

STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

MAY 1, 2018

FIRST TRUST VARIABLE INSURANCE TRUST

FIRST TRUST/DOW JONES DIVIDEND & INCOME ALLOCATION PORTFOLIO

CLASS I

CLASS II

FIRST TRUST MULTI INCOME ALLOCATION PORTFOLIO

CLASS I

CLASS II

This Statement of Additional Information ("SAI") is not a prospectus. It should be read in conjunction with the prospectus dated May 1, 2018, as it may be revised from time to time (the "Prospectus"), for First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio and First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio (each a "Fund," and collectively, the "Funds"), each a series of First Trust Variable Insurance Trust (the "Trust"). Capitalized terms used herein that are not defined have the same meaning as in the Prospectus, unless otherwise noted. A copy of the Prospectus may be obtained without charge by writing to the Trust's distributor, First Trust Portfolios L.P., 120 East Liberty Drive, Suite 400, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, or by calling toll free at (800) 621-1675.

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The audited financial statements for the Funds' most recent fiscal year appear in the Funds' Annual Report to Shareholders dated December 31, 2017, which was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") on February 23, 2018. The financial statements from the Annual Report are incorporated herein by reference. The Annual Report is available without charge by calling (800) 621-1675 or by visiting the SEC's website at www.sec.gov.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND HISTORY

The Trust was organized as a Massachusetts business trust on December 14, 2011 and is authorized to issue an unlimited number of shares in one or more series. The Trust is an open-end management investment company, registered under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the "1940 Act").

Each Fund, as a series of the Trust, represents a beneficial interest in a separate portfolio of securities and other assets, with its own objective(s) and policies. Shares of the Funds are sold only to variable insurance accounts (each an "Account") to fund the benefits of the variable annuity and variable life insurance contracts (the "Contracts") issued by life insurance companies writing variable annuity contracts and variable life insurance contracts (each a "Participating Insurance Company").

This SAI relates to the Funds, each a diversified series. Each Fund, as a series of the Trust, represents a beneficial interest in a separate portfolio of securities and other assets, with its own Objectives and policies.

The Board of Trustees of the Trust (the "Board," "Board of Trustees" or "Trustees") has the right to establish additional series in the future, to determine the preferences, voting powers, rights and privileges thereof and to modify such preferences, voting powers, rights and privileges without shareholder approval. Shares of any series may also be divided into one or more classes at the discretion of the Trustees.

The Trust or any series or class thereof may be terminated at any time by the Board of Trustees upon written notice to the shareholders.

Each share has one vote with respect to matters upon which a shareholder vote is required consistent with the requirements of the 1940 Act and the rules promulgated thereunder. Shares of all series of the Trust vote together as a single class except as otherwise required by the 1940 Act or if the matter being voted on affects only a particular series, and, if a matter affects a particular series differently from other series, the shares of that series will vote separately on such matter. The Trust's Declaration of Trust (the "Declaration") requires a shareholder vote only on those matters where the 1940 Act requires a vote of shareholders and otherwise permits the Trustees to take actions without seeking the consent of shareholders. For example, the Declaration gives the Trustees broad authority to approve reorganizations between a Fund and another entity or the sale of all or substantially all of such Fund's assets, or the termination of the Trust or either Fund without shareholder approval if the 1940 Act would not require such approval.

The Declaration provides that by becoming a shareholder of a Fund, each shareholder shall be expressly held to have agreed to be bound by the provisions of the Declaration and to any By-laws adopted by the Trust. The Declaration provides that, except as set forth therein and authorized by the Trustees, shareholders have no rights, privileges, claims or remedies under any contract or agreement entered into by the Trust or a Fund with any service provider or other agent to or contractor with the Trust or a Fund including, without limitation, any third party beneficiary rights.

The Declaration may, except in limited circumstances, be amended by the Trustees in any respect without a shareholder vote. The Declaration provides that the Trustees may establish the number of Trustees and that vacancies on the Board of Trustees may be filled by the remaining Trustees, except when election of Trustees by the shareholders is required under the 1940 Act. Trustees are then elected by a plurality of votes cast by shareholders at a meeting at which a quorum is present. The Declaration also provides that Trustees may be removed, with or without cause, by a vote of shareholders holding at least two-thirds of the voting power of the Trust, or by a vote of two-thirds of the remaining Trustees. The provisions of the Declaration relating to the election and removal of Trustees may not be amended without the approval of two-thirds of the Trustees.

The holders of Fund shares are required to disclose information on direct or indirect ownership of Fund shares as may be required to comply with various laws applicable to the Funds or as the Trustees may determine, and ownership of Fund shares may be disclosed by the Funds if so required by law or regulation. In addition, pursuant to the Declaration, the Trustees may, in their discretion, require the Trust to redeem shares held by any shareholder for any reason under terms set by the Trustees.

The Declaration provides a detailed process for the bringing of derivative actions by shareholders in order to permit legitimate inquiries and claims while avoiding the time, expense, distraction and other harm that can be caused to the Funds or its shareholders as a result of spurious shareholder demands and derivative actions. In addition, the Declaration provides that actions that are derivative in nature may not be brought directly. Prior to bringing a derivative action, a demand must first be made on the Trustees. The Declaration details various information, certifications, undertakings and acknowledgements that must be included in the demand. Following receipt of the demand, the Trustees have a period of 90 days, which may be extended by an additional 60 days, to consider the demand. If a majority of the Trustees who are considered independent

for the purposes of considering the demand determine that maintaining the suit would not be in the best interests of the Funds, the Trustees are required to reject the demand and the complaining shareholder may not proceed with the derivative action unless the shareholder is able to sustain the burden of proof to a court that the decision of the Trustees not to pursue the requested action was not a good faith exercise of their business judgment on behalf of the Funds. In making such a determination, a Trustee is not considered to have a personal financial interest by virtue of being compensated for his or her services as a Trustee. If a demand is rejected, the complaining shareholder will be responsible for the costs and expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred by the Funds in connection with the consideration of the demand under a number of circumstances. In addition, if a court determines that a derivative action was made without reasonable cause or for an improper purpose, or if a derivative or direct action is dismissed on the basis of a failure to comply with the procedural provisions relating to shareholder actions as set forth in the Declaration, or if a direct action is dismissed by a court for failure to state a claim, the shareholder bringing the action may be responsible for such Fund's costs, including attorneys' fees.

The provisions of the Declaration provide that any direct or derivative action commenced by a shareholder must be brought only in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts (Boston Division) or if any such action may not be brought in that court, then in the Business Litigation Session of Suffolk Superior Court in Massachusetts (the "*Chosen Courts*"). Except as prohibited by applicable law, if a shareholder commences an applicable action in a court other than a Chosen Court without the consent of the Fund, then such shareholder may be obligated to reimburse the Funds and any applicable Trustee or officer of the Funds made party to such proceeding for the costs and expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred in connection with any successful motion to dismiss, stay or transfer of the action. The Declaration also provides that any shareholder bringing an action against the Funds waives the right to trial by jury to the fullest extent permitted by law.

The Trust is not required to and does not intend to hold annual meetings of shareholders.

Under Massachusetts law applicable to Massachusetts business trusts, shareholders of such a trust may, under certain circumstances, be held personally liable as partners for its obligations. However, the Declaration contains an express disclaimer of shareholder liability for acts or obligations of the Trust and requires that notice of this disclaimer be given in each agreement, obligation or instrument entered into or executed by the Trust or the Trustees. The Declaration further provides for indemnification out of the assets and property of the Trust for all losses and expenses of any shareholder held personally liable for the obligations of the Trust. Thus, the risk of a shareholder incurring financial loss on account of shareholder liability is limited to circumstances in which both inadequate insurance existed and the Trust or a Fund itself was unable to meet its obligations.

The Declaration further provides that a Trustee acting in his or her capacity as Trustee is not personally liable to any person other than the Trust, for any act, omission, or obligation of the Trust. The Declaration requires the Trust to indemnify any persons who are or who have been Trustees, officers or employees of the Trust for any liability for actions or failure to act except to the extent prohibited by applicable federal law. In making any determination as to whether any person is entitled to the advancement of expenses in connection with a claim for which indemnification is sought, such person is entitled to a rebuttable presumption that he or she did not engage in conduct for which indemnification is not available. The Declaration provides that any Trustee who serves as chair of the Board of Trustees or of a committee of the Board of Trustees, as lead independent Trustee or as audit committee financial expert, or in any other similar capacity will not be subject to any greater standard of care or liability because of such position.

The Declaration further provides that no provision of the Declaration will restrict any shareholder rights expressly granted by the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended or the 1940 Act, or any rule, regulation or order of the Securities Exchange Commission thereunder.

First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio is advised by First Trust Advisors L.P. (the "*Advisor*" or "*First Trust*"). First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio is advised by First Trust and sub-advised by Energy Income Partners, LLC ("*EIP*" or a "*Sub-Advisor*") and Stonebridge Advisors LLC ("*Stonebridge*" or a "*Sub-Advisor*" and collectively with EIP, the "*Sub-Advisors*").

INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The Prospectus describes the investment objectives and certain policies of the Funds. The following supplements the information contained in the Prospectus concerning the investment objectives and policies of the Funds.

Each Fund is subject to the following fundamental policies, which may not be changed without approval of the holders of a majority of the outstanding voting securities (as such term is defined in the 1940 Act) of a Fund:

- (1) A Fund may not issue senior securities, except as permitted under the 1940 Act.
- (2) A Fund may not borrow money, except that a Fund may (i) borrow money from banks for temporary or emergency purposes (but not for leverage or the purchase of investments) and (ii) engage in other transactions permissible under the 1940 Act that may involve a borrowing (such as obtaining short-term credits as are necessary for the clearance of transactions, engaging in delayed-delivery transactions, or purchasing certain futures, forward contracts and options), *provided* that the combination of (i) and (ii) shall not exceed 33⅓% of the value of such Fund's total assets (including the amount borrowed), less such Fund's liabilities (other than borrowings).
- (3) A Fund will not underwrite the securities of other issuers except to the extent a Fund may be considered an underwriter under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "1933 Act"), in connection with the purchase and sale of portfolio securities.
- (4) A Fund will not purchase or sell real estate or interests therein, unless acquired as a result of ownership of securities or other instruments (but this shall not prohibit a Fund from purchasing or selling securities or other instruments backed by real estate or of issuers engaged in real estate activities).
- (5) A Fund may not make loans to other persons, except through (i) the purchase of debt securities permissible under such Fund's investment policies, (ii) repurchase agreements, or (iii) the lending of portfolio securities, *provided* that no such loan of portfolio securities may be made by a Fund if, as a result, the aggregate of such loans would exceed 33⅓% of the value of such Fund's total assets.
- (6) A Fund may not purchase or sell physical commodities unless acquired as a result of ownership of securities or other instruments (but this shall not prevent a Fund from purchasing or selling options, futures contracts, forward contracts or other derivative instruments, or from investing in securities or other instruments backed by physical commodities).
- (7) A Fund may not invest more than 25% of its assets in securities of issuers in any one single industry. Notwithstanding the foregoing, there shall be no limitation on the purchase of obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government, its agencies or instrumentalities.
- (8) A Fund may not, as to 75% of its total assets, (a) invest more than 5% of the value of its total assets in the securities of any one issuer or (b) hold more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of that issuer (other than securities of other investment companies and obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. government or any agency or instrumentality thereof).
- (9) The First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio may not pledge, mortgage or hypothecate any of its assets except as may be necessary in connection with permissible borrowings or investments.

For purposes of applying restriction (1) above, under the 1940 Act as currently in effect, a Fund is not permitted to issue senior securities, except that a Fund may borrow from any bank if immediately after such borrowing the value of such Fund's total assets is at least 300% of the principal amount of all of such Fund's borrowings (*i.e.*, the principal amount of the borrowings may not exceed 33⅓% of such Fund's total assets). In the event that such asset coverage shall at any time fall below 300% the applicable Fund shall, within three days thereafter (not including Sundays and holidays), reduce the amount of its borrowings to an extent that the asset coverage of such borrowings shall be at least 300%.

Except for restriction (2) above, if a percentage restriction is adhered to at the time of investment, a later increase in percentage resulting from a change in market value of the investment or the total assets will not constitute a violation of that restriction. With respect to restriction (2), if the limitations are exceeded as a result of a change in market value then the Fund will reduce the amount of borrowings within three days thereafter to the extent necessary to comply with the limitations (not including Sundays and holidays).

The fundamental investment limitations set forth above limit the Funds' ability to engage in certain investment practices and purchase securities or other instruments to the extent permitted by, or consistent with, applicable law. As such, these limitations will change as the statute, rules, regulations or orders (or, if applicable, interpretations) change, and no shareholder vote will be required or sought.

Each Fund's investment objective(s) and the foregoing fundamental policies of each Fund may not be changed without the affirmative vote of the majority of the outstanding voting securities of the respective Fund. The 1940 Act defines a majority vote as the vote of the lesser of (i) 67% or more of the voting securities represented at a meeting at which more than 50%

of the outstanding securities are represented; or (ii) more than 50% of the outstanding voting securities. Certain matters under the 1940 Act which must be submitted to a vote of the holders of the outstanding voting securities of a series or class, shall not be deemed to have been effectively acted upon unless approved by the holders of a majority of the outstanding voting shares of each series or class affected by such matter.

In addition to the foregoing fundamental policies, a Fund is also subject to strategies and policies discussed herein which, unless otherwise noted, are non-fundamental restrictions and policies and may be changed by the Board of Trustees.

INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

The following information supplements the discussion of the Funds' investment objectives, policies and strategies that appear in the Prospectus.

Types of Investments

Equities. The Funds invest in equity securities. Equity securities represent an ownership position in a company. The prices of equity securities fluctuate based on, among other things, events specific to their issuers and market, economic, and other conditions. Equity securities may include common and preferred stocks. Common stocks include the common stock of any class or series of a domestic or foreign corporation or any similar equity interest, such as a trust or partnership interest. These investments may or may not pay dividends and may or may not carry voting rights. Common stock occupies the most junior position in a company's capital structure. The Funds may also invest in warrants and rights related to common stocks.

The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio will also invest in preferred equity securities. Preferred stock, unlike common stock, offers a stated dividend rate payable from the issuer's earnings. Preferred stock dividends may be cumulative or non-cumulative, participating or action rate. If interest rates rise, the fixed dividend on preferred stocks may be less attractive, causing the price of preferred stocks to decline. Preferred stock may have mandatory sinking fund provisions, as well as call/redemption provisions prior to maturity, a negative feature when interest rates decline.

Corporate Bonds. Corporate bonds, also known as fixed-income securities, are debt obligations issued by corporations. Corporate bonds are generally used by corporations to borrow money from investors. Corporate bonds may be either secured or unsecured. Collateral used for secured debt includes, but is not limited to, real property, machinery, equipment, accounts receivable, stocks, bonds or notes. If a corporate bond is unsecured, it is known as a debenture. Holders of corporate bonds, as creditors, have a prior legal claim over common and preferred stockholders as to both income and assets of the issuer for the principal and interest due them and may have a prior claim over other creditors if liens or mortgages are involved. Interest on corporate bonds may be fixed or floating, or the securities may be zero coupon fixed-income securities which pay no interest. Interest on corporate bonds is typically paid semi-annually and is fully taxable to the holder of the bonds. Corporate bonds contain elements of both interest rate risk and credit risk. The market value of a corporate bond generally may be expected to rise and fall inversely with changes in interest rates and may also be affected by the credit rating of the issuer, the issuer's performance and perceptions of the issuer in the marketplace. Corporate bonds usually yield more than government or agency bonds due to the presence of credit risk.

High Yield Securities. The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio invests in high yield securities, which are commonly referred to as "junk" bonds and are rated below investment grade at the time of purchase. The ratings of a rating agency represent its opinion as to the quality of securities it undertakes to rate. Ratings are not absolute standards of quality; consequently, securities with the same maturity, duration, coupon, and rating may have different yields. For purposes of determining whether a security is below investment grade, the highest available rating will be considered. If a security owned by the Fund is subsequently downgraded, the Fund will not be required to dispose of such security. If a downgrade occurs, the Advisor and Sub-Advisors will consider what action, including the sale of such security, is in the best interests of the Fund. The Credit Rating Definitions as published by Standard & Poor's Ratings Services, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. ("*Standard & Poor's*"), Fitch Ratings ("*Fitch*") and Moody's Investors Service, Inc. ("*Moody's*"), are set forth in *Exhibit B* to this SAI.

