

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

12 CFR Part 213

Docket No. R-1727

RIN 7100-AF98

BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION

12 CFR Part 1013

Consumer Leasing (Regulation M)

AGENCY: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (Board); and Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection (Bureau).

ACTION: Final rules, official interpretations and commentary.

SUMMARY: The Board and the Bureau are finalizing amendments to the official interpretations and commentary for the agencies' regulations that implement the Consumer Leasing Act (CLA). The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank Act) amended the CLA by requiring that the dollar threshold for exempt consumer leases be adjusted annually by the annual percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). If there is no annual percentage increase in the CPI-W, the Board and the Bureau will not adjust this exemption threshold from the prior year. However, in years following a year in which the exemption threshold was not adjusted, the threshold is calculated by applying the annual percentage change in the CPI-W to the dollar amount that would have resulted, after rounding, if the decreases and any subsequent increases in the CPI-W had been taken into account. Based on the annual percentage increase in the CPI-W as of June 1, 2020, the exemption threshold will remain at \$58,300 effective January 1, 2021.

Because the Dodd-Frank Act also requires similar adjustments in the Truth in Lending Act's threshold for exempt consumer credit transactions, the Board and the Bureau are making similar amendments to each of their respective regulations implementing the Truth in Lending Act elsewhere in this issue of the *Federal Register*.

DATES: This final rule is effective January 1, 2021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: *Board:* Vivian W. Wong, Senior Counsel, Division of Consumer and Community Affairs, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, at (202) 452-3667; for users of Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) only, contact (202) 263-4869.

Bureau: Rachel Ross, Attorney-Advisor, Office of Regulations, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, at (202) 435-7700. If you require this document in an alternative electronic format, please contact CFPB_Accessibility@cfpb.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010 (Dodd-Frank Act) increased the threshold in the Consumer Leasing Act (CLA) for exempt consumer leases, and the threshold in the Truth in Lending Act (TILA) for exempt consumer credit transactions,¹ from \$25,000 to \$50,000, effective July 21, 2011.² In addition, the Dodd-Frank Act requires that, on and after December 31, 2011, these thresholds be adjusted annually for inflation by the annual percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical

¹ Although consumer credit transactions above the threshold are generally exempt, loans secured by real property or by personal property used or expected to be used as the principal dwelling of a consumer and private education loans are covered by TILA regardless of the loan amount. See 12 CFR 226.3(b)(1)(i) (Board) and 12 CFR 1026.3(b)(1)(i) (Bureau).

² Pub. L. 111-203, section 1100E, 124 Stat. 1376, 2111 (2010).

Workers (CPI-W), as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In April 2011, the Board issued a final rule amending Regulation M (which implements the CLA) consistent with these provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act, along with a similar final rule amending Regulation Z (which implements TILA) (collectively, the Board Final Threshold Rules).³

Title X of the Dodd-Frank Act transferred rulemaking authority for a number of consumer financial protection laws from the Board to the Bureau, effective July 21, 2011. In connection with this transfer of rulemaking authority, the Bureau issued its own Regulation M implementing the CLA, 12 CFR part 1013, substantially duplicating the Board's Regulation M.⁴ Although the Bureau has the authority to issue rules to implement the CLA for most entities, the Board retains authority to issue rules under the CLA for certain motor vehicle dealers covered by section 1029(a) of the Dodd-Frank Act, and the Board's Regulation M continues to apply to those entities.⁵

The Board's and the Bureau's regulations,⁶ and their accompanying commentaries, provide that the exemption threshold will be adjusted annually effective January 1 of each year based on any annual percentage increase in the CPI-W that was in effect on the preceding June 1. They further provide that any increase in the threshold amount will be rounded to the nearest

³ 76 FR 18349 (Apr. 4, 2011); 76 FR 18354 (Apr. 4, 2011).

⁴ See 76 FR 78500 (Dec. 19, 2011); 81 FR 25323 (Apr. 28, 2016).

⁵ Section 1029(a) of the Dodd-Frank Act states: "Except as permitted in subsection (b), the Bureau may not exercise any rulemaking, supervisory, enforcement, or any other authority . . . over a motor vehicle dealer that is predominantly engaged in the sale and servicing of motor vehicles, the leasing and servicing of motor vehicles, or both." 12 U.S.C. 5519(a). Section 1029(b) of the Dodd-Frank Act provides that subsection (a) shall not apply to any person, to the extent that such person (1) provides consumers with any services related to residential or commercial mortgages or self-financing transactions involving real property; (2) operates a line of business (A) that involves the extension of retail credit or retail leases involving motor vehicles; and (B) in which (i) the extension of retail credit or retail leases are provided directly to consumers; and (ii) the contract governing such extension of retail credit or retail leases is not routinely assigned to an unaffiliated third party finance or leasing source; or (3) offers or provides a consumer financial product or service not involving or related to the sale, financing, leasing, rental, repair, refurbishment, maintenance, or other servicing of motor vehicles, motor vehicle parts, or any related or ancillary product or service. 12 U.S.C. 5519(b).

