures contract may result in immediate and substantial loss (as well as gain) to the investor. For example, if at the time of purchase, 10% of the value of the futures contract is deposited as margin, a subsequent 10% decrease in the value of the futures contract would result in a total loss of the margin deposit, before any deduction for the transaction costs, if the account were then closed out. Thus, a purchase or sale of a futures contract may result in losses in excess of the amount invested in the contract. The Fund will only engage in futures transactions when it is believed these risks are justified and will engage in futures transactions primarily for risk management purposes.

*Correlation Risk.* The prices of futures contracts depend primarily on the value of their underlying instruments. Because there are a limited number of types of futures contracts, it is possible that the standardized futures contracts available to the Fund will not match exactly the Fund's current or potential investments. The Fund may buy and sell futures contracts based on underlying instruments with different characteristics from the securities in which it typically invests for example, by hedging investments in portfolio securities with a futures contract based on a broad index of securities, which involves a risk that the futures position will not correlate precisely with the performance of the Fund's investments.

Futures prices can also diverge from the prices of their underlying instruments, even if the underlying instruments closely correlate with the Fund's investments. Futures prices are affected by factors such as current and anticipated short-term interest rates, changes in volatility of the underlying instruments and the time remaining until expiration of the contract. Those factors may affect securities prices differently from futures prices. Imperfect correlations between the Fund's investments and its futures positions also may result from differing levels of demand in the futures markets and the securities markets, from structural differences in how futures and securities are traded, and from imposition of daily price fluctuation limits for futures contracts. The Fund may buy or sell futures contracts with a greater or lesser value than the securities it wishes to hedge or is considering purchasing in order to attempt to compensate for differences in historical volatility between the futures contract and the securities, although this may not be successful in all cases. If price changes in the Fund's futures positions are poorly correlated with its other investments, its futures positions may fail to produce desired gains or result in losses that are not offset by the gains in the Fund's other investments.

### *Margin Requirements*

The buyer or seller of a futures contract is not required to deliver or pay for the underlying instrument unless the contract is held until the delivery date. However, both the buyer and seller are required to deposit "initial margin" for the benefit of the FCM when the contract is entered into. Initial margin deposits:

- Are equal to a percentage of the contract's value, as set by the exchange on which the contract is traded; and
- Are similar to good faith deposits or performance bonds.

Unlike margin extended by a securities broker, initial margin payments do not constitute purchasing securities on margin for purposes of the Fund's investment limitations. If the value of either party's position declines, that party will be required to make additional "variation margin" payments for the benefit of the FCM to settle the change in value on a daily basis. The party that has a gain may be entitled to receive all or a portion of this amount. In the event of the bankruptcy of the FCM that holds margin on behalf of the Fund, the Fund may be entitled to return of margin owed to the Fund only in proportion to the amount received by the FCM's other customers. The Fund will attempt to minimize this risk by careful monitoring of the creditworthiness of the FCMs with which it does business and by depositing margin payments in a segregated account with the Trust's custodian. Please see "Restrictions on the Use of Derivatives and Other Transactions" for additional information regarding the Fund's use of derivatives.

### *Regulation as a Commodity Pool Operator*

The Adviser has claimed an exclusion from the definition of the term "commodity pool operator" in accordance with CFTC Regulation 4.5 so that the Adviser is not subject to registration or regulation as a commodity pool operator under the Commodity Exchange Act ("CEA") with respect to the Fund. In order to maintain the exclusion for the Adviser, the Fund must invest no more than a prescribed level of its liquidation value in certain futures, certain swap contracts and certain other derivatives subject to the CEA's jurisdiction, and the Fund must not market itself as providing investment exposure to such instruments. If the Fund's investments no longer qualify the Adviser for the exclusion, the Adviser may be subject to the CFTC's commodity pool operator registration requirements with respect to the Fund, and the disclosure and operations of the Fund would need to comply with all applicable regulations governing commodity pools registered as investment companies under the 1940 Act and commodity pool operators. Compliance with the additional registration and regulatory requirements may increase operating expenses. Other potentially adverse regulatory initiatives could also develop.

## High Yield Securities

The Fund and the Underlying Funds may invest in high yield securities. High yield, high risk bonds are securities that are generally rated below investment grade by the primary rating agencies (BB+ or lower by S&P and Ba1 or lower by Moody's). Other terms used to describe such securities include "lower-rated bonds," "non-investment grade bonds," "below investment grade bonds," and "junk bonds." These securities are considered to be high-risk investments. The risks include the following:

*Greater Risk of Loss.* These securities are regarded as predominately speculative. There is a greater risk that issuers of lower-rated securities will default than issuers of higher rated securities. Issuers of lower-rated securities generally are less creditworthy and may be highly indebted, financially distressed, or bankrupt. These issuers are more vulnerable to real or perceived economic changes, political changes or adverse industry developments. In addition, high yield securities are frequently subordinated to the prior payment of senior indebtedness. If an issuer fails to pay principal or interest, the Fund would experience a decrease in income and a decline in the market value of its investments. The Fund or an Underlying Fund also may incur additional expenses in seeking recovery from an issuer that defaults.

*Sensitivity to Interest Rate and Economic Changes.* The income and market value of lower-rated securities may fluctuate more than higher rated securities. Although non-investment grade securities tend to be less sensitive to interest rate changes than investment grade securities, non-investment grade securities are more sensitive to short-term corporate, economic and market developments. During periods of economic uncertainty and change, the market price of the investments in lower-rated securities may be volatile. The default rate for high yield bonds tends to be cyclical, with defaults rising in periods of economic downturn.

*Valuation Difficulties.* It is often more difficult to value lower-rated securities than higher rated securities. If an issuer's financial condition deteriorates, accurate financial and business information may be limited or unavailable. In addition, the lower-rated investments may be thinly traded and there may be no established secondary market. Because of the lack of market pricing and current information for investments in lower-rated securities, valuation of such investments is much more dependent on judgment than is the case with higher rated securities.

*Liquidity.* There may be no established secondary or public market for investments in lower-rated securities. Such securities are frequently traded in markets that may be relatively less liquid than the market for higher rated securities. In addition, relatively few institutional purchasers may hold a major portion of an issue of lower-rated securities at times. As a result, a fund that invests in lower-rated securities may be required to sell investments at substantial losses or retain them indefinitely even where an issuer's financial condition is deteriorating.

*Credit Quality.* Credit quality of non-investment grade securities can change suddenly and unexpectedly, and even recently-issued credit ratings may not fully reflect the actual risks posed by a particular high-yield security.

*New Legislation.* Future legislation may have a possible negative impact on the market for high yield, high risk bonds. New legislation, if enacted, could have a material negative effect on a fund's investments in lower-rated securities.

High yield, high risk investments may include the following:

*Straight fixed-income debt securities.* These include bonds and other debt obligations that bear a fixed or variable rate of interest payable at regular intervals and have a fixed or resettable maturity date. The particular terms of such securities vary and may include features such as call provisions and sinking funds.

*Zero-coupon debt securities.* These bear no interest obligation but are issued at a discount from their value at maturity. When held to maturity, their entire return equals the difference between their issue price and their maturity value.

*Zero-fixed-coupon debt securities.* These are zero-coupon debt securities that convert on a specified date to interest-bearing debt securities.

*Pay-in-kind bonds.* These are bonds which allow the issuer, at its option, to make current interest payments on the bonds either in cash or in additional bonds. Pay-in-kind bonds may be considered riskier than other types of high yield bonds. If an issuer chooses to pay in additional bonds, the Fund would have a greater portion of its net assets invested in the issuer's debt and the issuer would become more highly leveraged.

These are bonds sold without registration under the 1933 Act, usually to a relatively small number of institutional investors.

*Convertible Securities.* These are bonds or preferred stock that may be converted to common stock.

*Preferred Stock.* These are stocks that generally pay a dividend at a specified rate and have preference over common stock in the payment of dividends and in liquidation.

*Loan Participations and Assignments.* These are participations in, or assignments of all or a portion of loans to corporations or to governments, including governments of less developed countries.

*Securities issued in connection with Reorganizations and Corporate Restructurings.* In connection with reorganizing or restructuring of an issuer, an issuer may issue common stock or other securities to holders of its debt securities. A fund may hold such common stock and other securities even if they do not invest in such securities.

## **Hybrid Securities**

The Fund may acquire hybrid securities. A third party or the Adviser (or Sub-adviser) may create a hybrid security by combining an income-producing debt security ("income producing component") and the right to receive payment based on the change in the price of an equity security ("equity component"). The income-producing component is achieved by investing in non-convertible, income-producing securities such as bonds, preferred stock and money market instruments, which may be represented by derivative instruments. The equity component is achieved by investing in securities or instruments such as cash-settled warrants or options to receive a payment based on whether the price of a common stock surpasses a certain exercise price, or options on a stock index. A hybrid security comprises two or more separate securities, each with its own market value. Therefore, the "market value" of a hybrid security is the sum of the values of its income-producing component and its equity component.

A holder of a hybrid security faces the risk of a decline in the price of the security or the level of the index involved in the equity component, causing a decline in the value of the security or instrument, such as a call option or warrant, purchased to create the hybrid security. The equity component has risks typical to a purchased call option. Should the price of the stock fall below the exercise price and remain there throughout the exercise period, the entire amount paid for the call option or warrant would be lost. Because a hybrid security includes the income-producing component as well, the holder of a hybrid security also faces risks typical to all fixed-income securities.

## **Illiquid and Restricted Securities**

The Fund may invest up to 15% of its net assets in illiquid investments. An illiquid investment as defined by Rule 22e-4 under the 1940 Act is an investment that the Fund reasonably expects cannot be sold or disposed of in current market conditions within 7 calendar days or less without the sale or disposition significantly changing the market value of the investment. The Fund has implemented a liquidity risk management program and related procedures to identify illiquid investments pursuant to Rule 22e-4, and the Trustees have approved the designation of the Adviser to administer the Fund's liquidity risk management program and related procedures. Illiquid investments include securities subject to contractual or legal restrictions on resale (e.g., because they have not been registered under the 1933 Act) and securities that are otherwise not readily marketable (e.g., because trading in the security is suspended or because market makers do not exist or will not entertain bids or offers). Securities that have not been registered under the 1933 Act are referred to as private placements or restricted securities and are purchased directly from the issuer or in the secondary market. Foreign securities that are freely tradable in their principal markets are not considered to be illiquid.

Restricted and other illiquid investments may be subject to the potential for delays on resale and uncertainty in valuation. The Fund might be unable to dispose of illiquid investments promptly or at reasonable prices and might thereby experience difficulty in satisfying redemption requests from shareholders. The Fund might have to register restricted securities in order to dispose of them, resulting in additional expense and delay. Adverse market conditions could impede such a public offering of securities.

A large institutional market exists for certain securities that are not registered under the 1933 Act, including foreign securities. The fact that there are contractual or legal restrictions on resale to the general public or to certain institutions may not be indicative of the liquidity of such investments. Rule 144A under the 1933 Act allows such a broader institutional trading market for securities otherwise subject to restrictions on resale to the general public. Rule 144A establishes a "safe harbor" from the registration requirements of the 1933 Act for resale of certain securities to qualified institutional buyers. Rule 144A has produced enhanced liquidity for many restricted securities, and market liquidity for such securities may continue to expand as a result of this regulation and the consequent existence of the PORTAL system, which is an automated system for the trading, clearance and settlement of unregistered securities of domestic and foreign issuers sponsored by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority ("FINRA").

Under guidelines adopted by the Board, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser may determine that particular Rule 144A securities, and commercial paper issued in reliance on the private placement exemption from registration afforded by Section 4(a)(2) of the 1933 Act, are liquid even though they are not registered. A determination of whether such a security is liquid or not is a question of fact. In making this determination, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser will consider, as it deems appropriate under the circumstances and among other factors: (1) the frequency of trades and quotes for the security; (2) the number of dealers willing to purchase or sell the security; (3) the number of other potential purchasers of the security; (4) dealer undertakings to make a market in the security; (5) the nature of the security (e.g., debt or equity, date of maturity, terms of dividend or interest payments, and other material terms) and the nature of the marketplace trades (e.g., the time needed to dispose of the security, the method of soliciting offers, and the mechanics of transfer); and (6) the rating of the security and the financial condition and prospects of the issuer. In the case of commercial paper, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser will also determine that the paper (1) is not traded flat or in default as to principal and interest, and (2) is rated in one of the two highest rating categories by at least two National Statistical Rating Organizations ("NRSROs") or, if only one NRSRO rates the security, by that NRSRO, or, if the security is unrated, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser determines that it is of equivalent quality.

Rule 144A securities and Section 4(a)(2) commercial paper that have been deemed liquid as described above will continue to be monitored by the Adviser or Sub-Adviser to determine if the security is no longer liquid as the result of changed conditions. Investing in Rule 144A securities or Section 4(a)(2) commercial paper could have the effect of increasing the amount of the Fund's assets invested in illiquid investments if institutional buyers are unwilling to purchase such securities.

### **Indexed Securities**

The Fund may purchase indexed securities consistent with its investment objectives. Indexed securities are those, the value of which varies positively or negatively in relation to the value of other securities, securities indices or other financial indicators. Indexed securities may be debt securities or deposits whose value at maturity or coupon rate is determined by reference to a specific instrument or statistic. Recent issuers of indexed securities have included banks, corporations and certain U.S. government agencies.

The performance of indexed securities depends to a great extent on the performance of the security or other instrument to which they are indexed and also may be influenced by interest rate changes in the United States and abroad. Indexed securities are subject to the credit risks associated with the issuer of the security, and their values may decline substantially if the issuer's creditworthiness deteriorates. Indexed securities may be more volatile than the underlying instruments. Certain indexed securities that are not traded on an established market may be deemed illiquid.

### **Inflation-Protected Securities**

The Fund may invest in U.S. Treasury Inflation Protected Securities ("U.S. TIPS"), which 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. The Fund may also invest in other inflation-protected securities issued by non-U.S. governments or by private issuers. 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 in the secondary market U.S. TIPS 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. If a guarantee of principal is not provided, the adjusted principal value of the bond repaid at maturity may be less than the original principal amount.

The periodic adjustment of U.S. TIPS is currently tied to the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers ("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-protected bonds issued by a non-U.S. government are generally adjusted to reflect a comparable 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. 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. 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.

In general, the value of inflation-protected 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-protected 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-protected 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, when the Fund invests in inflation-protected 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 (“RIC”) and to eliminate any fund-level income tax liability under the Code.

### **Infrastructure Investments**

Securities and instruments of infrastructure-related companies are subject to a variety of factors that may adversely affect their business or operations, including costs associated with compliance with and changes in environmental, governmental and other regulations, rising interest costs in connection with capital construction and improvement programs, government budgetary constraints and funding that impact publicly funded projects, the effects of general economic conditions throughout the world, surplus capacity and depletion concerns, service interruptions, increased competition from other providers of services, uncertainties regarding the availability of fuel at reasonable prices, the effects of energy conservation policies, unfavorable tax laws or accounting policies and high leverage. Infrastructure companies will also be affected by technological innovations that may render existing plants, equipment or products obsolete and natural or man-made disasters. Additionally, infrastructure-related entities may be subject to regulation by various governmental authorities and may also be affected by governmental regulation of rates charged to customers, service interruption and/or legal challenges due to environmental, operational or other mishaps and the imposition of special tariffs and changes in tax laws, regulatory policies and accounting standards. There is also the risk that corruption may negatively affect publicly-funded infrastructure projects, resulting in delays and cost overruns. Companies operating in the infrastructure industry also face operating risks, including the risk of fire, explosions, leaks, mining and drilling accidents or other catastrophic events. In addition, natural risks, such as earthquakes, floods, lightning, hurricanes, tsunamis and wind, are inherent risks in infrastructure company operations.

### **Initial Public Offerings**

The Fund may purchase debt or equity securities in initial public offerings (“IPOs”). These securities, which are often issued by unseasoned companies, may be subject to many of the same risks of investing in companies with smaller market capitalizations. Securities issued in IPOs have no trading history, and information about the companies may be available for very limited periods. Securities issued in an IPO frequently are very volatile in price, and the Fund may hold securities purchased in an IPO for a very short period of time. As a result, the Fund’s investments in IPOs may increase portfolio turnover, which increases brokerage and administrative costs and may result in taxable distributions to shareholders.

At any particular time or from time to time the Fund may not be able to invest in securities issued in IPOs, or invest to the extent desired because, for example, only a small portion (if any) of the securities being offered in an IPO may be made available to the Fund. In addition, under certain market conditions a relatively small number of companies may issue securities in IPOs. Similarly, as the number of funds to which IPO securities are allocated increases, the number of securities issued to any one fund may decrease. The investment performance of the Fund during periods when it is unable to invest significantly or at all in IPOs may be lower than during periods when the Fund is able to do so. In addition, as the Fund increases in size, the impact of IPOs on the Fund’s performance will generally decrease. There can be no assurance that investments in IPOs will improve the Fund’s performance.

## **Insured Bank Obligations**

The Fund may invest in insured bank obligations. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (“FDIC”) insures the deposits of federally insured banks and savings and loan associations (collectively referred to as “banks”) up to \$250,000. The Fund may purchase bank obligations which are fully insured as to principal by the FDIC. Currently, to remain fully insured as to principal, these investments must be limited to \$250,000 per bank; if the principal amount and accrued interest together exceed \$250,000, the excess principal and accrued interest will not be insured. Insured bank obligations may have limited marketability.

Additionally, U.S. and global markets recently have experienced increased volatility, including the recent failures of certain U.S. and non-U.S. banks, which could be harmful to the Fund, the Underlying Funds, and issuers in which they invest. Conditions in the banking sector are evolving, and the scope of any potential impacts to the Fund, the Underlying Funds, and issuers, both from market conditions and also potential legislative or regulatory responses, are uncertain. Continued market volatility and uncertainty and/or a downturn in market and economic and financial conditions, as a result of developments in the banking industry or otherwise (including as a result of delayed access to cash or credit facilities), could have an adverse impact on the Fund, the Underlying Funds, and issuers in which they invest.

## **Inverse Floaters**

Inverse floaters constitute a class of Collateralized Mortgage Obligations (“CMOs”) with a coupon rate that moves inversely to a designated index, such as the 11th District Cost of Funds Index (“COFI”). Inverse floaters have coupon rates that typically change at a multiple of the changes of the relevant index rate. Any rise in the index rate (as a consequence of an increase in interest rates) causes a drop in the coupon rate on an inverse floater while any drop in the index rate causes an increase in the coupon rate of an inverse floater. In some circumstances, the coupon on an inverse floater could decrease to zero. In addition, like most other fixed-income securities, the value of inverse floaters will decrease as interest rates increase and their average lives will extend. Inverse floaters exhibit greater price volatility than the majority of mortgage-backed securities. In addition, some inverse floaters display extreme sensitivity to changes in prepayments. As a result, the yield to maturity of an inverse floater is sensitive not only to changes in interest rates but also to changes in prepayment rates on the related underlying mortgage assets. As described above, inverse floaters may be used alone or in tandem with interest-only stripped mortgage instruments.

## **Investment Company Securities**

The Fund may invest in the securities of other investment companies (open-end, including ETFs, and closed-end) to the extent that such an investment would be consistent with the requirements of the 1940 Act and the Fund’s investment objectives. Investments in the securities of other investment companies may involve duplication of advisory fees and certain other expenses. By investing in another investment company, the Fund becomes a shareholder of that investment company. As a result, the Fund’s shareholders indirectly will bear the Fund’s proportionate share of the fees and expenses paid by shareholders of the other investment company, in addition to the fees and expenses the Fund’s shareholders directly bear in connection with the Fund’s own operations.

Under Section 12(d)(1)(A) of the 1940 Act, the Fund may hold securities of an Underlying Fund in amounts which (i) do not exceed 3% of the total outstanding voting stock of the Underlying Fund, (ii) do not exceed 5% of the value of the Fund's total assets and (iii) when added to all other Underlying Fund securities held by the Fund, do not exceed 10% of the value of the Fund's total assets. These limits may be exceeded when permitted under Rule 12d1-4. The Fund intends to rely on either Section 12(d)(1)(F) of the 1940 Act, which provides that the provisions of Section 12(d)(1)(A) shall not apply to securities purchased or otherwise acquired by the Fund if (i) immediately after such purchase or acquisition not more than 3% of the total outstanding stock of such Underlying Fund is owned by the Fund and all affiliated persons of the Fund, and (ii) certain requirements are met with respect to sales charges, or Rule 12d1-4.

### **Leverage Risk**

The Fund may borrow amounts up to one-third of the value of its total assets, but it will not borrow more than 5% of the value of its total assets except to satisfy redemption requests or for other temporary purposes. Borrowing for the purpose of investment is a speculative technique that increases both investment opportunity and the Fund's ability to achieve greater diversification. However, it also increases investment risk and the possibility of fluctuation in the Fund's NAV. Because the Fund's investments will fluctuate in value, whereas the interest obligations on borrowed funds may be fixed, during times of borrowing, the Fund's NAV may tend to increase more when its investments increase in value, and decrease more when its investments decrease in value, than it would without such leverage. In addition, interest costs on borrowings may fluctuate with changing market interest rates and may partially offset or exceed the return earned on the borrowed funds. Also, during times of borrowing under adverse market conditions, the Fund might have to sell portfolio securities to meet interest or principal payments at a time when fundamental investment considerations would not favor such sales. Unless profits on assets acquired with borrowed funds exceed the costs of borrowing, the use of borrowing will diminish the investment performance of the Fund compared with what it would have been without borrowing.

### **Loan Participation and Assignments**

Investment in secured or unsecured fixed or floating rate loans ("Loans") arranged through private negotiations between a borrowing corporation, government or other entity and one or more financial institutions ("Lenders") may be in the form of participations in Loans ("Participation") or assignments of all or a portion of Loans from third parties ("Assignments"). Participations typically result in the Fund having a contractual relationship only with the Lender, not with the borrower. The Fund has 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 has no direct 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 assumes the credit risk of both the borrower and the Lender that is selling the Participation. In the event of the insolvency of the selling Lender, the Fund may be treated as a general creditor of that Lender and may not benefit from any set-off between the Lender and the borrower. The Fund will acquire Participations only if the Adviser or Sub-Adviser determines that the selling Lender is creditworthy.

When the Fund purchases Assignments from Lenders, it acquires direct rights against the borrower on the Loan. In an Assignment, the Fund is entitled to receive payments directly from the borrower and, therefore, does not depend on the selling bank to pass these payments onto the Fund. However, because 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 assigning Lender.

Assignments and Participations are generally not registered under the 1933 Act, and thus may be subject to the Fund's limitation on investment in illiquid investments. Because there may be no liquid market for such securities, such securities may 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 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.

### **Market Disruption, Geopolitical, Pandemic and Climate Change Risks**

Geopolitical and other events (e.g., wars, terrorism, natural disasters, climate change, epidemics or pandemics) may disrupt securities markets and adversely affect global economies and markets, thereby decreasing the value of the Fund's investments. Sudden or significant changes in the supply or prices of commodities or other economic inputs may have material and unexpected effects on both global securities markets and individual countries, regions, sectors, companies, or industries, which could significantly reduce the value of the Fund's investments. Wars, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, climate change, epidemics or pandemics could result in unplanned or significant securities market closures or declines. Securities markets also may be susceptible to market manipulation or other fraudulent trading practices, which could disrupt the orderly functioning of markets, increase overall market volatility, or reduce the value of investments traded in them, including investments of the Fund.

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected the worldwide economy, as well as the economies of individual countries, the financial health of individual companies and the market in general in significant and unforeseen ways. On May 5, 2023, the World Health Organization declared the end of the global emergency status for COVID-19. The United States subsequently ended the federal COVID-19 public health emergency declaration effective May 11, 2023. Although vaccines for COVID-19 are widely available, it is unknown how long certain circumstances related to the pandemic will persist, whether they will reoccur in the future, and what additional implications may follow from the pandemic. The impact of these events and other epidemics or pandemics in the future could adversely affect Fund performance.

