Statutory Issue Paper No. 169

Principles-Based Bond Definition

STATUS
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Original SSAP: SSAP No. 26 and SSAP No. 43

Current Authoritative Guidance: SSAP No. 21, SSAP No. 26 and SSAP No. 43

Type of Issue:
Common Area

SUMMARY OF ISSUE

1. The guidance within this issue paper details the new statutory accounting concept revisions to SSAP No. 26—Bonds (SSAP No. 26), SSAP No. 43—Loan-backed and Structured Securities (SSAP No. 43) and SSAP No. 21—Other Admitted Assets (SSAP No. 21) pursuant to the Statutory Accounting Principles (E) Working Group's (Working Group) Investment Classification Project as well as in response to expanding investment structures that have been reported on Schedule D-1: Long-Term Bonds. The revisions and discussions detailed within reflects a comprehensive review, referred to as the "Principles-Based Bond Project," to establish principal concepts for determining whether a debt security qualifies for reporting as a bond. Although SSAP No. 26 was previously revised pursuant to the Investment Classification Project in 2017, it was identified that some entities were classifying securities issued from special purpose vehicles (SPVs) in scope of SSAP No. 26 instead of SSAP No. 43. As the focus of this Principles-Based Bond Project is on the substance of investments, regardless of whether they include an SPV for issuance, this project includes all debt securities and encompasses both SSAP No. 26 and SSAP No. 43.

SUMMARY CONCLUSION

2. Investments eligible for reporting as bonds on Schedule D-1[1] shall comply with the principles-based definition of a bond or be specifically noted in scope of SSAP No. 26 or SSAP No. 43. Revisions to reflect the principles-based bond definition have been incorporated to SSAP No. 26, with SSAP No. 43 revised for accounting and reporting guidance for investments that qualify as asset-backed securities under the SSAP No. 26 bond definition. SSAP No. 21 has been revised to detail accounting and reporting guidance for debt securities that do not qualify as bonds under SSAP No. 26 and to provide guidance for the accounting and reporting of residual interests. Lastly, various revisions to other SSAPs have been incorporated to update guidance and/or references to the bond guidance. The final adopted SSAPs and other revisions are shown in the exhibits to this issue paper.

DISCUSSION

3. The discussion of this issue originally began in August 2019 with agenda item 2019-21: SSAP No. 43 – Equity Investments. This agenda item was drafted to consider clarification to SSAP No. 43 particularly with regards to collateralized fund obligations and similar structures that reflect underlying equity interests. In response to the discussion of comment letters in January 2020, this project was expanded to include a

[1] Pursuant to reporting changes adopted in response to the principles-based bond definition, issuer credit obligations (ICO) in scope of SSAP No. 26—Bonds will be reported on Schedule D-1-1: Bonds and asset-backed security (ABS) investments that qualify as bonds under SSAP No. 26 but follow SSAP No. 43—Asset-Backed Securities for accounting and reporting will be reported on Schedule D-1-2: Asset-Backed Securities. Throughout this issue paper, these bond investments (both ICO and ABS) are collectively referred to as bonds reported on Schedule D-1.

comprehensive review of SSAP No. 43 under the Working Group's Investment Classification Project, with NAIC staff directed to prepare a discussion document for subsequent review.

4. A preliminary discussion document was exposed for comment on March 18, 2020. Although there were no proposed recommendations in that exposed document, it captured the following:

a.

that the evaluation of the structure under the security definition considers the substance of the instrument rather than solely its legal form.

13. The consideration of whether a structure reflects a "security" is a key factor in determining the

include explicit reference to loan structures within the principles-based bond concepts and instead refer to the substance of the investment structure. Additi

20. Regulator concerns arise when features that facilitate the production of predictable cash flows are not present. In such situations, when there are not predictable cash flows equipped to service the debt, repayment may rely on sale or refinancing of the underlying equity investments at maturity in order to satisfy the debt. In that case, equity valuation risk may be the primary risk for the non-payment of the issued debt. If repayment predominantly relies on a point-in-time equity valuation (such as at maturity), then the substance of the risk is not consistent with what is expected of a bond reported on Schedule D-1.

21. Although the full disallowance of equity-backed debt would prevent these regulator concerns, there is a position that there are CFO securitizations (or other investments) of well-diversified, seasoned funds for which there is compelling evidence that there will be sufficient cash distributions to amortize the debt and structure protections that minimize the residual equity exposure. The approach to allow such CFO securitizations/investments to be reported as bonds only works when there are appropriate safeguarding principles established, which require a relatively high standard of proof.

22. An investment for which the primary non-payment risk is equity devaluation is not consistent with the substance-intent for what is expected to be reported as a bond on Schedule D-1 under the principles-based definition. Allowing such investments to be reported as bonds on Schedule D-1 could result with the regulatory arbitrage that regulators are concerned about without any real mitigants. This could ultimately result in a situation where industry has taken on significantly more equity risk that they have historically, all while characterizing the investment as a bond exposure. As such, it was noted as critical that appropriate safeguards be incorporated into the principles-based bond definition to address this concern. This is why the guidance reflects a rebuttable presumption that equity-backed ABS do not qualify to be reported as bonds on Schedule D-1 unless a documented analysis supporting the predictability of cash flows is completed that demonstrates bond-like cashflows that supports different treatment from that presumption.

23. The principles-based bond definition is clear that a security that possesses equity-like characteristics or that represents an ownership interest in the issuer in substance does not represent a creditor relationship. Examples of equity investments, equity holdings and equity-like interests include any security ultimately reflecting an ownership or membership interest in an entity (such as common stock, preferred stock, private equity holdings, investments in joint ventures, partnerships, and LLCs) as well as any structure that reflects the performance of an entity (such as dividends or capital gains). Furthermore, examples of equity instruments also include any debt instrument where the risk/reward profile is substantially similar to an equity interest.

24. With the prohibition of equity-like structures or items that represent ownership interests, there is a rebuttable presumption that debt instruments collateralized by equity interests do not qualify as bonds because they do not reflect a creditor relationship in substance. Notwithstanding this rebuttable presumption, it is possible for such a debt instrument to represent a creditor relationship if the characteristics of the underlying equity interests lend themselves to the production of predictable cash flows and the underlying equity risks have been sufficiently redistributed through the capital structure of the issuer.

25. With the establishment of the principles-based bond definition, this rebuttable presumption was specifically discussed, and it was concluded that the determination of whether debt instruments collateralized by equity interests qualify as bonds inherently requires significant judgment and analysis. Unlike debt instruments collateralized with contractual cash flows, or debt instruments collateralized by cash-generating non-financial assets, debt instruments collateralized by equity interests may be dependent on cash flow distributions that are not contractually required to be made, predetermined, and/or may not be controlled by the issuer of the debt. In some instances, sale or refinancing of the underlying equity interests may be the only means of generating cash flows to service the debt instruments. If this is the situation, then it is expected that compensating factors from other characteristics of the structure will be present that supports classifying the investment as a bond. For example, if the source of cash flows is driven from the sale or refinancing, then an appropriate, compensating level of overcollateralization would be required to overcome the presumption that the structure does not qualify as a bond.