⁶ 12 CFR 213.2(e)(1) (Board) and 12 CFR 1013.2(e)(1) (Bureau).

\$100 increment. For example, if the annual percentage increase in the CPI-W would result in a \$950 increase in the threshold amount, the threshold amount will be increased by \$1,000.

However, if the annual percentage increase in the CPI-W would result in a \$949 increase in the threshold amount, the threshold amount will be increased by \$900.⁷ Since 2011, the Board and the Bureau have adjusted the Regulation M exemption threshold annually, in accordance with these rules.

On November 30, 2016, the Board and the Bureau published a final rule in the *Federal Register* to memorialize the calculation method used by the agencies each year to adjust the exemption threshold to ensure that, as contemplated by section 1100E(b) of the Dodd-Frank Act, the values for the exemption threshold keep pace with the CPI-W (Regulation M Adjustment Calculation Rule).⁸ The Regulation M Adjustment Calculation Rule memorialized the policy that, if there is no annual percentage increase in the CPI-W, the Board and Bureau will not adjust the exemption threshold from the prior year. The Regulation M Adjustment Calculation Rule also provided that, in years following a year in which the exemption threshold was not adjusted because there was a decrease in the CPI-W from the previous year, the threshold is calculated by applying the annual percentage change in the CPI-W to the dollar amount that would have resulted, after rounding, if the decreases and any subsequent increases in the CPI-W had been taken into account. If the resulting amount calculated, after rounding, is greater than the current threshold, then the threshold effective January 1 the following year will increase accordingly; if the resulting amount calculated, after rounding, is equal to or less than the current threshold, then the threshold effective January 1 the following year will not change, but future increases will be calculated based on the amount that would have resulted, after rounding.

⁷ See comments 2(e)-9 in Supplements I of 12 CFR parts 213 and 1013.

⁸ See 81 FR 86256 (Nov. 30, 2016).

II. 2021 Adjustment and Commentary Revision

Effective January 1, 2021, the exemption threshold amount remains at \$58,300. This amount is based on the CPI-W in effect on June 1, 2020, which was reported on May 12, 2020. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes consumer-based indices monthly, but does not report a CPI change on June 1; indices are reported in the middle of the prior month. The CPI-W is a subset of the CPI-U index (based on all urban consumers) and represents approximately 29 percent of the U.S. population. The CPI-W reported on May 12, 2020 reflects a 0.1 percent increase in the CPI-W from April 2019 to April 2020. Accordingly, the 0.1 percent increase in the CPI-W from April 2019 to April 2020 results in an exemption threshold amount of \$58,300, after rounding. The Board and the Bureau are revising the commentaries to their respective regulations to add new comment 2(e)-11.xii to state that, from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, the threshold amount is \$58,300. These revisions are effective January 1, 2021.⁹

III. Regulatory Analysis

Administrative Procedure Act

Under the Administrative Procedure Act, notice and opportunity for public comment are not required if the Board and the Bureau find that notice and public comment are impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.¹⁰ The amendments in this rule are technical and apply the method previously set forth in the Board Final Threshold Rules and the Regulation M Adjustment Calculation Rule. For these reasons, the Board and the Bureau have determined that publishing a notice of proposed rulemaking and providing opportunity for public comment are

⁹ The agencies note that to add new comment 2(e)-11.xii to their respective rules, Supplement I to part 213, *section 213.2 paragraph 2(e)* (Board) and Supplement I to part 1013, *section 1013.2, paragraph 2(e)* (Bureau) are being republished in their entirety to comply with the *Federal Register's* publication requirement.

¹⁰ 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B).

unnecessary. Therefore, the amendments are adopted in final form.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) does not apply to a rulemaking where a general notice of proposed rulemaking is not required.¹¹ As noted previously, the agencies have determined that it is unnecessary to publish a general notice of proposed rulemaking for this joint final rule. Accordingly, the RFA's requirements relating to an initial and final regulatory flexibility analysis do not apply.

Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995,¹² the agencies reviewed this final rule. No collections of information pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act are contained in the final rule.

