

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA  
WEST PALM BEACH DIVISION  
[www.flsb.uscourts.gov](http://www.flsb.uscourts.gov)

In re:

CHAPTER 11

PALM BEACH FINANCE PARTNERS, L.P.,  
PALM BEACH FINANCE II, L.P.,

Case No. 09-36379-PGH  
Case No. 09-36396-PGH  
(Jointly Administered)

Debtors.

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**LIQUIDATING TRUSTEE'S MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF SETTLEMENT  
WITH TERRA PARTNERS, LLC AND PAYMENT OF CONTINGENCY FEE**

**Any interested party who fails to file and serve a written response to this motion within 21 days after the date of service stated in this motion shall, pursuant to Local Rule 9013-1(D), be deemed to have consented to the entry of an order in the form attached to this motion. Any scheduled hearing may then be cancelled.**

Barry E. Mukamal, in his capacity as liquidating trustee ("*Liquidating Trustee*") for the Palm Beach Finance Partners Liquidating Trust ("*Liquidating Trust*"), by and through undersigned counsel, and pursuant to *Fed. R. Bankr. P.* 9019, seeks an Order from this Court approving a settlement of claims that could be asserted against Terra Partners, LLC ("*TPLLC*"). In support of this relief, the Liquidating Trustee states the following:

**I. Factual Background**

**A. The Pre-Petition Activities of PBF I**

1. The Liquidating Trust is the successor to Palm Beach Finance Partners, L.P. ("*PBF I*").

2. PBF I was formed to lend monies in purchase financing transactions supposedly brokered by Thomas Petters and his company, Petters Company, Inc. ("*PCF*") in the consumer

goods business. The idea was that PBF I and other lenders would supply bridge financing to PCI and then later, once goods were received by a particular big box retailer, the retailer would remit the payment to the lender or PCI.

3. In reality, PBF I's investments in PCI were worthless - PCI's purchase and financing transactions were fictitious and part of an elaborate, multi-billion dollar *ponzi* scheme perpetrated by Mr. Petters, Deanna Munson a/k/a Deanna Coleman, Robert White and others. No retailer ever made any payment on the purchase and sale of goods because the deals never existed.

4. On September 24, 2008, federal agents raided Mr. Petters' offices. Thereafter, Mr. Petters' companies were placed into federal receivership. Ultimately, Mr. Petters was convicted of his crimes and sentenced to 50 years in prison. Other persons complicit in the fraud were sentenced to prison sentences as well.

5. On November 30, 2009 ("***Petition Date***"), PBF I commenced a Chapter 11 bankruptcy case by filing a voluntary petition for relief under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Florida ("***Bankruptcy Court***").

6. On October 21, 2010, the Bankruptcy Court entered its Order Confirming Second Amended Plan of Liquidation [ECF No. 444], creating the Liquidating Trust and appointing the Liquidating Trustee as liquidating trustee.

**B. Transfers Made to TPLLC**

7. TPLLC was a limited partner in PBF I.

8. Based on a cash in, cash out analysis, TPLLC received a profit in the amount of \$59,715.69 ("***Profit Distribution***") with respect to its limited partner investment in PBF I.

## II. Settlement Terms

9. The key aspects of the stipulation of settlement between the parties (“*Stipulation*”) are the following:<sup>1</sup>

- a) Upon approval of the Stipulation, TPLLC will pay (or cause to be paid) \$35,829.41 to the Liquidating Trust (“*Settlement Payment*”). The Settlement Payment represents 60% of the Profit Distribution.
- b) The parties shall exchange mutual, general releases; and
- c) TPLLC shall not be entitled to any distribution from the PBF I bankruptcy estate.

## III. Relief Requested

10. The Liquidating Trustee seeks an Order from this Court (a) approving the Stipulation and (b) approving the Contingency Fee (as defined below).

11. Federal Rule of Bankruptcy Procedure 9019 provides in relevant part that [o]n motion . . . and after a hearing on notice to creditors; the debtor . . . and to such other entities as the Court may designate, the Court may approve a compromise or settlement.”

12. Approval of a settlement in a bankruptcy proceeding is within the sole discretion of the Court and will not be disturbed or modified on appeal unless approval or disapproval is an abuse of discretion. *In re Arrow Air*, 85 BR 891 (Bankr. S.D. Fla. 1988).

13. The standards for approval are well settled and require the Court to inquire into the reasonableness of the proposed settlement. *See, e.g., Protective Comm. for Indep. Stockholders of TMT Trailer Ferry, Inc. v. Anderson*, 390 U.S. 414, 424 (1968); *In re W.T. Grant Co.*, 699 F.2d 599, 608 (2d Cir. 1983); *Florida Trailer and Equip. Co. v. Deal*, 284 F.2d 567, 571 (5th Cir. 1960). The inquiry need only determine whether the settlement falls below the

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<sup>1</sup> A copy of the Stipulation is attached as Exhibit 1. To the extent the terms of the agreement differ with the terms set forth in this Motion, the agreement shall control.

lowest point of the range of reasonableness. *See W.T. Grant Co.*, 699 F.2d at 608; *see also In re Martin*, 91 F.3d 389 (3rd Cir. 1996); *In re Louise's Inc.*, 211 B.R. 798 (D. Del. 1997) (setting forth considerations by the Court for approval of a settlement, including: (i) the probability of success in litigation, (ii) the likely difficulties in collection; (iii) the complexity of the litigation involved, and the expense, inconvenience and delay necessarily attending it; and (iv) the paramount interest of the creditors.