26. For debt instruments that are collateralized by equity interests, various factors should be considered in determining whether debt collateralized by equity interests qualify as bonds. Additionally, to overcome the presumption that the structure does not qualify as a bond, it is presumed that reporting entities will have sufficient documentation supporting this conclusion. Factors to consider include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Number and diversification of the underlying equity interests

b. Characteristics of the equity interests

c. Liquidity facilities

d. Overcollateralization

e. Waiting period for the distributions / paydowns to begin

f. Capitalization of interest

g. Covenants (e.g., loan-to-value trigger provisions)

h. Reliance on ongoing sponsor commitments

i. Source(s) of expected cash flows to service the debt (i.e., dividend distributions from the underlying collateral vs. sale of the underlying collateral)

27. The assessment of equity-backed securities should be looked at, not only in form, but in substance. For example, a common arrangement exists where debt is issued from a feeder fund, and the feeder fund has an equity interest in another fund which predominantly holds debt instruments. The fund passes those fixed-income cash flows through the structure to the ultimate feeder fund debt holder(s), in a way that produces substantially the same risk profile to the debt holders as a collateralized loan obligation (CLO). Accordingly, such an arrangement may have its substance aligned with a debt investment rather than a single equity investment, despite the direct holding being a fund investment. This conclusion would be supported if the terms of the structure ensure that the underlying fixed-income cash flows are passed through. Factors that add additional uncertainty as to the timing and/or amount of the pass-through of cash flows from the underlying debt instruments may call into question a conclusion that a feeder fund structure is a debt-backed structure in substance. For example, discretion of an underlying fund manager to withhold distribution of the underlying cash flows passed through from underlying debt instruments may create uncertainties as to the timing and/or amount of cash flows in such a manner that is more characteristic of an equity investment. Likewise, a feeder fund structure that is not expected to provide for regular cash interest payments would also call into question the substance as a debt-backed investment. Features that are customary to CLOs and other asset-backed securities would not ordinarily call the investment's substance into question on its own. For example, a waterfall structure dictating the pass-through and order of payments or retaining sufficient funds for covering contractual underlying fund level payments (e.g., investment management fees, legal costs, and other customary fund level expenses) are common to CLOs and other ABS, as are customary payment in kind (PIK) features designed to address temporary liquidity issues where the PIK then gets prioritized in the waterfall structure. These customary features do not constitute manager discretion that would call into question a conclusion that a feeder fund structure is a debt-backed structure in substance.

28. Conversely, if the feeder fund debt ultimately relies on equity interests for repayment (the final fund holds equity interests that generate the pass-through cash flows), the held debt instrument from the feeder fund would have to meet the requirements of paragraph 26 while looking at the substance of equity interests supporting the debt. Regardless of the underlying collateral, feeder fund arrangements would have to meet the other relevant parts of the standard (e.g., have a substantive credit enhancement, etc.) to qualify for bond reporting. Investments that resemble feeder fund structures will require entity review to determine the

underlying source of cash flows and identify the uncertainties or vulnerabilities that could impact the cash flows that will be passed through to the reporting entity holder. Ultimately, the conclusion that a structure represents a feeder fund shall not automatically qualify the structure for bond classification but shall not automatically preclude bond classification. Substance over form should be the determining factor in these and similar situations.

Determination of Issuer Credit Obligation or Asset Backed Security (ABS)

29. Security structures that qualify as creditor relationships are divided between ICO and ABS. The initial distinction between ICO and an ABS is a key factor with the principle-based bond concepts. Given their differing characteristics, investments that qualify as ICO are not required to complete assessments for qualifying credit enhancements or meaningful cash flow generation. As such, it is critical to ensure that structures which should be considered ABS or that reflect non-qualifying Schedule D-1 structures, are not classified as ICO to avoid those detailed assessments.

30. Determining whether an investment reflects an ICO or an ABS focuses on the issuer and the primary source of repayment of the instrument. An ICO represents a bond structure where the repayment is supported primarily[2] by the general creditworthiness of an operating entity or entities. The support for this structure consists of direct or indirect recourse to an operating entity or entities. An “operating entity” can be any sort of business entity, not-for-profit organization, or other provider of goods or services, but cannot be a natural person or an Asset Backed Security (ABS) Issuer. An ABS is a bond issued by an entity (an ABS Issuer) created for the primary purpose of raising debt capital backed by financial assets or cash generating non-financial assets owed by the ABS Issuer, whereby repayment is primarily derived from the cash flows associated with the underlying defined collateral rather than the cash flows of an operating entity.

31. The prior assessments to divide structures between SSAP No. 26 and SSAP No. 43 seemed to focus primarily on legal form (issued by trust/SPV that held pledged assets) or on the basis of prepayment risk within the structure (meaning, that the expected timing of cash flows may vary, impacting the effective interest rate). Under the principle-based bond definition, neither of these components shall be used as a determinant in concluding whether a struct

bonds issued from SEC-registered entities. Th determined principal and interest payments (whether fixed interest or variable interest) with contractual amounts that do not vary based on the appreciation or depreciation (e.g., performance) of any underlying collateral value or other non-debt variable[3]. For example, an issued security that has varying principal and interest payments based on the appreciation of referenced equity, real estate or other non-debt variables are precluded from bond treatment as they do not reflect creditor relationships. Although US TIPS are indexed to the consumer price index and grow with inflation, these securities shall be captured as ICO on Schedule D-1-1.

33. This principles-based bond project is not expected to reconsider certain investments previously considered by the Working Group and explicitly permitted for bond reporting on Schedule D-1. As such, unless subsequently addressed, the following investment types are expected to continue to qualify as Schedule D-1 investments, classified as ICO. (By including these investments as ICO, these investments are not subject to the assessments of sufficient credit enhancement or meaningful cash flow generation required for ABS securities.)

a. Certificates of deposit that have a fixed schedule of payments and a maturity date in excess of one year from the date of acquisition.

b. Bank loans that are obligations of operating entities, issued directly by a reporting entity or acquired through a participation, syndication or assignment.

c. Debt instruments in a certified capital company (CAPCO).

d. SVO-Identified Bond ETFs.

34. The investment structures explicitly permitted for Schedule D-1 reporting no longer includes a generic reference to “hybrid securities.” Under prior guidance in SSAP No. 26, hybrid securities, defined in the annual statement instructions as securities with characteristics of both debt and equity securities, were included and captured on a specific Schedule D-1 reporting line. Examples in the annual statement instructions included Trust Preferred Securities and Yankee Tier 1 bonds, however, both types of securities are no longer overly prevalent, although some insurers may continue to have them in their portfolios. Pursuant to the intent of the principle-based bond definition, a broad exception for securities that have characteristics of both debt and equity is not viable. Rather, to ensure that securities are classified and reported based on the substance of the investments, securities with characteristics of both debt and equity shall be assessed for inclusion as a bond for reporting on Schedule D-1 in accordance with the principal-

a. Substantive Credit Enhancement: The holder of the debt obligation issued by the ABS Issuer is in a different economic position than if the holder owned the ABS Issuer's assets directly.

b. Cash Generating Collateral Assets: The assets owed by the ABS Issuer are either financial assets or cash-generating non-financial assets. Cash-generating non-financial assets are defined as assets that are expected to gene interpreted to mean that a reperformance of the credit underwriting process would be needed to support accounting classification, which is not the intent and could be seen to violate the policy that credit ratings do not determine accounting classification, as well as introduce an administrative reporting burden that is both duplicative and lacking any added value. Further, a misinterpretation could occur that would permit satisfaction of this component if a credit rating or NAIC designation was obtained. The intent of the concept is not to address credit quality. Rather, the intent is to require that there must be economic substance to support the transformation of the underlying collateral risk, to bond risk. As a result of these discussions, revisions were incorporated to revise the terminology and related definition to reflect a "substantive credit enhancement." In addition to eliminating a perception that reporting entities could use credit ratings to support this distinction, this guidance incorporates principle concepts to ensure that the provision cannot be satisfied with structural elements that are merely nominal or lack economic substance.