Bureau Congressional Review Act Statement

Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*), the Bureau will submit a report containing this rule and other required information to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General of the United States prior to the rule taking effect. The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) has designated this rule as not a "major rule" as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

Bureau Signing Authority

The Acting Associate Director for Research, Markets and Regulations, Dan S. Sokolov, having reviewed and approved this document, is delegating the authority to electronically sign this

¹¹ 5 U.S.C. 603(a) and 604(a).

¹² 44 U.S.C. 3506; 5 CFR part 1320.

document to Laura Galban, a Bureau Federal Register Liaison, for purposes of publication in the *Federal Register*.

List of Subjects

12 CFR Part 213

Advertising, Consumer leasing, Consumer protection, Federal Reserve System, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

12 CFR Part 1013

Administrative practice and procedure, Advertising, Consumer protection, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Truth in lending.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Authority and Issuance

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, the Board amends Regulation M, 12 CFR part 213, as set forth below:

PART 213—CONSUMER LEASING (REGULATION M)

1. The authority citation for part 213 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 15 U.S.C. 1604 and 1667f; Pub. L. No. 111-203 § 1100E, 124 Stat. 1376.

2. In Supplement I to Part 213, under *Section 213.2—Definitions*, revise *2(e) Consumer Lease*, as follows:

Supplement I to Part 213—Official Staff Interpretations

* * * * *

Section 213.2—Definitions

* * * * *

2(e) Consumer Lease.

1. *Primary purposes.* A lessor must determine in each case if the leased property will be used primarily for personal, family, or household purposes. If a question exists as to the primary purpose for a lease, the fact that a lessor gives disclosures is not controlling on the question of whether the transaction is covered. The primary purpose of a lease is determined before or at consummation and a lessor need not provide Regulation M disclosures where there is a subsequent change in the primary use.

2. *Period of time.* To be a consumer lease, the initial term of the lease must be more than four months. Thus, a lease of personal property for four months, three months or on a month-to-month or week-to-week basis (even though the lease actually extends beyond four months) is not a consumer lease and is not subject to the disclosure requirements of the regulation. However, a lease that imposes a penalty for not continuing the lease beyond four months is considered to have a term of more than four months. To illustrate:

i. A three-month lease extended on a month-to-month basis and terminated after one year is not subject to the regulation.

ii. A month-to-month lease with a penalty, such as the forfeiture of a security deposit for terminating before one year, is subject to the regulation.

3. *Total contractual obligation.* The total contractual obligation is not necessarily the same as the total of payments disclosed under §213.4(e). The total contractual obligation includes nonrefundable amounts a lessee is contractually obligated to pay to the lessor, but excludes items such as:

i. Residual value amounts or purchase-option prices;

ii. Amounts collected by the lessor but paid to a third party, such as taxes, licenses, and registration fees.

4. *Credit sale.* The regulation does not cover a lease that meets the definition of a credit sale in Regulation Z, 12 CFR 226.2(a)(16), which is defined, in part, as a bailment or lease (unless terminable without penalty at any time by the consumer) under which the consumer:

i. Agrees to pay as compensation for use a sum substantially equivalent to, or in excess of, the total value of the property and services involved; and

ii. Will become (or has the option to become), for no additional consideration or for nominal consideration, the owner of the property upon compliance with the agreement.

5. *Agricultural purpose.* Agricultural purpose means a purpose related to the production, harvest, exhibition, marketing, transportation, processing, or manufacture of agricultural products by a natural person who cultivates, plants, propagates, or nurtures those agricultural products, including but not limited to the acquisition of personal property and services used primarily in farming. Agricultural products include horticultural, viticultural, and dairy products, livestock, wildlife, poultry, bees, forest products, fish and shellfish, and any products thereof, including processed and manufactured products, and any and all products raised or produced on farms and any processed or manufactured products thereof.

6. *Organization or other entity.* A consumer lease does not include a lease made to an organization such as a corporation or a government agency or instrumentality. Such a lease is not covered by the regulation even if the leased property is used (by an employee, for example) primarily for personal, family or household purposes, or is guaranteed by or subsequently assigned to a natural person.

7. *Leases of personal property incidental to a service.* The following leases of personal property are deemed incidental to a service and thus are not subject to the regulation:

i. Home entertainment systems requiring the consumer to lease equipment that enables a television to receive the transmitted programming.

ii. Security alarm systems requiring the installation of leased equipment intended to monitor unlawful entries into a home and in some cases to provide fire protection.

iii. Propane gas service where the consumer must lease a propane tank to receive the service.

8. *Safe deposit boxes.* The lease of a safe deposit box is not a consumer lease under §213.2(e).