**A. *The Stipulation Ought to be Approved***

14. Based upon the above legal principles, the Liquidating Trustee asserts that the Stipulation falls well above the lowest point of the range of reasonableness and thus, should be approved.

*Probability of success in litigation*

15. The Liquidating Trustee, on behalf of the Liquidating Trust, could assert that the Profit Distribution to TPLLC was a fraudulent transfer under federal or state law, or alternatively, that TPLLC was unjustly enriched by the Profit Distribution.

16. The Liquidating Trustee believes that he will likely succeed in prosecuting either of these causes of action.

17. Nonetheless, the Liquidating Trustee acknowledges that there are risks inherent in all litigation and there is the possibility that TPLLC, or other similarly situated parties, could raise certain issues or defenses that potentially could impact the Liquidating Trustee's claims.

*Collectability*

18. Collectability is not an issue in dispute between the parties.

*Complexity of litigation and attendant expense, inconvenience and delay*

19. This is a meaningful consideration that militates in favor of approval of the Stipulation.

20. In sum, although many of the claims outlined above are typical claims litigated before this Court, they still potentially require retention of experts and extensive fact discovery before a trial could take place. The result of these efforts will be substantial fees of professionals that could diminish the net result of any recovery to creditors in the PBF I case.

21. Moreover, assuming the Liquidating Trustee was successful in obtaining a judgment against TPLLC, he would then have to engage in collection efforts. Again, this would result in the estate incurring additional fees and delay.

22. The Stipulation addresses these concerns. The parties avoid litigating fact specific claims, with the attendant expense and delay of litigation being nullified.

*Paramount interest of creditors*

23. The Settlement Payment represents a 60% recovery of the Profit Distribution and a waiver of any potential or corresponding claim. This result gives certainty to the estate and avoids the risk, expense and delay attendant with litigation. As such, the Stipulation is in the paramount interest of PBF I's creditors and should be approved.

**B. The Contingency Fee Ought to be Approved**

24. Pursuant to the Plan and this Court's Order Approving the Trustee's Motion to Approve Hybrid Form of Compensation [ECF No. 223], Meland Russin & Budwick, P.A. ("**MRB**") is entitled to a contingency fee of 10% for any affirmative recovery it obtains on behalf of the Liquidating Trust without further order of the Court ("**Contingency Fee**").

25. As such, MRB requests that the Contingency Fee be paid from the Settlement Payment without further Order from this Court.

WHEREFORE, the Liquidating Trustee requests that this Court enter an Order (similar in form to the Order attached as Exhibit 2) (1) approving the Stipulation; (2) approving payment of the Contingency Fee and (3) granting such other relief this Court deems just and proper.

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that, on November 8, 2011, a true and correct copy of the foregoing was served via the Court's Notice of Electronic Filing on those parties listed on the attached Exhibit 3; and via U.S. Mail to the parties listed on the matrix attached as Exhibit 4.

s/ Jessica L. Wasserstrom  
Jessica L. Wasserstrom, Esquire  
Florida Bar No. 985820  
[jwasserstrom@melandrussin.com](mailto:jwasserstrom@melandrussin.com)  
MELAND RUSSIN & BUDWICK, P.A.  
3000 Southeast Financial Center  
200 South Biscayne Boulevard  
Miami, Florida 33131  
Telephone: (305) 358-6363  
Telecopy: (305) 358-1221

*Attorneys for Barry E. Mukamal,  
Liquidating Trustee*

**STIPULATION OF SETTLEMENT**

This Stipulation of Settlement ("***Stipulation***") is entered into on \_\_\_\_\_, 2011 by and between (a) Barry E. Mukamal, in his capacity as liquidating trustee ("***Liquidating Trustee***") of the Palm Beach Finance Partners Liquidating Trust ("***Liquidating Trust***") and (b) Terra Partners, LLC ("***TPLLC***") (the Liquidating Trustee and TPLLC are at times individually referred to as a "***Party***" or collectively, the "***Parties***"). The terms of this Stipulation are as follows:

**RECITALS**

A. On November 30, 2009 ("***Petition Date***"), Palm Beach Finance Partners, L.P. ("***PBF P***") commenced a Chapter 11 bankruptcy case by filing a voluntary petition for relief under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Florida ("***Bankruptcy Court***");

B. On October 21, 2010, the Bankruptcy Court entered its Order Confirming Second Amended Plan of Liquidation [ECF No. 444], creating the Liquidating Trust and appointing the Liquidating Trustee as liquidating trustee.

C. The Liquidating Trustee, on behalf of the Liquidating Trust, asserts certain claims against TPLLC (the "***Potential Litigation***");

D. TPLLC expressly denies the claims that could be asserted in the Potential Litigation;

E. The Liquidating Trustee and TPLLC have engaged in discussions in an attempt to resolve any and all issues, including the claims that could be raised in the Potential Litigation;

F. To avoid the continued expense and risk of adverse outcome arising from the Potential Litigation, as well as incurring costs and expenses associated therewith, among other reasons, the Parties have agreed to resolve the Potential Litigation pursuant to the terms and conditions of this Stipulation.