International war or conflicts (including armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine in Europe and Israel, Hamas and other militant groups in the Middle East) and geopolitical events in foreign countries, along with instability in regions such as Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, possible terrorist attacks in the United States or around the world, and other similar events could adversely affect the U.S. and foreign financial markets. As a result, whether or not the Fund invests in securities located in or with significant exposure to the countries directly affected, the value and liquidity of the Fund's investments may be negatively impacted. Further, due to closures of certain markets and restrictions on trading certain securities, the value of certain securities held by the Fund could be significantly impacted.

The impairment or failure of one or more banks with whom the Fund transacts may inhibit the Fund's ability to access depository accounts. In such cases, the Fund may be forced to delay or forgo investments, resulting in lower Fund performance. In the event of such a failure of a banking institution where the Fund holds depository accounts, access to such accounts could be restricted and FDIC protection may not be available for balances in excess of amounts insured by the FDIC. In such instances, the Fund may not recover such excess, uninsured amounts.

Additionally, climate change poses long-term threats to physical and biological systems. Potential hazards and risks related to climate change include, among other things, wildfires, rising sea levels, more severe coastal flooding and erosion hazards, and more intense storms. Storms in recent years have demonstrated vulnerabilities in infrastructure to extreme weather events. Climate change risks, if they materialize, can adversely impact financial plan in current or future years. In addition, economists and others have expressed increasing concern about the potential effects of global climate change on property and security values. A rise in sea levels, an increase in powerful windstorms and/or a climate-driven increase in sea levels or flooding could cause coastal properties to lose value or become unmarketable altogether. Economists warn that, unlike previous declines in the real estate market, properties in affected coastal zones may not ever recover their value. Large wildfires driven by high winds and prolonged drought may devastate businesses and entire communities and may be very costly to any business found to be responsible for the fire. Regulatory changes and divestment movements tied to concerns about climate change could adversely affect the value of certain land and the viability of industries whose activities or products are seen as accelerating climate change. The Fund cannot predict the effects of or likelihood of such events on the U.S. and world economies or the NAV of the Fund. The issuers of securities, including those held in the Fund's portfolio, could be materially impacted by such events which may, in turn, negatively affect the value of such securities or the Fund.

Advancements in technology may also adversely impact markets and the overall performance of the Fund. For instance, the economy may be significantly impacted by the advanced development and increased regulation of artificial intelligence. As the use of technology grows, liquidity and market movements may be affected. As artificial intelligence is used more widely, the profitability and growth of Fund holdings may be impacted, which could significantly impact the overall performance of the Fund.

### **Mortgage-Backed Securities**

The Fund may invest in mortgage-backed securities. Mortgage-backed securities represent participation interests in pools of one-to-four family residential mortgage loans originated by private mortgage originators. Traditionally, residential mortgage-backed securities have been issued by governmental agencies such as the Federal Housing Administration and the Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae), the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and the Federal Home Loan Banks and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac). The Fund may invest in commercial mortgage-backed securities. Non-governmental entities that have issued or sponsored residential mortgage-backed securities offerings include savings and loan associations, mortgage banks, insurance companies, investment banks and special purpose subsidiaries of the foregoing.

While residential loans do not typically have prepayment penalties or restrictions, they are often structured so that subordinated classes may be locked out of prepayments for a period of time. However, in a period of extremely rapid prepayments, during which senior classes may be retired faster than expected, the subordinated classes may receive unscheduled payments of principal and would have average lives that, while longer than the average lives of the senior classes, would be shorter than originally expected. The types of residential mortgage-backed securities in which the Fund may invest may include the following:

*Guaranteed Mortgage Pass-Through Securities.* The Fund may invest in mortgage pass-through securities representing participation interests in pools of residential mortgage loans originated by the U.S. government and guaranteed, to the extent provided in such securities, by the U.S. government or one of its agencies or instrumentalities. Such securities, which are ownership interests in the underlying mortgage loans, differ from conventional debt securities, which provide for periodic payment of interest in fixed amounts (usually semi-annually) and principal payments at maturity or on specified call dates. Mortgage pass-through securities provide for monthly payments that are a “pass-through” of the monthly interest and principal payments (including any prepayments) made by the individual borrowers on the pooled mortgage loans, net of any fees paid to the guarantor of such securities and the servicer of the underlying mortgage loans. The guaranteed mortgage pass-through securities in which the Fund will invest are those issued or guaranteed by Ginnie Mae, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

*Private Mortgage Pass-Through Securities.* Private mortgage pass-through securities (“Private Pass-Throughs”) are structured similarly to the Ginnie Mae, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac mortgage pass-through securities described above and are issued by originators of and investors in mortgage loans, including savings and loan associations, mortgage banks, commercial banks, investment banks and special purpose subsidiaries of the foregoing. Private Pass-Throughs are usually backed by a pool of conventional fixed rate or adjustable rate mortgage loans.

Since Private Pass-Throughs typically are not guaranteed by an entity having the credit status of Ginnie Mae, Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, such securities generally are structured with one or more types of credit enhancement.

*Collateralized Mortgage Obligations (CMOs).* CMOs are debt obligations collateralized by mortgage loans or mortgage pass-through securities. Typically, CMOs are collateralized by Ginnie Mae, Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac Certificates, but also may be collateralized by whole loans or Private Pass-Throughs (such collateral collectively hereinafter referred to as “Mortgage Assets”).

Multi-class pass-through securities are equity interests in a pool of Mortgage Assets. Unless the context indicates otherwise, all references herein to CMOs include multi-class pass-through securities. Payments of principal of and interest on the Mortgage Assets, and any reinvestment income thereon, provide the Fund to pay debt service on the CMOs or make scheduled distributions on the multi-class pass-through securities. CMOs may be sponsored by agencies or instrumentalities of the U.S. government, or by private originators of, or investors in, mortgage loans, including savings and loan associations, mortgage banks, commercial banks, investment banks and special purpose subsidiaries of the foregoing. Under current law, a newly created CMO issuer seeking to be treated for federal income tax purposes as a Real Estate Mortgage Investment Conduit (a “REMIC”) must elect to be so treated for its first taxable year.

In a CMO, a series of bonds or certificates is issued in multiple classes. Each class of CMOs, often referred to as a “tranche,” is issued at a specific fixed or floating coupon rate and has a stated maturity or final distribution date. Principal prepayments on the Mortgage Assets may cause the CMOs to be retired substantially earlier than their stated maturities or final distribution dates. Interest is paid or accrues on all classes of the CMOs on a monthly, quarterly or semi-annual basis. The principal of and interest on the Mortgage Assets may be allocated among the several classes of a series of a CMO in innumerable ways. In one structure, payments of principal, including any principal prepayments, on the Mortgage Assets are applied to the classes of a CMO in the order of their respective stated maturities or final distribution dates, so that no payment of principal will be made on any class of CMOs until all other classes having an earlier stated maturity or final distribution date have been paid in full.

The Fund may also invest in, among others, parallel pay CMOs and Planned Amortization Class CMOs (PAC Bonds). Parallel pay CMOs are structured to provide payments of principal on each payment date to more than one class. These simultaneous payments are taken into account in calculating the stated maturity date or final distribution date of each class, which, as with other CMO structures, must be retired by its payments of a specified amount of principal on each payment date.

*Ginnie Mae Certificates.* Ginnie Mae is a wholly-owned corporate instrumentality of the U.S. government within the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The National Housing Act of 1934, as amended (the “Housing Act”), authorizes Ginnie Mae to guarantee the timely payment of the principal of and interest on certificates that are based on and backed by a pool of mortgage loans insured by the Federal Housing Administration under the Housing Act, or Title V of the Housing Act of 1949 (“FHA Loans”), or guaranteed by the Veterans’ Administration under the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, as amended (“VA Loans”), or by pools of other eligible mortgage loans. The Housing Act provides that the full faith and credit of the U.S. government is pledged to the payment of all amounts that may be required to be paid under any guarantee.

The Ginnie Mae Certificates will represent a pro rata interest in one or more pools of the following types of mortgage loans: (i) fixed rate level payment mortgage loans; (ii) fixed rate graduated payment mortgage loans; (iii) fixed rate growing equity mortgage loans; (iv) fixed rate mortgage loans secured by manufactured (mobile) homes; (v) mortgage loans on multifamily residential properties under construction; (vi) mortgage loans on completed multifamily projects; (vii) fixed rate mortgage loans as to which escrowed funds are used to reduce the borrower's monthly payments during the early years of the mortgage loans ("buydown" mortgage loans); (viii) mortgage loans that provide for adjustments in payments based on periodic changes in interest rates or in other payment terms of the mortgage loans; and (ix) mortgage-backed serial notes. All of these mortgage loans will be FHA Loans or VA Loans and, except as otherwise specified above, will be fully-amortizing loans secured by first liens on one-to-four family housing units.

*Fannie Mae Certificates.* Fannie Mae is a federally chartered and privately owned corporation organized and existing under the Federal National Mortgage Association Charter Act. Fannie Mae was originally established in 1938 as a U.S. government agency to provide supplemental liquidity to the mortgage market and was transformed into a stockholder owned and privately managed corporation by legislation enacted in 1968. Fannie Mae provides funds to the mortgage market primarily by purchasing home mortgage loans from local lenders, thereby replenishing their funds for additional lending. Fannie Mae acquires funds to purchase home mortgage loans from many capital market investors that may not ordinarily invest in mortgage loans directly, thereby expanding the total amount of funds available for housing.

Each Fannie Mae Certificate entitles the registered holder thereof to receive amounts representing such holder's pro rata interest in scheduled principal payments and interest payments (at such Fannie Mae Certificate's pass-through rate, which is net of any servicing and guarantee fees on the underlying mortgage loans), and any principal prepayments on the mortgage loans in the pool represented by such Fannie Mae Certificate and such holder's proportionate interest in the full principal amount of any foreclosed or otherwise finally liquidated mortgage loan. The full and timely payment of principal of and interest on each Fannie Mae Certificate will be guaranteed by Fannie Mae, which guarantee is not backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government. In order to meet its obligations under such guarantee, Ginnie Mae is authorized to borrow from the U.S. Treasury with no limitations as to amount.

Each Fannie Mae Certificate will represent a pro rata interest in one or more pools of FHA Loans, VA Loans or conventional mortgage loans (*i.e.*, mortgage loans that are not insured or guaranteed by any governmental agency) of the following types: (i) fixed rate level payment mortgage loans; (ii) fixed rate growing equity mortgage loans; (iii) fixed rate graduated payment mortgage loans; (iv) variable rate California mortgage loans; (v) other adjustable rate mortgage loans; and (vi) fixed rate mortgage loans secured by multifamily projects.

*Freddie Mac Certificates.* Freddie Mac is a corporate instrumentality of the U.S. government created pursuant to the Emergency Home Finance Act of 1970, as amended (the "FHLMC Act"). Freddie Mac was established primarily for the purpose of increasing the availability of mortgage credit for the financing of needed housing. The principal activity of Freddie Mac currently consists of the purchase of first lien, conventional, residential mortgage loans and participation interests in such mortgage loans and the resale of the mortgage loans so purchased in the form of mortgage securities, primarily Freddie Mac Certificates.

Freddie Mac guarantees to each registered holder of a Freddie Mac Certificate the timely payment of interest at the rate provided for by such Freddie Mac Certificate, whether or not received. Freddie Mac also guarantees to each registered holder of a Freddie Mac Certificate ultimate collection of all principal of the related mortgage loans, without any offset or deduction, but does not generally guarantee the timely payment of scheduled principal. Freddie Mac may remit the amount due on account of its guarantee of collection of principal at any time after default on an underlying mortgage loan, but not later than 30 days following (i) foreclosure sale, (ii) payment of a claim by any mortgage insurer, or (iii) the expiration of any right of redemption, whichever occurs later, but in any event no later than one year after demand has been made upon the mortgagor for acceleration of payment of principal. The obligations of Freddie Mac under its guarantee are obligations solely of Freddie Mac and are not backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government.

Freddie Mac Certificates represent a pro rata interest in a group of mortgage loans (a “Freddie Mac Certificate group”) purchased by Freddie Mac. The mortgage loans underlying the Freddie Mac Certificates will consist of fixed rate or adjustable rate mortgage loans with original terms to maturity of between ten and thirty years, substantially all of which are secured by first liens on one-to-four family residential properties or multifamily projects. Each mortgage loan must meet the applicable standards set forth in the FHLMC Act. A Freddie Mac Certificate group may include whole loans, participation interests in whole loans and undivided interests in whole loans and participations comprising another Freddie Mac Certificate group.

On September 7, 2008, Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae were placed into conservatorship by their new regulator, the Federal Housing Finance Agency (“FHFA”). Under the plan of conservatorship, the FHFA has assumed control of, and generally has the power to direct, the operations of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, and is empowered to exercise all powers collectively held by their respective shareholders, directors and officers, including the power to: (1) take over the assets of and operate Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae with all the powers of the shareholders, the directors, and the officers of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae and conduct all business of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae; (2) collect all obligations and money due to Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae; (3) perform all functions of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae that are consistent with the conservator’s appointment; (4) preserve and conserve the assets and property of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae; and (5) contract for assistance in fulfilling any function, activity, action or duty of the conservator. In addition, in connection with the actions taken by the FHFA, the U.S. Treasury Department (the “Treasury”) entered into certain preferred stock purchase agreements with each of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, which established the Treasury as the holder of a new class of senior preferred stock in each of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, which stock was issued in connection with financial contributions from the Treasury to Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae.

The conditions attached to the financial contribution made by the U.S. Treasury to Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae and the issuance of this senior preferred stock placed significant restrictions on the activities of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae. Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae must obtain the consent of the U.S. Treasury to, among other things: (i) make any payment to purchase or redeem its capital stock or pay any dividend other than in respect of the senior preferred stock issued to the U.S. Treasury, (ii) issue capital stock of any kind, (iii) terminate the conservatorship of the FHFA except in connection with a receivership, or (iv) increase its debt beyond certain specified levels. In addition, significant restrictions were placed on the maximum size of each of Freddie Mac’s and Fannie Mae’s respective portfolios of mortgages and Mortgage-Backed Securities portfolios, and the purchase agreements entered into by Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae provide that the maximum size of their portfolios of these assets must decrease by a specified percentage each year.

The future status and role of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac could be impacted by (among other things) the actions taken and restrictions placed on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac by the FHFA in its role as conservator, the restrictions placed on Fannie Mae’s and Freddie Mac’s operations and activities as a result of the senior preferred stock investment made by the U.S. Treasury, market responses to developments at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and future legislative and regulatory action that alters the operations, ownership, structure and/or mission of these institutions, each of which may, in turn, impact the value of, and cash flows on, any mortgage-backed securities guaranteed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, including any such mortgage-backed securities held by the Fund.

Under the FHFA’s “Single Security Initiative,” Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have entered into a joint initiative to develop a common securitization platform for the issuance of Uniform Mortgage-Backed Securities (“UMBS”), which would generally align the characteristics of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac participation certificates. In June 2019 Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac began issuing UMBS in place of their current offerings of “to be announced”-eligible mortgage-backed securities. While the initial effects of the issuances of UMBS on the market for mortgage-related securities have been relatively minimal, the long-term effects are still uncertain.

Mortgage-backed securities are subject to the risk of default on the underlying mortgage, particularly during periods of economic downturn. Any economic downturn could increase the risk that such assets underlying mortgage-backed securities purchased by the Fund will also suffer greater levels of default than were historically experienced.

*Federal Home Loan Bank Securities.* The Federal Home Loan Bank system (“FHLB”) was created in 1932 pursuant to the Federal Home Loan Bank Act. The FHLB was created to support residential mortgage lending and community investment. The FHLB consists of 12 member banks which are owned by over 8,000 member community financial institutions. The FHLB provides liquidity for housing finance and community development by making direct loans to these community financial institutions, and through two FHLB mortgage programs, which help expand home ownership by giving lenders an alternative option for mortgage funding. Each member financial institution (typically a bank or savings and loan) is a shareholder in one or more of 12 regional FHLB banks, which are privately capitalized, separate corporate entities. Federal oversight, in conjunction with normal bank regulation and shareholder vigilance, assures that the 12 regional Banks will remain conservatively managed and well capitalized. The FHLB banks are among the largest providers of mortgage credit in the U.S.

The FHLB is also one of the world’s largest private issuers of fixed-income debt securities, and the Office of Finance serves as the FHLB’s central debt issuance facility. Debt is issued in the global capital markets and the Fund is channeled to member financial institutions to fund mortgages, community development, and affordable housing.

Securities issued by the FHLB are not obligations of the U.S. government and are not guaranteed by the U. S. government. The FHLB may issue either bonds or discount notes. The securities, issued pursuant to the Act, are joint and several unsecured general obligations of the FHLB banks. The bonds or discount notes will not limit other indebtedness that the FHLB banks may incur and they will not contain any financial or similar restrictions on the FHLB banks or any restrictions on their ability to secure other indebtedness. Under the Federal Home Loan Bank Act, the FHLB banks may incur other indebtedness such as secured joint and several obligations of the FHLB banks and unsecured joint and several obligations of the FHLB banks, as well as obligations of individual FHLB banks (although current Federal Housing Finance Board rules prohibit their issuance).

### **Mortgage Dollar Rolls**

The Fund may enter into mortgage dollar rolls with a bank or a broker-dealer. A mortgage dollar roll is a transaction in which the Fund sells mortgage-related securities for immediate settlement and simultaneously purchases the same type of securities for forward settlement at a discount. While the Fund begins accruing interest on the newly purchased securities from the purchase or trade date, it is able to invest the proceeds from the sale of its previously owned securities, which will be used to pay for the new securities, in money market investments until a future settlement date. The use of mortgage dollar rolls is a speculative technique involving leverage, and is considered to be a form of borrowing by the Fund.

The Fund also may enter into dollar roll transactions using to-be-announced securities in which it sells a fixed income security for delivery in the current month and simultaneously contracts to purchase similar securities (for example, same type, coupon and maturity) at an agreed upon future time. By engaging in a dollar roll transaction, the Fund foregoes 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 earn interest on the proceeds of the sale before they are reinvested. The Fund accounts for dollar rolls as purchases and sales. Dollar rolls may be used to create investment leverage and may increase the Fund's risk and volatility.

## **Municipal Securities**

The Fund may invest in securities issued by states, municipalities and other political subdivisions, agencies, authorities and instrumentalities of states and multi-state agencies or authorities. Although the interest earned on many municipal securities is exempt from federal income tax, the Fund may invest in taxable municipal securities. The tax-exempt nature of the interest on a municipal obligation is generally the subject of a bond counsel opinion delivered in connection with the issuance of the instrument. Tax opinions are generally provided at the time the municipal security is initially issued and neither the Fund nor its portfolio managers will independently review the bases for those tax opinions or guarantee that the tax opinions are correct.

Municipal securities share the attributes of debt/fixed-income securities in general, but are generally issued by states, municipalities and other political subdivisions, agencies, authorities and instrumentalities of states and multi-state agencies or authorities. The municipal securities which the Fund may purchase include general obligation bonds and limited obligation bonds (or revenue bonds), including industrial development bonds issued pursuant to former federal tax law. General obligation bonds are obligations involving the credit of an issuer possessing taxing power and are payable from such issuer's general revenues and not from any particular source. Limited obligation bonds 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 or other specific revenue source. Tax-exempt private activity bonds and industrial development bonds generally are also revenue bonds and thus are not payable from the issuer's general revenues. The credit and quality of private activity bonds and industrial development bonds are usually related to the credit of the corporate user of the facilities. Payment of interest on and repayment of principal of such bonds is the responsibility of the corporate user (and/or any guarantor).

Under the Code, certain limited obligation bonds are considered "private activity bonds" and interest paid on such bonds is treated as an item of tax preference for purposes of calculating federal alternative minimum tax liability.

Many state and municipal governments that issue securities are under significant economic and financial stress and may not be able to satisfy their obligations. The ability of municipal issuers to make timely payments of interest and principal may be diminished during general economic downturns and as governmental cost burdens are reallocated among federal, state and local governments. The taxing power of any governmental entity may be limited by provisions of state constitutions or laws and an entity's credit will depend on many factors, including the entity's tax base, the extent to which the entity relies on federal or state aid, and other factors which are beyond the entity's control. In addition, laws enacted in the future by Congress or state legislatures or referenda could extend the time for payment of principal and/or interest, or impose other constraints on enforcement of such obligations or on the ability of municipalities to levy taxes. Issuers of municipal securities might seek protection under the bankruptcy laws. In the event of bankruptcy of such an issuer, holders of municipal securities could experience delays in collecting principal and interest and such holders may not, in all circumstances, be able to collect all principal and interest to which they are entitled. To enforce its rights in the event of a default in the payment of interest or repayment of principal, or both, the Fund may take possession of and manage the assets securing the issuer's obligations on such securities, which may increase the Fund's operating expenses.

## **Obligations of Supranational Entities (Underlying Funds Only)**

The Fund may invest in an Underlying Fund that invests in obligations of supranational entities designated or supported by governmental entities to promote economic reconstruction or development and of international banking institutions and related government agencies. Examples include the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the “World Bank”), the European Coal and Steel Community, the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Each supranational entity’s lending activities are limited to a percentage of its total capital (including “callable capital” contributed by its governmental members at the entity’s call), reserves and net income. There is no assurance that participating governments will be able or willing to honor their commitments to make capital contributions to a supranational entity.

## **Options**

The Fund may utilize call and put options to attempt to protect against possible changes in the market value of securities held in or to be purchased for the Fund’s portfolio and to generate income or gain for the Fund. The ability of the Fund to successfully utilize options will depend on the Adviser’s or Sub-Adviser’s ability to predict pertinent market movements, which cannot be assured. The Fund will comply with applicable regulatory requirements when implementing these techniques and instruments. Please see “Restrictions on the Use of Derivatives and Other Transactions” below for additional information.

The Fund may write (sell) covered call options and covered put options and purchase call and put options. The purpose of engaging in options transactions is to reduce the effect of price fluctuations of the securities owned by the Fund (and involved in the options) on the Fund’s NAV per share and to generate additional revenues.

A covered call option is an option sold on a security owned by the seller of the option in exchange for a premium. A call option gives the purchaser of the option the right to buy the underlying securities at the exercise price during the option period. If the option is exercised by the purchaser during the option period, the seller is required to deliver the underlying security against payment of the exercise price. The seller’s obligation terminates upon expiration of the option period or when the seller executes a closing purchase transaction with respect to such option. Call options on securities which the Fund sells (writes) will be covered or secured, which means that the Fund will own the underlying security or, to the extent it does not hold such a security, will maintain a segregated account with the Fund’s custodian consisting of liquid debt obligations equal to the market value of the option, marked-to-market daily. When the Fund writes a covered call option, it profits from the premium paid by the buyer but gives up the opportunity to profit from an increase in the value of the underlying security above the exercise price. At the same time, the seller retains the risk of loss from a decline in the value of the underlying security during the option period. Although the seller may terminate its obligation by executing a closing purchase transaction, the cost of effecting such a transaction may be greater than the premium received upon its sale, resulting in a loss to the seller. If such an option expires unexercised, the seller realizes a gain equal to the premium received. Such a gain may be offset or exceeded by a decline in the market value of the underlying security during the option period. If an option is exercised, the exercise price, the premium received and the market value of the underlying security determine the gain or loss realized by the seller.

When the Fund sells a covered put option, it has the obligation to buy, and the purchaser of the put the right to sell, the underlying security at the exercise price during the option period. To cover a put option, the Fund deposits U. S. government securities (or other high-grade debt obligations) in a segregated account at its custodian. The value of the deposited securities is equal to or greater than the exercise price of the underlying security. The value of the deposited securities is marked-to-market daily and, if necessary, additional assets are placed in the segregated account to maintain a value equal to or greater than the exercise price. The Fund maintains the segregated account so long as it is obligated as the seller. The obligation of the Fund is terminated when the purchaser exercises the put option, when the option expires or when a closing purchase transaction is effected by the Fund. The Fund's gain on the sale of a put option is limited to the premium received plus interest earned on its segregated account. The Fund's potential loss on a put option is determined by taking into consideration the exercise price of the option, the market price of the underlying security when the put is exercised, the premium received and the interest earned on its segregated account. Although the Fund risks a substantial loss if the price of the security on which it has sold a put option drops suddenly, it can protect itself against serious loss by entering into a closing purchase transaction. The degree of loss will depend upon the Fund's ability to detect the movement in the security's price and to execute a closing transaction at the appropriate time.

