
JOINT RELEASE

**U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN)**

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SEC and FinCEN Sign Information Sharing Agreement

Washington, DC, Dec. 21, 2006 – The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) today announced that they have reached an agreement for the routine exchange of examination and enforcement information relating to SEC-regulated firms' compliance with the Bank Secrecy Act (BSA). The goal of the agreement is to assist in the identification, deterrence, and interdiction of terrorist financing and money laundering. The agreement will better ensure that SEC-regulated firms have robust anti-money laundering programs and assist the agencies' efforts to identify financial institutions with significant BSA violations or deficiencies and take enforcement and other action when appropriate. The BSA was designed to protect the U.S. financial system from money laundering and other financial crime through a system of regulatory controls and reporting aimed at increasing transparency in the U.S. financial system. SEC-regulated firms include, among others, broker-dealers in securities and investment companies.

The agencies entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under which the SEC will provide FinCEN with detailed information on a quarterly basis regarding the SEC's and the securities self-regulatory organizations' anti-money laundering examination and enforcement activities. For its part under the agreement, FinCEN will provide assistance and analytical reports to the SEC. The MOU is consistent with those that FinCEN has reached with the federal banking agencies and the Internal Revenue Service.

"This agreement is another cornerstone in FinCEN's continuing effort to strengthen communication and cooperation among federal regulators that examine financial institutions for compliance with the Bank Secrecy Act and other anti-money laundering regulations to further support our ability to follow up on and address financial crime," said Robert Werner, Director of FinCEN.

SEC Chairman Christopher Cox said, "We are pleased to formalize our already strong working relationship with FinCEN. The agreement will improve our joint efforts to ensure aggressive anti-money laundering compliance programs to deter potential money laundering and terrorist financing activities in the U.S."

The SEC and FinCEN will meet regularly as part of the agencies' continuing efforts to improve anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing compliance.

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The SEC is an independent federal agency responsible for administering the federal securities laws. The SEC and the self-regulatory organizations (SROs) it oversees conduct examinations of the anti-money laundering obligations of securities firms and enforce compliance with the relevant SEC and SRO rules.

The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), a bureau within the U.S. Department of the Treasury, is the administrator of the BSA. FinCEN has promulgated regulations requiring financial institutions to report suspicious transactions, as well as implement anti-money laundering and customer identification programs. Financial institutions currently subject to these requirements include, among others, broker-dealers in securities and mutual funds.