Because the risk of default is higher for below investment grade securities than for investment grade securities, the Advisor's and Sub-Advisors' research and credit analysis will be an especially important part of managing securities of this type. The Advisor and Sub-Advisors will attempt to identify those issuers of below investment grade securities whose financial condition the Advisor and Sub-Advisors believe are adequate to meet future obligations or who have improved or are expected to improve in the future. The Advisor's and Sub-Advisors' analysis primarily focuses on valuation and credit quality. Factors

considered include, but are not limited to, interest or dividend coverage, balance sheet leverage, free cash flow, asset coverage, earnings prospects, relative value and the experience and managerial strength of the issuer.

Master Limited Partnerships. The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio invests in Master Limited Partnerships (“MLPs”). Much of the high payout energy infrastructure companies are in the form of MLPs. MLPs are publicly traded partnerships primarily engaged in the transportation, storage, processing, refining, marketing, exploration, production, and mining of minerals and natural resources. By confining their operations to these specific activities, MLPs are able to trade on national securities exchanges exactly like the shares of a corporation, without entity level taxation on qualified income. MLPs generally distribute all available cash flow (cash flow from operations less maintenance capital expenditures) in the form of quarterly distributions. Some amounts received by the Fund with respect to its investments in MLPs may, if distributed by the Fund, be treated as a return of capital to Fund shareholders for federal income tax purposes.

Loans. The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio invests in fixed and floating rate loans (“Loans”). Loans may include senior floating rate loans (“Senior Loans”) and secured and unsecured loans, second lien or more junior loans and bridge loans (“Junior Loans”). Loans are typically arranged through private negotiations between borrowers in the United States or in foreign or emerging markets which are generally corporate issuers (“Obligors”) and one or more financial institutions and other lenders (“Lenders”). The Fund may invest in Loans by purchasing assignments of all or a portion of Loans (“Assignments”) or Loan participations (“Participations”) from third parties.

The Fund has direct rights against the Obligor on the Loan when it purchases an Assignment. Assignments are arranged through private negotiations between potential assignees and potential assignors. With respect to Participations, typically, the Fund will have a contractual relationship only with the Lender and not with the Obligor. The agreement governing Participations may limit the rights of the Fund to vote on certain changes which may be made to the Loan agreement, such as waiving a breach of a covenant. However, the holder of a Participation will generally have the right to vote on certain fundamental issues such as changes in principal amount, payment dates and interest rate. Participations may entail certain risks relating to the creditworthiness of the parties from which the participations are obtained.

A Loan is typically originated, negotiated and structured by a U.S. or foreign commercial bank, insurance company, finance company or other financial institution (the “Agent”) for a group of Loan investors. The Agent typically administers and enforces the Loan on behalf of the other Loan investors in the syndicate. The Agent’s duties may include responsibility for the collection of principal and interest payments from the Obligor and the apportionment of these payments to the credit of all Loan investors. The Agent is also typically responsible for monitoring compliance with the covenants contained in the Loan agreement based upon reports prepared by the Obligor. In addition, an institution, typically but not always the Agent, holds any collateral on behalf of the Loan investors. In the event of a default by the Obligor, it is possible, though unlikely, that the Fund could receive a portion of the borrower’s collateral. If the Fund receives collateral other than cash, any proceeds received from liquidation of such collateral will be available for investment as part of the Fund’s portfolio.

In the process of buying, selling and holding Senior Loans, the Fund may receive and/or pay certain fees. These fees are in addition to interest payments received and may include facility fees, commitment fees, commissions and prepayment penalty fees. When the Fund buys or sells a Loan it may pay a fee. In certain circumstances, the Fund may receive a prepayment penalty fee upon prepayment of a Loan.

There may be instances in which the Fund is required to vote upon amendments to certain of the Loans in which it invests. In these cases, the Fund will attempt to ensure that such amendments are voted consistently and solely in the best interests of the Fund.

Additional Information Concerning Senior Loans. The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio invests in Senior Loans, which typically hold the most senior position in the capital structure of the Obligor, are typically secured with specific collateral and have a claim on the assets and/or stock of the Obligor that is senior to that held by subordinated debt-holders and shareholders of the Obligor. Collateral for Senior Loans may include (i) working capital assets, such as accounts receivable and inventory; (ii) tangible fixed assets, such as real property, buildings and equipment; (iii) intangible assets, such as trademarks and patent rights; and/or (iv) security interests in shares of stock of subsidiaries or affiliates.

Preferred Securities and Hybrid Securities. The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio invests in preferred securities. Certain of the preferred securities in which the Fund invests are traditional preferred securities, which issue dividends that qualify for the dividend received deduction under which “qualified” domestic corporations are able to exclude a percentage of the dividends received from their taxable income.

Certain of the preferred securities in which the Fund invests are preferred securities that do not issue dividends that qualify for the dividends received deduction for eligible investors ("*non-DRD preferred securities*") and debt instruments that are similar in many respects to preferred securities (such debt instruments and non-DRD preferred securities are often referred to as "*hybrid securities*") that do not qualify for the dividends received deduction or issue qualified dividend income. Pursuant to the dividends received deduction, corporations may generally deduct 70% of the dividend income they receive. Corporate shareholders of a regulated investment company like the Fund generally are permitted to claim a deduction with respect to that portion of their distributions attributable to amounts received by the regulated investment company that qualify for the dividends received deduction. However, not all preferred securities pay dividends that are eligible for the dividends received deduction. Any corporate shareholder who otherwise would qualify for the dividends received deduction should assume that none of the distributions it receives from the Fund will qualify for the dividends received deduction.

These types of hybrid securities typically offer additional yield spread versus other types of preferred securities due to this lack of special tax treatment. Hybrid securities are typically issued by corporations, generally in the form of interest bearing notes or preferred securities, or by an affiliated business trust of a corporation, generally in the form of (i) beneficial interests in subordinated debentures or similarly structured securities or (ii) more senior debt securities that pay income and trade in a manner similar to preferred securities. The hybrid securities market consists of both fixed and adjustable coupon rate securities that are either perpetual in nature or have stated maturity dates. The hybrid securities market is divided into the "\$25 par" and the "institutional" segments. The \$25 par segment is typified by securities that are listed on the New York Stock Exchange (the "NYSE"), which trade and are quoted "flat", *i.e.*, without accrued dividend income, and which are typically callable at par value five years after their original issuance date. The institutional segment is typified by \$1,000 par value securities that are not exchange-listed, which trade and are quoted on an "accrued income" basis, and which typically have a minimum of 10 years of call protection (at premium prices) from the date of their original issuance.

Hybrid securities are typically junior and fully subordinated liabilities of an issuer or the beneficiary of a guarantee that is junior and fully subordinated to the other liabilities of the guarantor. In addition, hybrid securities typically permit an issuer to defer the payment of income for eighteen months or more without triggering an event of default. Generally, the deferral period is five years or more. Because of their subordinated position in the capital structure of an issuer, the ability to defer payments for extended periods of time without adverse consequence to the issuer, and certain other features (such as restrictions on common dividend payments by the issuer or ultimate guarantor when cumulative payments on the non-DRD preferred securities have not been made), these hybrid securities are often treated as close substitutes for traditional preferred securities, both by issuers and investors. Hybrid securities have many of the key characteristics of equity due to their subordinated position in an issuer's capital structure and because their quality and value are heavily dependent on the profitability of the issuer rather than on any legal claims to specific assets or cash flows.

Hybrid securities include but are not limited to: trust originated preferred securities, monthly income preferred securities, quarterly income bond securities, quarterly income debt securities, quarterly income preferred securities, corporate trust securities, public income notes, and other trust preferred securities.

Hybrid securities are typically issued with a final maturity date, although some are perpetual in nature. In certain instances, a final maturity date may be extended and/or the final payment of principal may be deferred at the issuer's option for a specified time without any adverse consequence to the issuer. No redemption can typically take place unless all cumulative payment obligations have been met, although issuers may be able to engage in open-market repurchases without regard to any cumulative dividends payable. A portion of the portfolio may include investments in non-cumulative preferred securities, whereby the issuer does not have an obligation to make up any arrearages to its shareholders. Should an issuer default on its obligations under such a security, the amount of dividends the Fund pays may be adversely affected.

Many hybrid securities are issued by a trust or other special purpose entities established by operating companies, and are not a direct obligation of an operating company. At the time a trust or special purpose entity sells its preferred securities to investors, the trust or special purpose entity purchases debt of the operating company (with terms comparable to those of the trust or special purpose entity securities), which enables the operating company to deduct for tax purposes the interest paid on the debt held by the trust or special purpose entity. The trust or special purpose entity is generally required to be treated as transparent for federal income tax purposes such that the holders of the non-DRD preferred securities are treated as owning beneficial interests in the underlying debt of the operating company. Accordingly, payments of the non-DRD preferred securities are treated as interest rather than dividends for federal income tax purposes and, as such, are not eligible for the dividends received deduction. The trust or special purpose entity in turn would be a holder of the operating company's debt and would have priority with respect to the operating company's earnings and profits over the operating company's common

shareholders, but would typically be subordinated to other classes of the operating company's debt. Typically a non-DRD preferred share has a rating that is slightly below that of its corresponding operating company's senior debt securities.

Non-U.S. Investments. The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio invests in non-U.S. securities, which may include securities denominated in non-U.S. currencies. Non-U.S. debt securities in which the Fund may invest include debt securities issued or guaranteed by companies organized under the laws of countries other than the United States (including emerging markets), debt securities issued or guaranteed by foreign, national, provincial, state, municipal or other governments with taxing authority or by their agencies or instrumentalities and debt obligations of supranational governmental entities such as the World Bank or European Union. Non-U.S. debt securities also include U.S. dollar-denominated debt obligations, such as "Yankee Dollar" obligations, of foreign issuers and of supra-national government entities. Yankee Dollar obligations are U.S. dollar-denominated obligations issued in the U.S. capital markets by foreign corporations, banks and governments. Foreign debt securities also may be traded on foreign securities exchanges or in OTC capital markets. The Fund's non-U.S. investments may be denominated in currencies other than the U.S. dollar. To the extent the Fund invests in such instruments, the value of the assets of the Fund as measured in U.S. dollars will be affected by changes in exchange rates. Generally, the Fund's currency exchange transactions will be conducted on a spot (*i.e.*, cash) basis at the spot rate prevailing in the currency exchange market. The cost of the Fund's currency exchange transactions will generally be the difference between the bid and offer spot rate of the currency being purchased or sold. In order to protect against uncertainty in the level of future currency exchange rates, the Fund is authorized to enter into various currency exchange transactions.

Additional Investments

Additional Information Concerning Synthetic Letters of Credit. The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio invests in Loans, which may include synthetic letters of credit. In a synthetic letter of credit transaction, the Lender typically creates a special purpose entity or a credit-linked deposit account for the purpose of funding a letter of credit to the borrower. When the Fund invests in a synthetic letter of credit, the Fund is typically paid a rate based on the lender's borrowing costs and the terms of a synthetic letter of credit. Synthetic letters of credit are typically structured as assignments with the Fund acquiring direct rights against the Obligor.

Additional Information Concerning Unfunded Commitments. The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio may invest in unfunded commitments, which are contractual obligations pursuant to which the Fund agrees to invest in a loan at a future date. Typically, the Fund receives a commitment fee for entering into the unfunded commitment.

Credit Linked Notes. The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio may invest in credit linked notes, which are structured securities typically issued by banks whose principal and interest payments are contingent on the performance of a reference issuer. Credit linked notes are created by embedding a credit default swap in a funded asset to form an investment whose credit risk and cash flow characteristics resemble those of a bond or loan. These credit linked notes pay an enhanced coupon to the investor for taking on the added credit risk of the reference issuer.

Illiquid Securities. The Funds may invest in illiquid securities (*i.e.*, securities that are not readily marketable). For purposes of this restriction, illiquid securities include, but are not limited to, certain restricted securities (securities the disposition of which is restricted under the federal securities laws), securities that may only be resold pursuant to Rule 144A under the 1933 Act that are deemed to be illiquid; and repurchase agreements with maturities in excess of seven days. However, a Fund will not acquire illiquid securities if, as a result, such securities would comprise more than 15% of the value of such Fund's net assets. The Board of Trustees or its delegate has the ultimate authority to determine, to the extent permissible under the federal securities laws, which securities are liquid or illiquid for purposes of this 15% limitation. The Board of Trustees has delegated to the Advisor or the Sub-Advisors the day-to-day determination of the illiquidity of any equity or fixed-income security, although it has retained oversight for such determinations. With respect to Rule 144A securities, the Advisor and the Sub-Advisors consider factors such as (i) the nature of the market for a security (including the institutional private resale market, the frequency of trades and quotes for the security, the number of dealers willing to purchase or sell the security, the amount of time normally needed to dispose of the security, the method of soliciting offers and the mechanics of transfer); (ii) the terms of certain securities or other instruments allowing for the disposition to a third party or the issuer thereof (*e.g.*, certain repurchase obligations and demand instruments); and (iii) other permissible relevant factors.

Restricted securities may be sold only in privately negotiated transactions or in a public offering with respect to which a registration statement is in effect under the 1933 Act. Where registration is required, a Fund may be obligated to pay all or part of the registration expenses and a considerable period may elapse between the time of the decision to sell and the time a Fund may be permitted to sell a security under an effective registration statement. If, during such a period, adverse market conditions were to develop, a Fund might obtain a less favorable price than that which prevailed when it decided to sell. Illiquid

securities will be priced at fair value as determined in good faith under procedures adopted by the Board of Trustees. If, through the appreciation of illiquid securities or the depreciation of liquid securities, a Fund should be in a position where more than 15% of the value of its net assets are invested in illiquid securities, including restricted securities which are not readily marketable, a Fund will take such steps as is deemed advisable, if any, to protect liquidity.

Investment Companies and Pooled Investment Vehicles. The Funds may invest in other pooled investment vehicles, including open-end or closed-end investment companies, exchange-traded funds (“ETFs”) and business development companies that invest primarily in securities of the types in which the Funds may invest directly. As a shareholder in a pooled investment vehicle, a Fund will bear its ratable share of that vehicle’s expenses, and would remain subject to payment of that vehicle’s management fees with respect to assets so invested. Normally shareholders are subject to duplicative expenses to the extent a Fund invests in other pooled investment vehicles. However, for the First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio, the Advisor has agreed waive and/or reimburse the acquired fund fees and expenses of the shares of the investment companies held by the Fund up to 0.37% of the Fund’s average daily net assets until May 1, 2019. Any acquired fund fees and expenses in excess of 0.37% of average daily net assets will be borne by the Fund and will lower the Fund’s net asset value. In addition, a Fund will incur brokerage costs when purchasing and selling shares of ETFs and closed-end funds. Other pooled investment vehicles may be leveraged, and the net asset value and market value of their securities will therefore be more volatile and the yield to shareholders will tend to fluctuate more than the yield of unleveraged pooled investment vehicles.

The Funds may invest in the securities of ETFs in excess of the limits imposed under the 1940 Act pursuant to exemptive orders obtained by certain ETFs and their sponsors from the SEC. An ETF is a fund that holds a portfolio of securities and trades on a securities exchange and its shares may, at times, trade at a premium or discount to their net asset value. Additionally, the Funds may invest in certain investment companies in excess of the limits imposed under the 1940 Act, subject to certain terms and conditions, pursuant to an exemptive order that the SEC has issued to the Trust.

Fixed Income Investments and Cash Equivalents. The Funds may invest in fixed income investments and cash equivalents in order to provide income, liquidity and preserve capital. Fixed income investments and cash equivalents held by each Fund may include, without limitation, the types of investments set forth below.

- (1) A Fund may invest in U.S. government securities, including bills, notes and bonds differing as to maturity and rates of interest, which are either issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Treasury or by U.S. government agencies or instrumentalities. U.S. government securities include securities that are issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Treasury, by various agencies of the U.S. government, or by various instrumentalities that have been established or sponsored by the U.S. government. U.S. Treasury securities are backed by the “full faith and credit” of the United States. Securities issued or guaranteed by federal agencies and U.S. government-sponsored instrumentalities may or may not be backed by the full faith and credit of the United States. Some of the U.S. government agencies that issue or guarantee securities include the Export-Import Bank of the United States, the Farmers Home Administration, the Federal Housing Administration, the Maritime Administration, the Small Business Administration and The Tennessee Valley Authority. An instrumentality of the U.S. government is a government agency organized under federal charter with government supervision. Instrumentalities issuing or guaranteeing securities include, among others, the Federal Home Loan Banks, the Federal Land Banks, the Central Bank for Cooperatives, Federal Intermediate Credit Banks and the Federal National Mortgage Association (“Fannie Mae”). In the case of those U.S. government securities not backed by the full faith and credit of the United States, the investor must look principally to the agency or instrumentality issuing or guaranteeing the security for ultimate repayment and may not be able to assert a claim against the United States itself in the event that the agency or instrumentality does not meet its commitment. The U.S. government, its agencies and instrumentalities do not guarantee the market value of their securities; consequently, the value of such securities may fluctuate.
- (2) A Fund may invest in certificates of deposit issued against funds deposited in a bank or savings and loan association. Such certificates are for a definite period of time, earn a specified rate of return and are normally negotiable. If such certificates of deposit are non-negotiable, they will be considered illiquid securities and be subject to such Fund’s 15% restriction on investments in illiquid securities. Pursuant to the certificate of deposit, the issuer agrees to pay the amount deposited plus interest to the bearer of the certificate on the date specified thereon. Under current FDIC regulations, the maximum insurance payable as to any one certificate of deposit is \$250,000; therefore, certificates of deposit purchased by a Fund may not be fully insured. A Fund may only invest in certificates of deposit issued by U.S. banks with at least \$1 billion in assets.
- (3) A Fund may invest in bankers’ acceptances, which are short-term credit instruments used to finance commercial transactions. Generally, an acceptance is a time draft drawn on a bank by an exporter or an importer to obtain

a stated amount of funds to pay for specific merchandise. The draft is then "accepted" by a bank that, in effect, unconditionally guarantees to pay the face value of the instrument on its maturity date. The acceptance may then be held by the accepting bank as an asset or it may be sold in the secondary market at the going rate of interest for a specific maturity.