The Fund will write options on such portion of its portfolio as management determines is appropriate in seeking to attain the Fund's objective. The Fund will write options when management believes that a liquid secondary market will exist on a national securities exchange for options of the same series so that the Fund can effect a closing purchase transaction if it desires to close out its position. Consistent with the investment policies of the Fund, a closing purchase transaction will ordinarily be effected to realize a profit on an outstanding option, to prevent an underlying security from being called or to permit the sale of the underlying security. Effecting a closing purchase transaction will permit the Fund to write another option on the underlying security with either a different exercise price or expiration date or both.

The Fund may purchase put options to protect against declines in the market value of portfolio securities or to attempt to retain unrealized gains in the value of portfolio securities. Put options might also be purchased to facilitate the sale of portfolio securities. The Fund may purchase call options as a temporary substitute for the purchase of individual securities, which then could be purchased in orderly fashion. Upon the purchase of the securities, the Fund would normally terminate the call position. The purchase of both put and call options involves the risk of loss of all or part of the premium paid. If the price of the underlying security does not rise (in the case of a call) or drop (in the case of a put) by an amount at least equal to the premium paid for the option contract, the Fund will experience a loss on the option contract equal to the deficiency.

### **Preferred Stock**

Preferred stocks are securities that have characteristics of both common stocks and corporate bonds. Preferred stocks may receive dividends but payment is not guaranteed as with a bond. These securities may be undervalued because of a lack of analyst coverage resulting in a high dividend yield or yield to maturity. The risks of preferred stocks are a lack of voting rights and the Adviser or Sub-Adviser may incorrectly analyze the security, resulting in a loss to the Fund. Furthermore, preferred stock dividends are not guaranteed and management can elect to forego the preferred dividend, resulting in a loss to the Fund.

### **Qualified Financial Contracts**

Regulations adopted by federal banking regulators under the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, which took effect in 2019, require that certain qualified financial contracts ("QFCs") with counterparties that are part of U.S. or foreign global systemically important banking organizations be amended to include contractual restrictions on close-out and cross-default rights. QFCs include, but are not limited to, securities contracts, commodities contracts, forward contracts, repurchase agreements, securities lending agreements and swaps agreements, as well as related master agreements, security agreements, credit enhancements, and reimbursement obligations. If a covered counterparty of the Fund or certain of the covered counterparty's affiliates were to become subject to certain insolvency proceedings, the Fund may be temporarily unable to exercise certain default rights, and the QFC may be transferred to another entity. These requirements may impact the Fund's credit and counterparty risks.

## Real Estate Investment Trusts (“REITs”)

The Fund may invest in equity interests or debt obligations issued by REITs. REITs are pooled investment vehicles which invest primarily in income producing real estate or real estate related loans or interest. REITs are generally classified as equity REITs, mortgage REITs or a combination of equity and mortgage REITs. Equity REITs invest the majority of their assets directly in real property and derive income primarily from the collection of rents. Equity REITs can also realize capital gains by selling property that has appreciated in value. Mortgage REITs invest the majority of their assets in real estate mortgages and derive income from the collection of interest payments. Similar to investment companies, REITs are not taxed on income distributed to shareholders provided they comply with several requirements of the Code. The Fund will indirectly bear its proportionate share of expenses incurred by REITs in which the Fund invests in addition to the expenses incurred directly by the Fund.

Investing in REITs involves certain unique risks in addition to those risks associated with investing in the real estate industry in general. Equity REITs may be affected by changes in the value of the underlying property owned by the REITs, while mortgage REITs may be affected by the quality of any credit extended. REITs are dependent upon management skills, are not diversified, are subject to heavy cash flow dependency, default by borrowers and self-liquidation. REITs are also subject to the possibilities of failing to qualify for tax free pass-through of income under the Code and failing to maintain their exemption from registration under the 1940 Act.

REITs (especially mortgage REITs) are also subject to interest rate risks. When interest rates decline, the value of a REIT’s investment in fixed rate obligations can be expected to rise. Conversely, when interest rates rise, the value of a REIT’s investment in fixed rate obligations can be expected to decline. In contrast, as interest rates on adjustable rate mortgage loans are reset periodically, yields on a REIT’s investment in such loans will gradually align themselves to fluctuate less dramatically in response to interest rate fluctuations than would investments in fixed rate obligations.

Investment in REITs involves risks similar to those associated with investing in small capitalization companies. These risks include:

- limited financial resources;
- infrequent or limited trading; and
- more abrupt or erratic price movements than larger company securities.

In addition, small capitalization stocks, such as REITs, historically have been more volatile in price than the larger capitalization stocks included in the S&P 500 Index.

## Repurchase Agreements

The Fund may invest up to 25% of the Fund’s net assets in fully collateralized repurchase agreements. A repurchase agreement is a short term investment in which the purchaser (*i.e.*, the Fund) acquires ownership of a security and the seller agrees to repurchase the obligation at a future time at a set price, thereby determining the yield during the purchaser’s holding period (usually not more than 7 days from the date of purchase). Any repurchase transaction in which the Fund engages will require full collateralization of the seller’s obligation during the entire term of the repurchase agreement. In the event of a bankruptcy or other default of the seller, the Fund could experience both delays in liquidating the underlying security and losses in value. However, the Fund intends to enter into repurchase agreements only with its custodian, other banks with assets of \$1 billion or more and registered securities dealers determined by the Adviser or Sub-Adviser to be creditworthy. The Adviser or Sub-Adviser monitors the creditworthiness of the banks and securities dealers with which the Fund engages in repurchase transactions. The Fund may not enter into a repurchase agreement with a term of more than seven days if, as a result, more than 15% of the value of its net assets would then be invested in such repurchase agreements and other illiquid investments.

## **Restrictions on the Use of Derivatives and Other Transactions**

Rule 18f-4 under the 1940 Act provides for the regulation of a registered investment company's use of derivatives and certain related investments. Subject to certain conditions, "limited derivatives users" (as defined in Rule 18f-4), are not be subject to the full requirements of Rule 18f-4. The Fund currently operates as a limited derivatives user under Rule 18f-4 of the 1940 Act. As a limited derivatives user, the Fund has adopted written policies and procedures designed to manage its derivatives risks, and the Fund's derivatives exposure, excluding certain currency and interest rate hedging transactions, may not exceed 10% of its net assets. This restriction is not fundamental and may be changed by the Fund without a shareholder vote. Should the Fund no longer intend to qualify as a limited derivatives user in the future, it would be required to establish and maintain a comprehensive derivative risk management program and appoint a derivative risk manager, as required by Rule 18f-4.

Rule 18f-4 could restrict the Fund's ability to engage in certain derivatives transactions and/or increase the costs of derivatives transactions, which could adversely affect the value or performance of the Fund.

In general, the "derivatives transactions" covered by Rule 18f-4 include the following: (1) any swap, security-based swap (including a contract for differences), futures contract, forward contract, option (excluding purchased options), any combination of the foregoing, or any similar instrument, under which the Fund is or may be required to make any payment or delivery of cash or other assets during the life of the instrument or at maturity or early termination, whether as margin or settlement payment or otherwise; (2) any short sale borrowing; (3) reverse repurchase agreements and similar financing transactions, if the Fund elects to treat these transactions as "derivatives transactions" under Rule 18f-4; and (4) when-issued or forward-settling securities (e.g., firm and standby commitments, including to-be-announced ("TBA") commitments, and dollar rolls) and non-standard settlement cycle securities, unless such transactions meet the delayed-settlement provision of the rule.

The use of derivatives is also subject to operational and legal risks. Operational risks generally refer to risks related to potential operational issues, including documentation issues, settlement issues, system failures, inadequate controls, and human error. Legal risks generally refer to risks of loss resulting from insufficient documentation, insufficient capacity or authority of counterparty, or legality or enforceability of a contract.

## **Reverse Repurchase Transactions**

The Fund may enter into reverse repurchase transactions. In a reverse repurchase transaction, the Fund concurrently agrees to sell portfolio securities to financial institutions such as banks and broker-dealers, and to repurchase the same securities at a later date at a mutually agreed upon price. The repurchase price generally is equal to the original sales price plus interest. The Fund retains record ownership of the securities and the right to receive interest and principal payments. The Fund will enter into a reverse repurchase transaction in order to obtain funds to pursue additional investment opportunities with an expected return in excess of the cost of the reverse repurchase transaction. Such transactions may increase fluctuations in the market value of Fund assets and may be viewed as a form of leverage. Reverse repurchase transactions also involve the risk that the market value of the securities sold by the Fund may decline below the price at which the Fund is obligated to repurchase the securities. In the event of bankruptcy or other default by the purchaser, the Fund could experience both delays in repurchasing the portfolio securities and losses. The Fund will enter into reverse repurchase transactions only with parties whose creditworthiness has been reviewed and found satisfactory by the Adviser or Sub-Adviser.

In accordance with Rule 18f-4 under the 1940 Act, when the Fund engages in reverse repurchase agreements and similar financing transactions, the Fund may either (i) comply with the asset segregation requirements of Section 18 under the 1940 Act, or (ii) treat such transactions as “derivatives transactions” and comply with Rule 18f-4 with respect to such transactions. See “Restrictions on the Use of Derivative and Other Transactions” above for additional information.

## **Rights**

Rights are usually granted to existing shareholders of a corporation to subscribe to shares of a new issue of common stock before it is issued to the public. The right entitles its holder to buy common stock at a specified price. Rights have similar features to warrants, except that the life of a right is typically much shorter, usually a few weeks. The Adviser or Sub-Adviser believes rights may become underpriced if they are sold without regard to value and if analysts do not include them in their research. The risk in investing in rights is that the Adviser or Sub-Adviser might miscalculate their value resulting in a loss to the Fund. Another risk is the underlying common stock may not reach the Adviser’s or Sub-Adviser’s anticipated price within the life of the right.

## **Short Sales**

The Fund may seek to realize additional gains or hedge investments by selling a security short. A short sale is a transaction in which the Fund sells a security that it does not own in anticipation of a decline in the market price of the security. To complete the short sale, the Fund must arrange through a broker to borrow the security in order to deliver it to the buyer. The Fund is obligated to replace the borrowed security by purchasing it at a market price at or prior to the time it must be returned to the lender. The price at which the Fund is required to replace the borrowed security may be more or less than the price at which the security was sold by the Fund. Until the security is replaced, the Fund is required to repay the lender any dividends or interest attributable to the borrowed security that may accrue during the period of the loan. To borrow the security, the Fund may be required to pay a premium, which would increase the cost of the security sold. Until the short position is closed out, the Fund also will incur transaction costs.

The net proceeds of the short sale plus any additional cash collateral will be retained by the broker to the extent necessary to meet margin requirements and provide a collateral cushion in the event that the value of the security sold short increases. The Fund will receive the net proceeds after it closes out the short position by replacing the borrowed security. Until the Fund closes the short position, the Fund also must maintain a segregated account with its custodian consisting of cash or other liquid securities in an amount at least equal to (i) the current market value of the security sold short, (ii) less any collateral deposited with the broker (not including the proceeds of the short sale). The assets in the segregated account are marked-to-market daily. The collateral held by the broker and the segregated account with the custodian will not necessarily limit the Fund’s potential loss on a short sale, which is unlimited.

The Fund will incur a loss if the price of the security increases between the date of the short sale and the date on which the Fund replaces the borrowed security. The Fund will realize a gain if the price of the security declines between those dates. The amount of any gain will be decreased, and the amount of any loss increased, by the amount of any premium, dividend, interest or expenses the Fund may be required to pay in connection with the short sale. There can be no assurance that the Fund will be able to close out a short position at any particular time or at an acceptable price.

Please see “Restrictions on the Use of Derivatives and Other Transactions” above for additional information regarding the Fund’s use of derivatives, including short sales.

### **Sovereign Obligations (Underlying Funds Only)**

The Fund may invest in an Underlying Fund that invests in sovereign debt obligations. Investment in sovereign debt obligations involves special risks not present in corporate debt obligations. The issuer of the sovereign debt or the governmental authorities that control the repayment of the debt may be unable or unwilling to repay principal or interest when due, and the Underlying Fund may have limited recourse in the event of a default. During periods of economic uncertainty, the market prices of sovereign debt, and the Fund’s NAV, may be more volatile than prices of U.S. debt obligations. In the past, certain sovereign emerging market debtors have encountered difficulties in servicing their debt obligations, withheld payments of principal and interest and declared moratoria on the payment of principal and interest on their sovereign debts. Sovereign debt obligations are also subject to political risks (e.g., government instability, poor socioeconomic conditions, corruption, lack of democratic accountability, internal and external conflict, poor quality of bureaucracy, and religious and ethnic tensions) and economic risks (e.g., the relative size of the governmental entity’s debt position in relation to the economy, high foreign debt as a percentage of gross domestic product or exports, high inflation or deflation, or an overvalued exchange rate) or a combination of these risks, such as the failure to put in place economic reforms required by the International Monetary Fund or other multilateral agencies.

A sovereign debtor’s willingness or ability to repay principal and pay interest in a timely manner may be affected by, among other factors, its cash flow situation, the extent of its foreign currency reserves, the availability of sufficient foreign exchange, the relative size of the debt service burden, the sovereign debtor’s policy toward principal international lenders and local political constraints. Sovereign debtors may also be dependent on expected disbursements from foreign governments, multilateral agencies and other entities to reduce principal and interest arrearages on their debt. The failure of a sovereign debtor to implement economic reforms, achieve specified levels of economic performance or repay principal or interest when due may result in the cancellation of third-party commitments to lend funds to the sovereign debtor, which may further impair such debtor’s ability or willingness to service its debts.

### **Special Purpose Acquisition Companies**

The Fund may invest in special purpose acquisition companies (“SPACs”). SPACs are collective investment structures that pool funds in order to seek potential acquisition opportunities. Unless and until an acquisition is completed, a SPAC generally invests its assets (less an amount to cover expenses) in U.S. government securities, money market fund securities and cash. SPACs and similar entities may be blank check companies with no operating history or ongoing business other than to seek a potential acquisition. Accordingly, the value of their securities is particularly dependent on the ability of the entity’s management to identify and complete a profitable acquisition. Certain SPACs may seek acquisitions only in limited industries or regions, which may increase the volatility of their prices. If an acquisition that meets the requirements for the SPAC is not completed within a predetermined period of time, the invested funds are returned to the entity’s shareholders. Investments in SPACs may be illiquid and/or be subject to restrictions on resale. To the extent the SPAC is invested in cash or similar securities, this may impact the Fund’s ability to meet its investment objective. The officers of a SPAC may operate multiple SPACs and could have conflicts of interest in determining to which SPAC a particular business opportunity should be presented. In such circumstances, there can be no assurance that a given business opportunity would be presented to the SPAC in which the Fund holds an investment.

## **Stripped Mortgage Securities**

Stripped Mortgage Securities may be issued by federal agencies, or by private originators of, or investors in, mortgage loans, including savings and loan associations, mortgage banks, commercial banks, investment banks and special purpose subsidiaries of the foregoing. Stripped Mortgage Securities not issued by federal agencies will be treated by the Fund as illiquid investments so long as the staff of the SEC maintains its position that such securities are illiquid. Stripped Mortgage Securities issued by Federal Agencies generally will be treated by the Fund as liquid investments under procedures adopted by the Fund and approved by the Board.

Stripped Mortgage Securities usually are structured with two classes that receive different proportions of the interest and principal distribution of a pool of mortgage assets. A common type of Stripped Mortgage Security will have one class receiving some of the interest and most of the principal from the mortgage assets, while the other class will receive most of the interest and the remainder of the principal. In the most extreme case, one class will receive all of the interest (the interest-only or “IO” class), while the other class will receive all of the principal (the principal-only or “PO” class). PO classes generate income through the accretion of the deep discount at which such securities are purchased, and, while PO classes do not receive periodic payments of interest, they receive monthly payments associated with scheduled amortization and principal prepayment from the mortgage assets underlying the PO class. The yield to maturity on a PO or an IO class security is extremely sensitive to the rate of principal payments (including prepayments) on the related underlying mortgage assets. A slower than expected rate of principal payments may have an adverse effect on a PO class security’s yield to maturity. If the underlying mortgage assets experience slower than anticipated principal repayment, the Fund may fail to fully recoup its initial investment in these securities. Conversely, a rapid rate of principal payments may have a material adverse effect on an IO class security’s yield to maturity. If the underlying mortgage assets experience greater than anticipated prepayments or principal, the Fund may fail to fully recoup its initial investment in these securities.

The Fund may purchase Stripped Mortgage Securities for income, or for hedging purposes to protect the Fund’s portfolio against interest rate fluctuations. For example, since an IO class will tend to increase in value as interest rates rise, it may be utilized to hedge against a decrease in value of other fixed-income securities in a rising interest rate environment.

## **STRIPS**

The Federal Reserve creates STRIPS (Separate Trading of Registered Interest and Principal of Securities) by separating the coupon payments and the principal payment from an outstanding Treasury security and selling them as individual securities. To the extent the Fund purchases the principal portion of the STRIP, the Fund will not receive regular interest payments. Instead they are sold at a deep discount from their face value. The Fund will accrue income on such STRIPS for tax and accounting purposes, in accordance with applicable law, which income is distributable to shareholders. Because no cash is received at the time such income is accrued, the Fund may be required to liquidate other Fund securities to satisfy its distribution obligations. Because the principal portion of the STRIP does not pay current income, its price can be very volatile when interest rates change. In calculating its dividend, the Fund takes into account as income a portion of the difference between the principal portion of the STRIP’s purchase price and its face value.

## **Structured Notes**

Structured notes are debt securities which contain an embedded derivative component that may be linked to a particular equity security, a basket of equity securities, or an index. Structured notes generally entitle their holders to receive some portion of the principal or interest payments that would be due on traditional debt obligations. Rather than paying a straight fixed or floating coupon, the interest payments fluctuate based on the value of the linked item, as well as the underlying debt obligation.

Structured notes are subject to a number of fixed-income risks including income risk, credit risk, and market risk. In addition, as a result of the imbedded derivative feature, structured notes generally are subject to more risk than investing in a simple note or bond issued by the same issuer. It is impossible to predict whether the referenced factor (such as an index) or prices of the underlying securities will rise or fall. The Fund's right to receive principal or interest payments on a structured product may vary in timing or amount, depending on changes in the reference factor and, at times, the price fluctuations may be very significant. In addition, changes in the reference instrument or the underlying security may cause the interest rate on a structured note to be reduced to zero, at which point further adverse changes may lead to a reduction in the principal amount payable on maturity. Even with respect to structured notes that purport to provide a "buffer", the principal typically is protected only to the extent that the value of the reference factor does not fall below a set limit. Structured notes may also be less liquid than other types of securities, and may be more volatile than the reference factor or security underlying the note. Please see "Restrictions on the Use of Derivatives and Other Transactions" above for additional information regarding the Fund's use of derivatives.

## **Swaps**

The Fund may invest without limitation in interest rate, index, total return, currency and credit default swap agreements. A swap is an agreement between two parties (known as counterparties) where one stream of payments is exchanged for another based on a specified principal amount. Swaps are typically used to limit or manage exposure to fluctuations in interest rates, currency exchange rates or potential defaults by credit issuers. The Fund may attempt to enhance the return on the cash portion of its portfolio by investing in a total return swap agreement. A total return swap agreement provides the Fund with a return based on the performance of an underlying asset, in exchange for fee payments to a counterparty based on a specific rate. The difference in the value of these income streams is recorded daily by the Fund, and is settled in cash at the end of each month or sooner if one party owes the other a certain amount. If the underlying asset declines in value over the term of the swap, the Fund would be required to pay the dollar value of that decline to the counterparty. The Fund may use its own NAV as the underlying asset in a total return swap. The Adviser or Sub-adviser may utilize a total return swap using the Fund's return as the underlying asset in order for the Fund's cash positions allocated to the swap to share in similar investment returns as the Fund itself while maintaining a sufficient cash position to meet liquidity needs in the Fund, including liquidity to invest in new investment opportunities.

The CFTC has adopted rules that apply to CFTC-registered swap dealers that are not banks. Such rules generally require a Fund to provide variation margin and (in some cases) initial margin when it enters into uncleared swap agreements. Additionally, since January 1, 2023, federal position limits apply to swaps that are economically equivalent to futures contracts that are subject to CFTC set speculative position limits. All positions owned or controlled by the same person or entity, even if in different accounts, must be aggregated for purposes of determining whether the applicable position limits have been exceeded, unless an exemption applies.

Please see "Restrictions on the Use of Derivatives and Other Transactions" above for additional information.

## **Time Deposits and Variable Rate Notes**

The Fund may invest in fixed time deposits, whether or not subject to withdrawal penalties.

The commercial paper obligations which the Fund may buy are unsecured and may include variable rate notes. The nature and terms of a variable rate note (*i.e.*, a “Master Note”) permit the Fund to invest fluctuating amounts at varying rates of interest pursuant to a direct arrangement between the Fund as lender, and the issuer, as borrower. It permits daily changes in the amounts borrowed. The Fund has the right at any time to increase, up to the full amount stated in the note agreement, or to decrease the amount outstanding under the note. The issuer may prepay at any time and without penalty any part of or the full amount of the note. The note may or may not be backed by one or more bank letters of credit. Because these notes are direct lending arrangements between the Fund and the issuer, it is not generally contemplated that they will be traded; moreover, there is currently no secondary market for them. Except as specifically provided in the Prospectus, there is no limitation on the type of issuer from whom these notes may be purchased; however, in connection with such purchase and on an ongoing basis, the Adviser or Sub-adviser will consider the earning power, cash flow and other liquidity ratios of the issuer, and its ability to pay principal and interest on demand, including a situation in which all holders of such notes made demand simultaneously. Variable rate notes are subject to the Fund’s investment restriction on illiquid investments unless such notes can be put back to the issuer on demand within seven days.

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

The Fund may invest in U.S. government securities. These securities may be backed by the credit of the government as a whole or only by the issuing agency. U.S. Treasury bonds, notes, and bills and some agency securities, such as those issued by Ginnie Mae, are backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government as to payment of principal and interest and are the highest quality government securities. Other securities issued by U.S. government agencies or instrumentalities, such as securities issued by Freddie Mac, are supported only by the credit of the agency that issued them, and not by the U.S. government. Securities issued by the Federal Farm Credit System, the Federal Land Banks, and Fannie Mae are supported by the agency’s right to borrow money from the U.S. Treasury under certain circumstances, but are not backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government. The maximum potential liability of the issuers of some U.S. government securities may greatly exceed their current resources, including any legal right to support from the U.S. Treasury. In addition, the secondary market for certain participations in loans made to foreign governments or their agencies may be limited. In the absence of a suitable secondary market, such participations are generally considered illiquid.

The Fund’s investments in U.S. government securities may include agency step-up obligations. These obligations are structured with a coupon rate that “steps-up” periodically over the life of the obligation. Step-up obligations typically contain a call option, permitting the issuer to buy back the obligation upon exercise of the option. Step-up obligations are designed for investors who are unwilling to invest in a long-term security in a low interest rate environment. Step-up obligations are used in an attempt to reduce the risk of a price decline should interest rates rise significantly at any time during the life of the obligation. However, step-up obligations also carry the risk that market interest rates may be significantly below the new, stepped-up coupon rate. If this occurs, the issuer of the obligation likely will exercise the call option, leaving investors with cash to reinvest. As a result, these obligations may expose the Fund to the risk that proceeds from a called security may be reinvested in another security paying a lower rate of interest.

U.S. government debt securities generally do not involve the credit risks associated with investments in other types of debt securities, although, as a result, the yields available from U.S. government debt securities are generally lower than the yields available from other securities. Additionally, from time to time, uncertainty regarding the status of negotiations in the U.S. government to increase the statutory debt ceiling could impact the creditworthiness of the United States and could impact the liquidity of the U.S. government securities markets and ultimately the Fund.