45. Substantive credit enhancement can come in various forms, including but not limited to, subordination/overcollateralization, guarantees, or other forms of recourse. In whatever form the credit enhancement comes in, it must be of a level of significance that the holder of the debt instrument is in a substantively different position than owning the underlying collateral directly. Assessment of whether a credit enhancement has substance may involve an evaluation of the level of overcollateralization (loan-to-value or LTV) or the capacity of whatever form of subordination, guarantee or recourse to absorb collateral losses. The guidance intends to be specific that an NAIC designation, obtained from either the NAIC Securities Valuation Office (SVO) or from a Credit Rating Provider (CRP) does not provide standalone evidence to support a conclusion that the structure includes a substantive credit enhancement. Although the presence of independent market validation may provide evidence supporting the substance of a credit enhancement, that provision shall not be interpreted to indicate that the presence of an NRSRO rating is automatic validation that the substantive threshold has been met.

46. The following elements were specifically discussed with regards to the requirement for a substantive credit enhancement:

a. Agency-Backed Pass-Through Structures (e.g., RMBS/CMBS): These structures, when they have an agency guarantee, are expected to meet the substantive credit enhancement requirement with little analysis. Although the reporting entity participates on a proportional basis in the cash flows from the underlying mortgage loans held by the SPV, the reporting entity is in a different economic position than if it owned the underlying mortgages directly because the credit risk has been redistributed and assumed by the agencies.

b. Non-Agency Backed Pass-Through Structures: Unlike the above agency-backed example, a pass-through MBS without a credit enhancement, if one were to exist, would not put the holder in a different economic position as owning the mortgage loans directly as they would participate proportionally in the first dollar of losses on the underlying loans. Pursuant to the intent of the overall principles-based bond / Schedule D-1 project and required substantive credit enhancement, the guidance does not permit use of an SPV to recharacterize an asset to qualify for reporting as a bond on Schedule D-1 if the holder is in the same economic position as holding the underlying investments directly. This would apply to any type of underlying asset. In contrast, if a debt instrument represents a senior interest in the pool of loans, through existence of a subordinated tranche for example, the holder may conclude that it is in a different economic position from holding the loans directly, provided the subordination is determined to be substantive.

c. Loan-To-Value (LTV) Assessments: An assessment of LTV at origination may provide evidence of substantive credit enhancement through overcollateralization. The review should be a holistic assessment, evaluating the expected LTV over the life of the transaction, in conjunction with the liquidity and market value volatility of the underlying collateral, particularly in points in time when the underlying equipment is expected to be off-lease or at the time of maturity if refinancing or sale is required. It is appropriate to consider any expected economic depreciation, but it is not appropriate to factor in any expected economic appreciation. Although an expected decline in the LTV ratio may support the presence of a credit enhancement, a declining LTV is not required, and an increasing LTV is not prohibited, as long as the structure continues to provide a substantive credit enhancement. An expected high LTV at maturity, relative to the market value volatility of the underlying collateral, is considered to lack substantive overcollateralization and would require other forms of credit enhancement in order to meet the substantive credit enhancement criteria.

d. The first loss position may be issued as part of an ABS structure in the form of debt or payments as well as periodic sales of the rental cars as the means to generate meaningful cash flows to service the debt. This design, with planned periodic sales of the non-financial collateral assets over the debt term, is distinctly different than a structure in which cash flows are not meaningfully generated over the course of the debt term and would rely predominantly on the sale or refinancing of the underlying collateral at maturity to satisfy the debt obligation. This restriction also does not exclude all structures that have any amount of sales or refinancing at the end of the debt term. Such investments can qualify for reporting as a bond on Schedule D-1 if they meet the meaningful cash generation criteria throughout the term of the instrument other than through the sale/refinancing at maturity.

51. The assessment of meaningful cash flows may require detailed evaluations as it is not permissible to conclude that the presence of any cash flows generated within the structure will result with the investment reaching the "meaningful" threshold. It is also not expected to commonly see ABS structures that include both financial and non-financial collateral. Such designs shall be reviewed to determine that the structure is in line with the principle intent of the bond definition and has not been developed to circumvent separate assessment or reporting of non-financial asset components. As a simplistic example, including mortgage-backed securities and artwork in a single structure, and identifying that the cash flows of the MBS satisfies the meaningful threshold with the artwork representing a minimal residual element, with a conclusion that the full structure qualifies for reporting as a bond on Schedule D-1 is not reflective of the intent of the principles-based standard. If there are instances in which financial asset and non-financial asset collateral are combined in a single ABS structure, consideration should occur on the intent of commingling these collateral elements pursuant to the intent of the principles-based bond definition and in assessing the meaningful cash flow requirements. Structures identified that have been developed to circumvent the provisions of the principle-based bond definition are not permitted to be reported as a bond on Schedule D-1 and shall be captured as a non-bond debt security in scope of SSAP No. 21.

52. The assessment of meaningful cash flows is specific to each transaction, determined at origination, and should consider various factors collectively in determining if the meaningful threshold is met. For this assessment, it is noted that an increase in price volatility or variability of cash flows requires a greater percentage of cash flows generated to service the debt from sources other than the sale or refinancing of the underlying collateral. On the flip side, as liquidity, diversification or overcollateralization increase, the required percentage of cash flows generated to service the debt from sources other than the sale or refinancing of the underlying collateral is permitted to decrease. The following factors should be considered with the assessment of meaningful cash flows:

a. Price volatility in the principal market in the underlying collateral.

b. Liquidity in the principal market for the underlying collateral.

c. Diversification characteristics of the underlying collateral (i.e., types of collateral, geographic locations, sources of cash flows within the structure, etc.,)

d. Overcollateralization of the underlying collateral relative to the debt obligation.

e. Variability of cash flows, from sources other than sale or refinancing, expected to be generated from the underlying collateral.

53.

Rather, such instances do not qualify under the practical expedient and would require a complete analysis of the noted factors in determining whether the meaningful cash-generating criteria has been met.

Additional Elements for Asset Backed Securities

54. When establishing the ABS definition and required components, various aspects were discussed to improve clarity on the application of the guidance.