- (4) A Fund may invest in repurchase agreements, which involve purchases of debt securities with counterparties that are deemed by First Trust to present acceptable credit risks. In such an action, at the time a Fund purchases the security, it simultaneously agrees to resell and redeliver the security to the seller, who also simultaneously agrees to buy back the security at a fixed price and time. This assures a predetermined yield for a Fund during its holding period since the resale price is always greater than the purchase price and reflects an agreed-upon market rate. Such actions afford an opportunity for a Fund to invest temporarily available cash. A Fund may enter into repurchase agreements only with respect to obligations of the U.S. government, its agencies or instrumentalities, certificates of deposit or bankers' acceptances in which a Fund may invest. Repurchase agreements may be considered loans to the seller, collateralized by the underlying securities. The risk to a Fund is limited to the ability of the seller to pay the agreed-upon sum on the repurchase date; in the event of default, the repurchase agreement provides that the affected Fund is entitled to sell the underlying collateral. If the value of the collateral declines after the agreement is entered into, however, and if the seller defaults under a repurchase agreement when the value of the underlying collateral is less than the repurchase price, a Fund could incur a loss of both principal and interest. The portfolio managers monitor the value of the collateral at the time the action is entered into and at all times during the term of the repurchase agreement. The portfolio managers do so in an effort to determine that the value of the collateral always equals or exceeds the agreed-upon repurchase price to be paid to a Fund. If the seller were to be subject to a federal bankruptcy proceeding, the ability of a Fund to liquidate the collateral could be delayed or impaired because of certain provisions of the bankruptcy laws.
- (5) A Fund may invest in bank time deposits, which are monies kept on deposit with banks or savings and loan associations for a stated period of time at a fixed rate of interest. There may be penalties for the early withdrawal of such time deposits, in which case the yields of these investments will be reduced.
- (6) A Fund may invest in commercial paper, which are short-term unsecured promissory notes, including variable rate master demand notes issued by corporations to finance their current operations. Master demand notes are direct lending arrangements between the Fund and a corporation. There is no secondary market for the notes. However, they are redeemable by a Fund at any time. A Fund's portfolio managers will consider the financial condition of the corporation (e.g., earning power, cash flow and other liquidity ratios) and will continuously monitor the corporation's ability to meet all of its financial obligations, because such Fund's liquidity might be impaired if the corporation were unable to pay principal and interest on demand. A Fund may invest in commercial paper only if it has received the highest rating from at least one nationally recognized statistical rating organization or, if unrated, judged by First Trust to be of comparable quality.
- (7) A Fund may invest in shares of money market funds, as consistent with its investment objectives and policies. Shares of money market funds are subject to management fees and other expenses of those funds. Therefore, investments in money market funds will cause the Fund to bear proportionately the costs incurred by the money market funds' operations. At the same time, a Fund will continue to pay its own management fees and expenses with respect to all of its assets, including any portion invested in the shares of other investment companies. Although money market funds that operate in accordance with Rule 2a-7 under the 1940 Act seek to preserve a \$1.00 share price. It is possible for the Fund to lose money by investing in money market funds.

Other Loans. The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio may invest in secured loans that are not first lien and loans that are unsecured. These loans have the same characteristics as Senior Loans except that such loans are not first in priority of repayment and/or are not secured by collateral. Accordingly, the risks associated with these loans are higher than the risks for loans with first priority over the collateral. Because these loans are lower in priority and/or unsecured, they are subject to the additional risk that the cash flow of the borrower may be insufficient to meet scheduled payments after giving effect to the secured obligations of the borrower. In the event of default on such a loan, the first priority lien holder has first claim to the underlying collateral of the loan. It is possible that no value would remain for the holders of secured loans that are not first lien and loans that are unsecured and therefore result in a loss of investment to the Fund.

When-Issued or Delayed-Delivery Transactions. The Funds may from time to time purchase securities on a "when-issued" or other delayed-delivery basis. The price of securities purchased in such transactions is fixed at the time the

commitment to purchase is made, but delivery and payment for the securities take place at a later date. Normally, the settlement date occurs within 45 days of the purchase. During the period between the purchase and settlement, a Fund does not remit payment to the issuer, no interest is accrued on debt securities and dividend income is not earned on equity securities. Delayed-delivery commitments involve a risk of loss if the value of the security to be purchased declines prior to the settlement date, which risk is in addition to the risk of a decline in value of a Fund's other assets. While securities purchased in delayed-delivery transactions may be sold prior to the settlement date, the Funds intend to purchase such securities with the purpose of actually acquiring them. At the time a Fund makes the commitment to purchase a security in a delayed-delivery transaction, it will record the transaction and reflect the value of the security in determining its net asset value.

When the time comes to pay for delayed-delivery securities, a Fund will meet its obligations from then-available cash flow, sale of the securities earmarked or held in the segregated account as described above, sale of other securities or, although it would not normally expect to do so, from the sale of the delayed-delivery securities themselves (which may have a market value greater or less than such Fund's payment obligation).

Although the Prospectus and this SAI describe certain permitted methods of segregating assets or otherwise "covering" certain transactions, such descriptions are not all-inclusive. Each Fund may segregate against or cover such transactions using other methods permitted under the 1940 Act, the rules and regulations thereunder, or orders issued by the SEC thereunder.

Portfolio Turnover

The Funds buy and sell portfolio securities in the normal course of their investment activities. The proportion of such Fund's investment portfolio that is bought and sold during a year is known as such Fund's portfolio turnover rate. A portfolio turnover rate of 100% would occur, for example, if all of the portfolio securities (other than short-term securities) were replaced once during the fiscal year. A high portfolio turnover rate could result in the payment by a Fund of increased brokerage costs, expenses and taxes. The portfolio turnover rates for the specified periods are set forth in the table below. Any significant variations in portfolio turnover from year-to-year resulted from fluctuation in the size of the Fund.

Portfolio Turnover Rate

Fund	Fiscal Year Ended December 31,	
	2017	2016
First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio	71%	96%
First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio	46%	46%

Hedging Strategies

General Description of Hedging Strategies

The Funds may engage in hedging activities. First Trust (or with respect to the Multi Income Allocation Portfolio, a Sub-Advisor) may cause a Fund to utilize a variety of financial instruments, including options, forward contracts, futures contracts, options on futures contracts and shorting strategies and swap agreements to attempt to hedge each Fund's holdings. The use of futures is not a part of a principal investment strategy of the Funds.

Hedging or derivative instruments on securities generally are used to hedge against price movements in one or more particular securities positions that a Fund owns or intends to acquire. Such instruments may also be used to "lock-in" realized but unrecognized gains in the value of portfolio securities. Hedging instruments on stock indices, in contrast, generally are used to hedge against price movements in broad equity market sectors in which a Fund has invested or expects to invest. Hedging strategies, if successful, can reduce the risk of loss by wholly or partially offsetting the negative effect of unfavorable price movements in the investments being hedged. However, hedging strategies can also reduce the opportunity for gain by offsetting the positive effect of favorable price movements in the hedged investments. The use of hedging instruments is subject to applicable regulations of the SEC, the several options and futures exchanges upon which they are traded, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (the "CFTC") and various state regulatory authorities. In addition, the Funds' ability to use hedging instruments may be limited by tax considerations.

General Limitations on Futures and Options Transactions

The Funds limit their direct investments in futures, options on futures and swaps to the extent necessary for the Advisor to claim the exclusion from regulation as a "commodity pool operator" with respect to each Fund under CFTC Rule 4.5, as

such rule may be amended from time to time. Under Rule 4.5 as currently in effect, the Funds limit their trading activity in futures, options on futures and swaps (excluding activity for "bona fide hedging purposes," as defined by the CFTC) such that it meets one of the following tests: (i) aggregate initial margin and premiums required to establish its futures, options on futures and swap positions do not exceed 5% of the liquidation value of the applicable Fund's portfolio, after taking into account unrealized profits and losses on such positions; or (ii) aggregate net notional value of the applicable Fund's futures, options on futures and swap positions does not exceed 100% of the liquidation value of the Fund's portfolio, after taking into account unrealized profits and losses on such positions.

The Advisor has filed a notice of eligibility for exclusion from the definition of the term "commodity pool operator" with respect to each Fund with the National Futures Association, the futures industry's self-regulatory organization. If a Fund were no longer able to claim the exclusion, the Advisor would be required to register as a commodity pool operator," and the Fund and the Advisor would be subject to regulation under the Commodity Exchange Act (the "CEA").

Asset Coverage for Futures and Options Positions

The Funds will comply with the regulatory requirements of the SEC and the CFTC with respect to coverage of options and futures positions by registered investment companies and, if the guidelines so require, will earmark or set aside cash, U.S. government securities, high grade liquid debt securities and/or other liquid assets permitted by the SEC and CFTC in a segregated custodial account in the amount prescribed. Securities earmarked or held in a segregated account cannot be sold while the futures or options position is outstanding, unless replaced with other permissible assets, and will be marked-to-market daily.

Stock Index Options

The Funds may purchase stock index options, sell stock index options in order to close out existing positions, and/or write covered options on stock indices for hedging purposes. Stock index options are put options and call options on various stock indices. In most respects, they are identical to listed options on common stocks. The primary difference between stock options and index options occurs when index options are exercised. In the case of stock options, the underlying security, common stock, is delivered. However, upon the exercise of an index option, settlement does not occur by delivery of the securities comprising the stock index. The option holder who exercises the index option receives an amount of cash if the closing level of the stock index upon which the option is based is greater than, in the case of a call, or less than, in the case of a put, the exercise price of the option. This amount of cash is equal to the difference between the closing price of the stock index and the exercise price of the option expressed in dollars times a specified multiple.

A stock index fluctuates with changes in the market values of the stocks included in the index. For example, some stock index options are based on a broad market index, such as the S&P 500® Index or the Value Line® Composite Index or a more narrow market index, such as the S&P 100 Index. Indices may also be based on an industry or market segment. Options on stock indices are currently traded on the following exchanges: the Chicago Board Options Exchange, NYSE Amex Options, The Nasdaq Stock Market LLC ("*Nasdaq*") and the Philadelphia Stock Exchange.

The Funds' use of stock index options is subject to certain risks. Successful use by a Fund of options on stock indices will be subject to the ability of its Advisor to correctly predict movements in the directions of the stock market. This requires different skills and techniques than predicting changes in the prices of individual securities. In addition, such Fund's ability to effectively hedge all or a portion of the securities in its portfolio, in anticipation of or during a market decline through transactions in put options on stock indices, depends on the degree to which price movements in the underlying index correlate with the price movements of the securities held by the Fund. Inasmuch as the Fund's securities will not duplicate the components of an index, the correlation will not be perfect. Consequently, the Fund will bear the risk that the prices of its securities being hedged will not move in the same amount as the prices of its put options on the stock indices. It is also possible that there may be a negative correlation between the index and such Fund's securities, which would result in a loss on both such securities and the options on stock indices acquired by the Fund.

The hours of trading for options may not conform to the hours during which the underlying securities are traded. To the extent that the options markets close before the markets for the underlying securities, significant price and rate movements can take place in the underlying markets that cannot be reflected in the options markets. The purchase of options is a highly specialized activity, which involves investment techniques and risks different from those associated with ordinary portfolio securities transactions. The purchase of stock index options involves the risk that the premium and transaction costs paid by a Fund in purchasing an option will be lost as a result of unanticipated movements in prices of the securities comprising the stock index on which the option is based.

Certain Considerations Regarding Options

There is no assurance that a liquid secondary market on an options exchange will exist for any particular option, or at any particular time, and for some options no secondary market on an exchange or elsewhere may exist. If a Fund is unable to close out a call option on securities that it has written before the option is exercised, a Fund may be required to purchase the optioned securities in order to satisfy its obligation under the option to deliver such securities. If a Fund is unable to effect a closing sale transaction with respect to options on securities that it has purchased, it would have to exercise the option in order to realize any profit and would incur transaction costs upon the purchase and sale of the underlying securities.

The writing and purchasing of options is a highly specialized activity which involves investment techniques and risks different from those associated with ordinary portfolio securities transactions. Imperfect correlation between the options and securities markets may detract from the effectiveness of attempted hedging. Options transactions may result in significantly higher transaction costs and portfolio turnover for the Funds.

Futures Contracts

The Funds may enter into futures contracts, including index futures as a hedge against movements in the equity markets, in order to hedge against changes on securities held or intended to be acquired by a Fund or for other purposes permissible under the CEA. A Fund's hedging activities may include sales of futures as an offset against the effect of expected declines in stock prices and purchases of futures as an offset against the effect of expected increases in stock prices. The Funds will not enter into futures contracts which are prohibited under the CEA and will, to the extent required by regulatory authorities, enter only into futures contracts that are traded on national futures exchanges and are standardized as to maturity date and underlying financial instrument. The principal interest rate futures exchanges in the United States are the Chicago Board of Trade and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. Futures exchanges and trading are regulated under the CEA by the CFTC.

An interest rate futures contract provides for the future sale by one party and purchase by another party of a specified amount of a specific financial instrument (*e.g.*, a debt security) or currency for a specified price at a designated date, time and place. An index futures contract is an agreement pursuant to which the parties agree to take or make delivery of an amount of cash equal to the difference between the value of the index at the close of the last trading day of the contract and the price at which the index futures contract was originally written. Transaction costs are incurred when a futures contract is bought or sold and margin deposits must be maintained. A futures contract may be satisfied by delivery or purchase, as the case may be, of the instrument or by payment of the change in the cash value of the index. More commonly, futures contracts are closed out prior to delivery by entering into an offsetting transaction in a matching futures contract. Although the value of an index might be a function of the value of certain specified securities, no physical delivery of those securities is made. If the offsetting purchase price is less than the original sale price, a gain will be realized. Conversely, if the offsetting sale price is more than the original purchase price, a gain will be realized; if it is less, a loss will be realized. The transaction costs must also be included in these calculations. There can be no assurance, however, that a Fund will be able to enter into an offsetting transaction with respect to a particular futures contract at a particular time. If a Fund is not able to enter into an offsetting transaction, a Fund will continue to be required to maintain the margin deposits on the futures contracts.

Margin is the amount of funds that must be deposited by a Fund with its custodian in a segregated account in the name of the futures commission merchant in order to initiate futures trading and to maintain such Fund's open positions in futures contracts. A margin deposit is intended to ensure the Fund's performance of the futures contracts.

The margin required for a particular futures contract is set by the exchange on which the futures contract is traded and may be significantly modified from time to time by the exchange during the term of the futures contract. Futures contracts are customarily purchased and sold on margins that may range upward from less than 5% of the value of the futures contract being traded.

If the price of an open futures contract changes (by increase in the case of a sale or by decrease in the case of a purchase) so that the loss on the futures contract reaches a point at which the margin on deposit does not satisfy margin requirements, the broker will require an increase in the margin. However, if the value of a position increases because of favorable price changes in the futures contract so that the margin deposit exceeds the required margin, the broker will pay the excess to a Fund. In computing daily net asset value, a Fund will mark to market the current value of its open futures contracts. The Funds expect to earn interest income on their margin deposits.

Because of the low margin deposits required, futures trading involves an extremely high degree of leverage. As a result, a relatively small price movement in a futures contract may result in immediate and substantial loss, as well as gain, to the investor. For example, if at the time of purchase 10% of the value of the futures contract is deposited as margin, a

subsequent 10% decrease in the value of the futures contract would result in a total loss of the margin deposit, before any deduction for the transaction costs, if the account were then closed out. A 15% decrease would result in a loss equal to 150% of the original margin deposit, if the future contracts were closed out. Thus, a purchase or sale of a futures contract may result in losses in excess of the amount initially invested in the futures contract. However, a Fund would presumably have sustained comparable losses if, instead of the futures contract, it had invested in the underlying financial instrument and sold it after the decline.