## **Warrants**

Warrants are securities that are usually issued with a bond or preferred stock but may trade separately in the market. A warrant allows its holder to purchase a specified amount of common stock at a specified price for a specified time. The risk in investing in warrants is the Adviser or Sub-adviser might miscalculate their value, resulting in a loss to the Fund. Another risk is the warrants will not realize their value because the underlying common stock does not reach the Adviser's or Sub-adviser's anticipated price within the life of the warrant.

## **When-Issued, Forward Commitments and Delayed Settlements**

The Fund may purchase and sell securities on a when-issued, forward commitment or delayed settlement basis. When-issued, delayed delivery and forward commitment transactions include to-be-announced transactions ("TBAs"). In a TBA, the Fund typically agrees to buy a mortgage-backed security of a specific type and maturity and issued by an agency or instrumentality of the U.S. Government on a future date. Purchasing securities on a to-be-announced basis can have the effect of leveraging the Fund's portfolio and increasing the volatility of the Fund's performance because the Fund has investment exposure to the securities it has agreed to purchase before it has to pay for them. In addition, FINRA rules include mandatory margin requirements that require the Fund to post collateral in connection with its TBA transactions. There is no similar requirement applicable to the Fund's TBA counterparties. The required collateralization of TBA trades could increase the cost of TBA transactions to the Fund and impose added operational complexity. TBAs may be purchased independently or as part of a dollar roll transaction. See "Mortgage Dollar Rolls" above.

The Fund does not intend to engage in these transactions for speculative purposes but only in furtherance of its investment objectives.

The Fund will purchase securities on a when-issued, forward commitment or delayed settlement basis only with the intention of completing the transaction. If deemed advisable as a matter of investment strategy, however, the Fund may dispose of or renegotiate a commitment after it is entered into, and may sell securities it has committed to purchase before those securities are delivered to the Fund on the settlement date. In these cases the Fund may realize a taxable capital gain or loss. When the Fund engages in when-issued, forward commitment and delayed settlement transactions, it relies on the other party to consummate the trade. Failure of such party to do so may result in the Fund incurring a loss or missing an opportunity to obtain a price credited to be advantageous.

The market value of the securities underlying a when-issued purchase, forward commitment to purchase securities, or a delayed settlement and any subsequent fluctuations in their market value is taken into account when determining the market value of the Fund starting on the day the Fund agrees to purchase the securities. The Fund does not earn interest on the securities it has committed to purchase until it has paid for and delivered on the settlement date.

The obligation to purchase securities on a specified future date involves the risk that the market value of the securities that the Fund is obligated to purchase may decline below the purchase price. In addition, in the event the other party to the transaction files for bankruptcy becomes insolvent or defaults on its obligation, the Fund may be adversely affected.

Rule 18f-4 under 1940 Act permits the Fund to enter into when-issued or forward-settling securities and non-standard settlement cycle securities notwithstanding the limitation on the issuance of senior securities in Section 18 of the 1940 Act, provided that the Fund intends to physically settle the transaction and the transaction will settle within 35 days of its trade date (the “Delayed-Settlement Securities Provision”). If a when-issued, forward-settling or non-standard settlement cycle security does not satisfy the Delayed-Settlement Securities Provision, then it is treated as a derivatives transaction under Rule 18f-4. See “Restrictions on the Use of Derivative and Other Transactions” above for additional information.

## **Investment Restrictions**

*Fundamental Investment Limitations.* The investment limitations described below have been adopted by the Trust with respect to the Fund and are fundamental (“Fundamental”), *i.e.*, they may not be changed without the affirmative vote of a majority of the outstanding shares of the Fund. As used in the Prospectus and the SAI, the term “majority” of the outstanding shares of the Fund means the lesser of: (1) 67% or more of the outstanding shares of the Fund present at a meeting, if the holders of more than 50% of the outstanding shares of the Fund is present or represented at such meeting; or (2) more than 50% of the outstanding shares of the Fund. Other investment practices, which may be changed by the Board of Trustees without the approval of shareholders to the extent permitted by applicable law, regulation or regulatory policy, are considered non-fundamental (“Non-Fundamental”).

1. Borrowing Money. The Fund will not borrow money, except: (a) from a bank, provided that immediately after such borrowing there is an asset coverage of 300% for all borrowings of the Fund; or (b) from a bank or other persons for temporary purposes only, provided that such temporary borrowings are in an amount not exceeding 5% of the Fund’s total assets at the time when the borrowing is made. This limitation does not preclude the Fund from entering into reverse repurchase transactions, provided that the Fund has an asset coverage ratio of 300% for all borrowings and repurchase commitments of the Fund pursuant to reverse repurchase transactions.

2. Senior Securities. The Fund will not issue senior securities. This limitation is not applicable to activities that may be deemed to involve the issuance or sale of a senior security by the Fund, provided that the Fund’s engagement in such activities is consistent with or permitted by the 1940 Act, the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder or interpretations of the SEC or its staff.

3. Underwriting. The Fund will not act as underwriter of securities issued by other persons. This limitation is not applicable to the extent that, in connection with the disposition of portfolio securities (including restricted securities), the Fund may be deemed an underwriter under certain federal securities laws.

4. Real Estate. The Fund will not purchase or sell real estate. This limitation is not applicable to investments in marketable securities that are secured by or represent interests in real estate. This limitation does not preclude the Fund from investing in mortgage-related securities or investing in companies engaged in the real estate business or that have a significant portion of their assets in real estate (including REITs).

5. Commodities. The Fund will not purchase or sell commodities unless acquired as a result of ownership of securities or other investments. This limitation does not preclude the Fund from purchasing or selling options or futures contracts, from investing in securities or other instruments backed by commodities or from investing in companies, which are engaged in a commodities business or have a significant portion of their assets in commodities.

6. Loans. The Fund will not make loans to other persons, except: (a) by loaning portfolio securities (limited at any given time to no more than one-third of the Fund’s total assets); (b) by engaging in repurchase agreements; or (c) by purchasing nonpublicly offered debt securities. For purposes of this limitation, the term “loans” shall not include the purchase of a portion of an issue of publicly distributed bonds, debentures or other securities.

7. Concentration. The Fund will not invest 25% or more of its total assets in a particular industry or group of industries. The Fund will not invest 25% or more of its total assets in any investment company that concentrates. This limitation is not applicable to investments in obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government, its agencies and instrumentalities or repurchase agreements with respect thereto.

8. Diversification. The Fund will invest in the securities of any issuer only if, immediately after such investment, at least 75% of the value of the total assets of the Fund will be invested in cash and cash items (including receivables), government securities, securities of other investment companies, and other securities for the purposes of this calculation limited in respect of any one issuer to an amount (determined immediately after the latest acquisition of securities of the issuer) not greater in value than 5% of the value of the total assets of the Fund and to not more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of such issuer. With respect to the percentages adopted by the Trust as maximum limitations on its investment policies and limitations, an excess above the fixed percentage will not be a violation of the policy or limitation unless the excess results immediately and directly from the acquisition of any security or the action taken. In other words, if the limitation is exceeded as a result of market fluctuations, fund redemptions or other non-investment related activity, the percentage limitation policy will not have been violated. This paragraph does not apply to the borrowing policy set forth in paragraph 1 above and the illiquid investments policy set forth in paragraph 4 below.

*Non-Fundamental*. The following limitations have been adopted by the Trust with respect to the Fund and are Non-Fundamental (see “Investment Limitations - Fundamental” above).

1. Pledging. The Fund will not mortgage, pledge, hypothecate or in any manner transfer, as security for indebtedness, any assets of the Fund except as may be necessary in connection with borrowings described in limitation (1) above, and then not to exceed 33⅓% of the Fund’s assets. Margin deposits, security interests, liens and collateral arrangements with respect to transactions involving options, futures contracts, short sales and other permitted investments and techniques are not deemed to be a mortgage, pledge or hypothecation of assets for purposes of this limitation.

2. Borrowing. The Fund will not purchase any security while borrowings (including reverse repurchase agreements) representing more than one-third of its total assets are outstanding.

3. Margin Purchases. The Fund will not purchase securities or evidences of interest thereon on “margin.” This limitation is not applicable to short-term credit obtained by the Fund for the clearance of purchases and sales or redemption of securities, or to arrangements with respect to transactions involving options, or futures contracts.

4. Illiquid Investments. The Fund will not invest 15% or more of its net assets in securities for which there are legal or contractual restrictions on resale and other illiquid investments.

## **MANAGEMENT OF THE FUND**

The Board of Trustees supervises the business activities of the Trust and appoints the officers. Each Trustee serves as a trustee until the termination of the Trust unless the Trustee dies, resigns, retires or is removed. The Fund is one of three series in the Trust and there are eight additional portfolios in the “Fund Complex”. The Board generally meets four times a year to review the progress and status of the Fund.

*Leadership Structure.* The Trust is led by Mr. Patrick Galley, who has served as the President and Principal Executive Officer of the Trust, since the Trust's inception. Mr. Galley is an interested person by virtue of his position as Chief Executive Officer and Chief Investment Officer of the Adviser. The Board of Trustees is comprised of Mr. Galley, one additional interested Trustee and three Independent Trustees (*i.e.* those who are not "interested persons" of the Trust, as defined under the 1940 Act). The Trust has designated Mr. John K. Carter as lead Independent Trustee. Governance guidelines provide that Independent Trustees will have an opportunity to meet in executive session at each Board meeting and more frequently if needed. As lead Independent Trustee, Mr. Carter chairs the executive sessions of the Independent Trustees of the Trust and reports the results of executive sessions and meetings of the Independent Trustees to the full Board. Mr. Carter also serves as a point of contact between the Independent Trustees and the Adviser between the Board's regular quarterly meetings. Governance guidelines provide that Independent Trustees will have an opportunity to meet in executive session at each Board meeting and more frequently if needed.

The Trust has an Audit Committee with Mr. J. Wayne Hutchens, an Independent Trustee, acting as its Chair. The Trust also has a Nominating and Governance Committee with Mr. David M. Swanson, an Independent Trustee, acting as its Chair. The Trust does not have a Qualified Legal Compliance Committee (QLCC). However, the Trust's Audit Committee performs the duties of a QLCC if, and when necessary. Under the Trust's Declaration of Trust, By-Laws and governance guidelines, the President of the Board is generally responsible for (a) presiding over Board meetings, (b) setting the agendas for these meetings and (c) providing information to Board members in advance of each Board meeting and between Board meetings. Generally, the Trust believes it best to have a single leader who is seen by shareholders, business partners and other stakeholders as providing strong leadership. The Trust believes that its President, together with the Audit Committee and the full Board of Trustees, provide effective leadership that is in the best interests of the Trust, the Fund and each shareholder.

*Board Risk Oversight.* The Board is responsible for overseeing risk management, and the full Board regularly engages in discussions of risk management and receives compliance reports that inform its oversight of risk management from Mr. Marc Collins in his role as Chief Compliance Officer at meetings and on an ad hoc basis, when and if necessary. The Audit Committee considers financial and reporting risk within its area of responsibilities. Generally, the Board believes that its oversight of material risks is adequately maintained through the compliance-reporting chain where the Chief Compliance Officer is the primary recipient and communicator of such risk-related information.

*Trustee Qualifications.* Generally, the Trust has concluded that each Trustee and advisory Board member is competent to serve because of his individual overall merits including (i) experience, (ii) qualifications, (iii) attributes and (iv) skills.

Mr. Patrick Galley is the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Investment Officer for the Adviser. He is also the President of the Fund and a portfolio manager of the Fund. His knowledge regarding the investment strategy of the Fund, more specifically the closed-end mutual fund industry makes him uniquely qualified to serve as the Fund's President.

Mr. John K. Carter was elected as a Trustee in January 2013. Mr. Carter possesses extensive mutual fund industry experience. Mr. Carter served as a Business Unit Head at Transamerica Asset Management, a subsidiary of Aegon, N.V. Mr. Carter oversaw the mutual fund servicing, operations and advisory services for Transamerica's approximately 120 mutual funds. He also served as a compliance officer. Mr. Carter brings experience managing a large mutual fund complex, including experience overseeing multiple sub-advisers. Mr. Carter is currently an attorney in private practice and was previously an investment management attorney with experience as in-house counsel, serving with the SEC and in private practice with a large law firm. The Board feels Mr. Carter's industry-specific experience, including as a chairman of another fund complex, as a compliance officer and as an experienced investment management attorney will be valuable to the Board as the Trust, particularly when dealing with complex legal issues.

Mr. J. Wayne Hutchens was appointed as an advisory board member in November 2020 and was elected as a Trustee in 2021. Mr. Hutchens was President and CEO of the University of Colorado (CU) Foundation from April 2006 to December 2012 and Executive Director for the CU Real Estate Foundation from April 2009 to December 2012. Prior to these positions, Mr. Hutchens spent over 30 years in the banking industry, retiring as Chairman of Chase Bank Colorado. Mr. Hutchens is a graduate of the University of Colorado Boulder's School of Business and has done graduate study at Syracuse University and the University of Colorado. He was selected to serve as a Trustee based on his business and financial services experience.

Mr. David M. Swanson was elected as a Trustee in November 2018. Mr. Swanson founded SwanDog Marketing, a marketing consulting firm to asset managers, in 2006. He currently serves as SwanDog's Managing Partner. He has over 40 years of senior management and marketing experience, with over 35 years in financial services. Before joining SwanDog, Mr. Swanson most recently served as Executive Vice President and Head of Distribution for Calamos Investments, an investment management firm. He previously held positions as Chief Operating Officer of Van Kampen Investments, President and CEO of Scudder, Stevens & Clark, Canada, Ltd., and Managing Director and Head of Global Investment Products at Morgan Stanley. Mr. Swanson holds a Master of Management from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University and a Bachelors in Journalism from Southern Illinois University. The Board believes Mr. Swanson's business, financial services and investment management experience adds depth and understanding to its consideration of the Trustee's obligations to the Trust and shareholders.

Mr. Jerry Raio has served as a Trustee since 2022. Mr. Raio has many years of experience in the securities industry, including management roles in the banking and investment management industries. He has more than 15 years of experience in equity capital markets, having worked on the retail syndicate desks at both Citigroup and Morgan Stanley. Since 2018, he has served as President and CEO of Arbor Lane Advisors, Inc. He served as the Managing Director and Head of Retail Origination for Wells Fargo Securities, LLC from 2005 to 2018. Prior to working at Wells Fargo, he served as Director and Head of Closed-End Funds for Citigroup Asset Management. He also serves as an advisory board member on each of the Boards for FLX Distribution; Qudos Technologies; Quantify Crypto; and ETF Action. He was selected to serve as a Trustee of the Fund based on his business, financial services and investment management experience.

The Trust does not believe any one factor is determinative in assessing a Trustee's qualifications, but that the collective experience of each Trustee makes them highly qualified.

The following table provides information regarding each Trustee who is not an "interested person" of the Trust, as defined in the 1940 Act.

Independent Trustees					
Name, Address <sup>1</sup> and Year of Birth	Position(s) Held with the Fund	Term of Office/ Length of Time Served	Principal Occupation(s) During Past 5 Years	Number of Portfolios in Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee <sup>2</sup>	Other Directorships Held by Trustee During the Past 5 Years
John K. Carter (1961)	Trustee; Lead Independent Trustee	Indefinite/ January 2013 to present	Founder, Special Counsel, Law Office of Osprey Law Firm P.A. (formerly known as the Law Office of John K. Carter, P.A.) (a general practice and corporate law firm) (2015 to present).	11	Carillon Mutual Funds (16 funds) (2016 to present).
J. Wayne Hutchens (1944)	Trustee	Indefinite/ September 2021 to present	Currently retired; Treasurer of University of Colorado Boulder Economic Corporation, a nonprofit subsidiary of the University of Colorado Boulder (May 2019 to present); Trustee of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (2000 to 2020); Director of AMG National Trust Bank (June 2012 to present); Trustee of Children's Hospital Colorado (May 2012 to 2020).	11	ALPS Series Trust (11 funds) (2012 to present).
David M. Swanson (1957)	Trustee	Indefinite/ November 2018 to present	Founder & Managing Partner, SwanDog Strategic Marketing (marketing consulting firm) (2006 to present).	11	Managed Portfolio Series (31 funds) (2011 to present); ALPS Variable Investment Trust (7 funds) (2006 to present).

<sup>1</sup> The mailing address of each Trustee is 360 South Rosemary Avenue, Suite 1420, West Palm Beach, FL 33401.

<sup>2</sup> The Fund Complex consists of the Fund, the RiverNorth Core Opportunity Fund and the RiverNorth/Oaktree High Income Fund, each a series of the Trust, RiverNorth Opportunities Fund, Inc., RiverNorth/DoubleLine Strategic Opportunity Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Opportunistic Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Flexible Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Flexible Municipal Income Fund II, Inc., RiverNorth Managed Duration Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Managed Duration Municipal Income Fund II, Inc. and RiverNorth Capital and Income Fund, Inc.

The following table provides information regarding each Trustee who is an “interested person” of the Trust, as defined in the 1940 Act, and each officer of the Trust.

Interested Trustees and Officers					
Name, Address <sup>1</sup> and Year of Birth	Position(s) Held with the Fund	Term of Office/ Length of Time Served	Principal Occupation(s) During Past 5 Years	Number of Portfolios in Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee <sup>2</sup>	Other Directorships Held by Trustee During the Past 5 Years
Patrick W. Galley <sup>3</sup> (1975)	Interested Trustee, President, Principal Executive Officer	Indefinite/ July 2006 to present	Chief Executive Officer, RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC (2020 to present); Chief Investment Officer, RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC (2004 to present).	11	N/A
Jerry R. Raio <sup>4</sup> (1964)	Interested Trustee	Indefinite/ November 2022 to present	President, Arbor Lane Advisors, Inc. (Since 2018); Advisory Board Member of each of FLX Distribution, (2020 to present); Quantify Crypto (2021 to present); ETF Action (2022 to present); Qudos Technologies (2019 to 2022); Head of Capital Markets, ClickIPO (2018-2019); Managing Director, Head of Retail Origination, Wells Fargo Securities, LLC (2005 to 2018).	11	N/A
Jonathan M. Mohrhardt (1974)	Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer	Indefinite/ February 2009 to present	President, RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC (2020 to present); Chief Operating Officer, RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC, (2011 to present).	N/A	N/A

Marcus L. Collins (1968)	Chief Compliance Officer; Secretary	Indefinite/ May 2012 to Present; Indefinite/ January 2017 to Present	General Counsel, RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC (2012 to present); Chief Compliance Officer, RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC (2012 to present).	N/A	N/A
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- 1 The mailing address of each Trustee and officer, unless otherwise noted, is 360 South Rosemary Avenue, Suite 1420, West Palm Beach, FL 33401.
- 2 The Fund Complex consists of the Fund, the RiverNorth Core Opportunity Fund and the RiverNorth/Oaktree High Income Fund, each a series of the Trust, RiverNorth Opportunities Fund, Inc., RiverNorth/DoubleLine Strategic Opportunity Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Opportunistic Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Flexible Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Flexible Municipal Income Fund II, Inc., RiverNorth Managed Duration Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Managed Duration Municipal Income Fund II, Inc. and RiverNorth Capital and Income Fund, Inc.
- 3 Patrick W. Galley is considered an “Interested” Trustee as defined in the 1940 Act, because he is an officer of the Trust and Chief Executive Officer and Chief Investment Officer of the Adviser.
- 4 Jerry Raio is considered an “Interested” Trustee as defined in the 1940 Act because of his current position as an advisory board member of FLX Distribution, which the Adviser is an investor in and Mr. Galley is a Director of; and because of his prior position as Managing Director – Head of Retail Origination at Wells Fargo Securities, LLC, which had previously served as a broker and principal underwriter for certain funds advised by the Adviser.

*Board Committees.*

*Audit Committee.* The Trust has an audit committee that consists of all of the Independent Trustees. The audit committee is responsible for (i) overseeing the accounting and financial reporting policies and practices of the Fund, its internal controls and, as appropriate, the internal controls of certain service providers; (ii) overseeing the quality and objectivity of the Fund’s financial statements and the independent audit of the financial statements; and (iii) acting as a liaison between the Fund’s independent auditors and the full Board of Trustees. None of the audit committee members are “Interested” as defined in the 1940 Act. During the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024, the Audit Committee met three times.

*Nominating Committee.* The Trust has a nominating and governance committee that consists of all of the Independent Trustees. The nominating committee is responsible for, among other things: (i) the selection and recommendation of candidates for election or appointment as Independent Trustees of the Trust; (ii) presenting recommendations to the Board to fill vacancies or to nominate trustees for the election by shareholders; (iii) periodically reviewing the composition of the Board; and (iv) monitoring the performance of legal counsel employed by the Trust and the Independent Trustees. None of the nominating committee members are “Interested” as defined in the 1940 Act. During the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024, the Nominating Committee met one time.

*Trustee Ownership.* As of December 31, 2024, the Trustees beneficially owned the following amounts in the Fund and the Fund Complex:

Name of Trustee	Dollar Range of Equity Securities in the Fund	Aggregate Dollar Range of Securities in the Fund Complex <sup>1</sup>
John K. Carter	None	\$50,001 – \$100,000
J. Wayne Hutchens	None	\$100,001 - \$500,000
David M. Swanson	None	\$100,001 - \$500,000
Jerry R. Raio	None	\$50,001 - \$100,000
Patrick W. Galley	\$50,001 - \$100,000	Over \$500,000

<sup>1</sup> The Fund Complex consists of the Fund, the RiverNorth Core Opportunity Fund and the RiverNorth/Oaktree High Income Fund, each a series of the Trust, RiverNorth Opportunities Fund, Inc., RiverNorth/DoubleLine Strategic Opportunity Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Opportunistic Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Flexible Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Flexible Municipal Income Fund II, Inc., RiverNorth Managed Duration Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Managed Duration Municipal Income Fund II, Inc. and RiverNorth Capital and Income Fund, Inc.

*Trustee and Officer Compensation.* The Trust pays no salaries or compensation to any interested Trustee employed by the Adviser. Effective January 1, 2024, each Trustee who is not an interested Trustee employed by the Adviser receives a fee of \$28,000 per year plus \$2,000 per meeting and \$1,500 per special meeting attended from the Trust. In addition, the Chair of the Audit Committee receives \$1,111 annually, the Chair of the Nominating and Governance Committee receives \$667 annually and the Lead Independent Trustee receives \$1,333 annually. The Trust also reimburses the Trustees and officers for travel and other expenses relating to attendance at Board meetings.

The Trust's officers receive no compensation directly from the Trust for performing the duties of their offices. Mr. Collins serves as the Trust's Chief Compliance Officer and provides compliance services to the Trust. Mr. Collins is also an employee and the Chief Compliance Officer of the Adviser. Mr. Collins receives compensation directly from the Adviser for his compliance services. The Trust reimburses the Adviser for certain compliance costs related to the Fund, inclusive of a portion of the Chief Compliance Officer's compensation.

The following table shows compensation from the Fund and the Fund Complex<sup>1</sup> for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024. Patrick W. Galley is an interested person of each fund in the Fund Complex, and is employed by the Adviser, and has not received any compensation from any fund in the Fund Complex.

Name	Position	Aggregate Compensation from the Fund	Total Compensation from the Fund Complex <sup>1</sup>
Patrick W. Galley	Interested Trustee	\$0	\$0
John K. Carter	Independent Trustee	\$35,677.08	\$243,122.75
J. Wayne Hutchens	Independent Trustee	\$35,696.87	\$239,749.25
David M. Swanson	Independent Trustee	\$34,848.72	\$236,062.50
Jerry R. Raio	Interested Trustee	\$34,694.75	\$231,125.00

<sup>1</sup> The Fund Complex consists of the Fund, the RiverNorth Core Opportunity Fund and the RiverNorth/Oaktree High Income Fund, each a series of the Trust, RiverNorth Opportunities Fund, Inc., RiverNorth/DoubleLine Strategic Opportunity Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Opportunistic Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Flexible Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Flexible Municipal Income Fund II, Inc., RiverNorth Managed Duration Municipal Income Fund, Inc., RiverNorth Managed Duration Municipal Income Fund II, Inc. and RiverNorth Capital and Income Fund, Inc.

