

Regulatory Comments

From: Mark Leavesley <no-reply@cuanswers.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2015 11:20 AM
To: _Regulatory Comments
Subject: Risk-Based Capital Comment

To: Regulatory Comments
From: Mark Leavesley
Thunder Bay Area Credit Union

02/23/2015

Dear Mr. Poliquin:

History has shown that the cooperative model of credit unions is a successful one. The diverse nature of our charters has meant that despite little capital—except member good will and loyalty—the forefathers and current stakeholders of the industry have built the second largest financial system in America today, serving close to 40 million households with savings of nearly \$1 trillion. The proposed rule will serve to hinder that diversity by placing credit unions into more general categories. Protect the true nature of credit unions by ending this rule so we can celebrate the charters that made this industry possible, from the \$60 billion Navy FCU to any of the \$1-5 million “family” credit unions. From the farming communities of South Dakota serving family farms with loans to the taxi drivers from NYC to San Francisco. From the raw recruit in San Diego to the forward deployed military professional in Diego Garcia, Korea, or Afghanistan. From the auto worker in Detroit or Tennessee to the high tech communities of Silicon Valley.

I believe the revised RBC rule penalizes credit unions for specific activities such as real estate lending, member business lending, and credit unions chartered to assist the un-bankable by placing a capital tax on the resulting assets of low income or poor credit lending. We believe the end result will be thousands of homogenous balance sheets in 2025 that you can easily understand from a supervisory perspective. However, this current risk posture of the NCUA cannot fail but to lead credit unions to shy away from diversity or cooperative reason for the charter and field of membership. The end result of this rule will ultimately force credit unions into potential areas of investment and lending that the credit union lacks experience with or create industry wide concentrations that could be impacted by similar economic variables. In and of itself, this rule creates more risk than it proposes to control.

Our credit union leadership team feels that while there is no question the NCUA did make changes in the RBC rule with respect to such items as the definition of “complex” credit unions, eliminating IRR, and extending the implementation timeframe, the impact to the industry if RBC2 is passed remains highly suspect and likely detrimental. Although the proposal was 450 pages, far too many were reviews of the comments and the NCUA’s rebuttal or disregard of them. In a vacuum, the changes accepted by the NCUA would appear good but in fact are designed to draw credit union leadership away from impact of the rule as a whole. We believe that the RBC rule will increase costs to members, expand the right of the NCUA to interfere in the governance of credit unions through Prompt Corrective Action (“PCA”), and threaten the financial stability of the industry long term.

Although Congress has stated NCUA must develop risk based capital standards and they must be formulated in a similar fashion as the banking industry, we do not believe Congress wished to create a tax on members and abandon the cooperative principals of credit unions. Since the publication in the Federal Register the actual

costs associated with this capital tax have been challenged. Recently NAFCU published an estimate that credit unions will need to raise an additional \$760 million dollars in capital to achieve their current capital levels. Because credit unions only have one source of earnings, that additional capital tax must come directly out of our members' pockets through a reduction in savings rates, increase in loan rates, and potentially changes to transaction fees. We believe NCUA's estimate falls far short of the actual cost to the industry and again focused on the potential risk to the insurance fund rather than those they regulate and ultimately their members . In an effort to remain the best financial resource for our members, we would encourage the NCUA to withdraw the proposed rule altogether.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Leavesley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some underlining at the end.

Mark Leavesley
Thunder Bay Area Credit Union