

connection with certain services, transactions, and underwritings, (ii) excessive layering of fees, and (iii) overly complex fund structures, which are the concerns underlying the limits in sections 12(d)(1)(A) and (B) of the Act.

8. Applicants request an exemption from sections 17(a)(1) and 17(a)(2) of the Act to permit persons that are Affiliated Persons, or Second-Tier Affiliates, of the Funds, solely by virtue of certain ownership interests, to effectuate purchases and redemptions in-kind. The deposit procedures for in-kind purchases of Creation Units and the redemption procedures for in-kind redemptions of Creation Units will be the same for all purchases and redemptions and Deposit Instruments and Redemption Instruments will be valued in the same manner as those investment positions currently held by the Funds. Applicants also seek relief from the prohibitions on affiliated transactions in section 17(a) to permit a Fund to sell its shares to and redeem its shares from a Fund of Funds, and to engage in the accompanying in-kind transactions with the Fund of Funds.³ The purchase of Creation Units by a Fund of Funds directly from a Fund will be accomplished in accordance with the policies of the Fund of Funds and will be based on the NAVs of the Funds.

9. Section 6(c) of the Act permits the Commission to exempt any persons or transactions from any provision of the Act if such exemption is necessary or appropriate in the public interest and consistent with the protection of investors and the purposes fairly intended by the policy and provisions of the Act. Section 12(d)(1)(J) of the Act provides that the Commission may exempt any person, security, or transaction, or any class or classes of persons, securities, or transactions, from any provision of section 12(d)(1) if the exemption is consistent with the public interest and the protection of investors. Section 17(b) of the Act authorizes the Commission to grant an order permitting a transaction otherwise prohibited by section 17(a) if it finds that (a) the terms of the proposed transaction are fair and reasonable and do not involve overreaching on the part of any person concerned; (b) the

³ The requested relief would apply to direct sales of shares in Creation Units by a Fund to a Fund of Funds and redemptions of those shares. Applicants, moreover, are not seeking relief from section 17(a) for, and the requested relief will not apply to, transactions where a Fund could be deemed an Affiliated Person, or a Second-Tier Affiliate, of a Fund of Funds because an Adviser or an entity controlling, controlled by or under common control with an Adviser provides investment advisory services to that Fund of Funds.

proposed transaction is consistent with the policies of each registered investment company involved; and (c) the proposed transaction is consistent with the general purposes of the Act.

For the Commission, by the Division of Investment Management, under delegated authority.

Brent J. Fields,
Secretary.
[FR Doc. 2017–28166 Filed 12–28–17; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 8011–01–P

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
[Disaster Declaration #15414 and #15415; ALASKA Disaster Number AK–00037]

Presidential Declaration of a Major Disaster for Public Assistance Only for the State of Alaska

AGENCY: U.S. Small Business Administration.
ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This is a Notice of the Presidential declaration of a major disaster for Public Assistance Only for the State of Alaska (FEMA–4351–DR), dated 12/20/2017.
Incident: Severe Storm.
Incident Period: 09/28/2017 through 09/30/2017.
DATES: Issued on 12/20/2017.
Physical Loan Application Deadline Date: 02/19/2018.
Economic Injury (EIDL) Loan Application Deadline Date: 09/20/2018.
ADDRESSES: Submit completed loan applications to: U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing And Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: A Escobar, Office of Disaster Assistance, U.S. Small Business Administration, 409 3rd Street SW, Suite 6050, Washington, DC 20416, (202) 205–6734.
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice is hereby given that as a result of the President’s major disaster declaration on 12/20/2017, Private Non-Profit organizations that provide essential services of a governmental nature may file disaster loan applications at the address listed above or other locally announced locations.
The following areas have been determined to be adversely affected by the disaster:
Primary Counties: North Slope Borough.
The Interest Rates are:

	Percent
Non-Profit Organizations Without Credit Available Elsewhere	2.500
For Economic Injury: Non-Profit Organizations Without Credit Available Elsewhere	2.500

The number assigned to this disaster for physical damage is 15414B and for economic injury is 154150.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 59008)

Jerome Edwards,
Acting Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance.
[FR Doc. 2017–28162 Filed 12–28–17; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 8025–01–P

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
[Docket No. SSA–2017–0067]

Rate for Assessment on Direct Payment of Fees to Representatives in 2018

AGENCY: Social Security Administration (SSA).
ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are announcing that the assessment percentage rate under the Social Security Act (Act), is 6.3 percent for 2018.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeffrey C. Blair, Associate General Counsel for Program Law, Office of the General Counsel, Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235–6401.
Phone: (410) 965–3157, email Jeff.Blair@ssa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A claimant may appoint a qualified individual as a representative to act on his or her behalf in matters before the Social Security Administration (SSA). If the claimant is entitled to past-due benefits and was represented either by an attorney or by a non-attorney representative who has met certain prerequisites, the Act provides that we may withhold up to 25 percent of the past-due benefits and use that money to pay the representative’s approved fee directly to the representative.