## CODE OF ETHICS

Pursuant to the requirements of Rule 17j-1 under the 1940 Act and in order to protect against certain unlawful acts, practices and courses of business by certain individuals or entities related to the Fund, the Fund, the Adviser, and the Sub-Adviser have each adopted a Code of Ethics and procedures for implementing the provisions of the Code. The personnel of the Fund, the Adviser, and the Sub-Adviser are subject to the applicable code of ethics when investing in securities that may be purchased, sold or held by the Fund.

## **MULTI-CLASS STRUCTURE**

The Fund offers two classes of shares, Class R Shares and Class I Shares. Each class of shares of the Fund represents an equal pro rata interest in the Fund and both classes have the same voting, dividend, liquidation and other rights. The share classes differ in their investment minimums and the assessment of a 12b-1 fee as discussed below.

## **DISTRIBUTION PLAN**

The Fund has adopted a plan pursuant to Rule 12b-1 under the 1940 Act (the “Plan”) for the Fund’s Class R shares. The Plan permits the Fund to pay ALPS Distributors, Inc., the Trust’s distributor (the “Distributor”), for certain distribution and promotion expenses related to marketing Class R shares of the Fund. The amount payable annually by the Fund is 0.25% of the average daily net assets for Class R shares.

Under the Plan, the Distributor may engage in any activities related to the distribution of Class R shares, including without limitation the following: (a) payments, including incentive compensation, to securities dealers or other financial intermediaries, financial institutions, investment advisers and others that are engaged in the sale of Class R shares of the Fund, or that may be advising shareholders of the Trust regarding the purchase, sale or retention of Class R shares of the Fund; (b) expenses of maintaining personnel (including personnel of organizations with which the Trust has entered into agreements related to this Plan) who engage in or support distribution of Class R shares of the Fund; (c) costs of preparing, printing and distributing prospectuses and statements of additional information and reports of the Fund for recipients other than existing shareholders of the Fund; (d) costs of formulating and implementing marketing and promotional activities, including, but not limited to, sales seminars, direct mail promotions and television, radio, newspaper, magazine and other mass media advertising; (e) costs of preparing, printing and distributing sales literature; (f) costs of obtaining such information, analyses and reports with respect to marketing and promotional activities as the Distributor may, from time to time, deem advisable; and (g) costs of implementing and operating this Plan.

The Trustees expect that the Plan could significantly enhance the Fund’s ability to expand distribution of Class R shares of the Fund. It is also anticipated that an increase in the size of the Fund will produce economies of scale that benefit the shareholders, facilitate more efficient portfolio management, and assist the Fund in seeking to achieve its investment objective.

The Plan has been approved by the Board of Trustees, including a majority of the Trustees who are not “interested persons” of the Trust and who have no direct or indirect financial interest in the Plan or any related agreement, by a vote cast in person. Continuation of the Plan and the related agreements must be approved by the Trustees annually, in the same manner, and the Plan or any related agreement may be terminated at any time without penalty by a majority of such Independent Trustees or by a majority of the outstanding Class R shares of the Fund. Any amendment increasing the maximum percentage payable under the Plan or other material change must be approved by a majority of the outstanding Class R shares of the Fund, and all other material amendments to the Plan or any related agreement must be approved by a majority of the Independent Trustees.

For the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024, the Fund accrued the following expenses under the Plan and paid the full amount to the Distributor:

	Class R Shares	Class I Shares
Advertising	\$0	N/A
Compensation to broker-dealers	\$136,738	N/A
Compensation to sales personnel	\$0	N/A
Compensation to underwriters	\$0	N/A
Interest, carrying, or other financing charges	\$0	N/A
Printing and mailing of prospectuses to other than current shareholders	\$0	N/A
Marketing Costs	\$0	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$136,738</b>	<b>N/A</b>

### CONTROL PERSONS AND PRINCIPAL HOLDERS OF SECURITIES

#### Principal Holders and Control Persons

As of December 31, 2024, the following persons were the owners of more than 5% of the outstanding shares of the Fund's classes:

Name and Address	Percentage of Ownership	Type of Ownership
Class R Shares		
CHARLES SCHWAB & COMPANY ATTN MUTUAL FUNDS SF215FMT-05 211 MAIN ST SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105	68.47%	Beneficial
NATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES CORP 82 DEVONSHIRE ST MAIL ZONE ZE7F BOSTON, MA 02109	17.56%	Beneficial
PERSHING 1 PERSHING PLZ JERSEY CITY, NJ 07399	5.42%	Beneficial
Class I Shares		
CHARLES SCHWAB & COMPANY ATTN MUTUAL FUNDS SF215FMT-05 211 MAIN ST SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105	46.34%	Beneficial
NATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES CORP 82 DEVONSHIRE ST MAIL ZONE ZE7F BOSTON, MA 02109	15.87%	Beneficial
MERRILL LYNCH PIERCE FENNER & SMITH 4800 DEER LAKE DR E FL1 JACKSONVILLE, FL 32246	9.95%	Beneficial
UBS FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC. ATTN: COMPLIANCE DEPT 1000 HARBOR BLVD FL 8 WEEHAWKEN, NJ 07086	9.82%	Beneficial
PERSHING 1 PERSHING PLZ	6.10%	Beneficial

JERSEY CITY, NJ 07399		
RBC CAPITAL MARKETS 250 NICOLETT MALL STE 1600 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401	5.11%	Beneficial

Beneficial shareholders owning more than 25% of the shares of the Fund are considered to “control” the Fund as that term is defined under the 1940 Act. Persons controlling the Fund can determine the outcome of any proposal submitted to the shareholders for approval, including changes to the Fund’s fundamental policies or the terms of the management agreement with the Adviser.

### **Management Ownership**

As of December 31, 2024, all officers and Trustees as a group beneficially owned less than 1% of the outstanding shares of each class of the Fund.

## **INVESTMENT ADVISORY AND OTHER SERVICES**

### **Investment Adviser**

The Trustees selected RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC as the investment adviser to the Fund. RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of RiverNorth Financial Holdings, LLC. RiverNorth Financial Holdings, LLC is majority owned by RiverNorth Holding Co. Brian H. Schmucker and Patrick W. Galley each owns, directly or indirectly, more than 25% of RiverNorth Holding Co. and therefore each may be deemed to control the Adviser.

Under the terms of the management agreement (the “Agreement”), the Adviser, subject to the supervision of the Board of Trustees, provides or arranges to be provided to the Fund such investment advice as it deems advisable and will furnish or arrange to be furnished a continuous investment program for the Fund consistent with the Fund’s investment objective and policies. As compensation for its management services, the Fund is obligated to pay the Adviser a fee computed and accrued daily and paid monthly in arrears at an annual rate of 0.75% of the average daily net assets of the Fund. The Adviser has contractually agreed to waive fees and/or reimburse certain expenses in an amount equal to the sum of any acquired fund fees and expenses, if any, incurred by the Fund that are attributable to the Fund’s investment in acquired funds managed by the Adviser or an investment adviser controlling, controlled by, or under common control with the Adviser until at least January 31, 2026.

For the fiscal year ended September 30, 2022, there were fee waivers or reimbursements for Class R Shares of \$10,846, and there were fee waivers or reimbursements for Class I Shares of \$172,105. For the fiscal year ended September 30, 2023, there were fee waivers or reimbursements for Class R Shares of \$9,056, and there were fee waivers or reimbursements for Class I Shares of \$174,081. For the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024, there were fee waivers or reimbursements for Class R Shares of \$8,869 and there were fee waivers or reimbursements for Class I Shares of \$192,938.

The Agreement will continue on a year-to-year basis, provided that continuance is approved at least annually by specific approval of the Board of Trustees or by vote of the holders of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund. In either event, it must also be approved by a majority of the Trustees who are neither parties to the Agreement nor interested persons as defined in the 1940 Act, at a meeting called for the purpose of voting on such approval. The Agreement may be terminated at any time without the payment of any penalty by the Board of Trustees or by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund on not more than 60 days’ written notice to the Adviser. In the event of its assignment, the Agreement will terminate automatically.

The following table shows the advisory fees paid to the Adviser by the Fund during the periods indicated:

<b>Fiscal Year Ended</b>	<b>Advisory Fees Accrued</b>	<b>Total Fees Deferred And/or Expenses Reimbursed</b>	<b>Previously Deferred Fees Recovered</b>	<b>Net Advisory Fees Paid</b>
September 30, 2022	\$13,826,136	\$182,951	\$0	\$13,643,185
September 30, 2023	\$9,675,345	\$183,137	\$0	\$9,492,208
September 30, 2024	\$9,225,218	\$201,907	\$0	\$9,023,311

### Sub-Adviser

The Trustees have approved the Adviser's selection of DoubleLine Capital LP as the investment sub-adviser to the Fund. DoubleLine Capital LP was organized in 2009 as a Delaware limited liability company, and was converted into a Delaware limited partnership on December 23, 2009. The general partner of DoubleLine Capital LP is DoubleLine Capital GP LLC, an entity that is wholly owned by Jeffrey E. Gundlach. As a result, Mr. Gundlach may be deemed to control the Sub-Adviser.

Under the terms of the sub-advisory agreement, the Sub-Adviser, subject to the supervision of the Adviser and the Board of Trustees, provides or arranges to be provided to the Fund such investment advice as it deems advisable and will furnish or arrange to be furnished a continuous investment program for the Fund consistent with the Fund's investment objective and policies. As compensation for its sub-advisory services, the Adviser, not the Fund, is obligated to pay the Sub-Adviser a fee computed and accrued daily and paid monthly in arrears based on an annual rate of the average daily net assets of the Fund.

### Portfolio Managers

Mr. Galley is the co-portfolio manager responsible for the day-to-day management of the Fund. As of September 30, 2024, Mr. Galley was responsible for the management of the following other types of accounts (inclusive of the Fund):

<b>Account Type</b>	<b>Number of Accounts by Account Type</b>	<b>Total Assets By Account Type</b>	<b>Number of Accounts by Type Subject to a Performance Fee</b>	<b>Total Assets By Account Type Subject to a Performance Fee</b>
Registered Investment Companies	15	\$4.07 billion	0	\$0
Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	5	\$1 billion	5	\$1 billion
Other Accounts	10	\$88.7 million	10	\$88.7 million

Mr. O'Neill is another co-portfolio manager responsible for the day-to-day management of the Fund. As of September 30, 2024, Mr. O'Neill was responsible for the management of the following other types of accounts (inclusive of the Fund):

<b>Account Type</b>	<b>Number of Accounts by Account Type</b>	<b>Total Assets By Account Type</b>	<b>Number of Accounts by Type Subject to a Performance Fee</b>	<b>Total Assets By Account Type Subject to a Performance Fee</b>
Registered Investment Companies	13	\$4.065 billion	0	\$0
Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	5	\$1 billion	5	\$1 billion
Other Accounts	10	\$88.7 million	10	\$88.7 million

Mr. Gundlach is another co-portfolio manager responsible for the day-to-day management of the Fund. As of September 30, 2024, Mr. Gundlach was responsible for the management of the following other types of accounts (inclusive of the Fund):

<b>Account Type</b>	<b>Number of Accounts by Account Type</b>	<b>Total Assets By Account Type</b>	<b>Number of Accounts by Type Subject to a Performance Fee</b>	<b>Total Assets By Account Type Subject to a Performance Fee</b>
Registered Investment Companies	32	\$66.6 billion	0	\$0
Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	22	\$7.2 billion	2	\$730.8 million
Other Accounts	68	\$16.9 billion	3	\$1.8 billion

#### *Conflicts of Interest*

Actual or apparent conflicts of interest may arise when a portfolio manager has day-to-day management responsibilities with respect to more than one fund or other accounts. For example, the management of multiple accounts may result in a portfolio manager devoting unequal time and attention to the management of each account. In addition, the management of multiple funds and accounts also may give rise to potential conflicts of interest if the funds and accounts have different objectives, benchmarks, time horizons, and fees as the portfolio manager must allocate his time and investment ideas across multiple funds and accounts. Another potential conflict of interest may arise where another account has the same investment objective as the Fund, whereby the portfolio manager could favor one account over another. Individual portfolio managers may also make investment decisions on behalf of one fund or account that has the potential to negatively impact another fund or account. The Adviser manages potential conflicts between the Fund and other accounts through allocation policies and procedures and internal review processes that are designed to ensure that no one client is intentionally favored at the expense of another.

With respect to securities transactions for the Fund, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser determines which broker to use to execute each order, consistent with the duty to seek best execution of the transaction. The portfolio manager may execute transactions for another fund or account that may adversely impact the value of securities held by the Fund. Securities selected for funds or accounts other than the Fund may outperform the securities selected for the Fund. Further, a potential conflict could include a portfolio manager's knowledge about the size, timing and possible market impact of Fund trades, whereby they could use this information to the advantage of other accounts and to the disadvantage of the Fund. These potential conflicts of interest could create the appearance that a portfolio manager is favoring one investment vehicle over another.

The appearance of a conflict of interest may arise where the Adviser or Sub-Adviser has an incentive, such as a performance-based management fee. The management of personal accounts may give rise to potential conflicts of interest; there is no assurance that the Fund's code of ethics will adequately address such conflicts. One of the portfolio manager's numerous responsibilities is to assist in the sale of Fund shares. Because the portfolio managers' compensation is indirectly linked to the sale of Fund shares, they may have an incentive to devote time to marketing efforts designed to increase sales of Fund shares.

Although the portfolio managers generally do not trade securities in their own personal account, the Adviser, the Sub-Adviser and the Fund have each adopted a code of ethics that, among other things, permits personal trading by employees under conditions where it has been determined that such trades would not adversely impact client accounts. Nevertheless, the management of personal accounts may give rise to potential conflicts of interest, and there is no assurance that these codes of ethics will adequately address such conflicts.

The Adviser, the Sub-Adviser and the Fund have adopted certain compliance procedures, which have been approved by the Board of Trustees, which are designed to address these types of conflicts. However, there is no guarantee that such procedures will detect each and every situation in which a conflict arises.

### **Compensation - RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC**

Mr. Galley's and Mr. O'Neill's total compensation package, like others in the Adviser's business, is a package designed to attract and retain investment professionals. The compensation package includes a base salary fixed from year to year. The amount of the base salary is assessed for its competitiveness in the industry and geographic location of the Adviser. The compensation package also provides for an annual but variable performance bonus. The performance bonus reflects individual performance of the portfolio manager in his or her allocated duties and responsibilities. While performance of the funds managed by the portfolio managers is considered in determining the annual performance bonus, it is but one factor. The overall success of the Adviser in its business objectives and the performance of the Adviser's business as a whole are more important factors than the investment performance of a particular fund or account. Mr. Galley and Mr. O'Neill also participate in a 401K program on the same basis as other officers of the Adviser, which includes matching of employee contributions up to a certain percent of the portfolio managers' base salary. Those portfolio managers that are also equity stakeholders in the Adviser or its affiliates may also receive periodic distribution of profits from business operations.

### **Compensation - DoubleLine Capital, LP**

Mr. Gundlach's total compensation is determined by the Sub-Adviser. The overall objective of the compensation program for the portfolio managers employed by the Sub-Adviser is for the Sub-Adviser to attract competent and expert investment professionals and to retain them over the long-term. Compensation is comprised of several components which, in the aggregate, are designed to achieve these objectives and to reward the Sub-Adviser's portfolio managers for their contribution to the success of the clients and the Sub-Adviser. The Sub-Adviser's portfolio managers are compensated through a combination of base salary, discretionary bonus and, in some cases, equity participation in the Sub-Adviser.

*Salary.* Salary is agreed to with managers at the time of employment and is reviewed from time to time. It does not change significantly and often does not constitute a significant part of the portfolio managers' compensation.

*Discretionary Bonus/Guaranteed Minimums.* Portfolio managers receive discretionary bonuses. However, in some cases, pursuant to contractual arrangements, some portfolio managers may be entitled to a mandatory minimum bonus if the sum of their salary and profit sharing does not reach certain levels.

*Equity Incentives.* Some portfolio managers participate in equity incentives based on overall firm performance of the Sub-Adviser, through direct ownership interests in the Sub-Adviser. These ownership interests or participation interests provide eligible portfolio managers the opportunity to participate in the financial performance of the Sub-Adviser. Participation is generally determined in the discretion of the Sub-Adviser, taking into account factors relevant to the portfolio manager’s contribution to the success of the Sub-Adviser.

*Other Plans and Compensation Vehicles.* Portfolio managers may elect to participate in the Sub-Adviser’s 401(k) plan, to which they may contribute a portion of their pre- and post-tax compensation to the plan for investment on a tax-deferred basis. The Sub-Adviser may also choose, from time to time, to offer certain other compensation plans and vehicles, such as a deferred compensation plan, to portfolio managers.

*Summary.* As described above, an investment professional’s total compensation is determined through a subjective process that evaluates numerous quantitative and qualitative factors, including the contribution made to the overall investment process. Not all factors apply to each employee and there is no particular weighting or formula for considering certain factors. Among the factors considered are: relative investment performance of portfolios (although there are no specific benchmarks or periods of time used in measuring performance); complexity of investment strategies; participation in the investment team’s dialogue; contribution to business results and overall business strategy; success of marketing/business development efforts and client servicing; seniority/length of service with the firm; management and supervisory responsibilities; and fulfillment of the Sub-Adviser’s leadership criteria.

### **Portfolio Manager Ownership of Securities**

The following table shows the dollar range of equity securities in the Fund beneficially owned by Mr. Galley, Mr. O’Neill and Mr. Gundlach as of September 30, 2024.

<b>Name of Portfolio Manager</b>	<b>Dollar Range of Equity Securities in the Fund</b>
Patrick W. Galley	\$50,001 - \$100,000
Stephen O’Neill	\$100,001 - \$500,000
Jeffery E. Gundlach	Over \$500,000

### **Administration**

ALPS Fund Services, Inc. acts as the administrator (“Administrator”) for the Trust. The Administrator assists in the filing of required disclosure documents with the SEC, preparation of Board materials and assisting with compliance testing. For its services as Administrator, the Administrator receives an annual fee from the Trust.

The annual fee paid by the Fund is based on an allocation of the fee among all series in the Trust based on total net assets of each series of the Trust.

In addition, the Administrator provides the Trust with fund accounting services, which includes certain monthly reports, record-keeping and other management-related services. The associated fees for these services are reflected in the Administration Agreement.

The Fund paid the Administrator the following amounts for transfer agency, fund administration and fund accounting services.

<b>Administration, Fund Accounting, Transfer Agency Fees For the Fiscal Year Ending September 30</b>	
2024	\$786,299
2023	\$966,267
2022	\$1,193,118

**Custodian**

State Street Bank and Trust Company, 100 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02116, serves as the Fund’s custodian (“Custodian”). The Custodian acts as the Fund’s depository, provides safekeeping of its portfolio securities, collects all income and other payments with respect thereto, disburses funds at the Fund’s request and maintains records in connection with its duties.

**Distributor**

ALPS Distributors, Inc., 1290 Broadway, Suite 1000, Denver, Colorado, 80203, (the “Distributor”) is the exclusive agent for distribution of shares of the Fund. The Distributor is obligated to sell the shares of the Fund on a best efforts basis only against purchase orders for the shares. Shares of the Fund are offered to the public on a continuous basis. The Distributor also reviews and files certain advertising and sales materials with the appropriate regulatory authorities.

The Distributor does not receive a fee from the Fund for the services performed hereunder.

**Transfer Agent**

ALPS Fund Services, Inc., 1290 Broadway, Suite 1000, Denver, Colorado, 80203, also acts as the transfer agent (“Transfer Agent”) for the Fund. The Transfer Agent maintains the records of each shareholder’s account, answers shareholders’ inquiries concerning their accounts, processes purchases and redemptions of the Fund’s shares, acts as dividend and distribution disbursing agent and performs other transfer agent and shareholder service functions. The Transfer Agent receives an annual base fee from the Fund of \$39,996 plus a per account fee.

**Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm**

The firm of Cohen & Company, Ltd. 1350 Euclid Ave., Suite 800, Cleveland, OH 44115, serves as the Trust’s independent registered public accounting firm and will perform an annual audit of the Fund’s financial statements and provides tax and accounting services as requested.

**PORTFOLIO TURNOVER**

Portfolio turnover measures the percentage of the Fund’s total portfolio market value that was purchased or sold during the period. The Fund’s turnover rate provides an indication of how transaction costs (which are not included in the Fund’s expenses) may affect the Fund’s performance. Also, funds with a high turnover may be more likely to distribute capital gains that may be taxable to shareholders. For the fiscal years ended September 30, 2023 and September 30, 2024, the Fund’s portfolio turnover amounted to 68% and 84%, respectively.

## **BROKERAGE ALLOCATION AND OTHER PRACTICES**

Subject to policies established by the Board of Trustees, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser is responsible for the Fund's portfolio decisions and the placing of the Fund's portfolio transactions. In placing portfolio transactions, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser seeks the best qualitative execution for the Fund, taking into account such factors as price (including the applicable brokerage commission or dealer spread), the execution capability, financial responsibility and responsiveness of the broker or dealer and the brokerage and research services provided by the broker or dealer. The Adviser or Sub-Adviser generally seeks favorable prices and commission rates that are reasonable in relation to the benefits received under the circumstances under which that particular trade is placed.

The Adviser or Sub-Adviser is specifically authorized to select brokers or dealers who also provide brokerage and research services to the Fund and/or the other accounts over which the Adviser or Sub-Adviser exercises investment discretion, and to pay such brokers or dealers a commission in excess of the commission another broker or dealer would charge if the Adviser or Sub-Adviser determines in good faith that the commission is reasonable in relation to the value of the brokerage and research services provided. The determination may be viewed in terms of a particular transaction or the Adviser's or Sub-Adviser's overall responsibilities with respect to the Trust and to other accounts over which it exercises investment discretion. The Adviser or Sub-Adviser may not give consideration to sales of shares of the Trust as a factor in the selection of brokers and dealers to execute portfolio transactions. However, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser may place portfolio transactions with brokers or dealers that promote or sell the Fund's shares so long as such placements are made pursuant to policies approved by the Board of Trustees that are designed to ensure that the selection is based on the quality of the broker's execution and not on its sales efforts.

Research services include supplemental research, securities and economic analyses, statistical services and information with respect to the availability of securities or purchasers or sellers of securities, and analyses of reports concerning performance of accounts. (Much, if not all, of this information is the usual and customary research provided to the Adviser and Sub-Adviser irrespective of any trading activity effected with that broker). The research services and other information furnished by brokers through whom the Fund effects securities transactions may also be used by the Adviser or Sub-Adviser in servicing other accounts. Similarly, research and information provided by brokers or dealers when serving other clients may be useful to the Adviser and Sub-Adviser in connection with its services to the Fund. Although research services and other information are useful to the Fund and the Adviser or Sub-Adviser, it is not possible to place a dollar value on the research and other information received. It is the opinion of the Board of Trustees and the Adviser or Sub-Adviser that the review and study of the research and other information will not increase or reduce the overall cost to the Adviser or Sub-Adviser of performing its duties to the Fund under the Agreement.

Over-the-counter transactions will be placed either directly with principal market makers or with broker-dealers, if the same or a better price, including commissions and executions, is available. Fixed-income securities are normally purchased directly from the issuer, an underwriter or a market maker. Purchases include a concession paid by the issuer to the underwriter and the purchase price paid to a market maker may include the spread between the bid and asked prices.

When the Fund and another of the Adviser's or Sub-Adviser's clients seek to purchase or sell the same security at or about the same time, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser may execute the transaction on a combined ("blocked") basis. Blocked transactions can produce better execution for the Fund because of the increased volume of the transaction. If the entire blocked order is not filled, the Fund may not be able to acquire as large a position in such security as it desires or it may have to pay a higher price for the security. Similarly, the Fund may not be able to obtain as large an execution of an order to sell or as high a price for any particular portfolio security if the other client desires to sell the same portfolio security at the same time. In the event that the entire blocked order is not filled, the purchase or sale will normally be allocated on a pro rata basis. The Adviser or Sub-Adviser may adjust the allocation when, taking into account such factors as the size of the individual orders and transaction costs, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser believes an adjustment is reasonable.

The following table shows the brokerage commissions paid by the Fund for the periods indicated.