55. Determination of "Assets" Backing Securities: Although the definition of an asset detailed in SSAP No. 4—Assets and Nonadmitted Assets, is applied throughout statutory accounting principles, the question was raised as to where the asset definition would be applied in determining a qualifying ABS. For example, an entity that expects to have subsequent receivables from future operations does not have recognized "assets" from those expectations as the requirements of the asset definition have not been met. However, if that entity were to sell the rights to future cash flows from expected operations, the selling entity would receive cash (a qualifying asset), and the acquiring entity would also have a recognized asset from the acquired right to future cash flows.

56. For purposes of qualifying as an "asset" permitted in an ABS structure, the definition of an asset must be met by the ABS Issuer. In some situations, particularly when the asset represents a right to future cash flows, the asset may not be in a form that could be liquidated to provide payment towards the debt obligations. (For example, if the asset represents acquired rights to future royalties, those royalty rights would have to materialize to have liquid assets available toward the debt obligations.) The ability to liquidate the backing collateral asset at a single point in time does not impact the structural determination of whether the issued security meets the definition of an ABS provided that the assets are expected to produce meaningful cash flows to service the debt terms. Additionally, the inability to liquidate the assets backing the instrument may impact the assessment of what constitutes substantive credit enhancement. Failure of cash flows to materialize may impact recoverability and require impairment of an ABS.

57. There is no requirement for a collateral asset backing an ABS structure to qualify as an admitted asset under statutory accounting. Assessing whether the underlying asset qualifies for admittance is not necessary as non-financial assets backing ABS must meet the meaningful cash-generating criteria. If the structure fails to meet the meaningful cash-generating requirement, the instrument does not qualify for reporting as a bond on Schedule D-1. Statutory accounting has not historically restricted bonds backed by inadmissible assets from being admissible, nor has it included any kind of evaluation of the cash flow producing ability of underlying assets. The principles-based bond definition adds a requirement to evaluate the cash flow producing ability of the underlying collateral, but continues to recognize that assets that may not be admissible if held individually on an insurer's balance sheet, may be well suited to support bond-like cash flows when securitized in large numbers with appropriate structuring (e.g. prioritization of cash flows).

58. Determining Whether the Structure Reflects "Financial" or "Non-Financial" Assets: The definition of a "financial asset" has previously been adopted from U.S. GAAP and is reflected in SSAP No. 103R—Transfers and Servicing of Financial Assets and Extinguishments of Liabilities as cash, evidence of an ownership interest in an entity, or a contract that conveys to one entity a right 1) to receive cash or another financial instrument from a second entity or 2) to exchange other financial instruments on potentially favorable terms with the second entity.

59. For purposes of excluding financial assets from the ABS meaningful cash generation criteria, the financial asset definition was clarified, for the avoidance of doubt, to not include assets for which the realization of benefits from the rights to receive or exchange financial assets depends on the completion of a performance obligation such as with a lease, mortgage servicing right, royalty rights, etc. For purposes of applying the ABS guidance, when there is a performance obligation required before the cash flows are generated, the assets represent non-financial assets, or a means through which non-financial assets produce cash flows, until the performance obligation has been satisfied. As another way to assess this clarification,

if the assets backing the ABS are only subject to default risk (meaning the risk of nonpayment is solely based on failure of the underlying payer to satisfy its unconditional promise to pay), then the asset is a financial asset. If the asset is subject to any other risk in addition to default risk, then the assets represent non-financial assets. As simple illustrative examples:

a. A mortgage-backed security (MBS), where the underlying mortgages have been securitized into a structure, the mortgage receivables represent unconditional promises to pay, with no further performance obligation of the lender or any other party. This structure is considered to be backed by financial assets. Although this structure is excluded from the meaningful cash flow assessment, it must still comply with the substantive credit enhancement requirement.

b. A structure that represents the securitization of rental car leases is contingent on the lessor performing its side of the transaction (providing the car for use) before the lessee is obligated to pay. Therefore, a lease is a non-financial asset due to the performance obligation that must be satisfied in order for payment to become unconditional. Additionally, as is the case with short-term car rentals, the lease (rental agreement) may not be in place and the structure may represent a securitization of the rights to future rental payments, which adds an additional performance condition. This structure combines performance risk with default risk, resulting with the structure not qualifying for classification as being backed by financial assets. For this structure, the reporting entity would have to complete assessments that 1) the structure results with substantive credit enhancement and 2) the structure produces meaningful cash flows over the term of the instrument to satisfy the debt obligation other than through the sale or refinancing at maturity. If at origination, the contractual cash flows from the underlying collateral (leased rental cars) would be sufficient to satisfy all of the interest and at least 50% of the original principal, then the meaningful criteria would be met through the practical expedient. That means, as discussed in SSAP No. 26, paragraph 9.b., that the practical expedient can only be used if less than 50% of the principal relies upon sale or refinancing.

60. <u>Whole-Business Securitizations:</u> In most ABS structures, the assets backing the cash flows are specified and limited to a distinct collateral pool. For example, dedicated cash flows from specific lease arrangements, or specific receivables from credit cards or mortgages. However, ABS structures can exist that represent an entire range of operating revenues or cash flows generated by the business. These structures are often referred to as “whole business” or “operating asset” securitizations. These structures, which could only include cash flows from certain operating segments, and not necessarily the entire business of a company’s operations, transfer the cash flows from the dedicated operations first to the investment holders, with the operating entity receiving their “operation proceeds” after the investment holders have been paid. This is different from a traditional bond structure where the operating entity first receives the proceeds from their operations and has discretion on how it uses those proceeds to continue operations and pay expenses and then ultimately pay the bond holders according to the debt terms. Further, debt holders in a whole-business securitization generally only have recourse to the cash flow streams pledged to support the debt, unlike a general credit obligation of the operating entity.

61. For the principles-based bond definition, structures that refer to whole-business securitizations, or that refer to operation proceeds as the collateral for the source of debt repayment still meet the definition as an ABS and do not reflect ICO. For these structures, the dedicated operational cash flows represent the defined collateral pool and should not be classified as ICO based on an interpretation that the proceeds represent the cash flows of an operating entity as they are not supported by the general creditworthiness of an operating entity, but rather only on referenced cash flow streams from the entity’s operations.

62. <u>Residual Tranches / “Equity” Components of Schedule D-1 Qualifying Structures:</u> The assessment of qualifying Schedule D-1 investments has to consider the overall investment structure but focuses primarily on the specific instrument held by the reporting entity. Structures, particularly ABS, may include

residual tranches that provide payment after pre-determined principal and interest payments have been

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another SSAP. This guidance mirrors concepts from the transition of the principles-based bond definition.