{Firm Clients/4190/4190-7/00981664.DOC.}1

**NOW, WHEREFORE**, it is stipulated, consented to and agreed, by and among the Parties as follows:

1. **No admission of liability.** The Parties acknowledge that this Stipulation is a compromise and settlement of a controversy. No Party admits, and each expressly denies, any liability on its part.

2. **Entire agreement.** This Stipulation constitutes the entire agreement and understanding between the Parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and there are no other stipulations, agreements, representations, or warranties other than those specifically set forth herein. All prior agreements and understandings between the Parties concerning the subject matter hereof are superseded by the terms of this Stipulation.

3. **Settlement Payment.** In full and final settlement of the Potential Litigation, TPLLC shall pay (or cause to be paid) \$35,829.41 (the "**Settlement Payment**") within 20 days from the date of the entry of an Order by the Bankruptcy Court approving this Stipulation. The Settlement Payment may be made via (i) wire transfer pursuant to written instructions to be provided by the Liquidating Trustee or his counsel or (ii) check made payable to "Barry E. Mukamal, Liquidating Trustee" and delivered to Jonathan S. Feldman, Esq., Meland Russin & Budwick, P.A., 200 South Biscayne Blvd., Suite 3000, Miami, Florida 33131.

4. **No entitlement to distribution.** TPLLC agrees that it shall not be entitled to any monetary distribution whatsoever from the Liquidating Trust or PBF I. To the extent TPLLC has scheduled or filed any proof of claim or proof of interest in the PBF I bankruptcy case, such claim or interest shall be deemed disallowed in its entirety and be stricken.

5. **General releases between the Parties.**

A. For purposes of this Stipulation, the term "**Claims**" shall mean any obligations, claims, causes of action, demands of any type that a party may presently have, may have



or have had in the past, upon or by reason of any matter, cause or thing whatsoever, including without limitation any and all obligations, claims, causes of actions and demands of any kind whatsoever, at law or in equity, indirect, derivative, or direct, known or unknown, discovered or undiscovered, including, but not limited to, those claims that could have been asserted in the Potential Litigation.

B. Upon approval of this Stipulation by final order of the Bankruptcy Court and payment of the Settlement Payment, the Liquidating Trustee, on behalf of the Liquidating Trust and PBF I, waives, releases and holds harmless, now and forever, TPLLC from any and all Claims that the Liquidating Trustee, the Liquidating Trust or PBF I may have against TPLLC; provided that nothing herein shall be deemed to release, waive or otherwise limit any rights or obligations arising out of this Stipulation. The scope of this release shall not impact, impair or alter in any manner any Claims whatsoever that the Liquidating Trustee, on behalf of the Liquidating Trust or PBF I, may have against any parties other than TPLLC, including but not limited to Claims against any alleged concurrent or consecutive tortfeasors, if any.

C. Upon approval of this Stipulation by final order of the Bankruptcy Court and payment of the Settlement Payment, TPLLC waives, releases and holds harmless, now and forever, the Liquidating Trustee, the Liquidating Trust and PBF I from any and all Claims that TPLLC may have against the Liquidating Trustee, the Liquidating Trust or PBF I; provided that this provision does not release, waive or otherwise limit any rights or obligations arising out of this Stipulation.

5. **Authorization to bind.** The individuals signing below represent and warrant that they have the authority to execute this Stipulation on behalf of the applicable Party and bind them to its terms.

6. **Review/No Duress.** Each of the Parties acknowledges that he, she or it has read all of the terms of this Stipulation, has had an opportunity to consult with counsel of his, her or its own choosing or voluntarily waived such right, and enters into those terms voluntarily and without duress.

7. **Attorneys' fees and costs.** Each Party shall bear its own attorneys' fees and costs in connection with the negotiation of this Stipulation and motions and orders as may be necessary to obtain the approval of this Stipulation by the Bankruptcy Court; provided that that in the event of any litigation between the Parties under this Stipulation or arising as a result of a default under this Stipulation, the prevailing Party shall be entitled to reasonable attorneys' fees and costs related thereto, including, but not limited to, those incurred at all trial and appellate levels.

8. **No waiver of modification.** This Stipulation and any of the specific items, covenants, and conditions contained herein, may not be waived, changed, altered or modified except by an instrument in writing signed by the Party against whom enforcement of such change is sought.

9. **Effective date.** This Stipulation shall be effective upon execution by all of the Parties hereto, subject only to approval of this Stipulation by final order of the Bankruptcy Court and payment of the Settlement Payment. Upon it becoming effective, this Stipulation shall be binding on all of the Parties' successors or assigns.

10. **No effect.** If the Bankruptcy Court does not approve this Stipulation, then the Stipulation shall be of no further force or effect, and the Parties shall be restored to their rights as they existed prior to the execution of this Stipulation. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Bankruptcy Court does not approve this Stipulation because any of the Parties have failed to provide the Bankruptcy Court with adequate information to rule on the merits of the Stipulation,

the Parties will use their best efforts to seek reconsideration of any order declining to approve the Stipulation, or to file an amended motion to approve the Stipulation.

11. **Controlling law.** This Stipulation shall in all respects be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida applicable to contracts made and to be performed wholly within the State of Florida and by federal law to the extent the same has preempted the laws of the State of Florida.