<b>Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2022</b>	<b>Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2023</b>	<b>Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2024</b>
\$473,703	\$161,506	\$96,756

### **DISCLOSURE OF PORTFOLIO HOLDINGS**

The Fund is required to include a schedule of portfolio holdings in its annual and semi-annual reports to shareholders, which are sent to shareholders within 60 days of the end of the second and fourth fiscal quarters and which are filed with the SEC on Form N-CSR within 70 days of the end of the second and fourth fiscal quarters. The Fund also is required to file a complete schedule of portfolio holdings with the SEC for each month in a fiscal quarter within 60 days after the end of the relevant fiscal quarter on Form N-PORT. The Fund's schedule of portfolio holdings for the third month of each fiscal quarter is available on the SEC's website at [sec.gov](http://sec.gov). The Fund must provide a copy of the complete schedule of portfolio holdings as filed with the SEC to any shareholder of the Fund, upon request, free of charge. This policy is applied uniformly to all shareholders of the Fund without regard to the type of requesting shareholder (*i.e.*, regardless of whether the shareholder is an individual or institutional investor). The Fund may also make a partial or complete list of its holdings available to the public on the Fund's website. The timing of the disclosures may vary, but will be universally available to all parties when listed. The Fund may enter into ongoing arrangements to release portfolio holdings to rating agencies, such as Morningstar or Broadridge, in order for the agencies to assign a rating or ranking to the Fund. Portfolio holdings will be supplied to rating agencies no more frequently than quarterly and only after the Fund has filed a Form N-CSR or Form N-PORT with the SEC. The Fund currently does not have any ongoing arrangements to release portfolio holdings information to rating agencies.

Pursuant to policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Trustees, the Fund has ongoing arrangements to release portfolio holdings information on a daily basis to:

- RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC – the Fund's Adviser;
- DoubleLine Capital, LP – the Fund's Sub-Adviser;
- ALPS Fund Services, Inc. – the Fund's Administrator, Transfer Agent, and Fund Accounting Agent;
- State Street Bank and Trust – the Fund's Custodian; 18f-4 and Liquidity services provider;
- Financial Recovery Technologies, LLC – the Fund's class action service provider; and
- FactSet Research Systems, Inc. – data systems service provider.

The Adviser, Administrator, Transfer Agent, Fund Accounting Agent and Custodian receive portfolio holdings information daily in order to carry out the essential operations of the Fund. The Adviser's middle office service provider receives access to the portfolio holdings information as part of the services provided by the Adviser.

The Fund also discloses portfolio holdings to:

- Cohen & Company, Ltd. – the Fund's Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm;

- Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP – the Fund’s legal counsel;
- Broadridge (ProxyEdge) – the Fund’s proxy voting service provider; and
- FilePoint – the Fund’s EDGAR service provider.

The lag between the date of the information and the date on which the information is disclosed will vary based on the identity of the party to whom the information is disclosed. For instance, the information may be provided to auditors within days of the end of an annual period, while the information may be given to legal counsel at any time.

The Fund, the Adviser, the Sub-Adviser, the Transfer Agent, the Fund Accounting Agent and the Custodian are prohibited from entering into any special or ad hoc arrangements with any person to make available information about the Fund’s portfolio holdings without the specific approval of the Board. Any party wishing to release portfolio holdings information on an ad hoc or special basis must submit any proposed arrangement to the Board, which will review the arrangement to determine (i) whether the arrangement is in the best interests of the Fund’s shareholders, (ii) whether the information will be kept confidential (based on the factors discussed below), (iii) whether sufficient protections are in place to guard against personal trading based on the information, and (iv) whether the disclosure presents a conflict of interest between the interests of Fund shareholders and those of the Adviser, or Sub-Adviser or any affiliated person of the Fund, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser. Additionally, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser, and any affiliated persons of the Adviser or Sub-Adviser, are prohibited from receiving compensation or other consideration, for themselves or on behalf of the Fund, as a result of disclosing the Fund’s portfolio holdings. The Fund’s Chief Compliance Officer monitors compliance with these procedures, and reviews their effectiveness on an annual basis.

Information disclosed to third parties, whether on an ongoing or ad hoc basis, is disclosed under conditions of confidentiality. “Conditions of confidentiality” include (i) confidentiality clauses in written agreements, (ii) confidentiality implied by the nature of the relationship (e.g., attorney-client relationship), (iii) confidentiality required by fiduciary or regulatory principles (e.g., custody relationships) or (iv) understandings or expectations between the parties that the information will be kept confidential. The agreements with the Adviser, Sub-Adviser, Transfer Agent, Fund Accounting Agent and Custodian contain confidentiality clauses, which the Board and these parties have determined extend to the disclosure of nonpublic information about the Fund’s portfolio holding and the duty not to trade on the non-public information. The Fund believes, based upon its size and history, that these are reasonable procedures to protect the confidentiality of the Fund’s portfolio holdings and will provide sufficient protection against personal trading based on the information.

## **DETERMINATION OF SHARE PRICE**

The price (NAV) of the shares of each class of the Fund is determined at the close of trading (normally 4:00 p.m., Eastern time) on each day the NYSE is open for business. For a description of the methods used to determine the NAV, see “How to Buy Shares – Purchasing Shares” in the Prospectus.

Equity securities generally are valued by using market quotations, but may be valued on the basis of prices furnished by a pricing service when the Adviser believes such prices accurately reflect the fair market value of such securities. Securities that are traded on any stock exchange or on the NASDAQ over-the-counter market are generally valued by the pricing service at the last quoted sale price. Lacking a last sale price, an equity security is generally valued by the pricing service at its last bid price. When market quotations are not readily available, when the Adviser determines that the market quotation or the price provided by the pricing service does not accurately reflect the current market value, or when restricted or illiquid investments are being valued, such securities are valued as determined in good faith by the Adviser, as the Fund’s valuation designee.

Fixed-income securities generally are valued by using market quotations, but may be valued on the basis of prices furnished by a pricing service when the Adviser believes such prices accurately reflect the fair market value of such securities. Prices obtained from pricing services typically use information provided by market makers or estimates of market values obtained from yield data relating to investments or securities with similar characteristics. Data used to establish quotes includes analysis of cash flows, pre-payment speeds, default rates, delinquency assumptions and assumptions regarding collateral and loss assumptions. If the Adviser decides that a price provided by the pricing service does not accurately reflect the fair market value of the securities, when prices are not readily available from a pricing service, or when restricted or illiquid investments are being valued, securities are valued at fair value as determined in good faith by the Adviser, as the Fund's valuation designee. This fair valuation may include use of quotes from brokers who make a market in the securities being valued. Short term investments in fixed-income securities with maturities of less than 60 days when acquired, or which subsequently are within 60 days of maturity, are valued by using the amortized cost method of valuation. However, securities with a demand feature exercisable within seven days are generally valued at par value.

SPACs generally are valued by using market quotations, but may be valued on the basis of prices furnished by a pricing service when the Adviser believes such prices accurately reflect the fair market value of such securities. In cases where the combined quoted prices of the common stock and the warrants that make up a SPAC unit are above the SPAC unit price, the Adviser may opt to value the SPAC security held in the Fund's portfolio at the aggregated price of the common stock and warrants, if the Fund has the option to separate the SPAC unit into its components.

Other securities generally are valued by using market quotations, but may be valued on the basis of prices furnished by a pricing service when the Adviser believes such prices accurately reflect the fair market value of such securities. When market quotations are not readily available, when the Adviser determines that the market quotation or the price provided by the pricing service does not accurately reflect the current market value, or when restricted or illiquid investments are being valued, such securities are valued as determined in good faith by the Adviser as the Fund's valuation designee.

Investments initially valued in currencies other than the U.S. dollar are converted to the U.S. dollar using exchange rates obtained from pricing services at the time the Fund calculates its NAV. As a result, the NAV of the Fund's shares may be affected by changes in the value of currencies in relation to the U.S. dollar. The value of securities traded in markets outside the United States or denominated in currencies other than the U.S. dollar may change significantly on a day that the NYSE is closed without an investor being able to purchase, redeem or exchange shares.

If market or broker-dealer quotations are unavailable or deemed unreliable for a security or if a security's value has been materially affected by events occurring after the close of the securities market on which the security principally trades but before the Fund calculates its NAV, the Fund may, in accordance with the Trust's Valuation and Fair Value Pricing Policies and Procedures, attempt to assign a value to the security that better reflects the security's market value at the time the Fund calculates its NAV. This "fair" value may be higher or lower than the corresponding market price or quotation for such security and, because this process necessarily depends upon judgment, this value may also vary from valuations determined by other funds using their own fair valuation procedures. While the Fund's use of fair value pricing is intended to result in calculation of a NAV that more fairly reflects security values as of the time of pricing, the Fund cannot guarantee that any fair value price will, in fact, accurately reflect the value of any security such that such security could be sold for the fair value amount.

Rule 2a-5 under the 1940 Act has established requirements for determining fair value in good faith for purposes of the 1940 Act. Rule 2a-5 permits fund boards to designate certain parties to perform fair value determinations, subject to board oversight and certain other conditions. Rule 2a-5 also defines when market quotations are “readily available” for purposes of Section 29(a)(41) of the 1940 Act, which requires a fund to fair value a security when market quotations are not readily available. The Trust has adopted Valuation and Fair Value Pricing Policies and Procedures conforming to the new rules and designating the Adviser as valuation designee for the Fund’s holdings.

### **REDEMPTION IN-KIND**

The Fund does not intend to redeem shares in any form except cash. However, if you redeem shares in an amount more than \$250,000 or 1% of the value of the Fund’s assets, the Fund reserves the right to pay all or part of your redemption proceeds in readily marketable securities instead of cash under unusual circumstances in order to protect the interests of remaining shareholders, or to accommodate a request by a particular shareholder. In the event that an in-kind distribution is made, a shareholder may incur additional expenses, such as the payment of brokerage commissions, on the sale or other disposition of the securities or other investments received from the Fund, and the shareholder will bear any market-related risks of the securities or other investments until they are sold.

### **TAX CONSEQUENCES**

The following discussion of U.S. federal income tax matters summarizes some of the important generally applicable U.S. federal income tax considerations not described in the Prospectus. This is not intended to be a detailed explanation of the tax treatment of the Fund or the shareholders and the discussion here and in the Prospectus are not intended as a substitute for careful tax planning. This discussion only relates to the Fund and to shares held by persons who are U.S. citizens or U.S. residents. Potential investors should consult their own tax advisors as to the consequences of an investment in the Fund, taking into account their own tax situations.

The Fund has qualified as and intends to continue to qualify as a regulated investment company under Subchapter M of Subtitle A, Chapter 1 of the Code (“Subchapter M”). Under the provisions of Subchapter M, the Fund will not be subject to federal income tax on amounts distributed to its shareholders. In order to qualify as a regulated investment company under Subchapter M the Fund must distribute at least 90% of its investment company taxable income and at least 90% of Fund’s income must be derived from qualifying income including dividends, interest and gains from securities transactions. In addition, the Fund must meet asset diversification tests. If the Fund were to fail to qualify under Subchapter M as a regulated investment company, the Fund would be subject to normal corporate income taxes on all of its taxable income and gains, whether or not distributed. Any dividend distribution of the Fund’s earnings would still be taxable to the shareholders when received.

Regulated investment companies are also subject to a non-deductible 4% excise tax if they fail to distribute an amount equal to specified percentages of their ordinary taxable income and capital gain net income by the end of each calendar year. The Fund intends to make sufficient distributions in each calendar year to avoid liability for this excise tax.

Because the Fund may invest in foreign securities the Fund may be subject to foreign withholding taxes with respect to dividends or interest received in foreign countries. If at the end of a taxable year more than 50% in value of the Fund assets consist of foreign stock or securities, the Fund may make an election to treat a proportionate amount of those foreign taxes as a distribution to each shareholder, which would allow a shareholder to either take a credit for its proportionate share of such taxes against its U.S. federal income tax liability or to deduct that amount as an itemized deduction. If the Fund is not eligible or does not make that election, the Fund will be entitled to deduct such foreign taxes in computing the amount it is required to distribute to its shareholders.

*Federal Withholding:* The Fund is required by federal law to withhold 24% of reportable payments (which may include dividends, capital gains, distributions and redemptions) paid to shareholders who have not complied with IRS regulations. In order to avoid this withholding requirement, you must certify on a W-9 tax form supplied by the Fund that your Social Security or Taxpayer Identification Number provided is correct and that you are not currently subject to back-up withholding, or that you are exempt from back-up withholding.

## **PROXY VOTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Board of Trustees has delegated responsibilities for decisions regarding proxy voting for securities held by the Fund to the Adviser or Sub-Adviser. The Adviser or Sub-Adviser will vote such proxies in accordance with its respective proxy policies and procedures. In some instances, the Adviser or Sub-Adviser may be asked to cast a proxy vote that presents a conflict between the interests of the Fund's shareholders, and those of the Adviser or Sub-Adviser or an affiliated person of the Adviser or Sub-Adviser. In such a case, the Trust's policy requires that the Adviser or Sub-Adviser abstain from making a voting decision and to forward all necessary proxy voting materials to the Trust to enable the Board of Trustees to make a voting decision. The Adviser or Sub-Adviser shall make a written recommendation of the voting decision to the Board of Trustees, which shall include: (i) an explanation of why it has a conflict of interest; (ii) the reasons for its recommendation; and (iii) an explanation of why the recommendation is consistent with the Adviser's (or Sub-adviser's) proxy voting policies. The Board of Trustees shall make the proxy voting decision that in its judgment, after reviewing the recommendation of the Adviser or Sub-Adviser, is most consistent with the Adviser's or Sub-Adviser's proxy voting policies and in the best interests of Fund shareholders. When the Board of Trustees is required to make a proxy voting decision, only the Trustees without a conflict of interest with regard to the security in question or the matter to be voted upon shall be permitted to participate in the decision of how the Fund's vote will be cast.

The Adviser's and Sub-Adviser's policies and procedures are attached as Appendix A and B, respectively.

**MORE INFORMATION.** The actual voting records relating to portfolio securities during the most recent 12-month period ended June 30 will be available without charge, upon request, by calling toll free, 1-888-848-7569. The information also will be available on the SEC's website at [sec.gov](http://sec.gov). In addition, a copy of the Trust's proxy voting policies and procedures are also available by calling 1-888-848-7569 and will be sent within three business days of receipt of a request.

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The financial statements and Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm's report required to be included in the SAI are hereby incorporated by reference to the Fund's Annual Report to the shareholders for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024. The Trust will provide the Annual Report as well as the unaudited Semi-Annual Report for the six months ended March 31, 2024 without charge upon written request or request by telephone.

**APPENDIX A**  
**PROXY VOTING POLICY OF THE ADVISER**

**Proxy Voting**  
**RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC**  
**PROXY VOTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Pursuant to the adoption by the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “Commission”) of Rule 206(4)-6 (17 CFR 275.206(4)-6) and amendments to Rule 204-2 (17 CFR 275.204-2) under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 (the “Act”), it is a fraudulent, deceptive, or manipulative act, practice or course of business, within the meaning of Section 206(4) of the Act, for an investment adviser to exercise voting authority with respect to client securities, unless (i) the adviser has adopted and implemented written policies and procedures that are reasonably designed to ensure that the adviser votes proxies in the best interests of its clients, (ii) the adviser describes its proxy voting procedures to its clients and provides copies on request, and (iii) the adviser discloses to clients how they may obtain information on how the adviser voted their proxies.

In its standard investment advisory agreement, RiverNorth Capital Management, LLC (“RiverNorth”) specifically states that it does not vote proxies unless otherwise directed by the client and the client, including clients governed by ERISA, is responsible for voting any proxies. Therefore, RiverNorth will not vote proxies for these clients. However, RiverNorth will vote proxies on behalf of its investment company clients and hedge fund clients (“Funds”). RiverNorth has instructed all custodians, other than Fund custodians, to forward proxies directly to its clients, and if RiverNorth accidentally receives a proxy for any non-Fund client, current or former, RiverNorth will promptly forward the proxy to the client. In order to fulfill its responsibilities to Funds, RiverNorth has adopted the following policies and procedures for proxy voting with regard to companies in any Funds’ investment portfolios.

**OVERVIEW**

The Proxy Voting Policies and Procedures are designed to protect the best interests of the Funds. RiverNorth does not delegate or rely on any third-party service provider for voting recommendations.

**KEY OBJECTIVES**

The key objectives of these policies and procedures recognize that a company’s management is entrusted with the day-to-day operations and longer term strategic planning of the company, subject to the oversight of the company’s board of directors. While “ordinary business matters” are primarily the responsibility of management and should be approved solely by the corporation’s board of directors, these objectives also recognize that the company’s shareholders must have final say over how management and directors are performing, and how shareholders’ rights and ownership interests are handled, especially when matters could have substantial economic implications to the shareholders.

Therefore, RiverNorth will pay particular attention to the following matters in exercising our proxy voting responsibilities as a fiduciary for the Funds:

- *Accountability.* Each company should have effective means in place to hold those entrusted with running a company’s business accountable for their actions. Management of a company should be accountable to its board of directors and the board should be accountable to shareholders.
- *Alignment of Management and Shareholder Interests.* Each company should endeavor to align the interests of management and the board of directors with the interests of the company’s shareholders. For example, we generally believe that compensation should be designed to reward management for doing a good job of creating value for the shareholders of the company.

- *Transparency*. Promotion of timely disclosure of important information about a company's business operations and financial performance enables investors to evaluate the performance of a company and to make informed decisions about the purchase and sale of a company's securities.

## **DECISION METHODS**

RiverNorth generally believes that the individual portfolio managers that invest in and track particular companies are the most knowledgeable and best suited to make decisions with regard to proxy votes. Therefore, RiverNorth relies on those individuals to make the final decisions on how to cast proxy votes.

No set of proxy voting guidelines can anticipate all situations that may arise. In special cases, RiverNorth may seek insight from its managers and analysts on how a particular proxy proposal will impact the financial prospects of a company, and vote accordingly.

In some instances, a proxy vote may present a conflict between the interests of a Fund, on the one hand, and RiverNorth's interests or the interests of a person affiliated with us, on the other. In such a case, RiverNorth will abstain from making a voting decision and will forward all of the necessary proxy voting materials to the client to enable the client to cast the votes.

Notwithstanding the forgoing, the following policies will apply to investment company shares owned by a Fund. The Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended, (the "Act") defines an "investment company" to include mutual funds, money market funds, closed-end funds (including preferred shares of a closed-end fund), and exchange traded funds. Under Section 12(d)(1) of the Act, a fund may only invest up to 5% of its total assets in the securities of any one investment company, but may not own more than 3% of the outstanding voting stock of any one investment company or invest more than 10% of its total assets in the securities of other investment companies. However, Section 12(d)(1)(F) of the Act provides that the provisions of paragraph 12(d)(1) shall not apply to securities purchased or otherwise acquired by a fund if (i) immediately after such purchase or acquisition not more than 3% of the total outstanding stock of such registered investment company is owned by the fund and all affiliated persons of the fund; and (ii) the fund is not proposing to offer or sell any security issued by it through a principal underwriter or otherwise at a public or offering price which includes a sales load of more than 1½% percent. Therefore, each Fund (or the Adviser acting on behalf of the Fund) must comply with the following voting restrictions unless it is determined that the Fund is not relying on Section 12(d) (1) (F):

- when the Fund exercises voting rights, by proxy or otherwise, with respect to any investment company owned by the Fund, the Fund will either
  - o seek instruction from the Fund's shareholders with regard to the voting of all proxies and vote in accordance with such instructions, or
  - o vote the shares held by the Fund in the same proportion as the vote of all other holders of such security.

Under Section 12(d)(1)-(4) of the Act, an investment company (including exchange traded funds ("ETFs"), or closed-end funds), or business development company ("BDC"), is allowed to acquire securities of any other registered investment company or BDC in excess of the limitations in Section 12(d)(1). For purposes of these policies and procedures, the term "Acquiring Fund" means a fund that invests in any other registered investment company and "Acquired Fund" means a fund that is being acquired by another registered investment company.

When an investment company is relying on 12(d)(1)-(4), the investment company must comply with the following provisions regarding proxy voting:

- **Limits on Control and Voting.** When an investment company acquires shares of another investment company (Acquiring Fund), its advisory group<sup>1</sup> is prohibited from controlling<sup>2</sup>, individually or in the aggregate, of the Acquired Fund. An Acquiring Fund and its advisory group are required to use mirror voting when they hold more than: (i) 25 percent of the outstanding voting securities of an Acquired Fund that is an open-end fund or UIT due to a decrease in the outstanding voting securities of the Acquired Fund; or (ii) 10 percent of the outstanding voting securities of an Acquired Fund that is a closed-end fund or BDC. In assessing whether a Fund is deemed to have control, the Acquiring Fund is required to aggregate its investment in an Acquired Fund with the investment of the Acquiring Fund's advisory group. The Acquiring Fund and its advisory group are required to use pass-through voting (i.e., seek voting instructions from the Acquiring Fund's own shareholders and vote accordingly) in situations where (1) all holders of an Acquired Fund's outstanding voting securities are required by Rule 12d1-4 or Section 12(d)(1) of the 1940 Act to use mirror voting, or (2) mirror voting by an Acquiring Fund is not possible (for example, when Acquiring Funds are the only shareholders of an Acquired Fund).
- **Exceptions from the Control and Voting Conditions.** The control and voting conditions described above do not apply when: (i) an Acquiring Fund is within the same group of investment companies as an Acquired Fund; or (ii) the Acquiring Fund's investment sub-advisor or any person controlling, controlled by, or under common control with such investment sub-advisor acts as the Acquired Fund's investment advisor or depositor.

## **PROXY VOTING GUIDELINES**

### **Election of the Board of Directors**

We believe that good corporate governance generally starts with a board composed primarily of independent directors, unfettered by significant ties to management, all of whose members are elected annually. We also believe that turnover in board composition promotes independent board action; fresh approaches to governance, and generally has a positive impact on shareholder value. We will generally vote in favor of non-incumbent independent directors.

The election of a company's board of directors is one of the most fundamental rights held by shareholders. Because a classified board structure prevents shareholders from electing a full slate of directors annually, we will generally support efforts to declassify boards or other measures that permit shareholders to remove a majority of directors at any time, and will generally oppose efforts to adopt classified board structures.

### **Approval of Independent Auditors**

RiverNorth believes that the relationship between a company and its auditors should be limited primarily to the audit engagement, although it may include certain closely related activities that do not raise an appearance of impaired independence.

- <sup>1</sup> Rule 12d1-4 defines "advisory group" as either: (i) an Acquiring Fund's investment advisor or depositor and any person controlling, controlled by, or under common control with such investment advisor or depositor; or (ii) an Acquiring Fund's investment sub-advisor and any person controlling, controlled by, or under common control with such investment sub-advisor.
- <sup>2</sup> "Control" means the power to exercise a controlling influence over the management or policies of a company, unless such power is solely the result of an official position with such company. The 1940 Act creates a rebuttable presumption that any person who, directly or indirectly, beneficially owns more than 25% of the voting securities of a company is deemed to control the company. Accordingly, an Acquiring Fund and its advisory group could own up to 25% of the outstanding shares of an Acquired Fund without being presumed to control the Acquired Fund. A determination of control depends on the facts and circumstances of the particular situation and does not turn solely on ownership of voting securities of a company.

RiverNorth will evaluate on a case-by-case basis instances in which the audit firm has a substantial non-audit relationship with a company to determine whether we believe independence has been, or could be, compromised.

### **Equity-based compensation plans**

RiverNorth believes that appropriately designed equity-based compensation plans, approved by shareholders, can be an effective way to align the interests of shareholders and the interests of directors, management, and employees by providing incentives to increase shareholder value. Conversely, we are opposed to plans that substantially dilute ownership interests in the company, provide participants with excessive awards, or have inherently objectionable structural features.

RiverNorth will generally support measures intended to increase stock ownership by executives and the use of employee stock purchase plans to increase company stock ownership by employees. These may include:

- Requiring senior executives to hold stock in a company.
- Requiring stock acquired through option exercise to be held for a certain period of time.

These are guidelines, and we consider other factors, such as the nature of the industry and size of the company, when assessing a plan's impact on ownership interests.

### **Corporate Structure**

RiverNorth views the exercise of shareholders' rights, including the rights to act by written consent, to call special meetings and to remove directors, to be fundamental to good corporate governance.