When we pay the representative’s fee directly to the representative, we must collect from that fee payment an assessment to recover the costs we incur in determining and paying representatives’ fees. The Act provides that the assessment we collect will be the lesser of two amounts: A specified dollar limit; or the amount determined

by multiplying the fee we are paying by the assessment percentage rate. (Sections 206(d), 206(e), and 1631(d)(2) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 406(d), 406(e), and 1383(d)(2).)

The Act initially set the dollar limit at \$75 in 2004 and provides that the limit will be adjusted annually based on changes in the cost-of-living. (Sections 206(d)(2)(A) and 1631(d)(2)(C)(ii)(I) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 406(d)(2)(A) and 1383(d)(2)(C)(ii)(I).) The maximum dollar limit for the assessment currently is \$93, as we announced in the **Federal Register** on October 30, 2017 (82 FR 50211).

The Act requires us each year to set the assessment percentage rate at the lesser of 6.3 percent or the percentage rate necessary to achieve full recovery of the costs we incur to determine and pay representatives' fees. (Sections 206(d)(2)(B)(ii) and 1631(d)(2)(C)(ii)(II) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 406(d)(2)(B)(ii) and 1383(d)(2)(C)(ii)(II).)

Based on the best available data, we have determined that the current rate of 6.3 percent will continue for 2018. We will continue to review our costs for these services on a yearly basis.

Michelle King,

Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, and Management.

[FR Doc. 2017-28218 Filed 12-28-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4191-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2014-0387; FMCSA-2016-0002]

Qualifications of Drivers; Applications for Exemptions; Hearing

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The FMCSA announces its response to public comments regarding the granting of exemptions from the hearing requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). Since February 2013, FMCSA has granted a number of exemptions and published numerous **Federal Register** notices requesting public comment on additional exemption applications. This notice responds to the substantive comments we received and announces our intention to continue granting additional exemptions.

DATES: This notice is applicable on December 29, 2017.

ADDRESSES: You may search background documents or comments to the docket for this notice, identified by docket numbers FMCSA-2014-0387 and FMCSA-2016-0002, by visiting the:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for reviewing documents and comments. *Regulations.gov* is available electronically 24 hours each day, 365 days a year; or
- *DOT Docket Management Facility (M-30):* U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building, Ground Floor, Room 12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

Privacy Act: In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(c), DOT solicits comments from the public to better inform its rulemaking process. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to www.regulations.gov, as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at www.dot.gov/privacy.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Christine A. Hydock, Chief, Medical Programs Division, (202) 366-4001, fmcsamedical@dot.gov, FMCSA, Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Room W64-224, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. If you have questions about viewing or submitting material to the docket, contact Docket Services, telephone (202) 366-9826.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), FMCSA may grant an exemption from the safety regulations if it finds "such exemption would likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent such exemption." The current provisions of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) concerning hearing state that a person is physically qualified to drive a CMV if that person first perceives a forced whispered voice in the better ear at not less than 5 feet with or without the use of a hearing aid or, if tested by use of an audiometric device, does not have an average hearing loss in the better ear greater than 40 decibels at 500 Hz, 1,000 Hz, and 2,000 Hz with or without a hearing aid when the audiometric device is calibrated to American National Standard (formerly ASA Standard) Z24.5-1951.

The hearing standard under 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11) was adopted in 1970, with

a revision in 1971 to allow drivers to be qualified under this standard while wearing a hearing aid, 35 FR 6458, 6463 (April 22, 1970) and 36 FR 12857 (July 3, 1971).

On May 25, 2012, FMCSA published a notice requesting public comment on the application from the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) for an exemption from the regulatory requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11) on behalf of 45 deaf drivers (77 FR 31423). The Agency received 570 comments in response to this notice, and 40 of the 45 applicants were granted exemptions (78 FR 7479). Since that time, FMCSA has granted more than 300 hearing exemptions to individuals who do not meet the hearing standard. In doing so, FMCSA has published numerous **Federal Register** notices announcing receipt of hearing exemption applications and requesting public comment.

On September 21, 2015, FMCSA published a notice of receipt of applications from 14 individuals requesting an exemption from the hearing requirement to operate a CMV in interstate commerce (80 FR 57043). The Agency requested comments from all interested parties on whether a driver who cannot meet the hearing standard should be permitted to operate a CMV in interstate commerce. Further, the Agency requested comments on whether a driver who cannot meet the hearing standard should be limited to operating only certain types of vehicles in interstate commerce, for example, vehicles without airbrakes. The public comment period ended on October 21, 2015, and four comments were received, two of which were from drivers in support of hearing exemptions. The other two commenters were the Commercial Vehicle Training Association (CVTA) and the President of the Iowa Association of the Deaf.

On August 1, 2016, FMCSA published a notice of receipt of applications from 33 individuals requesting an exemption from the hearing requirement to operate a CMV in interstate commerce (81 FR 50594). The Agency requested comments from all interested parties on whether a driver who cannot meet the hearing standard should be permitted to operate a CMV in interstate commerce. The public comment period ended on August 31, 2016, and one comment was received from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

II. Discussion of Comments Received

Below is a composite discussion of comments received in response to the notices identified above. The CVTA stated that FMCSA should not grant