69. Stapling of Investments: The original exposure of the principles-based bond definition (May 2021) included an initial example detailing a situation where "equity interests" from a tranche (such as residuals) were required to be held by a reporting entity when holding debt tranches. That language identified situations where the reporting entity would be restricted from selling, assigning, or transferring the unsecured debt investment without also selling, assigning or transferring the equity interest to the same party. This restriction is often referred to as the "stapling" of investments. Pursuant to the guidance in the initial example, although the debt instrument would separately qualify as a creditor relationship for bond reporting, when considering the entirety of the holdings (both the residual/equity interests and debt tranches combined), the investment would be considered an equity instrument in substance. Although the debt instrument would appear to have a higher priority of payment, that priority would be supported by the residual/equity interest the reporting entity has to hold. Ultimately, the reporting entity would be subordinate to themselves as they would recognize a loss on the residual/equity tranche to safeguard payment under the debt tranche. Under that initial proposed example, all holdings under such situations, including thetran

would not be necessary to achieve a similar result. Structures would only need to be designed to require initial acquisition of residual/equity tranches when acquiring debt tranches (with removal of the explicit disposal restrictions) to avoid the proposed stapling guidance. Since the proposed guidance could be easily avoided, the guidance would not address the underlying concern.

c. This discussion noted that it is quite common for acquisitions to require purchases of a vertical slice of a structure and for investments to be stapled for a short duration of time. These provisions are generally made for easier marketing and for easier compliance with conflict-o requirement will not be met without sale or refinancing. These industry comments take the position that as the level of overcollateralization to the debt obligation increases, then there is a greater likelihood that the debt issuer will be successful in refinancing or selling the assets and generate the means to repay the debt obligation. Although overcollateralization is a factor in securities for bond classification, allowing overcollateralization to override the requirement for meaningful cash flows other than the refinancing / sale at maturity is not permitted for the following reasons:

a. The intent of the principles-based bond definition is to clarify what shall be reported as bonds on Schedule D-1. Non-financial ABS that do not generate meaningful cash flows and rely on the refinancing or sale of the underlying assets do not reflect bond-like cash flows and are not characteristic of bond investments. These structures ultimately reflect equity (point-in-time) valuation risks of the assets held as collateral.

b. The industry position that overcollateralization safeguards the asset performance is an argument that supports the quality of the structure, but not the substance of the investment design. The principles-based bond definition does not factor in investment or credit quality within the determination of whether a structure qualifies for reporting as a bond on Schedule D-1. Permitting an assessment based on overcollateralization would introduce a concept that credit quality determines bond / Schedule D-1 reporting, and that is not an accurate conclusion in line with the principle concepts of bond classification.

75. Consistent with prior conclusions, reporting an investment as a bond on Schedule D-1 is not indicative of the quality of the investment, but rather reflects securities expected to generate bond-like cash flows. Securities reported as bonds on Schedule D-1 may be of high-quality or low-quality, but the reporting is based on the substance of the structure, which ultimately requires bond-like cash flows for all investments. This includes a requirement that non-financial ABS must produce meaningful cash flows through the use of the underlying collateral assets other than through the sale or refinancing of the assets.

76. Additionally, through the small group discussions around the refinancing restriction, it was noted that even if a debt instrument meets all of the criteria to be reported as a bond on Schedule D-1, there will still be a potential for unintentional RBC arbitrage related to securitizations, because the residual tranches absorb all of the redistributed risk of the underlying collateral, but receives a fixed RBC charge that is not in any way risk-rated. While this could be the case in any type of securitization, it is particularly pronounced if the underlying collateral is equity investments. Equity investments generally receive a base 30% RBC charge for life companies. If equity investments are securitized, the bond tranches will get low bond charges (<2%), while the residual tranche will continue to receive a flat 30% base charge. This will have the effect of bringing the overall weighted-average capital charge on the underlying investments from 30% to approximately 10-15%. This will occur even if the bond tranches have all of the substance associated with a bond. Following these discussions, it was identified that this regulatory concern may not be appropriate to address through the accounting standards but may warrant discussion under the Capital Adequacy (E) Task Force. Subsequent discussions from the Financial Condition (E) Committee directed the new RBC working group (the RBC Investment Risk and Evaluation (E) Working Group) to evaluate this and any other investment-related RBC items. Subsequent to these discussions, the RBC Investment Risk and Evaluation (E) Working Group assumed a project to assess RBC factors for residual interests. An interim approach was adopted to include a 30% base RBC factor with a 15% sensitivity test for year-end 2023, with a 45% base RBC factor and 0% sensitivity for year-end 2024. Continued discussion is expected under a long-term project.

77. <u>Use of NAIC Designation / SVO Review in Determining Bond / Schedule D-1 Reporting</u>: The accuracy of the financial statements, and compliance with statutory accounting provisions, is the responsibility of the reporting entity. Assessment and compliance with key concepts, such as the "meaningful cash flow generation" and "substantive credit enhancement" concepts for ABS are also the responsibility of the reporting entity, along with appropriate documentation of these assessments for regulator review when requested. Consistent with the existing NAIC Policy Statement on Coordination of

the Accounting Practices and Procedures Manual and the Purposes and Procedures Manual of the NAIC Investment Analysis Office, a reporting entity cannot utilize an NAIC designation to conclude on the substance of an investment or the resulting reporting schedule. Pursuant to the policy statement, obtaining an NAIC designation does not change an investment's applicable SSAP, annual or quarterly statement reporting schedule, or override SSAP guidance required for an investment to be an admitted asset.

78. Questions have been received whether an NAIC designation in the AVS+ product or an assessment of an investment from a "Regulatory Treatment Analysis Service" (RTAS) submission from the SVO can be utilized as support that an investment qualifies as a bond for Schedule D-1 reporting. These are inaccurate interpretations on the use of NAIC designations within those products. The assignment of an NAIC designation (either from the SVO or CRP) reflects the credit quality of an invest

b. Mortgage-Backed Securities and Other Non-Treasury Strips: Other IO and PO strips are required to be assessed in accordance with the principle concepts of the bond definition. It is anticipated that non-U.S. strips (including mortgage-backed security strips) would not qualify as ICO and shall be reviewed in accordance with the ABS concepts to determine whether the strip qualifies for reporting as a bond on Schedule D-1. The separation of the principal and interest components into separate securities does not change the application of the principle concepts for determining whether a security qualifies as a bond. It was noted that IO strips could be high in the capital structure (supported by subordination) or could represent residual interests (reflecting the spread between proceeds collected and contractual interest). The specific details of the individual IO/PO security shall determine the appropriate accounting and reporting.

83. The discussion of IO/PO strips identified that there is no current need to have separate reporting lines to identify these items within the investment schedules. However, it was identified that the ability to identify these investments with a code (or other feature) would allow for future aggregation and assessment. This was requested to be considered as part of the reporting revisions.

87. Debt securities in scope of SSAP No. 21 that do not qualify as bonds under SSAP No. 26 and for which the primary source of repayment is derived through rights to underlying collateral, qualify as admitted assets if the underlying collateral primarily qualify as admitted invested assets. As detailed in the SSAP No. 21 guidance pertaining to residual tranches, any residual tranches or first loss positions held from the same securitization that did not qualify as a bond under SSAP No. 26 also only qualify as admitted assets to the extent the underlying collateral primarily qualifies as admitted invested assets.

88. Debt securities in scope of the SSAP No. 21 guidance shall be reported at acquisition at cost, including brokerage and other related fees on Schedule BA. Subsequent measurement shall reflect the lower of amortized cost or fair value. Changes in measurement to reflect the lower value or to reflect changes in fair value shall be recorded as unrealized gains or losses. Debt securities in scope of SSAP No. 21 shall then follow the guidance in SSAP No. 43 for calculating amortized cost, for determining and recognizing other-than-temporary impairments and for allocating unrealized and realized gains and losses between the asset valuation reserve (AVR) and the interest maintenance reserve (IMR).