Most U.S. futures exchanges limit the amount of fluctuation permitted in futures contract prices during a single trading day. The day limit establishes the maximum amount that the price of a futures contract may vary either up or down from the previous day's settlement price at the end of a trading session. Once the daily limit has been reached in a particular type of futures contract, no trades may be made on that day at a price beyond that limit. The daily limit governs only price movement during a particular trading day and therefore does not limit potential losses, because the limit may prevent the liquidation of unfavorable positions. Futures contract prices have occasionally moved to the daily limit for several consecutive trading days with little or no trading, thereby preventing prompt liquidation of futures positions and subjecting some investors to substantial losses.

There can be no assurance that a liquid market will exist at a time when a Fund seeks to close out a futures position. A Fund would continue to be required to meet margin requirements until the position is closed, possibly resulting in a decline in the Fund's net asset value. In addition, many of the contracts discussed above are relatively new instruments without a significant trading history. As a result, there can be no assurance that an active secondary market will develop or continue to exist.

A public market exists in futures contracts covering a number of indices, including but not limited to, the S&P 500® Index, the S&P 100 Index, the NASDAQ-100 Index®, the Value Line® Composite Index and the NYSE Composite Index®.

Options on Futures

The Funds may also purchase or write put and call options on futures contracts and enter into closing transactions with respect to such options to terminate an existing position. A futures option gives the holder the right, in return for the premium paid, to assume a long position (call) or short position (put) in a futures contract at a specified exercise price prior to the expiration of the option. Upon exercise of a call option, the holder acquires a long position in the futures contract and the writer is assigned the opposite short position. In the case of a put option, the opposite is true. Prior to exercise or expiration, a futures option may be closed out by an offsetting purchase or sale of a futures option of the same series.

The Funds may use options on futures contracts in connection with hedging strategies. Generally, these strategies would be applied under the same market and market sector conditions in which each Fund uses put and call options on securities or indices. The purchase of put options on futures contracts is analogous to the purchase of puts on securities or indices so as to hedge such Fund's securities holdings against the risk of declining market prices. The writing of a call option or the purchasing of a put option on a futures contract constitutes a partial hedge against declining prices of securities which are deliverable upon exercise of the futures contract. If the price at expiration of a written call option is below the exercise price, a Fund will retain the full amount of the option premium which provides a partial hedge against any decline that may have occurred in such Fund's holdings of securities. If the price when the option is exercised is above the exercise price, however, a Fund will incur a loss, which may be offset, in whole or in part, by the increase in the value of the securities held by a Fund that were being hedged. Writing a put option or purchasing a call option on a futures contract serves as a partial hedge against an increase in the value of the securities a Fund intends to acquire.

As with investments in futures contracts, a Fund is required to deposit and maintain margin with respect to put and call options on futures contracts written by it. Such margin deposits will vary depending on the nature of the underlying futures contract (and the related initial margin requirements), the current market value of the option and other futures positions held by a Fund. A Fund will earmark or set aside in a segregated account at the Fund's custodian, liquid assets, such as cash, U.S. government securities or other high-grade liquid debt obligations equal in value to the amount due on the underlying obligation. Such segregated assets will be marked-to-market daily, and additional assets will be earmarked or placed in the segregated account whenever the total value of the earmarked or segregated assets falls below the amount due on the underlying obligation.

The risks associated with the use of options on futures contracts include the risk that the Funds may close out its position as a writer of an option only if a liquid secondary market exists for such options, which cannot be assured. A Fund's successful use of options on futures contracts depends on its Advisor's ability to correctly predict the movement in prices of futures contracts and the underlying instruments, which may prove to be incorrect. In addition, there may be imperfect correlation between the instruments being hedged and the futures contract subject to the option. For additional information, see "Futures

Contracts." Certain characteristics of the futures market might increase the risk that movements in the prices of futures contracts or options on futures contracts might not correlate perfectly with movements in the prices of the investments being hedged. For example, all participants in the futures and options on futures contracts markets are subject to daily variation margin calls and might be compelled to liquidate futures or options on futures contracts positions whose prices are moving unfavorably to avoid being subject to further calls. These liquidations could increase the price volatility of the instruments and distort the normal price relationship between the futures or options and the investments being hedged. Also, because of initial margin deposit requirements, there might be increased participation by speculators in the futures markets. This participation also might cause temporary price distortions. In addition, activities of large traders in both the futures and securities markets involving arbitrage, "program trading," and other investment strategies might result in temporary price distortions.

Short Sales

The Funds may take short positions in securities, which are often referred to as "short sales." A short sale is a sale of a security a Fund has borrowed, with the expectation that the security will underperform the market. To settle the short sale transaction, the Fund buys the same security at a later date and returns it to the lender of the security. A Fund makes money on a short position if the market price of the security goes down after the short sale or if the market price of the securities it buys with the proceeds of the short sale increases more than that of the security sold short. Conversely, if the price of the security sold short goes up after the short sale, the Fund loses money because it has to pay more to replace the borrowed security than it received when it sold the security short. Short-selling is considered "leverage" and may involve substantial risk.

Insurance Law Restrictions

In connection with the Trust's agreement to sell shares of a Fund to Accounts, Participating Insurance Companies and First Trust may enter into agreements, required by certain state insurance departments, under which First Trust may agree to use its best efforts to assure and to permit the Participating Insurance Companies to monitor such Fund for compliance with the investment restrictions and limitations prescribed by state insurance laws and regulations applicable to the investment of separate account assets in shares of mutual funds. If a Fund failed to comply with such restrictions or limitations, Participating Insurance Companies would take appropriate action which might include ceasing to make investments in such Fund or withdrawing from the state imposing the limitation. Such restrictions and limitations are not expected to have a significant impact on the Trust's operations.

INVESTMENT RISKS

The following risk disclosure supplements the discussion of the Funds' investment risks that appears in the Prospectus.

Overview

An investment in a Fund should be made with an understanding of the risks which an investment in common stocks and fixed income securities entails.

The risks of investing in common stocks include the risk that the financial condition of the issuers of the equity securities or the general condition of the common stock market may worsen and the value of the equity securities and therefore the value of a Fund may decline. A Fund may not be an appropriate investment for those who are unable or unwilling to assume the risks involved generally with an equity investment. The past market and earnings performance of any of the equity securities included in a Fund is not predictive of their future performance. Common stocks are especially susceptible to general stock market movements and to volatile increases and decreases of value as market confidence in and perceptions of the issuers change. These perceptions are based on unpredictable factors including expectations regarding government, economic, monetary and fiscal policies, inflation and interest rates, economic expansion or contraction, and global or regional political, economic or banking crises. First Trust cannot predict the direction or scope of any of these factors. Shareholders of common stocks have rights to receive payments from the issuers of those common stocks that are generally subordinate to those of creditors of, or holders of debt obligations or preferred stocks of, such issuers.

Shareholders of common stocks of the type held by a Fund have a right to receive dividends only when and if, and in the amounts, declared by the issuer's board of directors and have a right to participate in amounts available for distribution by the issuer only after all other claims on the issuer have been paid. Common stocks do not represent an obligation of the issuer and, therefore, do not offer any assurance of income or provide the same degree of protection of capital as do debt securities. The issuance of additional debt securities or preferred stock will create prior claims for payment of principal, interest and dividends which could adversely affect the ability and inclination of the issuer to declare or pay dividends on its common

stock or the rights of holders of common stock with respect to assets of the issuer upon liquidation or bankruptcy. The value of common stocks is subject to market fluctuations for as long as the common stocks remain outstanding, and thus the value of the equity securities in a Fund will fluctuate over the life of such Fund and may be more or less than the price at which they were purchased by the Fund. The equity securities held in a Fund may appreciate or depreciate in value (or pay dividends) depending on the full range of economic and market influences affecting these securities, including the impact of such Fund's purchase and sale of the equity securities and other factors.

Holders of common stocks incur more risk than holders of preferred stocks and debt obligations because common stockholders, as owners of the entity, have generally inferior rights to receive payments from the issuer in comparison with the rights of creditors of, or holders of debt obligations or preferred stocks issued by, the issuer. Cumulative preferred stock dividends must be paid before common stock dividends and any cumulative preferred stock dividend omitted is added to future dividends payable to the holders of cumulative preferred stock. Preferred stockholders are also generally entitled to rights on liquidation which are senior to those of common stockholders.

The risks of investing in fixed income securities, including the investment grade bonds in which a Fund invests, include: the risk that an issuer or guarantor of a security will be unable to pay some or all of the principal and interest when due (credit risk); the risk that a Fund may not be able to sell some or all of the securities it holds, either at the price it values the security or at any price (liquidity risk); and the risk that the rates of interest income generated by the fixed income investments of a Fund may decline due to a decrease in market interest rates and that the market prices of the fixed income investments of a Fund may decline due to an increase in market interest rates (interest rate risk).

The debt securities in which a Fund may invest may provide for fixed or variable principal payments and various types of interest rate and reset terms, including fixed rate, adjustable rate, zero coupon, contingent, deferred, payment-in-kind and auction rate features. Certain debt securities are "perpetual" in that they have no maturity date. Certain debt securities are zero coupon bonds. A zero coupon bond is a bond that does not pay interest either for the entire life of the obligations or for an initial period after the issuance of the obligation. If a security satisfies a Fund's minimum rating criteria at the time of purchase and is subsequently downgraded below such rating, such Fund will not be required to dispose of such security.

Agent Risk

Selling lenders, agents and other entities that may be positioned between a Fund and the Obligor will likely conduct their principal business activities in the banking, finance and financial services industries. Investments in loans may be more impacted by a single economic, political or regulatory occurrence affecting such industries than other types of investments. Entities engaged in such industries may be more susceptible to, among other things, fluctuations in interest rates, changes in the Federal Open Market Committee's monetary policy, government regulations concerning such industries and concerning capital raising activities generally and fluctuations in the financial markets generally. An agent, lender or other entity positioned between the Fund and the Obligor may become insolvent or enter FDIC receivership or bankruptcy. A Fund might incur certain costs and delays in realizing payment on a loan or suffer a loss of principal and/or interest if assets or interests held by the agent, lender or other party positioned between a Fund and the obligor are determined to be subject to the claims of the agent's, lender's or such other party's creditors.

Collateral, Subordination and Litigation Risk

With respect to Loans that are secured, a Fund is subject to the risk that collateral securing the Loan will decline in value or have no value or that the Fund's lien is or will become junior in payment to other liens. A decline in value, whether as a result of bankruptcy proceedings or otherwise, could cause the Loan to be under-collateralized or unsecured. There may be no formal requirement for the Obligor to pledge additional collateral. In addition, collateral may consist of assets that may not be readily liquidated, and there is no assurance that the liquidation of such assets would satisfy an Obligor's obligation on a Loan.

If an Obligor becomes involved in bankruptcy proceedings, a court may invalidate the Loan or such Fund's security interest in loan collateral or subordinate the Fund's rights under a Senior Loan or Junior Loan to the interest of the Obligor's other creditors, including unsecured creditors, or cause interest or principal previously paid to be refunded to the Obligor. If a court required interest or principal to be refunded, it could negatively affect Fund performance. Such action by a court could be based, for example, on a "fraudulent conveyance" claim to the effect that the Obligor did not receive fair consideration for granting the security interest in the Loan collateral to the Fund. For Senior Loans made in connection with a highly leveraged transaction, consideration for granting a security interest may be deemed inadequate if the proceeds of the Loan were not received or retained by the Obligor, but were instead paid to other persons (such as shareholders of the Obligor) in an amount which left the Obligor insolvent or without sufficient working capital. There are also other events, such as the failure to perfect

a security interest due to faulty documentation or faulty official filings, which could lead to the invalidation of a Fund's security interest in Loan collateral. If such Fund's security interest in Loan collateral is invalidated or the Senior Loan is subordinated to other debt of an Obligor in bankruptcy or other proceedings, the Fund would have substantially lower recovery, and perhaps no recovery on the full amount of the principal and interest due on the Loan, or the Fund could have to refund interest.

Lenders and investors in Loans can be sued by other creditors and shareholders of the Obligors. Losses can be greater than the original Loan amount and occur years after the principal and interest on the Loan have been repaid.

Depository Receipts Risk

The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio may hold securities of certain non-U.S. companies in the form of depository receipts ("*Depository Receipts*"). Depository Receipts may not necessarily be denominated in the same currency as the underlying securities into which they may be converted. American Depository Receipts ("*ADRs*") are receipts typically issued by a U.S. bank or trust company that evidence ownership of underlying securities issued by a foreign corporation. European Depository Receipts ("*EDRs*") are receipts issued by a European bank or trust company evidencing ownership of securities issued by a foreign corporation. New York shares are typically issued by a company incorporated in the Netherlands and represent a direct interest in the company. Unlike traditional depository receipts, New York share programs do not involve custody of the Dutch shares of the company. Global Depository Receipts ("*GDRs*") are receipts issued throughout the world that evidence a similar arrangement. ADRs, EDRs and GDRs may trade in foreign currencies that differ from the currency the underlying security for each ADR, EDR or GDR principally trades in. Global shares are the actual (ordinary) shares of a non-U.S. company which trade both in the home market and the United States. Generally, ADRs and New York shares, in registered form, are designed for use in the U.S. securities markets. EDRs, in registered form, are used to access European markets. GDRs, in registered form, are tradable both in the United States and in Europe and are designed for use throughout the world. Global shares are represented by the same share certificate in the United States and the home market, and separate registrars in the United States and the home country are maintained. In most cases, purchases occurring on a U.S. exchange would be reflected on the U.S. registrar. Global shares may also be eligible to list on exchanges in addition to the United States and the home country. The Fund may hold unsponsored Depository Receipts. The issuers of unsponsored Depository Receipts are not obligated to disclose material information in the United States; therefore, there may be less information available regarding such issuers and there may not be a correlation between such information and the market value of the Depository Receipts.

Fixed Income Securities Risk

The risks of investing in fixed income securities, including the bonds in which the underlying ETFs may invest, include: the risk that an issuer or guarantor of a security will be unable to pay some or all of the principal and interest when due (credit risk); the risk that an underlying ETF may not be able to sell some or all of the securities it holds, either at the price it values the security or at any price (liquidity risk); and the risk that the rates of interest income generated by the fixed income investments of the underlying ETFs may decline due to a decrease in market interest rates and that the market prices of the fixed income investments of the underlying ETFs may decline due to an increase in market interest rates (interest rate risk).

The debt securities in which the underlying ETFs may invest may provide for fixed or variable principal payments and various types of interest rate and reset terms, including fixed rate, adjustable rate, zero coupon, contingent, deferred, payment-in-kind and auction rate features. Certain debt securities are "perpetual" in that they have no maturity date. Certain debt securities are zero coupon bonds. A zero coupon bond is a bond that does not pay interest either for the entire life of the obligations or for an initial period after the issuance of the obligation.

Industry Specific Risk

With respect to the First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio, in addition to the risks set forth in the Prospectus under "Principal Risks – Energy Infrastructure Company Risk," the principal risks inherent in investing in energy infrastructure companies including the following:

- (1) ***Regulatory Risk.*** Energy infrastructure companies are subject to significant U.S., state and local government and/or foreign government regulation in virtually every aspect of their operations, including how facilities are constructed, maintained and operated, environmental and safety controls, and the prices they may charge for the products and services. Various governmental agencies and authorities have the power to enforce compliance with these regulations, and violators may be subject to administrative, civil and criminal penalties, including civil monetary penalties, imposition of remedial requirements, injunctions or all of the above. Stricter laws, regulations or enforcement policies could be enacted in the future, which would likely increase compliance costs and may adversely affect the financial performance of energy infrastructure companies.

Certain environmental statutes, state laws and regulations impose strict, joint and several liability for costs required to clean up and restore sites where hazardous substances have been disposed of or otherwise released. Moreover, it is not uncommon for neighboring landowners and other third parties to file claims for personal injury and property damage allegedly caused by the release of hazardous substances or other waste products into the environment.

There is an inherent risk that other entities operating in the energy infrastructure sector may incur environmental costs and liabilities due to the nature of their businesses and the substances they handle. For example, an accidental release from wells or gathering pipelines could subject them to substantial liabilities for environmental cleanup and restoration costs, claims made by neighboring landowners and other third parties for personal injury and property damage, and fines or penalties for related violations of environmental laws or regulations. MLPs and other entities operating in the energy infrastructure sector may not be able to recover these costs from insurance.