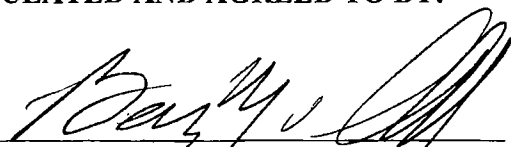
12. **Counterparts.** This Stipulation may be executed in any number of counterparts and by different parties hereto in separate counterparts, each of which when so executed shall be deemed to be an original and all of which taken together shall constitute one and the same Stipulation. Delivery of an executed counterpart of a signature page to this Stipulation by facsimile shall be effective as delivery of a manually executed counterpart of this Stipulation.

13. **Construction.** This Stipulation shall be deemed to have been jointly drafted by the Parties, and in construing and interpreting this Stipulation, no provision shall be construed and interpreted for or against any of the Parties because such provision or any other provision of the Stipulation as a whole is purportedly prepared or requested by such Party.

14. **Jurisdiction.** The Bankruptcy Court shall retain exclusive jurisdiction to enforce the terms of this Stipulation.

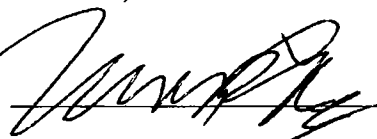
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**STIPULATED AND AGREED TO BY:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Barry E. Mukamal, Liquidating Trustee

Date: 11/4/11

Terra Partners, LLC

By:   
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: 11/2/11

**PROPOSED**

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA  
WEST PALM BEACH DIVISION  
[www.flsb.uscourts.gov](http://www.flsb.uscourts.gov)

In re:

CHAPTER 11

PALM BEACH FINANCE PARTNERS, L.P.,  
PALM BEACH FINANCE II, L.P.,

Case No. 09-36379-PGH  
Case No. 09-36396-PGH  
(Jointly Administered)

Debtors.

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**ORDER GRANTING LIQUIDATING TRUSTEE'S MOTION  
FOR APPROVAL OF SETTLEMENT WITH TERRA PARTNERS, LLC  
AND PAYMENT OF CONTINGENCY FEE [ECF NO. \_\_\_\_]**

**THIS CAUSE** came before the Court upon the Liquidating Trustee's Motion for Approval of Settlement with Terra Partners, LLC ("**TPLLC**") and Payment of Contingency Fee [ECF No. \_\_\_\_] (the "**Motion**").<sup>1</sup> The Court, having reviewed the Motion and noting that a Certificate of No Response and Request for Entry of Order has been filed, finds that the notice of the proposed

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<sup>1</sup> All capitalized terms not defined in this Order shall have the meaning ascribed to such term as set forth in the Motion.

compromise and settlement is sufficient to comply with Bankruptcy Rules 9019 and 2002(a)(3), Local Rule 9013-1(D) and any other applicable notice requirement, and accordingly, it is:

**ORDERED** as follows:

1. The Motion is **GRANTED**. The Settlement is **APPROVED**.
2. TPLLC shall pay (or cause to be paid) \$35,829.41 (the "**Settlement Payment**") within 20 days from the date of the entry of this Order. The Settlement Payment may be made via (i) wire transfer pursuant to written instructions to be provided by the Liquidating Trustee or his counsel or (ii) check made payable to "Barry E. Mukamal, Liquidating Trustee" and delivered to Jessica L. Wasserstrom, Esq., Meland Russin & Budwick, P.A., 200 South Biscayne Blvd., Suite 3000, Miami, Florida 33131.
3. To the extent that TPLLC has any scheduled claim or proof of interest or has filed a proof of claim or proof of interest in the PBF I bankruptcy case, such claim or interest is deemed disallowed in its entirety.
4. The Court retains jurisdiction to enforce the terms of the Settlement.
5. MRB's Contingency Fee in the amount of \$3,582.94 is approved and the Liquidating Trustee is authorized to pay this amount upon funding of the Settlement Payment.

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**Submitted By:**

s/ Jessica L. Wasserstrom  
Jessica L. Wasserstrom, Esquire  
Florida Bar No. 985820  
[jwasserstrom@melandrussin.com](mailto:jwasserstrom@melandrussin.com)  
MELAND RUSSIN & BUDWICK, P.A.  
3000 Southeast Financial Center  
200 South Biscayne Boulevard  
Miami, Florida 33131  
Telephone: (305) 358-6363  
Telecopy: (305) 358-1221  
Attorneys for the Liquidating Trustee

**Copies Furnished To:**

Jessica L. Wasserstrom, Esquire, is directed to serve copies of this Order on all parties in interest and to file a Certificate of Service.

## Mailing Information for Case 09-36379-PGH

### Electronic Mail Notice List

The following is the list of **parties** who are currently on the list to receive email notice/service for this case.