89. During the SSAP No. 21 discussion, industry inquired on the direction to utilize SSAP No. 43 for the components detailed in paragraph 88, and not separately assess securities to determine if they are more akin to ICO or ABS and using either SSAP No. 26 or SSAP No. 43 based on those assessments for the calculation of amortized cost, OTTI and allocating AVR/IMR. With this discussion, it was noted that investments that fail the creditor relationship test are identified before determining whether the security would be an ICO or ABS, and as the components of SSAP No. 43 are more relevant for debt securities that do not qualify as bonds, and to ensure consistency for all non-bond debt securities in scope of SSAP No. 21, the decision to utilize SSAP No. 43 for all debt securities that do not qualify as bonds was retained.

<u>Transition Guidance</u>

90. At the time of transition to apply the guidance adopted to reflect the principles-based bond definition, reporting entities shall make their best efforts to assess investments to determine whether they qualify within the bond definition for reporting on Schedule D-1. The bond definition requires assessments at the time of acquisition (as of the origination date), and it is recognized that reporting entities may not have the means to complete historical assessments for securities held at the time of transition. For these instances, if information is not readily available for reporting entities to assess a security as of the date at origination, reporting entities may utilize current or acquisition information in concluding that a security qualifies for reporting as a bond as either an ICO or ABS.

91. Investments that were reported as a bond on Schedul

ii. For securities held at fair value under the lower of amortized cost or fair value measurement method, previously reported unrealized losses shall be reversed on January 1, 2025, prior to disposal, resulting with a reported value that mirrors amortized cost at the time of disposal. This action prevents realized loss recognition at time of reclassification.

b. Securities reclassified from Schedule D-1 shall be recognized on the subsequent schedule (e.g., Schedule BA) with an actual cost that agrees to the l cosTfied fa subsequent schedule unrealized loss prior to the reclassification. The amortized cost shall be reported as "consideration received on disposals' on Schedule DA – Verification Between Years or Schedule E-2 – Verification Between Years, as applicable based on the prior reporting location. The security shall be recognized as an ABS acquired on Schedule D-3 at amortized cost. Immediately after initial recognition, if the security was required to be held at fair value, under the lower of amortized cost or fair value measurement method, the reporting entity shall recognize an unrealized loss.

94. The transition guidance shall be applied prospectively beginning with the first year of adoption (January 1, 2025). For disclosures that provide comparative information, reporting entities shall not restate the prior year's information in the 2025 disclosure.

Investment Examples – Securities That Do Not Represent Creditor Relationship Despite Legal Form

95. As detailed in the principles-based bond definition, an initial determinant is whether the investment is a security that represents a creditor relationship in substance. Examples included intend to identify scenarios that do not reflect an in-substance creditor relationship.

96. Example 1: Debt Instrument from SPV with Large Number of Diversified Equity Interests: A reporting entity invests in a debt instrument issued by a SPV that holds a large number of diversified equity interests with characteristics that support the production of predictable cash flows. The structure contains sufficient overcollateralization and liquidity provisions to ensure the production of adequate cash flows to service both principal and interest payments without significant reliance on refinancing or sale of the underlying equity investments. The debt instrument's periodic principal or interest payments, or both, contractually vary based on the appreciation or depreciation of the equity interests held in the SPV.

97. Example 1 Rationale: Because the instrument's principal or interest payments, or both, contractually vary with the appreciation or depreciation of the underlying equity interests, it contains an equity-like characteristic that is not representative of a creditor relationship. It would be inappropriate to conclude that a security with any variation in principal or interest payments, or both, due to underlying equity appreciation or depreciation, or an equity-based derivative, is a bond under the principles-based bond definition as such security would contain equity-like characteristics.

98. Example 2: Debt Instrument from SPV with Few Equity Interests, Not an Issuer Credit Obligation: A reporting entity invests in a debt instrument issued from a SPV that owns a portfolio of equity interests, and the debt instrument does not meet the definition of an ICO.

99. Example 2 Rationale: Determining whether debt instruments collateralized by equity interests qualify as bonds under the principles-based bond definition inherently requires significant judgment and analysis. Unlike debt instruments collateralized by assets with contractual cash flows, or debt instruments collateralized by cash-generating non-financial assets, debt instruments collateralized by equity interests may be dependent on cash flow distributions that are not contractually required to be made and/or may not be controlled by the issuer of the debt. In some instances, sale or refinancing of the underlying equity interests may be the only means of generating cash flows to service the debt instruments. As a result, there is a rebuttable presumption that a debt instrument collateralized by D0be con.5(tien)4nr57c90006 Tc.0718 Tw[]TJ20TDequit

c. Liquidity facilities

d. Overcollateralization

e. Waiting period for distributions/paydowns to begin

f. Capitalization of interest

g. Covenants (e.g., loan-to-value trigger provisions)

h. Reliance on ongoing sponsor commitments

i. Source(s) of expected cash flows to service the debt (i.e., dividend distributions from the underlying collateral vs. sale or refinancing of the underlying collateral)

100. While reliance on the sale of underlying equity interests or refinancing at maturity does not preclude the rebuttable presumption from being overcome, it does require that other characteristics mitigate the inherent reliance on equity valuation risk to support the transformation of underlying equity risk to bond risk. As reliance on sale or refinancing increases, the more compelling the other factors needed to overcome the rebuttable presumption become.

101. The analysis of the underlying structure should be conducted and documented by a reporting entity at the time such an investment is acquired. The level of documentation and analysis required will vary based on the characteristics of the individual debt instrument, as well as the level of third-party and/or non-insurance company market validation to which the issuance has been subjected. For example, a debt instrument collateralized by fewer, less diversified equity interests would require more extensive and persuasive documented analysis than one collateralized by a large and diversified portfolio of equity interests. Likewise, a debt instrument that has been successfully marketed to unrelated and/or non-insurance company investors may provide enhanced market validation of the structure compared to one held only by related party and/or insurance company investors where capital relief may be the primary motivation for the securitization.

Investment Examples – Analysis of ABS Under the Meaningful Cash Flows and Substantive Credit Enhancement Concepts

is expected to absorb all losses from the debt instrument. Therefore, the holder of the debt instrument is in a substantively different economic position than if the holder owned the ABS Issuer's unguaranteed assets directly. When guarantees do not cover 100% of principal and interest as the Agency guarantees do in this example, it is still appropriate to determine if the guarantee is substantive in accordance with the requirements of the principles-based bond definition to determine if the holder is in a substantively different economic position than if the holder held the underlying assets directly.

105. Example 4 – Debt Instrument Issued by an SPV: A reporting entity invested in a debt instrument issued by a SPV. Payments under the instrument are secured by a note, a legal assignment from the borrower of a lease for real property and an assignment of the lease payments from an operating entity tenant. Additional security is provided by a mortgage on the leased property (the "underlying collateral"). The leased property is owned by the borrower under the note and the SPV does not have any ownership interest in the underlying collateral, though it has legal recourse to it through the mortgage. The tenant makes

participant (i.e., a knowledgeable investor transacting at arm's length) would consider this level of overcollateralization to put the investor in a substantially different economic position than owning the underlying property directly.