Voluntary initiatives and mandatory controls have been adopted or are being discussed both in the United States and worldwide to reduce emissions of "greenhouse gases" such as carbon dioxide, a by-product of burning fossil fuels, and methane, the major constituent of natural gas, which many scientists and policymakers believe contribute to global climate change. These measures and future measures could result in increased costs to certain companies in which the Fund may invest to operate and maintain facilities and administer and manage a greenhouse gas emissions program and may reduce demand for fuels that generate greenhouse gases and that are managed or produced by companies in which the Fund may invest. In the wake of a Supreme Court decision holding that the EPA has some legal authority to deal with climate change under the Clean Air Act, the EPA and the Department of Transportation jointly wrote regulations to cut gasoline use and control greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks. These measures, and other programs addressing greenhouse gas emissions, could reduce demand for energy or raise prices, which may adversely affect the total return of certain of the Fund's investments.

- (2) **Supply and Demand Risk.** A decrease in the production of natural gas, NGLs, crude oil or other energy commodities or a decrease in the volume of such commodities available for transportation, processing, storage or distribution may adversely impact the financial performance of energy infrastructure companies. Production declines and volume decreases could be caused by various factors, including depressed commodity prices, catastrophic events affecting production, depletion of resources, labor difficulties, environmental or other governmental regulation, equipment failures and unexpected maintenance problems, import supply disruption, increased competition from alternative energy sources, international politics and political circumstances (particularly of key energy-producing countries), and policies of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries ("OPEC"). Alternatively, a sustained decline in demand for such commodities could also impact the financial performance of energy infrastructure companies. Factors that could lead to a decline in demand include economic recession or other adverse economic or political conditions (especially in key energy-consuming countries), higher fuel taxes, governmental regulations, increases in fuel economy, consumer shifts to the use of alternative fuel sources, an increase in commodity prices and weather conditions.
- (3) **Interest Rate Risk.** Rising interest rates could adversely affect the financial performance of energy infrastructure companies. Rising interest rates may increase an energy company's cost of capital, which would increase operating costs and may reduce an energy company's ability to execute acquisitions or expansion projects in a cost-effective manner. Rising interest rates may also impact the price of energy infrastructure company shares or units as the yields on alternative investments increase.
- (4) **Acquisition Risk.** The ability of MLPs, MLP affiliates, and dividend paying corporations to grow and, where applicable, to increase distributions to unit holders is dependent partly on their ability to make acquisitions that result in an increase in adjusted operating surplus per unit. In the event that MLPs, MLP affiliates, and dividend paying corporations are unable to make such accretive acquisitions because, for example, they are unable to identify attractive acquisition candidates, negotiate acceptable purchase contracts, raise financing for such acquisitions on economically acceptable terms or because they are outbid by competitors, their future growth and ability to raise distributions may be limited. Furthermore, even if MLPs, MLP affiliates, and dividend paying corporations do consummate acquisitions that they believe will be accretive, the acquisitions may in fact result in a decrease in adjusted operating surplus per unit. Any acquisition involves risks, which include, among others: the possibility of mistaken assumptions about revenues and costs, including synergies; the

assumption of unknown liabilities; possible limitations on rights to indemnity from the seller; the diversion of management's attention from other business concerns; unforeseen difficulties operating in new product areas or new geographic areas; and customer or key employee losses at the acquired businesses.

- (5) **Catastrophe Risk.** The operations of energy infrastructure companies are subject to many hazards inherent in the transporting, processing, storing, distributing or marketing of natural gas, NGLs, crude oil, refined petroleum products or other hydrocarbons, or in the exploring, managing or producing of such commodities or products, including: damage to pipelines, storage tanks or related equipment and surrounding properties caused by hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fires and other natural disasters and acts of terrorism; inadvertent damage from construction and farm equipment; leaks of natural gas, NGLs, crude oil, refined petroleum products or other hydrocarbons; and fires and explosions, among others. The occurrence of any such events could result in substantial losses due to, for example, personal injury and/or loss of life, damage to and destruction of property and equipment and pollution or other environmental damage, and may result in the curtailment, suspension or discontinuation of affected energy infrastructure companies' related operations. Many energy infrastructure companies are not fully insured against all risks inherent to their businesses. If an accident or event occurs that is not fully insured, it could adversely affect an energy infrastructure company's operations and financial condition.
- (6) **Operational Risk.** Energy infrastructure companies are subject to various operational risks, such as unscheduled outages, underestimated cost projections, unanticipated operation and maintenance expenses, failure to obtain the necessary permits to operate and failure of third-party contractors (e.g., energy producers and shippers) to perform their contractual obligations. In addition, energy infrastructure companies employ a variety of means of increasing cash flow, including increasing utilization of existing facilities, expanding operations through new construction, expanding operations through acquisitions, or securing additional long-term contracts. Energy infrastructure companies may be subject to construction risk, acquisition risk or other risk factors arising from their specific business strategies.
- (7) **Competition Risk.** The energy infrastructure companies that are involved midstream (processing, storing and transporting of energy resources) businesses may face substantial competition in acquiring properties, enhancing and developing their assets, marketing their commodities, securing trained personnel, services and supplies to build new projects. Many of their competitors, including major oil companies, natural gas utilities, independent power producers and other private independent energy companies, will likely have financial and other resources that substantially exceed their resources.
- (8) **Financing Risk.** Some of the energy infrastructure companies may rely on capital markets to raise money to pay their existing obligations and to fund growth. Their ability to access the capital markets on attractive terms or at all may be affected by any of the risk factors associated with energy infrastructure companies described above, by general economic and market conditions or by other factors. This may in turn affect their ability to grow and maintain their dividend or distribution.
- (9) **Commodity Pricing Risk.** Energy infrastructure companies may be affected by fluctuations in the prices of energy commodities, including, for example, natural gas, NGLs, crude oil and coal, in the short- and long-term. Fluctuations in energy commodity prices would impact directly energy companies that produce such energy commodities and could impact indirectly energy infrastructure companies that engage in the transportation, storage, processing, distribution or marketing of or exploration for such energy commodities. Commodity prices fluctuate for many reasons, including changes in market and economic conditions or political circumstances (especially of key energy-producing and consuming countries), the impact of weather on demand, levels of domestic production and imported commodities, energy conservation, domestic and foreign governmental regulation, international politics, policies of OPEC, and taxation and the availability of local, intrastate and interstate transportation systems. Volatility of commodity prices may make it more difficult for energy infrastructure companies to raise capital to the extent the market perceives that their performance may be directly tied to commodity prices. The energy infrastructure sector as a whole may also be impacted by the perception that the performance of energy infrastructure sector companies is directly linked to commodity prices.
- (10) **Counterparty Credit Risk.** Low commodity prices may introduce the risk of financial distress among companies engaged in exploration and production of oil and natural gas. Energy infrastructure companies that derive revenues from the transportation, storage, processing, distribution or marketing of or exploration for such energy commodities may face counterparty credit risk from financially distressed energy producers that are unable to perform under, or seek to reject contracts for these services.

- (11) **Weather Risk.** Weather plays a role in the seasonality of cash flows of some companies in which the Fund may invest. Companies in the propane industry, for example, rely on the winter season to generate almost all of their earnings. In an unusually warm winter season, propane companies experience decreased demand for their product. The damage done by extreme weather also may serve to increase many companies' insurance premiums and could adversely affect such companies' financial condition and ability to pay distributions to shareholders. Other companies operating in the energy infrastructure sector may be subject to similar risks.

Information Risk

There is typically less publicly available information concerning loans than other types of fixed income investments. As a result, a Fund generally will be dependent on reports and other information provided by the Obligor, either directly or through an agent, to evaluate the Obligor's creditworthiness or to determine the Obligor's compliance with the covenants and other terms of the Loan Agreement. Such reliance may make investments in loans more susceptible to fraud than other types of investments. In addition, because the Advisor and the Sub-Advisors may wish to invest in the publicly traded securities of an Obligor, they may not have access to material non-public information regarding the Obligor to which other Loan investors have access.

Inventory Risk

Affiliates of the Advisor and Sub-Advisors may participate in the primary and secondary market for Loans. Because of limitations imposed by applicable law, the presence of the Advisor's or Sub-Advisors' affiliates in the loan market may restrict such Fund's ability to acquire some loans, affect the timing of such acquisition or affect the price at which the loan is acquired.

Liquidity Risk

Whether or not the equity securities in a Fund are listed on a securities exchange, the principal trading market for certain of the equity securities in the Fund may be in the OTC market. As a result, the existence of a liquid trading market for the equity securities may depend on whether dealers will make a market in the equity securities. There can be no assurance that a market will be made for any of the equity securities, that any market for the equity securities will be maintained or that there will be sufficient liquidity of the equity securities in any markets made. The price at which the equity securities are held in the Funds will be adversely affected if trading markets for the equity securities are limited or absent.

Non-U.S. Securities Risk

The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio invests in non-U.S. securities which involves risks in addition to the usual risks inherent in domestic investments, including currency risk. The value of a non-U.S. security in U.S. dollars tends to decrease when the value of the U.S. dollar rises against the non-U.S. currency in which the security is denominated and tends to increase when the value of the U.S. dollar falls against such currency. Non-U.S. securities are affected by the fact that in many countries there is less publicly available information about issuers than is available in the reports and ratings published about companies in the United States and companies may not be subject to uniform accounting, auditing and financial reporting standards. Other risks inherent in non U.S. investments may include expropriation; confiscatory taxation; withholding taxes on dividends and interest; less extensive regulation of non-U.S. brokers, securities markets and issuers; diplomatic developments; and political or social instability. Non-U.S. economies may differ favorably or unfavorably from the U.S. economy in various respects, and many non-U.S. securities are less liquid and their prices tend to be more volatile than comparable U.S. securities. From time to time, non-U.S. securities may be difficult to liquidate rapidly without adverse price effects.

Passive Foreign Investment Companies Risk

The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio may invest in companies that are considered to be "passive foreign investment companies" ("PFICs"), which are generally certain non-U.S. corporations that receive at least 75% of their annual gross income from passive sources (such as interest, dividends, certain rents and royalties or capital gains) or that hold at least 50% of their assets in investments producing such passive income. Therefore, the Fund could be subject to U.S. federal income tax and additional interest charges on gains and certain distributions with respect to those equity interests, even if all the income or gain is distributed to its shareholders in a timely manner. The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio will not be able to pass through to its shareholders any credit or deduction for such taxes.

Real Estate Investment Trust ("REIT") Risk

REITs are financial vehicles that pool investors' capital to purchase or finance real estate. REITs may concentrate their investments in specific geographic areas or in specific property types, e.g., hotels, shopping malls, residential complexes and office buildings. The market value of REIT shares and the ability of the REITs to distribute income may be adversely affected

by several factors, including rising interest rates; changes in the national, state and local economic climate and real estate conditions; perceptions of prospective tenants of the safety, convenience and attractiveness of the properties; the ability of the owners to provide adequate management, maintenance and insurance; the cost of complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act; increased competition from new properties; the impact of present or future environmental legislation and compliance with environmental laws; changes in real estate taxes and other operating expenses; adverse changes in governmental rules and fiscal policies; adverse changes in zoning laws; and other factors beyond the control of the issuers of the REITs. In addition, distributions received by the Funds from REITs may consist of dividends, capital gains and/or return of capital. Many of these distributions however will not generally qualify for favorable treatment as qualified dividend income.

Regulatory Changes

To the extent that legislation or state or federal regulators that regulate certain financial institutions impose additional requirements or restrictions with respect to the ability of such institutions to make loans, particularly in connection with highly leveraged transactions, the availability of loans for investment may be adversely affected. Furthermore, such legislation or regulation could depress the market value of loans held by a Fund.

Risk Factors of Loan Assignments and Participations

Loans are subject to the risks associated with debt obligations in general including interest rate risk, credit risk and market risk. When a loan is acquired from a Lender, the risk includes the credit risk associated with the obligor of the underlying loan. A Fund may incur additional credit risk when the Fund acquires a participation in a loan from another lender because the Fund must assume the risk of insolvency or bankruptcy of the other lender from which the loan was acquired. To the extent that loans involve obligors in foreign or emerging markets, such Loans are subject to the risks associated with foreign investments or investments in emerging markets in general.

Tax Law Change Risk

Changes in tax laws or regulations, or interpretations thereof in the future, could adversely affect a Fund or the assets in which it invests. Any such changes could negatively impact the Fund and its shareholders.

Additional Risks of Investing in the Funds

Litigation Risk

At any time litigation may be instituted on a variety of grounds with respect to the or corporate bonds held by a Fund. The Funds are unable to predict whether litigation that has been or will be instituted might have a material adverse effect on the Funds.

Small and Mid Capitalization Companies Risk

Certain of the equity securities of a Fund may be small and/or mid capitalization company stocks. While historically such company stocks have outperformed the stocks of large companies, the former have customarily involved more investment risk as well. Small and mid capitalization companies may have limited product lines, markets or financial resources; may lack management depth or experience; and may be more vulnerable to adverse general market or economic developments than large companies. Some of these companies may distribute, sell or produce products which have recently been brought to market and may be dependent on key personnel.

The prices of small and mid capitalization company securities are often more volatile than prices associated with large company issues, and can display abrupt or erratic movements at times, due to limited trading volumes and less publicly available information. Also, because small and mid capitalization companies normally have fewer shares outstanding and these shares trade less frequently than large companies, it may be more difficult for a Fund which contains these equity securities to buy and sell significant amounts of such shares without an unfavorable impact on prevailing market prices. The securities of small and mid capitalization companies are often traded OTC and may not be traded in the volumes typical of a national securities exchange.

Risks and Special Considerations Concerning Derivatives

Derivatives Risk

The use of derivatives presents risks different from, and possibly greater than, the risks associated with investing directly in traditional securities. Among the risks presented are market risk, credit risk, management risk and liquidity risk. The use of derivatives can lead to losses because of adverse movements in the price or value of the underlying asset, index or rate, which may be magnified by certain features of the derivatives. In addition, when the Fund invests in certain derivative securities, including, but not limited to, when-issued securities, forward commitments, futures contracts and interest rate swaps, the Fund is effectively leveraging its investments, which could result in exaggerated changes in the net asset value of a Fund's shares and can result in losses that exceed the amount originally invested. The success of the Advisor's derivatives strategies will depend on its ability to assess and predict the impact of market or economic developments on the underlying asset, index or rate and the derivative itself, without the benefit of observing the performance of the derivative under all possible market conditions. Liquidity risk exists when a security cannot be purchased or sold at the time desired, or cannot be purchased or sold without adversely affecting the price. Certain specific risks associated with an investment in derivatives may include: market risk, credit risk, correlation risk, liquidity risk, legal risk and systemic or "interconnection" risk, as specified below.

- (1) **Market Risk.** Market risk is the risk that the value of the underlying assets may go up or down. Adverse movements in the value of an underlying asset can expose the Funds to losses. Market risk is the primary risk associated with derivative transactions. Derivative instruments may include elements of leverage and, accordingly, fluctuations in the value of the derivative instrument in relation to the underlying asset may be magnified. The successful use of derivative instruments depends upon a variety of factors, particularly the portfolio manager's ability to predict movements of the securities, currencies and commodities markets, which may require different skills than predicting changes in the prices of individual securities. There can be no assurance that any particular strategy adopted will succeed. A decision to engage in a derivative transaction will reflect the portfolio managers' judgment that the derivative transaction will provide value to a Fund and its shareholders and is consistent with such Fund's objectives, investment limitations and operating policies. In making such a judgment, the portfolio managers will analyze the benefits and risks of the derivative transactions and weigh them in the context of such Fund's overall investments and investment objectives.
- (2) **Credit Risk/Counterparty Risk.** Credit risk is the risk that a loss may be sustained as a result of the failure of a counterparty to comply with the terms of a derivative instrument. The counterparty risk for exchange-traded derivatives is generally less than for privately negotiated or over-the-counter ("OTC") derivatives, since generally a clearing agency, which is the issuer or counterparty to each exchange-traded instrument, provides a guarantee of performance. For privately negotiated instruments, there is no similar clearing agency guarantee. In all transactions, the Funds will bear the risk that the counterparty will default, and this could result in a loss of the expected benefit of the derivative transactions and possibly other losses to the Funds. The Funds will enter into transactions in derivative instruments only with counterparties that First Trust reasonably believes are capable of performing under the contract.
- (3) **Correlation Risk.** Correlation risk is the risk that there might be an imperfect correlation, or even no correlation, between price movements of a derivative instrument and price movements of investments being hedged. When a derivative transaction is used to completely hedge another position, changes in the market value of the combined position (the derivative instrument plus the position being hedged) result from an imperfect correlation between the price movements of the two instruments. With a perfect hedge, the value of the combined position remains unchanged with any change in the price of the underlying asset. With an imperfect hedge, the value of the derivative instrument and its hedge are not perfectly correlated. For example, if the value of a derivative instrument used in a short hedge (such as writing a call option, buying a put option or selling a futures contract) increased by less than the decline in value of the hedged investments, the hedge would not be perfectly correlated. This might occur due to factors unrelated to the value of the investments being hedged, such as speculative or other pressures on the markets in which these instruments are traded. The effectiveness of hedges using instruments on indices will depend, in part, on the degree of correlation between price movements in the index and the price movements in the investments being hedged.
- (4) **Liquidity Risk.** Liquidity risk is the risk that a derivative instrument cannot be sold, closed out or replaced quickly at or very close to its fundamental value. Generally, exchange contracts are very liquid because the exchange clearinghouse is the counterparty of every contract. OTC transactions are less liquid than exchange-traded derivatives since they often can only be closed out with the other party to the transaction. A Fund might be

required by applicable regulatory requirements to maintain assets as “cover,” maintain segregated accounts and/or make margin payments when taking positions in derivative instruments involving obligations to third parties (*i.e.*, instruments other than purchase options). If a Fund is unable to close out its positions in such instruments, it might be required to continue to maintain such assets or accounts or make such payments until the position expires, matures or is closed out. These requirements might impair such Fund's ability to sell a security or make an investment at a time when it would otherwise be favorable to do so, or require that a Fund sell a portfolio security at a disadvantageous time. A Fund's ability to sell or close out a position in an instrument prior to expiration or maturity depends upon the existence of a liquid secondary market or, in the absence of such a market, the ability and willingness of the counterparty to enter into a transaction closing out the position. Due to liquidity risk, there is no assurance that any derivatives position can be sold or closed out at a time and price that is favorable to a Fund.