Because classes of common stock with unequal voting rights limit the rights of certain shareholders, RiverNorth generally believes that shareholders should have voting power equal to their equity interest in the company and should be able to approve or reject changes to a company's by-laws by a simple majority vote.

RiverNorth will generally support the ability of shareholders to cumulate their votes for the election of directors.

### **Shareholder Rights Plans**

While RiverNorth recognizes that there are arguments both in favor of and against shareholder rights plans, also known as poison pills, such measures may tend to entrench current management, which RiverNorth generally considers to have a negative impact on shareholder value. Therefore, while RiverNorth will evaluate such plans on a case by case basis, we will generally oppose such plans.

### **PROXY SERVICE PROVIDER OVERSIGHT**

RiverNorth uses Broadridge Financial Solutions Inc.'s ProxyEdge ("ProxyEdge") as our third-party service provider for voting proxies. ProxyEdge, as a RiverNorth service provider, is monitored by RiverNorth through its proxy service and undergoes an initial and periodic due diligence review.

The initial due diligence of a third-party service provider for proxy services includes a review of the service provider's compliance policies and procedures, records of any administrative proceedings against the firm, interview with key personnel, review the information technology and cybersecurity controls in place to protect vital data and discussions with other clients of the service provider.

For a periodic due diligence, RiverNorth requires its third-party service provider for proxy services to complete a Due Diligence Questionnaire (DDQ). As with the initial due diligence, the DDQ will cover the service provider's compliance policies and procedures, records of any administrative proceedings against the firm and information technology and cybersecurity controls in place to protect vital data. It will also include an evaluation of any material changes in services or operations of the third-party service provider for proxy services.

## **CLIENT INFORMATION**

A copy of these Proxy Voting Policies and Procedures is available to our clients, without charge, upon request, by calling 1-800-646-0148. RiverNorth will send a copy of these Proxy Voting Policies and Procedures within three (3) business days of receipt of a request, by first-class mail or other means designed to ensure equally prompt delivery. In addition, RiverNorth will provide each client, without charge, upon request, information regarding the proxy votes cast by us with regard to the client's securities.

## **TESTING PROCEDURES**

On a monthly basis, the Chief Compliance Officer ("CCO") or his designee shall obtain periodic affirmations from employees responsible for voting proxies that all outstanding proxies have been voted. On a periodic basis, the CCO or his designee shall review a sample of all proxies for compliance with these policies and procedures.

Revised 2/12/2013

11/7/2014

7/1/2021

3/01/2022

7/1/2024

**APPENDIX B**  
**PROXY VOTING POLICIES OF SUB-ADVISER**

**DoubleLine Capital LP**  
**DoubleLine Alternatives LP**  
**DoubleLine ETF Adviser LP**  
**DoubleLine Funds Trust**  
**DoubleLine ETF Trust**  
**DoubleLine Closed-End Funds**

**Proxy Voting, Corporate Actions and Class Actions Policy**

**I. Background**

Rule 206(4)-6 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, as amended (the “Advisers Act”), requires investment advisers that exercise voting authority with respect to client securities to: (i) adopt and implement written policies and procedures reasonably designed to ensure that client securities are voted in the best interest of clients, which must include how an adviser addresses material conflicts that may arise between an adviser's interests and those of its clients; (ii) provide a concise summary of its proxy voting policies and procedures and, upon request, furnish a copy of the full policies and procedures to its clients; and (iii) disclose how clients may obtain information with respect to how the adviser voted their securities.

This Proxy Voting, Corporate Actions and Class Actions Policy (the “Proxy Policy”) is adopted by DoubleLine Capital LP, DoubleLine Alternatives LP and DoubleLine ETF Adviser LP (the “Advisers,” or each applicable “Adviser”) to govern the Advisers’ proxy voting, corporate actions and class actions activities involving client investments, and along with the DoubleLine Funds Trust (“DFT”), the DoubleLine ETF Trust (“DET”), the DoubleLine Opportunistic Credit Fund (“DBL”), the DoubleLine Income Solutions Fund (“DSL”), and the DoubleLine Yield Opportunities Fund (“DLY”) (DBL, DSL, and DLY are collectively, the “DoubleLine Closed-End Funds” and together with DFT and DET, each a “Fund,” collectively the “Funds,” and together with the Advisers, “DoubleLine”), to help ensure compliance with applicable disclosure and reporting requirements.

**II. Policy**

**Employees must handle all proxy voting, corporate actions and class actions (“Proxy Matters”) with reasonable care and diligence, and solely in the best interest of DoubleLine clients. Accordingly, all Proxy Matter proposals must immediately be forwarded to the Trade Management team to ensure that each proposal is processed timely and in accordance with the Proxy Policy.**

The Adviser generally will exercise proxy voting, corporate actions and class actions authority on behalf of clients only where the client has expressly delegated such authority in writing. If directed to do so by the client, the Adviser will process each proposal in a manner that seeks to enhance the economic value of client investments.

*Proxy Voting Guidelines and Corporate Actions*

Designated employees from the Portfolio Management team will review the specific facts and circumstances surrounding each proxy and corporate action proposal to determine a course of action that promotes the best interest of clients (including, if so directed, to maximize the value of client investments). The Advisers adopt the Proxy Voting Guidelines (the “Guidelines,” see Attachment A) as a framework for analyzing proxy and corporate action proposals on a consistent basis.

The Portfolio Management team may, in their discretion, vote proxies and corporate actions in a manner that is inconsistent with the Guidelines (or instruct applicable parties to do so) when they determine, after conducting reasonable due diligence, that doing so is in the best interest of the client. They may consult with the Proxy Voting Committee (the “Proxy Committee”), DoubleLine senior management or a third-party expert such as a proxy voting service provider to make such determinations.

### Class Actions

In the event that a client investment becomes the subject of a class action lawsuit, the Adviser will assess, among other factors, the potential financial impact of participating in such legal action. If the Adviser determines that participating in the class action is in the best interest of the client, the Adviser will recommend that the client or its custodian submit appropriate documentation on the client's behalf, subject to contractual or other authority. The Adviser may consider other factors in determining whether participation in a class action lawsuit is in the best interest of the client, including (i) the costs that likely would be incurred by the client, (ii) the resources that likely would be expended in participating in the class action, and (iii) other available options for pursuing legal recourse against the issuer. If appropriate, the Adviser may also notify the client about the class action without making a recommendation as to participation, which would allow clients to decide on how to proceed. The Advisers provide no assurance to former clients that applicable class action information will be delivered to them.

### Conflicts of Interest

Employees must be diligent with respect to actual and potential conflicts of interest when handling client investments. This covers conflicts between the interests of DoubleLine, employees and clients, including conflicts between two or more clients. As a general matter, conflicts should be avoided where practicable. In cases where it cannot be avoided, the conflict must be mitigated as much as possible and then fully and fairly disclosed to the client, such that the client can make an informed decision and, where applicable, provide an informed consent. **As required under the Code of Ethics and the Outside Business Activities and Affiliations Policy, employees must report, and in some cases request pre-approval for, certain transactions, activities and affiliations that may present a conflict of interest.** Moreover, employees from the Portfolio Management and Trade Management teams who are directly involved in the implementation of the Proxy Policy and members of the Proxy Committee should seek to identify, and report to the Proxy Committee, any conflict of interest related to any proposal or the Proxy Policy in general.

If a material conflict involving a client is deemed to exist with respect to a proposal, the Proxy Committee will generally seek to resolve such conflicts in the best interest of the applicable client by pursuing any one of the following courses of action: (i) voting (or not voting) in accordance with the Guidelines; (ii) convening a Proxy Committee meeting to assess and implement available measures; (iii) voting in accordance with the recommendation of an independent third-party service provider chosen by the Proxy Committee; (iv) voting (or not voting) in accordance with the instructions of such client; or (v) not voting with respect to the proposal if consistent with the Adviser's fiduciary obligations.

In the event that an Adviser invests in a Fund with other public shareholders, the Adviser will vote the shares of such Fund in the same proportion as the votes of the other shareholders. Under this "echo voting" approach, the Adviser's potential conflict is mitigated by replicating the voting preferences expressed by the other shareholders.

### Client Inquiries

**Employees must immediately forward any inquiry about DoubleLine's proxy voting policy and practices, including historical voting records, to the Trade Management team.** The Trade Management team will record the identity of the client, the date of the request, and the disposition of each request and coordinate the appropriate response with the Investor Services team or other applicable party.

The Adviser shall furnish the information requested, free of charge, to the client within ten (10) business days. A copy of the written response should be attached and maintained with the client's written request, if applicable, and stored in an appropriate file. Clients can require the delivery of the proxy voting record relevant to their accounts for the five-year period prior to their request.

The Funds are required to furnish a description of the Proxy Policy within three (3) business days of receipt of a shareholder request, by first-class mail or other means designed to ensure equally prompt delivery. The Funds rely upon the fund administrator to process such requests.

The Trade Management team shall forward to the Proxy Committee all Proxy Matter inquiries, including proxy solicitations or an Adviser's voting intention on a pending proposal, from third parties that are not duly authorized by a client.

### **III. Third-Party Proxy Agent**

To assist in carrying out its proxy voting obligations, DoubleLine has retained a third-party proxy voting service provider, currently Glass, Lewis & Co. ("Glass Lewis"), as its proxy voting agent. Pursuant to an agreement with DoubleLine, Glass Lewis obtains proxy ballots related to client investments, evaluates the facts and circumstances relating to each proposal and communicates to the Adviser the recommendation from the issuer's management (where available) and Glass Lewis' broad recommendation. The Adviser shall vote on proposals in its discretion and in a manner consistent with the Proxy Policy or instructs Glass Lewis to do so on its behalf.

In the event that DoubleLine determines that a recommendation from Glass Lewis (or from any other third-party proxy voting service provider retained by DoubleLine) was based on a material factual error, DoubleLine will investigate the error, taking into account, among other things, the nature of the error and the recommendation, and seek to determine whether the vote or other actions related to the proposal would change in light of the error and whether the service provider is taking reasonable steps to reduce similar errors in the future. DoubleLine will also inform the Proxy Committee of the error to determine if it is a material compliance matter under Rule 206(4)-7 of the Advisers Act or Rule 38a-1 of the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the "1940 Act"), or if further remedial action is necessary.

### **IV. Responsible Investment Matters**

The Advisers integrate environmental, social and governance ("ESG") factors into its research and decision-making process to gain a more holistic view of the relevant investment risks, better understand the potential drivers of performance, and strive for better risk-adjusted returns. In particular, the Advisers seek to identify and understand material ESG factors that have a potential financial impact on an issuer and the valuation of client investments. As stewards of client investments, the Advisers view proxy voting as an opportunity to influence the financial impact of such material ESG factors (if applicable) and, through the Guidelines, ensure that proposals are consistently reviewed and voted in a manner that seeks to enhance the economic value of client investments. The Advisers also may consider material ESG factors in determining how to address corporate actions and class actions.

### **V. Limitations**

#### Securities on Loan

The Adviser may not be able to take action with respect to a proposal when the client's relevant securities are on loan in accordance with a securities lending program or are controlled by a securities lending agent or custodian acting independently of DoubleLine. In addition, the Adviser will not recall securities if the potential economic impact of the proposal is insignificant or less than the economic benefit gained if the securities remained on loan (such as the interest income from the loan arrangement) or if recalling the securities is otherwise not in the best interest of the client. In the event that the Adviser determines that a proposal could reasonably enhance the economic value of the client's investment, the Adviser will make reasonable efforts to inform the client and recall the securities. Employees cannot make any representation that any securities on loan will be recalled successfully or in time for submitting a vote on a pending proposal.

### Foreign Markets

In certain markets, shares of securities may be blocked or frozen at the custodian or other designated depository for certain periods typically around the shareholder meeting date. In such cases, the Adviser cannot guarantee that the blocked securities can be processed in time for submitting a vote on a pending proposal. In addition, where the Adviser determines that there are unusual costs to the client or administrative difficulties associated with voting on a proposal, which more typically might be the case with respect to proposals involving non-U.S. issuers and foreign markets, the Adviser reserves the right to not vote on the proposal unless the Adviser determines that the potential benefits exceed the anticipated cost to the client.

### Proofs-of-Claim

The Advisers do not complete proofs-of-claim on behalf of clients for current or historical holdings other than for the Funds and private funds offered by DoubleLine; however, an Adviser may provide reasonable assistance to other existing clients by sharing related information that is in the Adviser's possession. The Advisers do not undertake to complete, or provide any assistance for, proofs-of-claim involving securities that had been held by any former client. The Advisers will complete proofs-of-claim for the Funds and private funds offered by DoubleLine or provide reasonable access to the applicable administrator to file such proofs-of-claim when appropriate.

### Contractual Obligations

In certain limited circumstances, particularly in the area of structured finance, the Adviser may, on behalf of clients, enter into voting agreements or other contractual obligations that govern proxy and corporate action proposals. In the event of a conflict between any such contractual requirements and the Guidelines, the Adviser will vote in accordance with its contractual obligations.

## **VI. Other Regulatory Matters and Responsibilities**

### Form N-PX Filings

- A. Rule 30b1-4 under the 1940 Act requires open-end and closed-end management investment companies to file an annual record of proxies voted on Form N-PX. The Funds shall file Form N-PX in compliance with Rule 30b1-4, including certain new requirements which include, but are not limited to, the following:
- *Identification of Proxy Voting Matters* – funds must use the same language as the issuer's proxy card (where a proxy card is required under Rule 14a-4 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the "Exchange Act"); and if the matter relates to an election of directors, identify each director separately in the same order as on the proxy card, even if the election of directors is presented as a single matter.

- *Categorization of Voting Matters* – funds are required to categorize the votes reported on Form N-PX consistent with a list of categories outlined in the amended form. The categories will be non-exclusive, and funds must select all categories applicable to each proxy matter.
- *Quantitative Disclosures and Securities Lending* – funds must disclose the number of shares voted or instructed to be cast (if the fund had not received confirmation of the actual number of votes cast) and how those shares were voted (e.g., for, against or abstain). If the votes were cast in multiple manners (e.g., both for and against), funds will be required to disclose the number of shares voted or instructed to be voted in each manner. Additionally, funds must disclose the number of shares loaned but not recalled and, therefore, not voted by the fund.
- *Structured Data Language* – funds must file their reports using a custom XML format.
- *Joint Reporting* – funds are permitted to report on its Form N-PX on behalf of a series or a manager so long as the fund presents the complete voting record of each included series separately and provide the required quantitative information for each included manager separately. Funds must also provide certain information (generally, their name and other identifying information such as their legal entity identifier) in the summary page about the included series or managers.
- *Standardized Order* – funds must submit information based on the specific Form N-PX format and standardized order of disclosure requirements.
- *Fund Notice Reports* – funds are now permitted to indicate on the cover page of Form N-PX if no securities were subject to a vote and, therefore, do not have any proxy votes to report.
- *Website Posting* – funds that have a website must make the most recently filed Form N-PX report publicly available as soon as reasonably practicable. Funds may satisfy the requirement by providing a direct link to the relevant HTML-rendered Form N-PX report on EDGAR.

- B. Rule 14Ad-1 under the Exchange Act requires institutional investment managers subject to section 13(f) of the Exchange Act, which may include certain Advisers, to report annually on Form N-PX how the managers voted proxies relating to executive compensation matters (commonly referred to as “say-on-pay” votes). When reporting say-on-pay votes, managers are required to comply with the other requirements of Form N-PX for their say-on-pay votes (including the new requirements as described above, except that a manager is not required to disclose or provide access to its proxy voting records on its website).

The Legal team shall be primarily responsible for DoubleLine’s Form N-PX filings. DoubleLine may rely on the applicable fund administrator or other service provider to prepare and submit required Form N-PX filings. The Trade Management team shall assist the Legal team and, as necessary, the relevant service provider by furnishing complete and accurate information required under Form N-PX (including by causing such information to be provided by any third-party proxy voting service provider). Form N-PX must be filed each year no later than August 31 and must contain applicable proxy voting records for the most recent twelve-month period ending June 30.

## Proxy Voting Disclosures

The Legal team will ensure that (i) a concise summary of the Proxy Policy which includes how conflicts of interest are addressed, and (ii) instructions for obtaining a copy of the Proxy Policy and accessing relevant proxy voting records free of charge (e.g., via a toll-free telephone number, the Funds' website, etc.) are provided within each Adviser's Form ADV Part 2A and the Funds' Statement of Additional Information, registration statement and Form N-CSR, in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

### **VII. Policy Governance**

DoubleLine established the Proxy Voting Committee to help ensure compliance with the Proxy Policy. The Proxy Committee, whose members include the Chief Risk Officer and the Chief Compliance Officer (or their respective designees), meets on an as-needed basis. The Proxy Committee will (i) monitor compliance with the Proxy Policy, including by periodically sampling Proxy Matters for review, (ii) review, no less frequently than annually, the adequacy of the Proxy Policy to ensure it has been effectively implemented and that it continues to be designed to ensure that Proxy Matters are addressed in a manner that promotes the best interest of clients, (iii) periodically review, as needed, the adequacy and effectiveness of Glass Lewis or other third-party proxy voting service provider retained by DoubleLine, and (iv) review conflicts of interest that may arise under the Proxy Policy, including changes to the businesses of DoubleLine or the service provider retained by DoubleLine to determine whether those changes present new or additional conflicts of interest that should be addressed pursuant to the Proxy Policy.

The Proxy Committee shall have primary responsibility for managing DoubleLine's relationship with Glass Lewis and any other third-party proxy voting service provider, including overseeing their compliance with the Proxy Policy, as well as reviewing periodically instances in which Glass Lewis does not provide a recommendation with respect to a proposal, or when Glass Lewis commits material errors.

### **VIII. Books and Records**

The Trade Management team shall maintain all proxy voting records whether internally or through a third party in compliance with Rule 204-2 of the Advisers Act. The Trade Management team will maintain records which include, but are not limited to: (i) copies of each proxy statement that each Adviser receives regarding securities held by clients; (ii) a record of each vote that each Adviser cast on behalf of each client; (iii) any documentation that is material to each Adviser's decision on voting a proxy or that describes the basis for that decision; (iv) a written description of each Adviser's analysis when deciding to vote a proxy in a manner inconsistent with the Guidelines or when an Adviser has identified a material conflict of interest, (v) each written request from a client for information about how the Adviser voted proxies; and (vi) the Adviser's written response to each client oral or written request for such information. The Trade Management team shall also ensure that comparable documentation related to corporate actions and class actions involving client investments is maintained.

The Legal team shall maintain investment management agreements which may include the Adviser's written authorization to process Proxy Matters or client-specified proxy voting guidelines.

DoubleLine must maintain all books and records described in the Proxy Policy for a period of not less than five (5) years from the end of the fiscal year during which the last entry was made on such record, the first two (2) years of which shall be onsite at its place of business.

History of Amendments:

Effective as of August 2023

Approved by the Boards of DFT, DET and DoubleLine Closed-End Funds: August 17, 2023

Effective as of August 2022

Approved by the Boards of DFT, DET and Closed-End Funds: August 18, 2022

Updated and effective as of May 2022

Approved by the Boards of DFT, DET and Closed-End Funds: May 19, 2022

Updated and effective as of February 15, 2022

Approved by the Boards of DFT, DET, DSL, DBL and DLY: February 15, 2022

Updated and effective as of January 2022

Effective as of January 2021

Approved by the boards of DFT, DSL, DBL and DLY: December 15, 2020

Last reviewed December 2020

Updated and effective as of February 2020

Approved by the boards of DFT, DSL, DBL and DLY: November 21, 2019

Last reviewed November 2019

Reviewed and approved by the Boards of the DoubleLine Funds Trust, DoubleLine Equity Funds, DoubleLine Opportunistic Credit Fund and DoubleLine Income Solutions Fund: August 20, 2015

Adopted by the DoubleLine Equity Funds Board of Trustees: March 19, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Equity Funds Board: May 22, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Equity Funds Board: November 20, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Equity Funds Board: August 21, 2014

Adopted by the DoubleLine Income Solutions Board of Trustees: March 19, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Income Solutions Board of Trustees: May 22, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Income Solutions Board of Trustees: November 20, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Income Solutions Board of Trustees: August 21, 2014

Adopted by the DoubleLine Opportunistic Credit Fund Board of Trustees: August 24, 2011

Renewed and approved by the DoubleLine Opportunistic Credit Fund Board of Trustees: March 19, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Opportunistic Credit Fund Board of Trustees: May 22, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Opportunistic Credit Fund Board of Trustees: November 20, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Opportunistic Credit Fund Board of Trustees: August 21, 2014

Adopted by the DoubleLine Funds Trust Board: March 25, 2010

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Funds Trust Board: March 1, 2011

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Funds Trust Board: August 25, 2011

Renewed and approved by the DoubleLine Funds Trust Board of Trustees: March 19, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Funds Trust Board: May 22, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Funds Trust Board: November 20, 2013

Renewed, reviewed and approved by the DoubleLine Funds Trust Board: August 21, 2014

**Attachment A to the Proxy Voting, Corporate Actions and Class Actions Policy**  
Effective July 1, 2023

Guidelines

The Advisers have a fiduciary duty to clients, and shall exercise diligence and care, with respect to its proxy voting authority. Accordingly, the Advisers will review each proposal to determine the relevant facts and circumstances and adopt the following guidelines as a framework for analysis in seeking to maximize the value of client investments. The guidelines do not address all potential voting matters and actual votes by the Advisers may vary based on specific facts and circumstances.