- **Geoffrey S. Aaronson** gaaronson@aspalaw.com, tdmckeown@mckeownpa.com;sbeiley@aspalaw.com;dlinder@aspalaw.com
- **Paul A Avron** pavron@bergersingerman.com, efile@bergersingerman.com
- **Michael S Budwick** mbudwick@melandrussin.com, ltannenbaum@melandrussin.com;mrbnefs@yahoo.com
- **Heidi A Feinman** Heidi.A.Feinman@usdoj.gov
- **Jonathan S. Feldman** jfeldman@melandrussin.com, ltannenbaum@melandrussin.com;mrbnefs@yahoo.com
- **Robert C Furr** bnasralla@furrcohen.com
- **Solomon B Genet** sgenet@melandrussin.com, ltannenbaum@melandrussin.com;mrbnefs@yahoo.com
- **Barry E Mukamal** bankruptcy@marcumllp.com, FL64@ecfcbis.com
- **Office of the US Trustee** USTPRegion21.MM.ECF@usdoj.gov
- **Leslie S. Osborne** rappaport@kennethrappaportlawoffice.com
- **John E Page** jpage@sfl-pa.com, scusack@sfl-pa.com;lrosetto@sfl-pa.com
- **Chad P Pugatch** cpugatch.ecf@rprslaw.com
- **Lane E Roesch** lroesch@whitecase.com, tnelson@whitecase.com
- **Robin J. Rubens** rjr@lklaw.com, cag@lklaw.com
- **Michael L Schuster** mschuster@gjb-law.com, gjbecf@gjb-law.com
- **Bradley S Shraiberg** bshraiberg@sfl-pa.com, vchapkin@sfl-pa.com;narakaki@sfl-pa.com;lrosetto@sfl-pa.com;scusack@sfl-pa.com;blee@sfl-pa.com
- **Paul Steven Singerman** singerman@bergersingerman.com, mruiz@bergersingerman.com;efile@bergersingerman.com
- **Peter A Tappert** ptappert@wdpalaw.com, elastra@wdpalaw.com;jsardina@wdpalaw.com;nonega@wdpalaw.com
- **Charles W Throckmorton** cwt@kttlaw.com, lf@kttlaw.com
- **Trustee Services Inc 2** court@trusteeservices.biz, sandirose.magder@gmail.com
- **Jessica L Wasserstrom** jwasserstrom@melandrussin.com, ltannenbaum@melandrussin.com;;mrbnefs@yahoo.com
- **Morris D. Weiss** morrisw@hts-law.com, sherris@hts-law.com;annmariej@hts-law.com
- **George L. Zinkler** gzinkler.ecf@rprslaw.com

EXHIBIT 3

Palm Beach Diversified Income, LP  
777 S Flagler Drive, Suite 150  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410

Christopher J Topolewski,  
West Capital Management  
c/o Simon B. Paris  
1 Liberty Pl 52 FL – 1650 Market St  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

West Capital Management  
1818 Market St, #3323  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Albert Liguori  
16590 Crownsbury Way, #201  
Ft. Myers, FL 33908

Alice Pugliese  
2741 Village Blvd, #403  
West Palm Beach, FL 33409

Alton Opitz  
16 K&L Ln  
Butler, PA 16001

Amy Davenport  
PO Box 3511  
Midland, TX 79702

Robert Davenport  
3 Greenwich Dr  
Midland, TX 79705

Robert Davenport, Jr.  
104 S. Pecos Street  
Midland, TX 79701

ARIS Capital Management  
152 W 57 St, 19th Fl  
New York, NY 10019

ARIS Multi-Strategy Fund, LP  
Aris Capital Management  
152 W 57 St 19 Fl  
New York, NY 10019

Armadillo Fund  
40 Random Farms Cir  
Chappaqua, NY 10514

BTA Oil Producers  
104 S Pecos St  
Midland, TX 79701

Lynda Beal  
104 S Pecos St  
Midland, TX 79701

Nancy Beal  
104 S Pecos St  
Midland, TX 79701

Spencer Beal  
104 S Pecos St  
Midland, TX 79701

Barry Beal  
104 S Pecos St  
Midland, TX 79701

Keleen Beal  
104 S Pecos St  
Midland, TX 79701

Kelly Beal  
104 S Pecos St  
Midland, TX 79701

BayRoc Associates  
c/o JamiScott  
15 W 53rd St. #24-B  
New York, NY 10019

JamiScott LLC  
15 W 53rd St #24-B  
New York, NY 10019

Leslie Schneider  
c/o JamiScott  
15 W 53rd St., #24-B  
New York, NY 10019

Scott Schneider  
c/o JamiScott  
15 W 53rd St, #24-B  
New York, NY 10019

Claridge Associates, LLC  
c/o JamiScott, LLC  
15 W 53rd St, #24  
New York, NY 10019

Leonard & Lillian Schneider  
c/o JamiScott LLC  
15 West 53rd St #24-B  
New York NY 10019

Beacon Partners, Ltd  
3030 McKinney Ave, #305  
Dallas, TX 75204

Blackpool Partners, LP  
701 Harger Rd, #190  
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Blackpool Absolute Return Fund, LLC  
c/o John E. Page, Esquire  
Shraiberg Ferrara & Landau, PA  
2385 NW Executive Ctr Dr #300  
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Centermark Asset Management  
21320 Baltic Dr  
Cornelius, NC 28031

Claude Lestage  
4893 N Kay  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418



Attn: Andrew N. Friedman, Esq.  
Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll, PLLC  
1100 New York Avenue, N.W.  
Suite 500, West Tower  
Washington, D.C. 20005

MIO Partners Inc  
c/o Robin E. Keller, Esq.  
Hogan Lovells US LLP  
875 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

