

PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

Required Interest Rate Assumption for Determining Variable-Rate Premium; Interest Assumptions for Multiemployer Plan Valuations Following Mass Withdrawal

AGENCY: Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

ACTION: Notice of interest rates and assumptions.

SUMMARY: This notice informs the public of the interest rates and assumptions to be used under certain Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation regulations. These rates and assumptions are published elsewhere (or can be derived from rates published elsewhere), but are collected and published in this notice for the convenience of the public. Interest rates are also published on the PBGC's Web site (<http://www.pbgc.gov>).

The PBGC notes that the provisions of the Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002 that temporarily increased the required interest rate to be used to determine the PBGC's variable-rate premium to 100% (from 85%) of the annual yield on 30-year Treasury securities expired at the end of 2003. Thus, the required interest rate announced in this notice for plan years beginning in March 2004 has been determined under prior law. Legislation has been proposed that would further change the rules for determining the required interest rate. If such legislation is adopted, and the change affects the required interest rate for plan years beginning in March 2004, the PBGC will promptly publish a **Federal Register** notice with the new required interest rate and post the change on the PBGC's Web site.

DATES: The required interest rate for determining the variable-rate premium under part 4006 applies to premium payment years beginning in March 2004. The interest assumptions for performing multiemployer plan valuations following mass withdrawal under part 4281 apply to valuation dates occurring in April 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Harold J. Ashner, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 1200 K Street NW., Washington, DC 20005, (202) 326-4024. TTY/TDD users may call the Federal relay service toll-free at 1-800-877-8339 and ask to be connected to (202) 326-4024.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Variable-Rate Premiums

Section 4006(a)(3)(E)(iii)(II) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and § 4006.4(b)(1) of the PBGC's regulation on Premium Rates (29 CFR part 4006) prescribe use of an assumed interest rate (the "required interest rate") in determining a single-employer plan's variable-rate premium. The required interest rate is the "applicable percentage" (currently 85 percent) of the annual yield on 30-year Treasury securities for the month preceding the beginning of the plan year for which premiums are being paid (the "premium payment year"). (Although the Treasury Department has ceased issuing 30-year securities, the Internal Revenue Service announces a surrogate yield figure each month—based on the 30-year Treasury bond maturing in February 2031—which the PBGC uses to determine the required interest rate.) The required interest rate to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning in March 2004 is 4.19 percent (*i.e.*, 85 percent of the 4.93 percent yield figure for February 2004).

The PBGC notes that the provisions of the Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002 that temporarily increased the required interest rate to be used to determine the PBGC's variable-rate premium to 100% (from 85%) of the annual yield on 30-year Treasury securities expired at the end of 2003. Thus, the required interest rate announced in this notice for plan years beginning in March 2004 has been determined under prior law. Legislation has been proposed that would further change the rules for determining the required interest rate. If such legislation is adopted, and the change affects the required interest rate for plan years beginning in March 2004, the PBGC will promptly publish a **Federal Register** notice with the new required interest rate and post the change on the PBGC's Web site.

The following table lists the required interest rates to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning between April 2003 and March 2004.

For premium payment years beginning in:	The required interest rate is:
April 2003	4.80
May 2003	4.90
June 2003	4.53
July 2003	4.37
August 2003	4.93
September 2003	5.31
October 2003	5.14
November 2003	5.16
December 2003	5.12
January 2004	4.31

For premium payment years beginning in:	The required interest rate is:
February 2004	4.23
March 2004	4.19

Multiemployer Plan Valuations Following Mass Withdrawal

The PBGC's regulation on Duties of Plan Sponsor Following Mass Withdrawal (29 CFR part 4281) prescribes the use of interest assumptions under the PBGC's regulation on Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans (29 CFR part 4044). The interest assumptions applicable to valuation dates in April 2004 under part 4044 are contained in an amendment to part 4044 published elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**. Tables showing the assumptions applicable to prior periods are codified in appendix B to 29 CFR part 4044.

Issued in Washington, DC on this 9th day of March 2004.

Joseph H. Grant,

Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

[FR Doc. 04-5763 Filed 3-12-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7708-01-P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-49379; File No. 600-30]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Emerging Markets Clearing Corporation; Notice of Filing and Order Approving a Request for an Extension of Temporary Registration as a Clearing Agency

March 9, 2004.

Pursuant to Section 19(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act"),¹ notice is hereby given that on January 26, 2004, the Emerging Markets Clearing Corporation ("EMCC") filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") a request that the Commission extend EMCC's temporary registration as a clearing agency.² The Commission is publishing this notice and order to solicit comments from interested persons and to extend EMCC's temporary registration as a clearing agency through March 31, 2005.

On February 13, 1998, pursuant to Sections 17A(b) and 19(a)(1) of the Act³ and Rule 17Ab2-1 promulgated

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(a).

² Letter from Karen L. Saperstein, General Counsel, EMCC (Jan. 23, 2004).

³ 15 U.S.C. 78q-1(b) and 78s(a)(1).