A. Director Elections

Directors play a critical role in ensuring that the company and its management serve the interests of its shareholders by providing leadership and appropriate oversight. We believe that the board of directors should have the requisite industry knowledge, business acumen and understanding of company stakeholders in order to discharge its duties effectively.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Frequency of Elections</b> Electing all directors annually.		<b>For</b>
<b>Uncontested Elections</b> Voting management nominees, unless the nominee lacks independence or focus, has had chronic absences or presents other material concerns to the detriment of the effectiveness of the board.		<b>For</b>
<b>Majority Voting</b> Allowing majority voting unless incumbent directors must resign if they do not receive a majority vote in an uncontested election.		<b>For</b>
<b>Cumulative Voting</b> Allowing cumulative voting unless the company previously adopted a majority voting policy.		<b>For</b>
<b>Changes in Board Structure</b> Changing the board structure, such as the process for vacancies or director nominations, or the board size, unless there is an indication that the change is an anti-takeover device, or it diminishes shareholder rights.		<b>For</b>
<b>Stock Ownership</b> Requiring directors to own company shares.	X	<b>Against</b>
<b>Contested Elections</b> The qualifications of nominees on both slates, management track record and strategic plan for enhancing shareholder value, and company financial performance generally will be considered when voting nominees in a contested election.	X	<b>Case-by-Case</b>

## B. Section 14A Say-On-Pay Votes

Current law requires companies to allow shareholders to cast non-binding advisory votes on the compensation for named executive officers, including the frequency of such votes. The Advisers generally support proposals for annual votes, as well as the ratification of executive compensation unless the compensation structure or any prior actions taken by the board or compensation committee warrant a case-by-case analysis.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Frequency of Say-On-Pay Votes</b> Annual shareholder advisory votes regarding executive compensation.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Compensation Disclosures</b> Seeking additional disclosures related to executive and director pay unless similar information is already provided in existing disclosures or reporting.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Executive Compensation Advisory</b> Executive compensation proposals generally will be assessed based on its structure, prevailing industry practice and benchmarks, and any problematic prior pay practices or related issues involving the board/compensation committee.	X	<b>Case-by-Case</b>
<b>Golden Parachute Advisory</b> Golden parachute proposals, in general, will be assessed based on the existing change-in-control arrangements, the nature and terms of the triggering event(s) and the amount to be paid.	X	<b>Case-by-Case</b>

## C. Audit-Related

The Advisers generally support proposals for the selection or ratification of independent auditors, subject to a consideration of any conflicts of interest, poor accounting practices or inaccurate prior opinions and related fees.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Appointment of Auditors</b> Selecting or ratifying independent auditors, unless there is a material conflict of interest, a history of poor accounting practice or inaccurate opinions, or excessive fees.		<b>For</b>
<b>Non-Audit/Consulting Services</b> Other alternative service providers, conflicts of interest, and company disclosures are areas of consideration when voting proposals to limit other engagements with auditors.	X	<b>Case-by-Case</b>
<b>Indemnification of Auditors</b> Indemnification of auditors generally will be assessed based on the nature of the engagement, the auditor's work history and field of expertise, and the terms of the agreement such as its impact on the ability of shareholders to pursue legal recourse against the auditor for certain acts or omissions.	X	<b>Case-by-Case</b>
<b>Rotation of Auditors</b> Shareholder proposals requiring auditor rotation generally will be assessed based on any audit issues involving the company, the auditor's tenure with the company, and policies and practices surrounding auditor evaluations.	X	<b>Case-by-Case</b>

#### D. Investment Company Matters

When the Advisers invest in a DoubleLine Fund with other public shareholders, the Advisers will vote the shares of such fund in the same proportion as the votes of the other shareholders. Under this “echo voting” approach, the Advisers’ potential conflict is mitigated by replicating the voting preferences expressed by the other shareholders. With respect to specific proposals involving the DoubleLine Funds, the Advisers generally support recommendations by the fund’s board unless applicable laws and regulations prohibit the Advisers from doing so.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Share Classes</b>		
Issuance of new classes or series of shares.		<b>For</b>
<b>Investment Objectives</b>		
Changing a fundamental investment objective to nonfundamental.		<b>Against</b>
<b>Investment Restrictions</b>		
Changing fundamental restrictions to nonfundamental generally will be assessed in consideration of the target investments, reason(s) for the change and its impact on the portfolio.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>
<b>Distribution Agreements</b>		
Distribution agreements generally will be assessed based on the distributor's services and reputation, applicable fees, and other terms of the agreement.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>
<b>Investment Advisory Agreements</b>		
Investment advisory agreements generally will be assessed based on the applicable fees, fund category and investment objective, and performance.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>

#### E. Shareholder Rights and Defenses

The Advisers believe that companies have a fundamental obligation to protect the rights of shareholders. Therefore, the Advisers generally support proposals that hold the board and management accountable in serving the best interest of shareholders and that uphold their rights. However, the Advisers generally will not support proposals from certain shareholders that are hostile, disruptive, or are otherwise counter to the best interest of the Advisers’ clients.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Appraisal Rights</b> Providing shareholders with rights of appraisal.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Fair Price Provision</b> Fair price provisions that ensures each shareholder's securities will be purchased at the same price if the company is acquired in disagreement with the board. However, fair price provisions may not be supported if it is used as an anti-takeover device by the board.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Special Meetings</b> Providing or restoring rights to call a special meeting so long as the threshold to call a meeting is no less than 10 percent of outstanding shares.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Confidential Voting</b> Allowing shareholders to vote confidentially.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Written Consents</b> Allowing shareholders to act by written consent.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Greenmail</b> Adopting anti-greenmail charter or bylaw amendments or otherwise restricting the company's ability to make greenmail payments for repurchasing shares at a premium to prevent a hostile takeover.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Supermajority Vote</b> Requiring a supermajority vote, unless there are disproportionate substantial shareholders that weaken minority votes.		<b>Against</b>
<b>Bundled Proposals</b> Bundled or conditional proposals generally will be reviewed to determine the benefit or cost of the matters included or if there is a controversy or any matter that is adverse to shareholder interests.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>
<b>Preemptive Rights</b> Preemptive rights, in general, will be assessed based on the size of the company and its shareholder base, for which larger publicly held companies with a broad shareholder base may be less ideal.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>
<b>Shareholder Rights Plans (Poison Pills)</b> Poison pills generally will be assessed based on the company's governance practices, existing takeover defenses, and the terms of the plan, including the triggering mechanism, duration, and redemption/rescission features. Requests to have shareholders ratify plans generally will be supported.	X	<b>Case-by-Case</b>

#### F. Extraordinary Transactions

Proposals for transactions that may affect the ownership interests or voting rights of shareholders, such as mergers, asset sales and corporate or debt restructuring, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis generally in consideration of the economic outcome for shareholders, the potential dilution of shareholder rights and its impact on corporate governance, among other relevant factors.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Reincorporation</b> Reincorporating in another state or country in support of the rights and economic interests of shareholders.		<b>For</b>
<b>Merger, Corporate Restructuring and Spin Offs</b> Merger, corporate restructuring and spin off proposals generally will be assessed with the view of maximizing the economic value of shareholder interests. The purchase or sale price and other deal terms will be reviewed, among other factors, to ensure that that the transaction is aligned with the long-term interests of shareholders.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>
<b>Debt Restructuring</b> The terms of the transaction, current capital markets environment, and conflicts of interest are factors that generally will be considered for ensuring that the proposal enhances the economic value of shareholder interests.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>
<b>Liquidations and Asset Sales</b> As with other transaction proposals, the long-term economic impact of the transaction will be the focus of review of such proposals and, in general, factors such as the sale price, costs and conflicts of interest will be considered.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>

#### G. Capital Structure

The Advisers believe that the prudent management of debt and equity to finance company operations and growth, and which is supportive of shareholders' rights and economic interests, is critical to financial viability.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Common Stock</b> Issuing common stock for recapitalizations, stock splits, dividends or otherwise reasonably amending outstanding shares for a specific purpose.		<b>For</b>
<b>Multi-Class Shares</b> Adopting multi-class share structures so long as they have equal voting rights.		<b>For</b>
<b>Repurchase Programs</b> Adopting plans to repurchase shares in the open market unless shareholders cannot participate on equal terms.		<b>For</b>
<b>Blank Check Preferred Stock</b> Allowing the board to issue preferred shares without prior shareholder approval and setting the terms and voting rights of preferred shares at the board's discretion.		<b>Against</b>
<b>Recapitalization Plans</b> The rationale and objectives; current capital markets environment; impact on shareholder interests including conversion terms, dividends and voting rights; and any material conflicts of interest are factors that generally will be considered when reviewing proposals to reclassify debt or equity capital.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>

## H. Compensation

The Advisers believe that compensation arrangements should align the economic interests of directors, management, and employees with those of shareholders and consider factors such as (1) local norms, (2) industry-specific practices and performance benchmarks, and (3) the structure of base and incentive compensation. The Advisers generally support transparency (e.g., disclosures related to the performance metrics and how they promote better corporate performance, etc.) and periodic reporting with respect to compensation.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Employee 401 (k) Plan</b> Adopting a 401 (k) plan for employees.		<b>For</b>
<b>Employee Stock Option Plan (ESOP)</b> Requiring shareholder approval to adopt a broad-based ESOP or to increase outstanding shares for an existing plan unless the allocation of outstanding shares to the ESOP exceeds five percent or 10 percent among all stock-based plans.		<b>For</b>
<b>Recoupment Provisions (Clawbacks)</b> Adopting clawback provisions in cases of revised financial results or performance indicators on which prior compensation payments were based, as well as for willful misconduct or violations of law or regulation that result in financial or reputational harm to the company.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Limits on Executive or Director Compensation</b> Setting limits on executive or director compensation unless there is a substantial deviation from industry practice or any problematic issue involving the board/compensation committee or prior pay practices.	X	<b>Against</b>
<b>Equity-Based and Other Incentive Plans</b> Incentive plans, in general, will be assessed based on the prevailing local and industry-specific practices and performance benchmarks, the terms of the plan and whether they are aligned with company goals and shareholder interests, the cost of the plan, and the overall compensation structure.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>
<b>Severance Agreements for Executives (Golden Parachutes)</b> Golden parachutes generally will be assessed based on the existing change-in-control arrangements, the nature and terms of the triggering event(s) and the amount to be paid.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>

## I. Corporate Governance

The Advisers believe that authority and accountability for establishing business strategies, corporate policies and compensation generally should rest with the board and management. The independence, qualifications, and integrity of the board as well as the effectiveness of management and their oversight, which must be aligned with shareholder interests, are essential to good governance. The following general guidelines reflect these principles although material environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors, which have a potential financial impact on the company and the valuation of client investments, if any, are also considered.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Quorum Requirements</b> Establishing a majority requirement, unless shareholder turnout has been an issue, or a reduced quorum is reasonable based on applicable laws or regulations and the market capitalization or ownership structure of the company.		<b>For</b>
<b>Annual Meetings</b> Changing the date, time, or location of annual meetings, unless the proposed schedule or location is unreasonable.		<b>For</b>
<b>Board Size</b> Setting the board size, so long as the proposal is consistent with the prevailing industry practice and applicable laws or regulations.		<b>For</b>
<b>Proxy Access</b> Allowing shareholders to nominate director candidates in proxy ballots with reasonable limitations (e.g., minimum percentage and duration of ownership and a cap on board representation) for preventing potential abuse by certain shareholders.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Independent Directors</b> Requiring the board chair and a majority of directors to be independent directors. Proposals for a lead independent director may be supported in cases where the board chair is not independent.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Independent Committees</b> Requiring independent directors exclusively for the audit, compensation, nominating and governance committees.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Removal of Directors</b> Removing a director without cause.	X	<b>For</b>
<b>Indemnification of Directors and Officers</b> Indemnifying directors and officers for acts and omissions made in good faith and were believed to be in the best interest of the company. Limitations on liability involving willful misconduct or violations of law or regulation, or a breach of fiduciary duty, generally will be voted against.		<b>For</b>

<b>Term Limits for Directors</b> Imposing term limits on directors unless the director evaluation process is ineffective and related issues persist.	X	<b>Against</b>
<b>Classified Boards</b> Establishing a classified board.		<b>Against</b>
<b>Adjournment of Meetings</b> Providing management the authority to adjourn annual or special meetings without reasonable grounds.		<b>Against</b>
<b>Amendments to Bylaws</b> Giving the board the authority to amend bylaws without shareholder approval.		<b>Against</b>

J. Environment or Climate

The Advisers would generally consider the recommendations of management for shareholder proposals involving environmental issues as it believes that, in most cases, elected directors and management are in the best position to address such matters. In addition, reporting that provides meaningful information for evaluating the financial impact of environmental policies and practices is generally supported unless it is unduly costly or burdensome or it places the company at a competitive disadvantage. Material ESG factors, which have a potential financial impact on the company and the valuation of client investments, if any, are also considered.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Environmental and Climate Disclosures</b> Providing environmental/climate-related disclosures and reporting unless it is duplicative or unsuitable.		<b>For</b>
<b>Environmental and Climate Policies</b> Environmental and climate policies generally will be assessed based on the company's related governance practices, local and industry-specific practices, the nature and extent of environmental and climate risks applicable to the company, and the economic benefit to shareholders.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>

K. Human Rights or Human Capital/Workforce

The Advisers would generally consider the recommendations of management for shareholder proposals involving social issues as it believes that, in most cases, elected directors and management are in the best position to address such matters. In addition, reporting that provides meaningful information for evaluating the financial impact of social policies and practices is generally supported unless it is unduly costly or burdensome or it places the company at a competitive disadvantage. Material ESG factors, which have a potential financial impact on the company and the valuation of client investments, if any, are also considered.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Human Rights and Labor Disclosures</b> Providing human rights and labor-related disclosures and reporting unless it is duplicative or unsuitable.		<b>For</b>
<b>Human Rights and Labor Policies</b> Human rights and labor policies generally will be assessed based on the company's related governance practices, applicable law or regulations, local and industry-specific practices, the nature and extent of supply chain or reputational risks applicable to the company, and their economic benefit to shareholders.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>

#### L. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Advisers generally support reporting that provides meaningful information for evaluating the financial impact of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies and practices unless it is unduly costly or burdensome. For policy proposals, the Advisers will consider existing policies, regulations and applicable local standards and best practices, to determine if they provide an added benefit to shareholders. Material ESG factors, which have a potential financial impact on the company and the valuation of client investments, if any, are also considered.

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>DEI Disclosures</b> Providing Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO-1) Reports, and other additional disclosures or reporting unless it is duplicative or unsuitable.		<b>For</b>
<b>Anti-Discrimination Policy</b> Adopting an anti-discrimination and harassment policy.		<b>For</b>
<b>Other DEI Policies</b> Other DEI policies generally will be assessed based on the company's related governance practices, applicable law or regulations, and local and industry-specific practices.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>

#### M. Other Social Issues

Proposal	Shareholder Proposal	Anticipated Vote
<b>Political Contribution and Activities</b> Political contributions and lobbying activities generally will be reviewed in consideration of legal restrictions and requirements, applicable policies and historical practice, and its cost-benefit to the company. Related disclosures to shareholders generally are supported.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>
<b>Charitable Contributions</b> Charitable contributions, in general, will be reviewed in consideration of applicable policies and historical practice, conflicts of interests, as well as the cost-benefit of charitable spending. Related disclosures to shareholders generally are supported.		<b>Case-by-Case</b>

## APPENDIX C

### DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES RATINGS

#### Short-Term Credit Ratings

An *S&P Global Ratings* short-term issue credit rating is generally assigned to those obligations considered short-term in the relevant market. The following summarizes the rating categories used by S&P Global Ratings for short-term issues:

“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 commitment 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.

Local Currency and Foreign Currency Ratings – S&P Global Ratings’ issuer credit ratings make a distinction between foreign currency ratings and local currency ratings. A foreign currency rating on an issuer can differ from the local currency rating on it when the obligor has a different capacity to meet its obligations denominated in its local currency, versus obligations denominated in a foreign currency.

“NR” – This indicates that a rating has not been assigned or is no longer assigned.

*Moody’s Investors Service (“Moody’s”)* short-term ratings are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial 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.

Moody's employs the following designations to indicate the relative repayment ability of rated issuers:

"P-1" – Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-1 reflect a superior ability to repay short-term obligations.

"P-2" – Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-2 reflect a strong ability to repay short-term obligations.

"P-3" – Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-3 reflect an acceptable ability to repay short-term obligations.

"NP" – Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Not Prime do not fall within any of the Prime rating categories.

"NR" – Is assigned to an unrated issuer, obligation and/or program.

***Fitch, Inc. / Fitch Ratings Ltd. ("Fitch")*** 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.<sup>1</sup> Typically, this means up to 13 months for corporate, sovereign, and structured obligations and up to 36 months for obligations in U.S. public finance markets. The following summarizes the rating categories used by Fitch for short-term obligations:

"F1" – Securities possess the highest short-term credit quality. This designation indicates the strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments; may have an added "+" to denote any exceptionally strong credit feature.

"F2" – Securities possess good short-term credit quality. This designation indicates good intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments.

"F3" – Securities possess fair short-term credit quality. This designation indicates that the intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is adequate.

"B" – Securities possess speculative short-term credit quality. This designation indicates minimal capacity for timely payment of financial commitments, plus heightened vulnerability to near term adverse changes in financial and economic conditions.

"C" – Securities possess high short-term default risk. Default is a real possibility.

<sup>1</sup> A long-term rating can also be used to rate an issue with short maturity.

"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.

“NR” – Is assigned to an issue of a rated issuer that are not and have not been rated.

The *DBRS Morningstar® Ratings Limited (“DBRS Morningstar”)* short-term obligation ratings provide DBRS Morningstar’s opinion on the risk that an issuer will not meet its short-term financial obligations in a timely manner. The obligations rated in this category typically have a term of shorter than one year. The R-1 and R-2 rating categories are further denoted by the subcategories “(high)”, “(middle)”, and “(low)”.

The following summarizes the ratings used by DBRS Morningstar for commercial paper and short-term debt:

“R-1 (high)” - Short-term debt rated “R-1 (high)” is of the highest credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is exceptionally high. Unlikely to be adversely affected by future events.

“R-1 (middle)” – Short-term debt rated “R-1 (middle)” is of superior credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is very high. Differs from “R-1 (high)” by a relatively modest degree. Unlikely to be significantly vulnerable to future events.

“R-1 (low)” – Short-term debt rated “R-1 (low)” is of good credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is substantial. Overall strength is not as favorable as higher rating categories. May be vulnerable to future events, but qualifying negative factors are considered manageable.

“R-2 (high)” – Short-term debt rated “R-2 (high)” is considered to be at the upper end of adequate credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is acceptable. May be vulnerable to future events.

“R-2 (middle)” – Short-term debt rated “R-2 (middle)” is considered to be of adequate credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is acceptable. May be vulnerable to future events or may be exposed to other factors that could reduce credit quality.

“R-2 (low)” – Short-term debt rated “R-2 (low)” is considered to be at the lower end of adequate credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is acceptable. May be vulnerable to future events. A number of challenges are present that could affect the issuer’s ability to meet such obligations.

“R-3” – Short-term debt rated “R-3” is considered to be at the lowest end of adequate credit quality. There is a capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due. May be vulnerable to future events, and the certainty of meeting such obligations could be impacted by a variety of developments.

“R-4” – Short-term debt rated “R-4” is considered to be of speculative credit quality. The capacity for the payment of short-term financial obligations as they fall due is uncertain.

“R-5” – Short-term debt rated “R-5” is considered to be of highly speculative credit quality. There is a high level of uncertainty as to the capacity to meet short-term financial obligations as they fall due.

“D” – A downgrade to “D” may occur when the issuer has filed under any applicable bankruptcy, insolvency or winding-up statute or there is a failure to satisfy an obligation after the exhaustion of grace periods. DBRS Morningstar may also use “SD” (Selective Default) in cases where only some securities are impacted, such as the case of a “distressed exchange”.

### **Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings**

The following summarizes the ratings used by *S&P Global Ratings* for long-term issues:

“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

Plus (+) or minus (-) – 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.

“NR” – This indicates that a rating has not been assigned, or is no longer assigned.

Local Currency and Foreign Currency Ratings - S&P Global Ratings’ issuer credit ratings make a distinction between foreign currency ratings and local currency ratings. A foreign currency rating on an issuer can differ from the local currency rating on it when the obligor has a different capacity to meet its obligations denominated in its local currency, versus obligations denominated in a foreign currency.

**Moody’s** long-term ratings are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial obligations with an original maturity of eleven months or more. Such ratings reflect both on the likelihood of default or impairment on contractual financial obligations and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default or impairment. The following summarizes the ratings used by Moody’s for long-term debt:

“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.

“NR” – Is assigned to unrated obligations, obligation and/or program.

The following summarizes long-term ratings used by *Fitch*:

“AAA” – Securities considered to be of the 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” – Securities considered to be of 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” – Securities considered to be of 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” – Securities considered to be of 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” – Securities considered to be speculative. “BB” ratings indicates 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” – Securities considered to be highly speculative. “B” ratings indicate that material credit risk is present.

“CCC” – A “CCC” rating indicates that substantial credit risk is present.

“CC” – A “CC” rating indicates very high levels of credit risk.

“C” – A “C” rating indicates exceptionally high levels of credit risk.

Defaulted obligations typically are not assigned “RD” or “D” ratings but are instead rated in the “CCC” to “C” rating categories, depending on their recovery prospects and other relevant characteristics. Fitch believes that this approach better aligns obligations that have comparable overall expected loss but varying vulnerability to default and loss.

Plus (+) or minus (-) may be appended to a rating to denote relative status within major rating categories. Such suffixes are not added to the “AAA” obligation rating category, or to corporate finance obligation ratings in the categories below “CCC”.

“NR” – Is assigned to an unrated issue of a rated issuer.

The **DBRS** Morningstar long-term obligation ratings provide DBRS Morningstar’s opinion on the risk that investors may not be repaid in accordance with the terms under which the long-term obligation was issued. The obligations rated in this category typically have a term of one year or longer. All rating categories from AA to CCC also contain subcategories “(high)” and “(low)”. The absence of either a “(high)” or “(low)” designation indicates the rating is in the middle of the category. The following summarizes the ratings used by DBRS Morningstar for long-term debt:

“AAA” – Long-term debt rated “AAA” is of the highest credit quality. The capacity for the payment of financial obligations is exceptionally high and unlikely to be adversely affected by future events.

“AA” – Long-term debt rated “AA” is of superior credit quality. The capacity for the payment of financial obligations is considered high. Credit quality differs from “AAA” only to a small degree. Unlikely to be significantly vulnerable to future events.

“A” – Long-term debt rated “A” is of good credit quality. The capacity for the payment of financial obligations is substantial, but of lesser credit quality than “AA.” May be vulnerable to future events, but qualifying negative factors are considered manageable.

“BBB” – Long-term debt rated “BBB” is of adequate credit quality. The capacity for the payment of financial obligations is considered acceptable. May be vulnerable to future events.

“BB” – Long-term debt rated “BB” is of speculative, non-investment grade credit quality. The capacity for the payment of financial obligations is uncertain. Vulnerable to future events.

“B” – Long-term debt rated “B” is of highly speculative credit quality. There is a high level of uncertainty as to the capacity to meet financial obligations.

“CCC”, “CC” and “C” – Long-term debt rated in any of these categories is of very highly speculative credit quality. In danger of defaulting on financial obligations. There is little difference between these three categories, although “CC” and “C” ratings are normally applied to obligations that are seen as highly likely to default or subordinated to obligations rated in the “CCC” to “B” range. Obligations in respect of which default has not technically taken place but is considered inevitable may be rated in the “C” category.

“D” – A downgrade to “D” may occur when the issuer has filed under any applicable bankruptcy, insolvency or winding up statute or there is a failure to satisfy an obligation after the exhaustion of grace periods. DBRS Morningstar may also use “SD” (Selective Default) in cases where only some securities are impacted, such as the case of a “distressed exchange”.

## **Municipal 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.

Municipal Short-Term Note rating symbols are as follows:

“SP-1” – A municipal note rated “SP-1” exhibits a 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” – A municipal note rated “SP-2” exhibits a satisfactory capacity to pay principal and interest, with some vulnerability to adverse financial and economic changes over the term of the notes.

“SP-3” – A municipal note rated “SP-3” exhibits a speculative capacity to pay principal and interest.

“D” – This rating 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.

**Moody's** uses the global short-term Prime rating scale (listed above under Short-Term Credit Ratings) for commercial paper issued by U.S. 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 provided below.

Moody's uses the MIG scale for U.S. municipal cash flow notes, bond anticipation notes and certain other short-term obligations, which typically mature in three years or less.

### MIG Scale

“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.

“NR” – Is assigned to an unrated obligation, obligation and/or program.

In the case of 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.

Moody’s typically assigns the 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”.

“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 and/or legal protections.

“NR” – Is assigned to an unrated obligation, obligation and/or program.

### **About Credit Ratings**

An *S&P Global Ratings* issue credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to a specific financial obligation, a specific class of financial obligations, or a specific financial program (including ratings on medium-term note programs and commercial paper programs). It takes into consideration the creditworthiness of guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation and takes into account the currency in which the obligation is denominated. The opinion reflects S&P Global Ratings’ view of the obligor’s capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments as they come due, and this opinion may assess terms, such as collateral security and subordination, which could affect ultimate payment in the event of default.

Ratings assigned on *Moody’s* global long-term and short-term rating scales 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.

**Fitch's** credit ratings are forward-looking opinions on the relative ability of an entity or obligation to meet financial commitments. Issuer Default Ratings (IDRs) are assigned to corporations, sovereign entities, financial institutions such as banks, leasing companies and insurers, and public finance entities (local and regional governments). Issue-level ratings are also assigned and often include an expectation of recovery, which may be notched above or below the issuer-level rating. Issue ratings are assigned to secured and unsecured debt securities, loans, preferred stock and other instruments. Credit ratings are indications of the likelihood of repayment in accordance with the terms of the issuance. In limited cases, Fitch may include additional considerations (*i.e.*, rate to a higher or lower standard than that implied in the obligation's documentation).

**DBRS Morningstar** offers independent, transparent, and innovative credit analysis to the market. Credit ratings are forward-looking opinions about credit risk that reflect the creditworthiness of an issuer, rated entity, security and/or obligation based on DBRS Morningstar's quantitative and qualitative analysis in accordance with applicable methodologies and criteria. They are meant to provide opinions on relative measures of risk and are not based on expectations of, or meant to predict, any specific default probability. Credit ratings are not statements of fact. DBRS Morningstar issues credit ratings using one or more categories, such as public, private, provisional, final(ized), solicited, or unsolicited. From time to time, credit ratings may also be subject to trends, placed under review, or discontinued. DBRS Morningstar credit ratings are determined by credit rating committees.