McKinsey Master Retirement Trust  
c/o Robin Keller, Esq.  
Hogan Lovells US LLP  
875 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

Special Situations Investment Fund, L.P. c/o  
Robin Keller, Esq.  
Hogan Lovells US LLP  
875 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

Deer Island, LP  
4 Nason Hill Lane  
Sherborn, MA 01770

Dennis Dobrinich  
3860 Dogwood Ave  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410

Douglas A. Kelley, Chapter 11 Trustee  
Attn: James A. Rubenstein, Esq.  
4800 Wells Fargo Center  
90 South Seventh Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Douglas A. Kelley, Chapter 11 Trustee  
Attn: Terrence J. Fleming, Esq.  
4200 IDS Center  
80 South Eighth Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Father's Heart Family Foundation Inc.  
8292 Nashua Dr  
Palm Beach Garden, FL 33418

Frank Carruth  
5407 S Flagler Dr  
West Palm Beach, FL 33405

Freestone Entities  
c/o Mr. Justin Young  
1918 Eighth Avenue, Suite 3400  
Seattle, WA 98101

Fulbright & Jaworski  
2100 IDS Center  
80 South Eighth Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55402-2112

Geoffrey Varga and Neil Morris  
Joint Liquidators of Palm Beach Offshore/  
c/o Mark W. Eckard, Esq.  
1201 N. Market Street, Suite 1500  
Wilmington, DE 19801

Edward J. Estrada, Esquire  
Christopher A. Lynch, Esquire  
Reed Smith LLP  
599 Lexington Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

George & Nancy Slain  
59-1089 Maluhi Pl  
Kamuela, HI 96743

H. Thomas Halen, III, President  
Golden Gate Financial Group LLC  
1750 Montgomery Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94111

Golden Gate VP Absolute Return Fund, LP  
c/o Michael J. Cordone, Esq.  
Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP  
2600 One Commerce Square  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Golden Sun Multi-Manager Fund, LP  
c/o Jeffrey S. Posta, Esq.  
Stark & Stark  
PO Box 5315  
Princeton, NJ 08543-5315

Guy M. Hohmann, Esq. and  
Messrs. Taube, Weiss and Taylor  
Hohmann, Taube & Summers, L.L.P.  
100 Congress Ave, 18th Floor  
Austin, TX 78701

Harvest Investments LP  
Red Bird Farm  
4 Nason Hill Rd  
Sherborn, MA 01770

Hillcrest Properties  
c/o Stephen Willia  
59 Damonte Ranch Pkwy, #B-360  
Reno, NV 89521

Attn: Mitchell Herr  
Holland & Knight, LLP  
701 Brickell Ave, Suite 3000  
Miami, FL 33131

Integrity Partners  
c/o Scott Walchek  
1499 Danville Blvd, #202  
Alamo, CA 94507

James Corydon  
6650 N Tower Circle Dr  
Lincolnwood, IL 60712

Janette Bancroft  
9052 SW 103 Ave  
Ocala, FL 34481

Janet Bonebrake  
7169 150th Ct N  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418

Jeffrey Markel  
US Bank (Custodian)  
515 N Flagler Dr, #2100  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

John Daniel  
225 Wellington Ln  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Judith Goldsmith  
3 Water Ln  
Manhasset, NY 11030

K&K Capital Management, Inc.  
3545 Lake St, #201  
Wilmette, IL 60091

Kaufman Rossin & Co.  
2699 S Bayshore Dr  
Miami, FL 33133

Keith Rudman  
2225 N Lakewood Ave  
Chicago, IL 60614

Kenneth A. Ralston  
c/o John E. Page, Esquire  
Shraiberg Ferrara & Landau, PA  
2385 NW Executive Ctr Dr #300  
Boca Raton, FL 33431

LAB Investments Fund, LP  
1875 S Grant St, #600  
San Mateo, CA 94402

Laulima Partners, LP  
c/o Smithfield Trust Co.  
Attn:Robert Kopf Jr.  
20 Stanwix St, #650  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Leon Meyers Management  
680 Fifth Ave, 9th Fl  
New York, NY 10019

M. Lee Toothman  
216 Barbados Dr  
Jupiter, FL 33458

MB Investments, LLC  
180 N Wacker Drive, Lower 1  
Chicago, IL 60606

Marder Investment Advisors Corp.  
8033 Sunset Blvd, #830  
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Mark Prevost  
2372 Hidden Ridge Ln  
Jasper, AL 35504

Martin Casdagli  
554 E Coronado Rd  
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Maxine Adler  
c/o US Trust/Bank of America  
and Patrici  
150 E. Palmetto Park Road, Suite 200  
Boca Raton, FL 33432

Mosaic Capital Fund LLC  
c/o Philadelphia Financial  
One Liberty Place  
1650 Market Street, 54<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Nancy Dobrinich  
3860 Dogwood Ave  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410

Nancy Hollingsworth  
7107 Arrowood Rd  
Bethesda, MD 20187

NetWide Capital LLC  
1818 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
Boulder, CO 80302-5456

Palm Beach Finance Holdings, Inc.  
c/o Lindquist & Vennum, PLLP  
80 South Eighth Street, Ste 4200  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Pemco Partners, LP  
8 Lyman St, #204  
Westborough, MA 01581