9. *Threshold amount.* A consumer lease is exempt from the requirements of this part if the total contractual obligation exceeds the threshold amount in effect at the time of consummation. The threshold amount in effect during a particular time period is the amount stated in comment 2(e)-11 for that period. The threshold amount is adjusted effective January 1 of each year by any annual percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) that was in effect on the preceding June 1. Comment 2(e)-11 will be amended to provide the threshold amount for the upcoming year after the annual percentage change in the CPI-W that was in effect on June 1 becomes available. Any increase in the threshold amount will be rounded to the nearest \$100 increment. For example, if the annual percentage increase in the CPI-W would result in a \$950 increase in the threshold amount, the threshold amount will be increased by \$1,000. However, if the annual percentage increase in the CPI-W would result in a \$949 increase in the threshold amount, the threshold amount will be increased by \$900. If a consumer lease is exempt from the requirements of this Part because the total contractual obligation exceeds the threshold amount in effect at the time of consummation, the lease remains exempt regardless of a subsequent increase in the threshold amount.

10. *No increase in the CPI-W.* If the CPI-W in effect on June 1 does not increase from the CPI-W in effect on June 1 of the previous year, the threshold amount effective the following January 1 through December 31 will not change from the previous year. When this occurs, for the years that follow, the threshold is calculated based on the annual percentage change in the CPI-W applied to the dollar amount that would have resulted, after rounding, if decreases and any subsequent increases in the CPI-W had been taken into account.

i. *Net increases.* If the resulting amount calculated, after rounding, is greater than the current threshold, then the threshold effective January 1 the following year will increase accordingly.

ii. *Net decreases.* If the resulting amount calculated, after rounding, is equal to or less than the current threshold, then the threshold effective January 1 the following year will not change, but future increases will be calculated based on the amount that would have resulted.

11. *Threshold.* For purposes of §213.2(e)(1), the threshold amount in effect during a particular period is the amount stated below for that period.

- i. Prior to July 21, 2011, the threshold amount is \$25,000.
- ii. From July 21, 2011 through December 31, 2011, the threshold amount is \$50,000.
- iii. From January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012, the threshold amount is \$51,800.
- iv. From January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013, the threshold amount is \$53,000.
- v. From January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014, the threshold amount is \$53,500.
- vi. From January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015, the threshold amount is \$54,600.
- vii. From January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016, the threshold amount is \$54,600.
- viii. From January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017, the threshold amount is \$54,600.
- ix. From January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018, the threshold amount is \$55,800.

- x. From January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019, the threshold amount is \$57,200.
- xi. From January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, the threshold amount is \$58,300.
- xii. From January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, the threshold amount is \$58,300.

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BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Authority and Issuance

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, the Bureau amends Regulation M, 12 CFR part 1013, as set forth below:

PART 1013—CONSUMER LEASING (REGULATION M)

3. The authority citation for part 1013 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 15 U.S.C. 1604 and 1667f; Pub. L. 111-203 sec. 1100E, 124 Stat. 1376.

4. In Supplement I to part 1013, under *Section 1013.2—Definitions*, revise 2(e)—

Consumer Lease to read as follows:

Supplement I to Part 1013—Official Interpretations

* * * * *

Section 1013.2—Definitions

* * * * *

2(e) Consumer Lease

1. *Primary purposes.* A lessor must determine in each case if the leased property will be used primarily for personal, family, or household purposes. If a question exists as to the primary purpose for a lease, the fact that a lessor gives disclosures is not controlling on the question of whether the transaction is covered. The primary purpose of a lease is determined before or at

consummation and a lessor need not provide Regulation M disclosures where there is a subsequent change in the primary use.

2. *Period of time.* To be a consumer lease, the initial term of the lease must be more than four months. Thus, a lease of personal property for four months, three months or on a month-to-month or week-to-week basis (even though the lease actually extends beyond four months) is not a consumer lease and is not subject to the disclosure requirements of the regulation. However, a lease that imposes a penalty for not continuing the lease beyond four months is considered to have a term of more than four months. To illustrate:

i. A three-month lease extended on a month-to-month basis and terminated after one year is not subject to the regulation.

ii. A month-to-month lease with a penalty, such as the forfeiture of a security deposit for terminating before one year, is subject to the regulation.

3. *Total contractual obligation.* The total contractual obligation is not necessarily the same as the total of payments disclosed under § 1013.4(e). The total contractual obligation includes nonrefundable amounts a lessee is contractually obligated to pay to the lessor, but excludes items such as:

i. Residual value amounts or purchase-option prices;

ii. Amounts collected by the lessor but paid to a third party, such as taxes, licenses, and registration fees.