109. For the purpose of determining whether there is substantive overcollateralization, it is appropriate to consider any expected economic depreciation, if it is reasonably expected, but it is not appropriate to consider any expected economic appreciation. Note that a debt instrument with a LTV that is expected to decrease over time is not necessarily deemed to have substantive overcollateralization.

110. <u>Example 5 – Debt Instrument Issued by an SPV With Lease Term Less than Debt Instrument</u>: A reporting entity invested in a debt instrument with the same characteristics as described in Example 4, except that the existing lease at the time of origination has a contractual term that is shorter than that of the debt instrument. It is expected with a high degree of probability that the lease will be renewed, and a substantial leasing market exists to replace the lessee should they not renew. However, in the unlikely circumstance that the property cannot be re-leased, there would not be enough cash flows to service the scheduled principal and interest payments, and the property would have to be liquidated to pay off the debt upon default.

111. <u>Example 5 – Rationale</u>: All details of this example, including the expected collateral cash flows, are consistent with those in Example 4, except that the cash flows in Example 4 are contractually fixed for the duration of the debt while the cash flows in this example are subject to re-leasing risk. Notwithstanding the involvement of re-leasing risk, the reporting entity concluded that the ability to re-lease the property was highly predictable and supported the conclusion that the underlying collateral was expected to produce meaningful cash flows to service the debt.

112. This distinction is to highlight that the expected cash flows of a cash-generating non-financial asset may or may not be contractually fixed for the term of the bond. Certain securitized cash flow streams may not by their nature lend themselves to long-term contracts (e.g., single-family home rentals), but may nevertheless lend themselves to the production of predictable cash flows. While the non-contractual nature of the cash flows is an important consideration in determining whether a non-financial asset is expected to produce meaningful cash flows to service the debt, it does not, in and of itself, preclude a reporting entity from concluding that the assets are expected to produce meaningful cash flows.

113. <u>Example 6 – Lease in SPV with 80% Balloon Payment:</u> A reporting entity invested in a debt instrument issued by a SPV that owns equipment which is leased to an equipment operator. The equipment operator makes lease payments to the SPV, which are passed through to service the SPV's debt obligation. While the debt is outstanding, the equipment and lease are held in trust and pledged as collateral for the debtholders. Should a default occur, the debtholders can foreclose on and liquidate the equipment as well as submit an unsecured lease claim in the lessee's bankruptcy for any defaulted lease payments. The LTV at origination is 70%.

114. The existing lease payments are sufficient to cover all interest payments and all scheduled debt amortization payments over the life of the debt instrument. However, at maturity, there is a balloon payment due, totaling 80% of the original outstanding principal amount. The corresponding lease has no balloon payment due at lease maturity, so the SPV will either need to refinance the debt or sell the underlying equipment to service the final debt balloon payment. The LTV at maturity is expected to increase to 95% considering the scheduled principal amortization payments net of the expected economic depreciation in the equipment value over the term of the debt. The equipment is expected to be subject to some market value volatility and periods of lower liquidity at certain points in time but has a predictable value range and ready market over a longer period of time, such that the equipment could be liquidated over a reasonable period of time, if necessary.

included to ensure recognition of an

the pass through of the underlying cash flows, or whether uncertainty as to the timing or amount of cash flows is introduced by the structure.

iv. Requested interested parties to work with NAIC staff in proposing revisions to capture the elements that may introduce equity-like characteristics into the main components of the bond definition.

b. In addition to the revisions incorporated from the July 18, 2022, call, the Working Group also heard comments and elected not to incorporate revisions for the following items:

i. The Working Group identified that non-bond items that are specifically scoped into SSAP No. 26 will not be identified in the bond definition. The Working Group was explicit that the inclusion of an investment in-scope of SSAP No. 26 did not make the investment a "bond" and such a distinction is necessary to prevent scope-creep or inference of other investments into the bond definition. For example, although SVO-Identified Bond ETFs, SVO-Identified CTLs and certificates of deposit that exceed one year are explicit inclusions to SSAP No. 26 and reported on Schedule D-1, these investments are not bonds.

ii. The Working Group did not incorporate industry-proposed edits to limit guidance that requires the consideration of all returns to equity-backed ABS. Rather, the Working Group clarified that all investments that have contractual principal and interest that can fluctuate due to a referenced variable shall consider all returns in excess of principal repayment as interest when determining whether the investment qualifies for bond reporting under the principles-based definition.

iii. The Working Group did not agree with comments supporting ABS to be reported as cash equivalents or short-term investments even if acquired with a maturity date that is less than 90-days or 1-year away. To ensure proper assessment under the bond definition, and reporting based on the underlying components of the investments, the Working Group retained the provisions that all ABS shall be captured within SSAP No. 43 and be reported on Schedule D-1-2.

iv. The Working Group did not direct changes to the bond definition or issue paper after considering the industry "Lease-Backed Securities Working Group" May 5, 2022, comment letter. That letter, which is consistent with their prior comments, proposes to capture securities as ICO if they pass-through cash flows unaltered (such as with certain lease-backed structures) and are supported primarily by a single rated credit payor, though principal repayment is not fully supported by the obligation of that payor. The discussion noted that these securities shall follow the guidance for ABS if they are not fully supported by an underlying contractual obligation of a single operating entity, including the criteria for substantive credit enhancement and meaningful cash flows. The Working Group identified that these structures are not based on the credit worthiness of a single operating entity and rely on the underlying collateral for re

viii. Revisions to SSAP No. 43 to identify Freddie-Mac When Issued Trust Certificates, pursuant to INT 22-01: Freddie Mac When Issued K-Deal (WI Trust) Certificates as an explicit scope inclusion.

ix. Revisions to SSAP No. 43 to clarify the guidance for prospective adjustment method for high-credit quality investments, and on the assessment of cash flows.

Working Group adopted the SSAP revisions reflected in these documents on August 12,

ii. Revisions clarified that residuals shall be accounted for at the lower of Allowable Earned Yield method or fair value, or under the practical expedient.

iii. Revisions eliminated the guidance that directed reclassification of residuals to other SSAPs and reporting schedules in situations when the residual tranches cease to meet the definition of residual tranches. With the deletion, once classified as a residual, an investment would retain that classification and reporting until it is disposed by the reporting entity.

iv. Revisions separate the OTTI calculation between items measured at the Allowable Earned Yield method and those that follow the practical expedient.

v. Revisions incorporate transition guidance for residuals that were accounted for under a different SSAP prior to the effective date.

vi. Revisions prescribe a January 1, 2025, effective date, but permit early adoption of the residual guidance.

History of Definition / Scope Development of SSAP No. 43 – Before the Principles-Based Definition

The following section details the historical development of SSAP No. 43 along with the prior benefits for reporting investments in scope of SSAP No. 43 and key issues from the prior guidance. Due to various revisions that have been reflected since its original adoption this information is retained for historical reference on the SSAP No. 43 guidance prior to the adoption of the principles-based bond proposal.