Petters Company, Inc.  
c/o Lindquist & Vennum, PLLP  
80 South Eighth Street, Ste 4200  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Quantum Family Office Group, LLC  
1500 San Remo Avenue, Suite 210  
Coral Gables, FL 33146

Raymond Feldman  
4644 Balboa Ave  
Encino, CA 91316

Raymond G. Feldman Family Ventures, LP  
c/o John E. Page, Esquire  
Shraiberg Ferrara & Landau, PA  
2385 NW Executive Ctr Dr #300  
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Randall Linkous  
1174 SW 27 Ave  
Boynton Beach, FL 33426

Ron Priestley  
5565 N Espina Rd  
Tuscon, AZ 85718

Ronald R. Peterson  
Jenner & Block LLP  
353 North Clark St.  
Chicago, IL 60654

Ronald R. Peterson  
c/o McDermott Will & Emery, LLP  
Attn: Lazar P. Raynal, Esq.  
227 West Monroe Street  
Chicago, IL 60606

SALI Fund Services, LLC  
6836 Austin Center Street, Suite 320  
Austin, TX 78731

SSR Capital Partners, LP  
c/o R. James George, Jr., Esq.  
114 W. Seventh Street, Suite 1100  
Austin, TX 78701-3015

Sage Capital Resources  
3006 Julia St W, Unit A  
Tampa, FL 33629

Sandra Linkous  
1174 SW 27 Ave  
Boynton Beach, FL 33426

Second City Alternatives  
801 Park Ave  
Wilmette, IL 60091

Select Access Management  
15 Valley Dr  
Greenwich, CT 06831

Attn: Lee S. Shalov, Esq.  
Attn: Thomas G. Ciarlone, Esq.  
Shalov Stone Bonner & Rocco, LLP  
260 Madison Avenue, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10016

Sims Moss Kline & Davis, LLP  
Three Ravinia Drive  
Suite 1700  
Atlanta, GA 30346

Spring Investor Services Inc.  
Red Bird Farm  
4 Nason Hill Lane  
Sherborn, MA 01770

Sterling Management Inc.  
160 White Oaks Ln  
Vadnais Heights, MN 55127

Steve Bakaysa  
2251 Wigwam Parkway #1921  
Henderson, NV 89074

Strategic Stable Return Fund (ID), LP  
c/o R. James George, Jr., Esq.  
114 West Seventh Street, Suite 1100  
Austin, TX 78701

Strategic Stable Return Fund II, LP  
c/o R. James George, Jr., Esq.  
114 W. Seventh Street, Suite 1100  
Austin, TX 78701

Table Mountain Capital, LLC  
850 Quince Ave  
Boulder, CO 80304

Ted Goldsmith  
3 Water Ln  
Manhasset, NY 11030

Tradex Global Advisors  
35 Mason St, 4th Fl  
Greenwich, CT 06830

Tradex Global Master Fund  
c/o Kenneth J. Vianale, Esq.  
2499 Glades Road, Suite 112  
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Tradex Global Master Fund  
c/o Lee S. Shalov, Esquire  
Thomas G. Ciarlone, Esquire  
260 Madison Avenue, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10016

Tradex Global Master Fund  
c/o Andrew N. Friedman, Esquire  
1100 New York Avenue, N.W.  
Suite 500, West Tower  
Washington, DC 20005

Umbach Financial Group, LLC  
525 South Flagler Drive, #100  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

VAS Partners, LLC  
Attn: Vincent P Allegra  
4401 W Roosevelt Rd  
Hillside, IL 60162

Valur Egilsson  
11966 Tuliptree Ln  
Huntley, IL 60142

Kenneth J. Vianale, Esq.  
Julie P. Vianale, Esquire  
Vianale & Vinale LLP  
2499 Glades Rd., Suite 112  
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Vincent Allegra  
449 S Evergreen St  
Bensenville, IL 60106

Wilbur Hobgood  
2189 Radnor Ct  
North Palm Beach, FL 33408

Zimmer Lucas Capital  
535 Madison Ave, 6th Fl  
New York, NY 10022

Gonzalo R Dorta  
334 Minorca Ave  
Miami, FL 33134

Steven W Thomas  
14 27 Ave  
Venice, CA 90291

Joel Barnett  
Barnett Capital Ltd.  
450 Skokie Blvd., # 604  
Northbrook, IL 60062

Guardian Capital, LLC  
3225 Aviation Avenue  
# 601  
Miami, FL 33133

Ocean Gate Capital Management, LP  
5 Sewall Street  
Marblehead, MA 01945

Santa Barbara Investment Capital  
2220 Santiago Rd  
Santa Barbara, CA 93103

Gary Marks/Sky Bell Asset  
Management, LLC  
3115 N. Noho Loihi Way  
Kihei, HI 96753

Pete L DeMahy, Esquire  
DeMahy Labrador et al.  
150 Alhambra Circle  
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Debevoise & Plimpton LLP  
Attn: Edwin G. Schallert, Esquire  
919 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

Bruce Prevost  
8292 Nashua Dr  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418

David Harrold  
963 Evergreen Dr  
Delray Beach, FL 33483

Lewis B. Freeman & Partners, Inc.  
c/o Kenneth A. Welt, Receiver  
1776 North Pine Island Road, Suite 102  
Plantation, FL 33322