- (5) **Legal Risk.** Legal risk is the risk of loss caused by the unenforceability of a party's obligations under the derivative. While a party seeking price certainty agrees to surrender the potential upside in exchange for downside protection, the party taking the risk is looking for a positive payoff. Despite this voluntary assumption of risk, a counterparty that has lost money in a derivative transaction may try to avoid payment by exploiting various legal uncertainties about certain derivative products.
- (6) **Systemic or “Interconnection” Risk.** Systemic or “interconnection” risk is the risk that a disruption in the financial markets will cause difficulties for all market participants. In other words, a disruption in one market will spill over into other markets, perhaps creating a chain reaction. Much of the OTC derivatives market takes place among the OTC dealers themselves, thus creating a large interconnected web of financial obligations. This interconnectedness raises the possibility that a default by one large dealer could create losses for other dealers and destabilize the entire market for OTC derivative instruments.

Writing Covered Options Risk

The First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio may write (or sell) covered call options on up to 30% of its net assets. A call option on securities written by the Fund would obligate the Fund to sell specified securities to the holder of the option at a specified price if the option is exercised at any time before the expiration date. A put option on securities written by the Fund would obligate the Fund to purchase specified securities from the option holder at a specified price if the option is exercised at any time before the expiration date. Options on securities indices are similar to options on securities, except that the exercise of securities index options requires cash settlement payments and does not involve the actual purchase or sale of securities. In addition, securities index options are designed to reflect price fluctuations in a group of securities or segment of the securities market rather than price fluctuations in a single security. Writing covered call options may deprive the Fund of the opportunity to fully profit from an increase in the market price of the securities in its portfolio. Writing covered put options may deprive the Fund of the opportunity to fully profit from a decrease in the market price of the securities to be acquired for its portfolio. If an option written by the Fund expires unexercised, the Fund realizes on the expiration date a capital gain equal to the premium received by the Fund at the time the option was written. If an option purchased by the Fund expires unexercised, the Fund realizes a capital loss equal to the premium paid at the time the option expires. Prior to the earlier of exercise or expiration, an exchange-traded option may be closed out by an offsetting purchase or sale of an option of the same series (type, underlying security, exercise price, and expiration). There can be no assurance, however, that a closing purchase or sale transaction can be effected when the Fund desires. The Fund may sell put or call options it has previously purchased, which could result in a net gain or loss depending on whether the amount realized on the sale is more or less than the premium and other transaction costs paid on the put or call option purchased. See “Federal Income Tax Matters.”

All call and put options written by the Fund are covered. A written call option or put option may be covered by (i) maintaining cash or liquid securities in a segregated account with a value at least equal to the Fund's obligation under the option; (ii) entering into an offsetting forward commitment; and/or (iii) purchasing an offsetting option or any other option which, by virtue of its exercise price or otherwise, reduces the Fund's net exposure on its written option position. A written call option on securities is typically covered by maintaining the securities that are subject to the option in a segregated account. The Fund may cover call options on a securities index by owning securities whose price changes are expected to be similar to those of the underlying index.

The Fund may terminate its obligations under an exchange traded call or put option by purchasing an option identical to the one it has written. Obligations under OTC options may be terminated only by entering into an offsetting transaction with the counterparty to such option. Such purchases are referred to as “closing purchase transactions.”

The Fund would normally purchase call options in anticipation of an increase, or put options in anticipation of a decrease (“*protective puts*”), in the market value of securities of the type in which it may invest. The Fund may also sell call and put options to close out its purchased options.

The purchase of a call option would entitle the Fund, in return for the premium paid, to purchase specified securities or currency at a specified price during the option period. The Fund would ordinarily realize a gain on the purchase of a call option if, during the option period, the value of such securities or currency exceeded the sum of the exercise price, the premium paid and transaction costs; otherwise the Fund would realize either no gain or a loss on the purchase of the call option.

The purchase of a put option would entitle the Fund, in exchange for the premium paid, to sell specified securities at a specified price during the option period. The purchase of protective puts is designed to offset or hedge against a decline in the market value of the Fund’s portfolio securities. Put options may also be purchased by the Fund for the purpose of affirmatively benefiting from a decline in the price of securities which it does not own. The Fund would ordinarily realize a gain if, during the option period, the value of the underlying securities decreased below the exercise price sufficiently to cover the premium and transaction costs; otherwise the Fund would realize either no gain or a loss on the purchase of the put option. Gains and losses on the purchase of put options may be offset by countervailing changes in the value of the Fund’s portfolio securities.

The Fund’s options transactions will be subject to limitations established by each of the exchanges, boards of trade or other trading facilities on which such options are traded. These limitations govern the maximum number of options in each class which may be written or purchased by a single investor or group of investors acting in concert, regardless of whether the options are written or purchased on the same or different exchanges, boards of trade or other trading facilities or are held or written in one or more accounts or through one or more brokers. Thus, the number of options which the Fund may write or purchase may be affected by options written or purchased by other investment advisory clients of the sub-advisors. An exchange, board of trade or other trading facility may order the liquidation of positions found to be in excess of these limits, and it may impose certain other sanctions.

DESCRIPTIONS OF INDICES

The First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio invests in stocks included in the Dow Jones US Total Stock Market IndexSM and bonds included in the Dow Jones Equal Weight U.S. Issued Corporate Bond IndexSM and Dow Jones Composite AverageSM. The following is a description of these indices.

Dow Jones U.S. Total Stock Market IndexSM

The Dow Jones U.S. Total Stock Market IndexSM is designed to represent all U.S. equity securities that have readily available prices. The composition of the Index is reviewed monthly. Additions and deletions are made after the close of trading on the third Friday of the month. Final component changes are announced on the second Friday of the month.

Dow Jones Equal Weight U.S. Issued Corporate Bond IndexSM

The Dow Jones Equal Weight U.S. Issued Corporate Bond IndexSM is an equally weighted basket of 96 recently issued investment-grade corporate bonds with laddered maturities. The index intends to measure the return of readily tradable, high-grade U.S. corporate bonds.

Dow Jones Composite AverageSM

The Dow Jones Composite AverageSM is a composite of the Dow Jones Industrial AverageSM, Dow Jones Transportation AverageSM and Dow Jones Utility AverageSM. The Dow Jones Composite AverageSM is intended to be a blue-chip microcosm of the U.S. stock market.

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NEITHER S&P DOW JONES INDICES NOR ITS AFFILIATES GUARANTEES THE ADEQUACY, ACCURACY, TIMELINESS AND/OR THE COMPLETENESS OF THE DOW JONES EQUAL WEIGHT U.S. ISSUED CORPORATE BOND INDEXSM, DOW JONES U.S. TOTAL STOCK MARKET INDEXSM AND DOW JONES COMPOSITE AVERAGESM OR ANY DATA RELATED THERETO OR ANY COMMUNICATION, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ORAL OR WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (INCLUDING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS) WITH RESPECT THERETO. S&P DOW JONES INDICES SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO ANY DAMAGES OR LIABILITY FOR ANY ERRORS, OMISSIONS, OR DELAYS THEREIN. S&P DOW JONES INDICES MAKES NO EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES, AND EXPRESSLY DISCLAIMS ALL WARRANTIES, OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE OR USE OR AS TO RESULTS TO BE OBTAINED BY FIRST TRUST, OWNERS OF THE FIRST TRUST/DOW JONES DIVIDEND & INCOME ALLOCATION PORTFOLIO, OR ANY OTHER PERSON OR ENTITY FROM THE USE OF THE DOW JONES EQUAL WEIGHT U.S. ISSUED CORPORATE BOND INDEXSM, DOW JONES U.S. TOTAL STOCK MARKET INDEXSM AND DOW JONES COMPOSITE AVERAGESM OR WITH RESPECT TO ANY DATA RELATED THERETO. WITHOUT LIMITING ANY OF THE FOREGOING, IN NO EVENT WHATSOEVER SHALL S&P DOW JONES INDICES BE LIABLE FOR ANY INDIRECT, SPECIAL, INCIDENTAL, PUNITIVE, OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, LOSS OF PROFITS, TRADING LOSSES, LOST TIME OR GOODWILL, EVEN IF THEY HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES, WHETHER IN CONTRACT, TORT, STRICT LIABILITY, OR OTHERWISE. THERE ARE NO THIRD PARTY BENEFICIARIES OF ANY AGREEMENTS OR ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN S&P DOW JONES INDICES AND FIRST TRUST, OTHER THAN THE LICENSORS OF S&P DOW JONES INDICES.

MANAGEMENT OF THE FUNDS

Trustees and Officers

The general supervision of the duties performed for the Funds under the investment management agreement and sub-advisory agreements is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. There are five Trustees of the Trust, one of whom is an "interested person" (as the term is defined in the 1940 Act) and four of whom are Trustees who are not officers or employees of First Trust or any of its affiliates ("*Independent Trustees*"). The Trustees set broad policies for the Funds, choose the Trust's officers and hire the Trust's investment advisor and sub-advisors. The officers of the Trust manage its day-to-day operations and are responsible to the Board of Trustees. The following is a list of the Trustees and executive officers of the Trust and a statement of their present positions and principal occupations during the past five years, the number of portfolios each Trustee oversees and the other directorships they have held during the past five years, if applicable. Each Trustee has been elected for an indefinite term. The officers of the Trust serve indefinite terms. Each Trustee, except for James A. Bowen, is an Independent Trustee. Mr. Bowen is deemed an "interested person" (as that term is defined in the 1940 Act) ("*Interested Trustee*") of the Trust due to his position as Chief Executive Officer of First Trust, investment advisor to the Funds. The following table identifies

the Trustees and Officers of the Trust. Unless otherwise indicated, the address of all persons below is c/o First Trust Advisors L.P., 120 E. Liberty Drive, Suite 400, Wheaton, IL 60187.

Name and Year of Birth	Position and Offices with Trust	Term of Office and Year First Elected or Appointed	Principal Occupations During Past 5 Years	Number of Portfolios in the First Trust Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee	Other Trusteeships or Directorships Held by Trustee During the Past 5 Years
TRUSTEE WHO IS AN INTERESTED PERSON OF THE TRUST					
James A. Bowen ⁽¹⁾ 1955	Chairman of the Board and Trustee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term Since inception 	Chief Executive Officer, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.; Chairman of the Board of Directors, BondWave LLC (Software Development Company) and Stonebridge Advisors LLC (Investment Advisor)	153 Portfolios	None
INDEPENDENT TRUSTEES					
Richard E. Erickson 1951	Trustee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term Since inception 	Physician and Officer, Wheaton Orthopedics; Limited Partner, Gundersen Real Estate Limited Partnership (June 1992 to December 2016); Member, Sportsmed LLC (April 2007 to November 2015)	153 Portfolios	None
Thomas R. Kadlec 1957	Trustee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term Since inception 	President, ADM Investor Services, Inc. (Futures Commission Merchant)	153 Portfolios	Director of ADM Investor Services, Inc., ADM Investor Services International, Futures Industry Association, and National Futures Association
Robert F. Keith 1956	Trustee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term Since inception 	President, Hibs Enterprises (Financial and Management Consulting)	153 Portfolios	Director of Trust Company of Illinois
Niel B. Nielson 1954	Trustee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term Since inception 	Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer (January 2015 to present), Pelita Harapan Educational Foundation (Educational Products and Services); President and Chief Executive Officer (June 2012 to September 2014), Servant Interactive LLC (Educational Products and Services); President and Chief Executive Officer (June 2012 to September 2014), Dew Learning LLC (Educational Products and Services)	153 Portfolios	Director of Covenant Transport Inc. (May 2003 to May 2014)
OFFICERS OF THE TRUST					
James M. Dykas 1966	President and Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term Since January 2016 	Managing Director and Chief Financial Officer (January 2016 to present), Controller (January 2011 to January 2016), Senior Vice President (April 2007 to January 2016), First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.; Chief Financial Officer, BondWave LLC (Software Development Company) and Stonebridge Advisors LLC (Investment Advisor) (January 2016 to present)	N/A	N/A
W. Scott Jardine 1960	Secretary and Chief Legal Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term Since inception 	General Counsel, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.; Secretary and General Counsel, BondWave LLC (Software Development Company) and Secretary, Stonebridge Advisors LLC (Investment Advisor)	N/A	N/A
Daniel J. Lindquist 1970	Vice President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term Since inception 	Managing Director, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.	N/A	N/A

Name and Year of Birth	Position and Offices with Trust	Term of Office and Year First Elected or Appointed	Principal Occupations During Past 5 Years	Number of Portfolios in the First Trust Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee	Other Trusteeships or Directorships Held by Trustee During the Past 5 Years
OFFICERS OF THE TRUST					
Kristi A. Maher 1966	Chief Compliance Officer and Assistant Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term CCO since January 2011, Assistant Secretary since Inception 	Deputy General Counsel, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.	N/A	N/A
Donald P. Swade 1972	Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Accounting Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term Since January 2016 	Senior Vice President (July 2016 to Present), Vice President (April 2012 to July 2016), First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.	N/A	N/A
Roger F. Testin 1966	Vice President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term Since inception 	Senior Vice President, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.	N/A	N/A
Stan Ueland 1970	Vice President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite term Since inception 	Senior Vice President, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.	N/A	N/A

(1) Mr. Bowen is deemed an "interested person" of the Trust due to his position as Chief Executive Officer of First Trust, investment advisor of the Funds.

Unitary Board Leadership Structure

Each Trustee serves as a trustee of all open-end and closed-end funds in the First Trust Fund Complex (as defined below), which is known as a "unitary" board leadership structure. Each Trustee currently serves as a trustee of First Trust Series Fund and First Trust Variable Insurance Trust, open-end funds with seven portfolios advised by First Trust; First Trust Senior Floating Rate Income Fund II, Macquarie/First Trust Global Infrastructure/Utilities Dividend & Income Fund, First Trust Energy Income and Growth Fund, First Trust Enhanced Equity Income Fund, First Trust/Aberdeen Global Opportunity Income Fund, First Trust Mortgage Income Fund, First Trust Strategic High Income Fund II, First Trust/Aberdeen Emerging Opportunity Fund, First Trust Specialty Finance and Financial Opportunities Fund, First Trust High Income Long/Short Fund, First Trust Energy Infrastructure Fund, First Trust MLP and Energy Income Fund, First Trust Intermediate Duration Preferred & Income Fund, First Trust Dynamic Europe Equity Income Fund, First Trust New Opportunities MLP & Energy Fund and First Trust Senior Floating Rate 2022 Target Term Fund, closed-end funds advised by First Trust; and First Trust Exchange-Traded Fund, First Trust Exchange-Traded Fund II, First Trust Exchange-Traded Fund III, First Trust Exchange-Traded Fund IV, First Trust Exchange-Traded Fund V, First Trust Exchange-Traded Fund VI, First Trust Exchange-Traded Fund VII, First Trust Exchange-Traded Fund VIII, First Trust Exchange-Traded AlphaDEX[®] Fund and First Trust Exchange-Traded AlphaDEX[®] Fund II, exchange-traded funds with 130 portfolios advised by First Trust (each a "First Trust Fund" and collectively, the "First Trust Fund Complex"). None of the Trustees who are not "interested persons" of the Trust, nor any of their immediate family members, has ever been a director, officer or employee of, or consultant to, First Trust, First Trust Portfolios L.P. or their affiliates.