124. SSAP No. 43—Loan-backed and Structured Securities was originally effective with the SAP codification and resulted with separate guidance for “bonds” (in SSAP No. 26) and “loan-backed and structured securities” (in SSAP No. 43). (The initial guidance indicated that investments in scope of SSAP No. 43 met the definition of a bond in SSAP No. 26—Bonds, excluding Loan-backed and Structured Securities) Although most of the guidance between the original SSAP No. 26 and SSAP No. 43 was the same, the guidance in SSAP No. 43 recognized the need to review (at least quarterly) the assumptions and resulting cash flows of the underlying loans, as changes in assumptions could necessitate a recalculation of the effective yield or other-than-temporary impairment.

125. The original issue paper to SSAP No. 43 (Issue Paper No. 43) cited guidance originally contained in Chapter 1, Bonds and Loaned Backed and Structured Securities, from the Accounting Practices and Procedures Manual of the Life and Accident and Health Insurance Companies. The issue paper identified that the Accounting Practices and Procedures Manual for Property and Casualty Insurance Companies contained similar guidance. In this Issue Paper No. 43, and the original SSAP No. 43, loan-backed securities were defined as “pass-through certificates, collateralized mortgage obligations (CMOs) and other securitized loans…-1.153 TD.00048TD.053 TD.000f9ocedurarte1987 Tw780 TcTf…-1.12.541 (R153 TD.00048TD.”3.945000

4. Loan-backed securities are issued by special-purpose trusts (issuer) established by a sponsoring parent organization. Mortgage loans or other securities securing the loan-backed obligation are acquired by the issuer and pledged to an independent trustee under the issuer s obligation has been fully satisfied. The investor can only look to the issuer s assets (primarily the trusteed assets or third parties such as insurers or guarantors) for repayment of the obligation. As a result, the sponsor and its other affiliates may have no financial obligation under the instrument, although one of those entities may retain the responsibility for servicing the underlying mortgage loans. Some sponsors do guarantee the performance of the underlying loans.

5. Loan-backed securities meet the definition of assets as defined in *SSAP No. 4—Assets and Nonadmitted Assets* and are admitted asset to the extent they conform to the requirements of this statement.

127. In agenda item 2007-26, FAS 156: Accounting for Servicing of Financial Assets an amendment of FASB Statement No. 140, the Working Group adopted with modification FAS 156 in SSAP No. 91R—Accounting for Transfers and Servicing of Financial Assets and Extinguishments of Liabilities, revising the terminology for “retained interests” to “interests that continue to be held by the transferor.” This action also clarified that beneficial interests from the sale of loan-backed and structured securities shall be accounted for in accordance with SSAP No. 43. This initial adoption identified that the holder of a beneficial interest in securitized financial assets should recognize the excess of all cash flows attributed to the beneficial interest estimated at the acquisition date over the initial investment as interest income over the life of the beneficial interest using the effective yield method.

128. In 2009, the Working Group adopted a substantively-revised SSAP No. 43 (effective September 30, 2009). The focus of the substantive revisions was to revise the valuation and impairment requirements based on the cash flows expected to be collected for the securities, rather than fair value. Although the focus of the revisions was inclusion of impairment guidance based on whether an entity has an intent to sell, whether an entity does not have the intent and ability to hold a security, and when there is a non-interest related decline if there is no intent to sell and the entity has the intent and ability to hold, the revisions resulted in a significant rewrite of the guidance in SSAP No. 43, including the guidance for beneficial interests. This guidance expanded the prior scope inclusion from “beneficial interests from the sale of LBSS,” to include “purchased beneficial interests in securitized financial assets.”

129. In agenda item 2010-12, Clarify Definitions of Loan-Backed and Structured Securities, the Working Group received a regulator-sponsored, nonsubstantive Form A with a proposal to revise the definitions of a loan-backed and structured security (LBSS). As a result of this proposal, the definition was revised to eliminate the reference to “securitized loans” and instead refer to “securitized assets.” These revisions were adopted with an effective date of January 1, 2011.

a. Although the agenda item simply identifies that this item was exposed in August 2010, and then adopted after a single exposure in October 2010, with an effective date of January 1, 2011, there were significant comments received during the exposure period. In short summary, these comments highlighted that the scope of the changes were intended to move fixed-income assets that had been accounted for as bonds under SSAP No. 26 to SSAP No. 43 as LBSS. Particularly, the comments noted concerns with the movement of equipment trust certificates and credit tenant loans from the accounting provisions of SSAP No. 26 to the accounting rules of SSAP No. 43. These comments stated that “instruments with radically different sources of cash flows and risk characteristics utilize trust structures, and not all should be classified as loan-backed.” There were no changes incorporated to the proposed guidance as a result of these comments, and the revisions were adopted as exposed.

130. In 2019, revisions to the definition and scope section were also adopted to clarify the identification of affiliate/related party transactions (agenda item 2019-03) as well as to explicitly capture mortgage-referenced securities issued from a government sponsored enterprise in scope of SSAP No. 43 (agenda item

2018-17). The inclusion of mortgage-referenced securities was a distinct departure from the "trust" structure required in determining inclusion within scope of SSAP No. 43, but was incorporated as the of a credit risk transfer in which the issued security is tied to a referenced pool of mortgages. These securities do not qualify as loan-backed securities as the pool of mortgages are not held in trust and the amounts due under the investment are not backed or secured by the mortgage loans. Rather, these items reflect instruments in which the payments received are linked to the credit and principal payment risk of the underlying mortgage loan borrowers captured in the referenced pool of mortgages. For these instruments, reporting entity holders may not receive a return of their full principal as principal repayment is contingent on repayment by the mortgage loan borrowers in the referenced pool of mortgages. Unless specifically noted, the provisions for loan-backed securities within this standard apply to mortgage-referenced securities.

b. Capturing an investment in scope of SSAP No. 26 or SSAP No. 43 may result in amortized cost reporting and a delay in recognizing decreases in value or other-than-temporary impairments than if the assets held in trust were reported separately on the statutory financial statements.

   i. Under the SSAP No. 43 bifurcated impairment model, an entity is not required to recognize an OTTI or deviate from an amortized cost measurement as long as the entity can assert that they have the intent and ability to hold the SSAP No. 43 security to recover the amortized cost basis and there is no non-interest related decline. (This has been a key factor in the PPN design, as a high-quality bond is placed in trust (along with other assets), and the bond – over several years – will single-handedly satisfy the contractual requirements of the 43 issued security, preventing any recognition of OTTI or a reduction of NAIC designation even when the other securities held in trust could completely default to zero.)

   ii. The SSAP No. 43 bifurcated impairment can be considered an advantage over SSAP No. 26 as under SSAP No. 43, if there is an intent and ability to hold the asset, a reporting entity only has to recognize an OTTI for the portion of the non-interest related loss. Under SSAP No. 26, if there is any assessed OTTI (despite if interest or credit related), a reporting entity must recognize an OTTI down to the then-current fair value for the security.

   iii. Prior to the principles-based bond project, guidance in SSAP No. 43 did not differentiate between different types of tranches or payment streams for the issued securities. This is easiest to illustrate through the "equity" tranche of a SSAP No. 43 investment but could be a factor if payments are provided sequentially. (Sequential payments are used to pay the senior notes first, until paid in full, before payments are allocated to junior notes.) For the "equity" tranche, which is a term ed