Lionheart Insurance Fund Series Interests of  
the SALI Multi-Fund Series Fund, LP  
6836 Austin Center Blvd. Ste 320  
Austin, TX 78731

U.S. Bank National Association  
c/o Richard G. Wilson, Esquire  
Maslon Edeman Borman & Brand, LLP  
90 S. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 3300  
Minneapolis, MN 55402-4140

Sarah Stroebel, Snr Corp Counsel  
U.S. Bank National Association  
800 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN 55402-4140

Golden Sun Capital Management, LLC  
885 Arapahoe Avenue  
Boulder, CO 80302

Genesis Capital  
Attn: Michael Dubinski  
7191 Wagner Way NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335

Robin J. Rubens, Esquire  
Levine Kellogg Lehman, et al.,  
201 South Biscayne Blvd.  
34th Floor, Miami Center  
Miami, FL 33131

Prateek Mehrotra, CFA, CAIA  
Sumnicht & Associates  
W6240 Communication Ct, #1  
Appleton, WI 54914-8549

Ron Robertson, President  
Strategic Capital Group  
7191 Wagner Way NW, Suite 302  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335

Globefin  
Attn: Andrew Hoffman  
980 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10018

Internal Revenue Service  
PO Box 7346  
Philadelphia, PA 19101-7346

John Docherty  
United States Attorney's Office  
316 North Robert Street, Suite 404  
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Andrew P. O'Brien, Esquire  
U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission  
Chicago Regional Office  
175 West Jackson Blvd., Suite 900  
Chicago, IL 60604

Sean O'D. Bosack  
780 N. Water Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

John L. Kirtley  
780 N Water Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Matia L. Kreiter  
780 N Water Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Daniel N. Rosen, Esquire  
Parker Rose, LLC  
300 First Avenue North, Suite 200  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Kenneth A. Welt  
8255 West Sunrise Blvd., # 177  
Plantation, FL 33322

Fortis Prime Fund Solutions Custodial  
Services / Attn: Daniel Kermode  
Fortis Prime Fund Solutions (IOM) Ltd  
18-20 North Quay  
Douglas, Isle of Man, IM99 1NR, UK

Kinetic Partners (Cayman) Limited  
The Harbour Center / 42 North Church  
Street / PO Box 10387  
Grand Cayman KY1-1004  
Cayman Islands

Palm Beach Offshore Ltd.  
Anchorage Centre, 2nd Floor  
PO Box 32021 SMB  
Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands

Palm Beach Offshore II, Ltd.  
Admiral Financial Center, 5th Floor  
90 Fort Street, PO Box 32021  
Grand Cayman KY-1208  
Cayman Islands

Scotia Capital  
The Bank of Nova Scotia  
Global Alternative Asset Group  
40 King Street W, 68<sup>th</sup> Fl  
Toronto Ontario M5W 2X6

Citco Global Securities Services  
2600 Airport Business Park  
Kinsale Road  
Co.Cork  
Ireland

Lane E. Roesch  
White & Case, LLP  
200 S. Biscayne Blvd., Suite 4900  
Miami, FL 33131

Monica Hanlet  
PO Box 321255  
Palm Coast, FL 32135-1255

Michael R. Band, Esquire  
Band Law Firm  
169 East Flagler Street, Suite 1200  
Miami, FL 33131

Andy Hall  
Soffer Charbonnet LLP  
7300 France Avenue South, Suite 210  
Minneapolis, MN 55435

Frank Vennes  
190 Seminole Lane, Apt. 205  
Cocoa Beach, FL 32931

Deutsche Bank (Cayman) Ltd  
ACF HSBC USA Inc  
Deutsche Bank (Cayman) Limited  
PO Box 1984  
Grand Cayman  
KY1-1104 – Cayman Islands

HSBC SECURITIES (USA) INC  
452 Fifth Avenue - T3  
New York, NY 10018

Carlton Beal Family Trust  
104 S Pecos Street  
Midland, TX 79701

Beal Family trust FBO Kelly Beal  
104 S Pecos Street  
Midland, TX 79701

The Beal Trust U/A  
104 S Pecos Street  
Midland, TX 79701

Beal GST Exemption Trust  
104 S Pecos Street  
Midland, TX 79701

Carlton Beal Family Trust  
104 S Pecos Street  
Midland, TX 79701

Thomas J. Ginley Life Ins. Trust  
Dated 1-22-97  
6650 N Tower Circle Drive  
Lincolnwood, IL 60712

Zcall, LLC  
c/o Brian S. Dervishi  
1 S.E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, # 1980  
Miami, FL 33131

Scall, LLC  
c/o Weissman, Dervishi, Borgo & Nodlund  
1 SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, # 1980  
Miami, FL 33131

U.S. Trust and Patricia Swab  
Successor Trustees, TUA Maxine B Adler  
POB 842056  
Dallas, TX 75284

James L. Volling, Esquire  
2200 Wells Fargo Center  
90 South Seventh Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55402-3901

Dana L. Choi, Esquire  
Holland & Knight LLP  
701 Brickell Avenue, Suite 3000  
Miami, FL 33131

Palm Beach Links Capital, LP  
12200 N Stemmos Fwy, Suite 316  
Dallas, TX 75234