The management of the Funds, including general supervision of the duties performed for the Funds under the investment management agreement between the Trust, on behalf of the Funds, and the Advisor, is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. The Trustees set broad policies for the Funds, choose the Trust's officers and hire the Funds' investment advisor, sub-advisors and other service providers. The officers of the Trust manage the day-to-day operations and are responsible to the Board. The Board is composed of four Independent Trustees and one Interested Trustee. The Interested Trustee, James A. Bowen, serves as the Chairman of the Board for each fund in the First Trust Fund Complex.

The same five persons serve as Trustees on the Board and on the Boards of all other First Trust Funds. The unitary board structure was adopted for the First Trust Funds because of the efficiencies it achieves with respect to the governance and oversight of the First Trust Funds. Each First Trust Fund is subject to the rules and regulations of the 1940 Act (and other applicable securities laws), which means that many of the First Trust Funds face similar issues with respect to certain of their fundamental activities, including risk management, portfolio liquidity, portfolio valuation and financial reporting. Because of the similar and often overlapping issues facing the First Trust Funds, the Board of the First Trust Funds believes that maintaining a unitary board structure promotes efficiency and consistency in the governance and oversight of all First Trust Funds and reduces the costs, administrative burdens and possible conflicts that may result from having multiple boards. In adopting a

unitary board structure, the Trustees seek to provide effective governance through establishing a board the overall composition of which will, as a body, possess the appropriate skills, diversity, independence and experience to oversee the Funds' business.

Annually, the Board reviews its governance structure and the committee structures, their performance and functions, and it reviews any processes that would enhance Board governance over the Funds' business. The Board has determined that its leadership structure, including the unitary board and committee structure, is appropriate based on the characteristics of the funds it serves and the characteristics of the First Trust Fund Complex as a whole.

In order to streamline communication between First Trust and the Independent Trustees and create certain efficiencies, the Board has a Lead Independent Trustee who is responsible for: (i) coordinating activities of the Independent Trustees; (ii) working with First Trust, Fund counsel and the independent legal counsel to the Independent Trustees to determine the agenda for Board meetings; (iii) serving as the principal contact for and facilitating communication between the Independent Trustees and the Funds' service providers, particularly First Trust; and (iv) any other duties that the Independent Trustees may delegate to the Lead Independent Trustee. The Lead Independent Trustee is selected by the Independent Trustees and serves a three-year term or until his or her successor is selected.

The Board has established four standing committees (as described below) and has delegated certain of its responsibilities to those committees. The Board and its committees meet frequently throughout the year to oversee the Funds' activities, review contractual arrangements with and performance of service providers, oversee compliance with regulatory requirements and review Fund performance. The Independent Trustees are represented by independent legal counsel at all Board and committee meetings (other than meetings of the Executive Committee). Generally, the Board acts by majority vote of all the Trustees, including a majority vote of the Independent Trustees if required by applicable law.

The three Committee Chairmen and the Lead Independent Trustee rotate every three years in serving as Chairman of the Audit Committee, the Nominating and Governance Committee or the Valuation Committee, or as Lead Independent Trustee. The Lead Independent Trustee and immediate past Lead Independent Trustee also serve on the Executive Committee with the Interested Trustee.

The four standing committees of the First Trust Fund Complex are: the Executive Committee (and Pricing and Dividend Committee), the Nominating and Governance Committee, the Valuation Committee and the Audit Committee. The Executive Committee, which meets between Board meetings, is authorized to exercise all powers of and to act in the place of the Board of Trustees to the extent permitted by the Trust's Declaration of Trust and By Laws. Such Committee is also responsible for the declaration and setting of dividends. Mr. Kadlec, Mr. Bowen and Mr. Erickson are members of the Executive Committee. During the last fiscal year, the Executive Committee held two meetings.

The Nominating and Governance Committee is responsible for appointing and nominating non-interested persons to the Board of Trustees. Messrs. Erickson, Kadlec, Keith and Nielson are members of the Nominating and Governance Committee. If there is no vacancy on the Board of Trustees, the Board will not actively seek recommendations from other parties, including shareholders. The Board of Trustees adopted a mandatory retirement age of 75 for Trustees, beyond which age Trustees are ineligible to serve. The Committee will not consider new trustee candidates who are 72 years of age or older. When a vacancy on the Board of Trustees occurs and nominations are sought to fill such vacancy, the Nominating and Governance Committee may seek nominations from those sources it deems appropriate in its discretion, including shareholders of the applicable Funds. To submit a recommendation for nomination as a candidate for a position on the Board of Trustees, shareholders of the applicable Funds should mail such recommendation to W. Scott Jardine, Secretary, at the Trust's address, 120 East Liberty Drive, Suite 400, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. Such recommendation shall include the following information: (i) evidence of Fund ownership of the person or entity recommending the candidate (if a Fund shareholder); (ii) a full description of the proposed candidate's background, including education, experience, current employment and date of birth; (iii) names and addresses of at least three professional references for the candidate; (iv) information as to whether the candidate is an "interested person" in relation to the Funds, as such term is defined in the 1940 Act, and such other information that may be considered to impair the candidate's independence; and (v) any other information that may be helpful to the Committee in evaluating the candidate. If a recommendation is received with satisfactorily completed information regarding a candidate during a time when a vacancy exists on the Board or during such other time as the Nominating and Governance Committee is accepting recommendations, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Chairman of the Nominating and Governance Committee and to counsel to the Independent Trustees. Recommendations received at any other time will be kept on file until such time as the Nominating and Governance Committee is accepting recommendations, at which point they may be considered for nomination. During the last fiscal year, the Nominating and Governance Committee held four meetings.

The Valuation Committee is responsible for the oversight of the valuation procedures of the Funds (the "Valuation Procedures"), for determining the fair value of the Funds' securities or other assets under certain circumstances as described in the Valuation Procedures and for evaluating the performance of any pricing service for the Fund. Messrs. Erickson, Kadlec, Keith and Nielson are members of the Valuation Committee. During the last fiscal year, the Valuation Committee held four meetings.

The Audit Committee is responsible for overseeing each Fund's accounting and financial reporting process, the system of internal controls and audit process and for evaluating and appointing independent auditors (subject also to Board approval). Messrs. Erickson, Kadlec, Keith and Nielson serve on the Audit Committee. During the last fiscal year, the Audit Committee held seven meetings.

Executive Officers

The executive officers of the Trust hold the same positions with each fund in the First Trust Fund Complex (representing 153 portfolios) as they hold with the Trust.

Risk Oversight

As part of the general oversight of the Funds, the Board is involved in the risk oversight of the Funds. The Board has adopted and periodically reviews policies and procedures designed to address each Fund's risks. Oversight of investment and compliance risk, including oversight of any sub-advisors, is performed primarily at the Board level in conjunction with the Advisor's investment oversight group and the Trust's Chief Compliance Officer ("CCO"). Oversight of other risks also occurs at the committee level. The Advisor's investment oversight group reports to the Board at quarterly meetings regarding, among other things, Fund performance and the various drivers of such performance. The Board reviews reports on the Funds' and the service providers' compliance policies and procedures at each quarterly Board meeting and receives an annual report from the CCO regarding the operations of the Funds' and the service providers' compliance program. In addition, the Independent Trustees meet privately each quarter with the CCO. The Audit Committee reviews with the Advisor each Fund's major financial risk exposures and the steps the Advisor has taken to monitor and control these exposures, including each Fund's risk assessment and risk management policies and guidelines. The Audit Committee also, as appropriate, reviews in a general manner the processes other Board committees have in place with respect to risk assessment and risk management. The Nominating and Governance Committee monitors all matters related to the corporate governance of the Funds. The Valuation Committee monitors valuation risk and compliance with the Funds' Valuation Procedures and oversees the pricing services and actions by the Advisor's Pricing Committee with respect to the valuation of portfolio securities.

Not all risks that may affect the Funds can be identified nor can controls be developed to eliminate or mitigate their occurrence or effects. It may not be practical or cost effective to eliminate or mitigate certain risks, the processes and controls employed to address certain risks may be limited in their effectiveness, and some risks are simply beyond the reasonable control of the Funds or the Advisor or other service providers. For instance, as the use of Internet technology has become more prevalent, the Funds and their service providers have become more susceptible to potential operational risk through breaches in cyber security (generally, intentional and unintentional events that may cause a Fund or a service provider to lose proprietary information, suffer data corruption or lose operational capacity). There can be no guarantee that any risk management systems established by the Funds, their service providers, or issuers of the securities in which the Funds invest to reduce cyber security risks will succeed, and the Funds cannot control such systems put in place by service providers, issuers or other third parties whose operations may affect the Funds and/or their shareholders. Moreover, it is necessary to bear certain risks (such as investment-related risks) to achieve the Funds' goals. As a result of the foregoing and other factors, the Funds' ability to manage risk is subject to substantial limitations.

Board Diversification and Trustee Qualifications

As described above, the Nominating and Governance Committee of the Board oversees matters related to the nomination of Trustees. The Nominating and Governance Committee seeks to establish an effective Board with an appropriate range of skills and diversity, including, as appropriate, differences in background, professional experience, education, vocation, and other individual characteristics and traits in the aggregate. Each Trustee must meet certain basic requirements, including relevant skills and experience, time availability and, if qualifying as an Independent Trustee, independence from First Trust, Sub-Advisors (if any), underwriters or other service providers, including any affiliates of these entities.

Listed below for each current Trustee are the experiences, qualifications and attributes that led to the conclusion, as of the date of this SAI, that each current Trustee should serve as a Trustee in light of the Trust's business and structure.

Richard E. Erickson, M.D., is an orthopedic surgeon. He also has been President of Wheaton Orthopedics, a co-owner and director of a fitness center and a limited partner of two real estate companies. Dr. Erickson has served as a Trustee of each First Trust Fund since its inception. Dr. Erickson has also served as the Lead Independent Trustee and on the Executive Committee (2008 – 2009), Chairman of the Nominating and Governance Committee (2003 – 2007 and 2014 – 2016), Chairman of the Audit Committee (2012 – 2013) and Chairman of the Valuation Committee (June 2006 – 2007 and 2010 – 2011) of the First Trust Funds. He currently serves as Lead Independent Trustee and on the Executive Committee (since January 1, 2017) of the First Trust Funds.

Thomas R. Kadlec is President of ADM Investor Services Inc. (“ADMIS”), a futures commission merchant and wholly-owned subsidiary of the Archer Daniels Midland Company (“ADM”). Mr. Kadlec has been employed by ADMIS and its affiliates since 1990 in various accounting, financial, operations and risk management capacities. Mr. Kadlec serves on the boards of several international affiliates of ADMIS and is a member of ADM’s Integrated Risk Committee, which is tasked with the duty of implementing and communicating enterprise-wide risk management. In 2014, Mr. Kadlec was elected to the board of the Futures Industry Association. In 2017, Mr. Kadlec was elected to the board of the National Futures Association. Mr. Kadlec has served as a Trustee of each First Trust Fund since its inception. Mr. Kadlec also served on the Executive Committee from the organization of the first First Trust closed-end fund in 2003 until he was elected as the first Lead Independent Trustee in December 2005, serving as such through 2007 (and 2014 – 2016). He also served as Chairman of the Valuation Committee (2008 – 2009), Chairman of the Audit Committee (2010 – 2011) and Chairman of the Nominating and Governance Committee (2012 – 2013). He currently serves as Chairman of the Valuation Committee and on the Executive Committee (since January 1, 2017) of the First Trust Funds.

Robert F. Keith is President of Hibs Enterprises, a financial and management consulting firm. Mr. Keith has been with Hibs Enterprises since 2003. Prior thereto, Mr. Keith spent 18 years with ServiceMaster and Aramark, including three years as President and COO of ServiceMaster Consumer Services, where he led the initial expansion of certain products overseas; five years as President and COO of ServiceMaster Management Services; and two years as President of Aramark ServiceMaster Management Services. Mr. Keith is a certified public accountant and also has held the positions of Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer of ServiceMaster, at which time he oversaw the financial aspects of ServiceMaster’s expansion of its Management Services division into Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Mr. Keith has served as a Trustee of the First Trust Funds since June 2006. Mr. Keith has also served as the Chairman of the Audit Committee (2008 – 2009) and Chairman of the Nominating and Governance Committee (2010 – 2011) and Chairman of the Valuation Committee (2014 – 2016) of the First Trust Funds. He served as Lead Independent Trustee and on the Executive Committee (2012 – 2016) and currently serves as Chairman of the Audit Committee (since January 1, 2017) of the First Trust Funds.

Niel B. Nielson, Ph.D., has been the Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer of Pelita Harapan Educational Foundation, a global provider of educational products and services since January 2015. Mr. Nielson formerly served as the President and Chief Executive Officer of Dew Learning LLC from June 2012 through September 2014. Mr. Nielson formerly served as President of Covenant College (2002 – 2012), and as a partner and trader (of options and futures contracts for hedging options) for Ritchie Capital Markets Group (1996 – 1997), where he held an administrative management position at this proprietary derivatives trading company. He also held prior positions in new business development for ServiceMaster Management Services Company and in personnel and human resources for NationsBank of North Carolina, N.A. and Chicago Research and Trading Group, Ltd. (“CRT”). His international experience includes serving as a director of CRT Europe, Inc. for two years, directing out of London all aspects of business conducted by the U.K. and European subsidiary of CRT. Prior to that, Mr. Nielson was a trader and manager at CRT in Chicago. Mr. Nielson has served as a Trustee of each First Trust Fund since its inception and of the First Trust Funds since 1999. Mr. Nielson has also served as the Chairman of the Audit Committee (2003 – 2006 and 2014 – 2016), Chairman of the Valuation Committee (2007 – 2008), Chairman of the Nominating and Governance Committee (2008 – 2009) and Lead Independent Trustee and a member of the Executive Committee (2010 – 2011). He currently serves as Chairman of the Nominating and Governance Committee (since January 1, 2017) of the First Trust Funds.

James A. Bowen is Chief Executive Officer of First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P. Mr. Bowen is involved in the day-to-day management of the First Trust Funds and serves on the Executive Committee. He has over 26 years of experience in the investment company business in sales, sales management and executive management. Mr. Bowen has served as a Trustee of each First Trust Fund since its inception and of the First Trust Funds since 1999.

Effective January 1, 2016, the fixed annual retainer paid to the Independent Trustees is \$230,000 per year and an annual per fund fee of \$2,500 for each closed-end fund and actively managed fund and \$250 for each index fund. The fixed annual retainer is allocated equally among each fund in the First Trust Fund Complex rather than being allocated pro rata based on each fund’s net assets. Additionally, the Lead Independent Trustee is paid \$30,000 annually, the Chairman of the Audit

Committee or Valuation Committee are each paid \$20,000 annually and the Chairman of the Nominating and Governance Committee is paid \$10,000 annually to serve in such capacities with compensation allocated pro rata among each fund in the First Trust Fund Complex based on its net assets.

The following table sets forth the compensation (including reimbursement for travel and out-of-pocket expenses) paid by the Funds and the compensation paid by the First Trust Fund Complex for services during the calendar year ended December 31, 2017, to each of the Independent Trustees. The Trust has no retirement or pension plans. The officers and Trustee who are "interested persons" as designated above serve without any compensation from the Trust. The Trust has no employees. Its officers are compensated by First Trust.

Name of Trustee	Total Compensation from the Funds ⁽¹⁾	Total Compensation from the First Trust Fund Complex ⁽²⁾
Richard E. Erickson	\$8,561	\$414,011
Thomas R. Kadlec	\$8,433	\$403,267
Robert F. Keith	\$8,432	\$403,163
Niel B. Nielson	\$8,312	\$392,987

(1) The estimated compensation to be paid by the Fund to the Independent Trustees for one fiscal year for services to the Funds.

(2) The total compensation paid to the Independent Trustees for the calendar year ended December 31, 2017 for services to the 151 portfolios, which consists of seven open-end mutual funds, 16 closed-end funds and 128 exchange-traded funds.