4. *Credit sale.* The regulation does not cover a lease that meets the definition of a credit sale in Regulation Z, 12 CFR 226.2(a)(16), which is defined, in part, as a bailment or lease (unless terminable without penalty at any time by the consumer) under which the consumer:

i. Agrees to pay as compensation for use a sum substantially equivalent to, or in excess of, the total value of the property and services involved; and

ii. Will become (or has the option to become), for no additional consideration or for nominal consideration, the owner of the property upon compliance with the agreement.

5. Agricultural purpose. Agricultural purpose means a purpose related to the production, harvest, exhibition, marketing, transportation, processing, or manufacture of agricultural products by a natural person who cultivates, plants, propagates, or nurtures those agricultural products, including but not limited to the acquisition of personal property and services used primarily in farming. Agricultural products include horticultural, viticultural, and dairy products, livestock, wildlife, poultry, bees, forest products, fish and shellfish, and any products thereof, including processed and manufactured products, and any and all products raised or produced on farms and any processed or manufactured products thereof.

6. Organization or other entity. A consumer lease does not include a lease made to an organization such as a corporation or a government agency or instrumentality. Such a lease is not covered by the regulation even if the leased property is used (by an employee, for example) primarily for personal, family or household purposes, or is guaranteed by or subsequently assigned to a natural person.

7. Leases of personal property incidental to a service. The following leases of personal property are deemed incidental to a service and thus are not subject to the regulation:

i. Home entertainment systems requiring the consumer to lease equipment that enables a television to receive the transmitted programming.

ii. Security alarm systems requiring the installation of leased equipment intended to monitor unlawful entries into a home and in some cases to provide fire protection.

iii. Propane gas service where the consumer must lease a propane tank to receive the service.

8. *Safe deposit boxes.* The lease of a safe deposit box is not a consumer lease under §1013.2(e).

9. *Threshold amount.* A consumer lease is exempt from the requirements of this part if the total contractual obligation exceeds the threshold amount in effect at the time of consummation. The threshold amount in effect during a particular time period is the amount stated in comment 2(e)-11 for that period. The threshold amount is adjusted effective January 1 of each year by any annual percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) that was in effect on the preceding June 1. Comment 2(e)-11 will be amended to provide the threshold amount for the upcoming year after the annual percentage change in the CPI-W that was in effect on June 1 becomes available. Any increase in the threshold amount will be rounded to the nearest \$100 increment. For example, if the annual percentage increase in the CPI-W would result in a \$950 increase in the threshold amount, the threshold amount will be increased by \$1,000. However, if the annual percentage increase in the CPI-W would result in a \$949 increase in the threshold amount, the threshold amount will be increased by \$900. If a consumer lease is exempt from the requirements of this part because the total contractual obligation exceeds the threshold amount in effect at the time of consummation, the lease remains exempt regardless of a subsequent increase in the threshold amount.

10. *No increase in the CPI-W.* If the CPI-W in effect on June 1 does not increase from the CPI-W in effect on June 1 of the previous year, the threshold amount effective the following January 1 through December 31 will not change from the previous year. When this occurs, for the years that follow, the threshold is calculated based on the annual percentage change in the

CPI-W applied to the dollar amount that would have resulted, after rounding, if decreases and any subsequent increases in the CPI-W had been taken into account.

i. *Net increases.* If the resulting amount calculated, after rounding, is greater than the current threshold, then the threshold effective January 1 the following year will increase accordingly.

ii. *Net decreases.* If the resulting amount calculated, after rounding, is equal to or less than the current threshold, then the threshold effective January 1 the following year will not change, but future increases will be calculated based on the amount that would have resulted.

11. *Threshold.* For purposes of § 1013.2(e)(1), the threshold amount in effect during a particular period is the amount stated below for that period.

- i. Prior to July 21, 2011, the threshold amount is \$25,000.
- ii. From July 21, 2011 through December 31, 2011, the threshold amount is \$50,000.
- iii. From January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012, the threshold amount is \$51,800.
- iv. From January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013, the threshold amount is \$53,000.
- v. From January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014, the threshold amount is \$53,500.
- vi. From January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015, the threshold amount is \$54,600.
- vii. From January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016, the threshold amount is \$54,600.
- viii. From January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017, the threshold amount is \$54,600.
- ix. From January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018, the threshold amount is \$55,800.
- x. From January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019, the threshold amount is \$57,200.

xi. From January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, the threshold amount is \$58,300.

xii. From January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, the threshold amount is \$58,300.

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By order of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, acting through the Secretary of the Board under delegated authority.

Ann Misback,
Secretary of the Board.

Laura Galban,
Federal Register Liaison, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.