The following table sets forth the dollar range of equity securities beneficially owned by the Trustees in the Funds and in other funds overseen by the Trustees in the First Trust Fund Complex as of December 31, 2017:

Trustee	Dollar Range of Equity Securities in the Funds (Number of Shares Held)	Aggregate Dollar Range of Equity Securities in All Registered Investment Companies Overseen by Trustee in the First Trust Fund Complex
Interested Trustee		
James A. Bowen	None	Over \$100,000
Independent Trustees		
Richard E. Erickson	None	Over \$100,000
Thomas R. Kadlec	None	Over \$100,000
Robert F. Keith	None	Over \$100,000
Niel B. Nielson	None	Over \$100,000

As of December 31, 2017, the Independent Trustees of the Trust and their immediate family members did not own beneficially or of record any class of securities of an investment advisor or principal underwriter of the Funds or any person directly or indirectly controlling, controlled by or under common control with an investment advisor or principal underwriter of the Funds.

As of December 31, 2017, the officers and Trustees, in the aggregate, owned less than 1% of the shares of each Fund.

As of December 31, 2017, the Advisor did not own any shares of the Funds.

CODE OF ETHICS

To mitigate the possibility that the Fund will be adversely affected by personal trading of employees, the Trust, First Trust and First Trust Portfolios have adopted Codes of Ethics under Rule 17j-1 of the 1940 Act. These Codes contain policies restricting securities trading in personal accounts of the officers, Trustees and others who normally come into possession of information on portfolio transactions. These Codes are on public file with, and are available from, the SEC.

PROXY VOTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Information regarding how the Funds voted proxies (if any) relating to portfolio securities during the most recent 12-month period ended June 30 is available upon request and without charge on the Funds' website at www.ftportfolios.com, by calling (800) 621-1675 or by accessing the SEC's website at www.sec.gov.

The Board has delegated to First Trust the proxy voting responsibilities for the Funds and has directed First Trust to vote proxies consistent with the Funds' best interests. First Trust has engaged the services of Institutional Shareholder Services Inc. ("ISS"), to make recommendations to First Trust on the voting of proxies relating to securities held by the Funds. If First Trust manages the assets of a company or its pension plan and any of First Trust's clients hold any securities of that company, First Trust will vote proxies relating to such company's securities in accordance with the ISS recommendations to avoid any conflict of interest.

To the extent that a Fund invests in other registered investment companies ("*acquired funds*"), it may do so pursuant to an exemptive order granted by the SEC. The relief granted by that order is conditioned upon complying with a number of undertakings, some of which require the Fund to vote its shares in an acquired fund in the same proportion as other holders of the acquired fund's shares. As a result, to the extent that a Fund, or another registered investment company advised by First Trust, relies on the relief granted by the exemptive order, First Trust will vote shares of an acquired fund in the same proportion as the other holders of that acquired fund's shares.

First Trust has adopted the ISS Proxy Voting Guidelines. While these guidelines are not intended to be all-inclusive, they do provide guidance on First Trust's general voting policies. The ISS Proxy Voting Guidelines are attached hereto as *Exhibit A*.

CONTROL PERSONS AND PRINCIPAL HOLDERS OF SECURITIES

To the extent required by applicable law, Participating Insurance Companies will solicit voting instructions from owners of the variable annuity and variable life insurance Contracts. All shares in the Funds will be voted by Participating Insurance Companies in accordance with voting instructions received from such Contract owners. Participating Insurance Companies will vote all of the shares which they are entitled to vote in the same proportion as the voting instructions given by variable annuity and variable life insurance Contract owners, on the issues presented. Participating Insurance Companies will also vote all shares owned in their own names proportional to such ownership. As a result of this proportional voting, a small number of Contract owners may have the ability to determine the outcome of any item voted on by the Fund.

INVESTMENT ADVISORY AND OTHER SERVICES

Investment Advisor

First Trust Advisors L.P., 120 East Liberty Drive, Suite 400, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, is the investment advisor to the Funds. As investment advisor, First Trust provides the Funds with professional investment supervision and management and permits any of its officers or employees to serve without compensation as Trustees or officers of the Trust if elected to such positions. First Trust provides the Funds with discretionary investment services and certain other services necessary with the management of the portfolio. Specifically, First Trust is responsible for supervising and directing the investments of the Funds in accordance with the Funds' investment objective(s), program, and restrictions as provided in the Prospectus and this SAI. First Trust is responsible for effecting all security transactions on behalf of the Funds. First Trust is also responsible for compliance with the provisions of the Code, applicable to the Funds (relating to the diversification requirements applicable to investments in underlying variable annuity and variable life insurance Contracts).

First Trust is a limited partnership with one limited partner, Grace Partners of DuPage L.P., and one general partner, The Charger Corporation. Grace Partners of DuPage L.P. is a limited partnership with one general partner, The Charger Corporation, and a number of limited partners. The Charger Corporation is an Illinois corporation controlled by James A. Bowen, the Chief Executive Officer of First Trust. First Trust discharges its responsibilities subject to the policies of the Board of Trustees.

First Trust is also advisor to seven open-end funds, 16 closed-end funds and 10 exchange-traded funds consisting of 130 series and is the evaluator and portfolio supervisor of certain unit investment trusts sponsored by First Trust Portfolios. FTP specializes in the underwriting, trading and distribution of unit investment trusts and other securities.

First Trust acts as investment advisor to the Funds pursuant to an investment management agreement (the "Investment Management Agreement"). The Investment Management Agreement continues in effect for the Funds from year to year after its initial two-year term so long as its continuation is approved at least annually by the Trustees including a majority of the Trustees who are not parties to such agreement or interested persons of any such party except in their capacity as Trustees of the Trust, or the interest holders of the Funds. It may be terminated at any time upon 60 days' notice by either party, or by a majority vote of the outstanding shares of the Fund, and will terminate automatically upon assignment. Additional Funds may be subject to a different agreement. The Investment Management Agreement provides that First Trust, its partners, directors, officers, employees, and certain other persons performing specific functions for the Funds will only be liable to the Funds for losses resulting from willful misfeasance, bad faith, gross negligence, or reckless disregard of their obligations and duties under the agreement. As compensation for its services, the Funds pay First Trust a fee as described in the Prospectus. Provisions regarding expense limitations are described in the Prospectus.

Pursuant to the Investment Management Agreement between First Trust and the Trust, First Trust is paid an annual management fee of 0.60% of each Fund's average daily net assets. Each Fund is responsible for all of its expenses, including the investment advisory fees, costs of transfer agency, custody, fund administration, legal, audit and other services, interest, taxes, brokerage commissions and other expenses connected with the execution of portfolio transactions, distribution and service fees pursuant to a 12b-1 plan, if any, acquired fund fees and expenses, and extraordinary expenses. First Trust has agreed to waive fees and/or pay Fund expenses to the extent necessary to prevent the annual operating expenses of Class I shares and Class II shares (excluding interest expense, brokerage commissions and other trading expenses, acquired fund fees and expenses, taxes and extraordinary expenses) from exceeding 1.20% and 0.95%, respectively, of either Fund's average daily net assets per year at least until May 1, 2019 (the "Expense Caps"). The agreement may be terminated by the Trust on behalf of a Fund at any time and by the Funds' investment advisor only after May 1, 2019 upon 60 days' written notice. Expenses borne and fees waived by First Trust are subject to reimbursement by a Fund up to three years from the date the fee or expense was incurred by such Fund, but no reimbursement payment will be made by a Fund at any time if it would result in such Fund's expenses exceeding the applicable Expense Cap in place for the most recent fiscal year for which such Expense Cap was in place.

Pursuant to a contractual agreement between the Trust, on behalf of the First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio, and First Trust, First Trust will waive management fees of 0.37% of the Fund's average daily net assets until May 1, 2019. The agreement may be terminated by the Trust's Board of Trustees on behalf of the Fund at any time and by First Trust only after May 1, 2019 upon 60 days' written notice.

The Funds paid the following advisory fees to First Trust and First Trust waived and reimbursed the amounts set forth below for the periods specified:

Fund	Amount of Management Fees (Net of Fee Waivers and Expense Reimbursements By First Trust)			Amount of Fees Waived and Expenses Reimbursed By First Trust		
	Fiscal Year Ended December 31,			Fiscal Year Ended December 31,		
	2017	2016	2015	2017	2016	2015
First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio	\$3,668,723	\$1,926,590	\$1,143,308	\$203,355	\$338,513	\$347,277
First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$261,140	\$208,203	\$184,872

Investment Committees

First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio

With respect to the First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio, the Investment Committee of First Trust (the "Investment Committee") is primarily responsible for the day-to-day management of the Fund's portfolios. There are currently six members of the Investment Committee, as follows:

Name	Position with First Trust	Length of Service with First Trust	Principal Occupation During Past Five Years
Daniel J. Lindquist	Chairman of the Investment Committee and Managing Director	Since 2004	Managing Director (July 2012 to Present), Senior Vice President (September 2005 to July 2012), First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.
Jon C. Erickson	Senior Vice President	Since 1994	Senior Vice President, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.
David G. McGarel	Chief Investment Officer, Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director	Since 1997	Chief Investment Officer (June 2012, to present), Managing Director (July 2012 to Present); Senior Vice President (January 2004 to July 2012), First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.
Roger F. Testin	Senior Vice President	Since 2001	Senior Vice President, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.
Todd Larson	Vice President	Since 2007	Vice President (2007 to Present), First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.
Chris A. Peterson	Senior Vice President	Since 2000	Senior Vice President, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.

Daniel J. Lindquist, CFA: Mr. Lindquist is Chairman of First Trust's Investment Committee (the "Investment Committee") and presides over Investment Committee meetings. Mr. Lindquist is also responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Fund's investment strategies.

Jon C. Erickson, CFA: As the head of First Trust's Equity Research Group, Mr. Erickson is responsible for determining the securities to be purchased and sold by funds that do not utilize quantitative investment strategies.

David G. McGarel, CFA: As First Trust's Chief Investment Officer, Mr. McGarel consults with the Investment Committee on market conditions and First Trust's general investment philosophy. As Chief Operating Officer, Mr. McGarel is responsible for First Trust and FTP operations, including information systems, trust administration and First Trust administration.

Roger F. Testin, CFA: As head of First Trust's Portfolio Management Group, Mr. Testin is responsible for executing the instructions of the Strategy Research Group and Equity Research Group.

Todd Larson, CFA: As head of First Trust's Fixed Income Group, Mr. Larson is responsible for implementing fixed income investment strategies for First Trust's institutional clients.

Chris A. Peterson, CFA: Mr. Peterson is a Senior Vice President and head of the strategy research group at First Trust. Mr. Peterson is responsible for developing and implementing quantitative equity investment strategies.

First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio

With respect to the First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio, the Investment Committee of First Trust (the "Investment Committee") is primarily responsible for the day-to-day management of the Fund's portfolios. There are currently nine members of the Investment Committee, as follows:

Name	Position with First Trust	Length of Service with First Trust	Principal Occupation During Past Five Years
Daniel J. Lindquist	Chairman of the Investment Committee and Managing Director	Since 2004	Managing Director (July 2012 to Present), Senior Vice President (September 2005 to July 2012), First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.
Jon C. Erickson	Senior Vice President	Since 1994	Senior Vice President, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.
David G. McGarel	Chief Investment Officer, Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director	Since 1997	Chief Investment Officer (June 2012, to present), Chief Operating Officer (2016 to present) and Managing Director (July 2012 to Present); Senior Vice President (January 2004 to July 2012), First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.
Roger F. Testin	Senior Vice President	Since 2001	Senior Vice President, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.
William Housey	Senior Vice President	Since 2010	Senior Vice President, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P. (June 2010 to Present); Executive Director and Co-Portfolio Manager, Morgan Stanley/Van Kampen Funds, Inc.

Name	Position with First Trust	Length of Service with First Trust	Principal Occupation During Past Five Years
Todd Larson	Vice President	Since 2007	Vice President (2007 to Present), First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.
James Snyder	Senior Vice President	Since 2013	Vice President (2013 to Present), First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.; Senior Portfolio Manager, Fort Sheridan Advisors
Jeremiah Charles	Senior Vice President	Since 2013	Vice President (2013 to Present), First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.; Vice President of Mortgage Product Sales for CRT Capital
Chris A. Peterson	Senior Vice President	Since 2000	Senior Vice President, First Trust Advisors L.P. and First Trust Portfolios L.P.

Daniel J. Lindquist, CFA: Mr. Lindquist is Chairman of First Trust's Investment Committee (the "Investment Committee") and presides over Investment Committee meetings. Mr. Lindquist is also responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Fund's investment strategies.

Jon C. Erickson, CFA: As the head of First Trust's Equity Research Group, Mr. Erickson is responsible for determining the securities to be purchased and sold by funds that do not utilize quantitative investment strategies.

David G. McGarel, CFA: As First Trust's Chief Investment Officer, Mr. McGarel consults with the Investment Committee on market conditions and First Trust's general investment philosophy. As Chief Operating Officer, Mr. McGarel is responsible for First Trust and FTP operations, including information systems, trust administration and First Trust administration.

Roger F. Testin, CFA: As head of First Trust's Portfolio Management Group, Mr. Testin is responsible for executing the instructions of the Strategy Research Group and Equity Research Group.

William Housey, CFA: Mr. Housey serves as Senior Portfolio Manager for the First Trust Leveraged Finance Investment Team.

Todd Larson, CFA: As head of First Trust's Fixed Income Group, Mr. Larson is responsible for implementing fixed income investment strategies for First Trust's institutional clients.

James Snyder: Mr. Snyder serves as a Portfolio Manager for the First Trust Mortgage Securities Team.

Jeremiah Charles: Mr. Charles serves as a Portfolio Manager for the First Trust Mortgage Securities Team.

Chris A. Peterson, CFA: Mr. Peterson is a Senior Vice President and head of the strategy research group at First Trust. Mr. Peterson is responsible for developing and implementing quantitative equity investment strategies.

Compensation

The compensation structure for each member of each Investment Committee is based upon a fixed salary as well as a discretionary bonus determined by the management of First Trust. Salaries are determined by management and are based upon an individual's position and overall value to the firm. Bonuses are also determined by management and are based upon an individual's overall contribution to the success of the firm and the profitability of the firm. Salaries and bonuses for members of each Investment Committee are not based upon criteria such as Fund performance or the value of assets included in a Fund's portfolio. In addition, Mr. Erickson, Mr. Lindquist, Mr. McGarel and Mr. Peterson also have an indirect ownership stake in the firm and will therefore receive their allocable share of ownership-related distributions.

Each Investment Committee manages the investment vehicles and accounts (other than the Trust) with the number of accounts and assets, as of December 31, 2017 set forth in the following table:

Accounts Managed by Investment Committees

Investment Committees Member	Registered Investment Companies Number of Accounts (\$ Assets)	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles Number of Accounts (\$ Assets)	Other Accounts Number of Accounts (\$ Assets)
Daniel J. Lindquist	100 (\$40,947,901,758)	30 (\$856,994,004)	1,676 (\$591,113,827)
David G. McGarel	100 (\$40,947,901,758)	30 (\$856,994,004)	1,676 (\$591,113,827)
Jon C. Erickson	100 (\$40,947,901,758)	30 (\$856,994,004)	1,676 (\$591,113,827)
Roger F. Testin	100 (\$40,947,901,758)	30 (\$856,994,004)	1,676 (\$591,113,827)
Chris A. Peterson	100 (\$40,947,901,758)	12 (\$519,726,112)	1,676 (\$591,113,827)
Todd Larson	4 (\$1,553,878,065)	N/A	N/A
William Housey	6 (\$3,801,110,748)	3 (\$159,945,803)	N/A
Jeremiah Charles	3 (\$2,463,687,048)	N/A	N/A
James Snyder	3 (\$2,463,687,048)	N/A	N/A

Conflicts. None of the accounts managed by either Investment Committee pay an advisory fee that is based upon the performance of the account. In addition, First Trust believes that there are no material conflicts of interest that may arise in connection with either Investment Committee's management of the respective Fund's investments and the investments of the other accounts managed by either Investment Committee. However, because the investment strategies of many of the other accounts managed by each Investment Committee are based on fairly mechanical investment processes, either Investment Committee may recommend that certain clients sell and other clients buy a given security at the same time. In addition, because the investment strategies of each Fund and other accounts managed by each Investment Committee generally result in the clients investing in readily available securities, First Trust believes that there should not be material conflicts in the allocation of investment opportunities between either Fund and other accounts managed by either Investment Committee. No member of either Investment Committee owns shares in the Funds.

Distributor

First Trust Portfolios L.P., 120 East Liberty Drive, Suite 400, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, serves as the principal underwriter of the shares of the Funds pursuant to a "best efforts" arrangement as provided by a distribution agreement with the Trust on behalf of the Funds (the "*Distribution Agreement*"). FTP is affiliated with First Trust. The officers of the Trust described as being associated with First Trust and FTP are affiliated persons of both the Trust and FTP. Pursuant to the Distribution Agreement, the Funds appointed FTP to be their agent for the distribution of the Funds' shares on a continuous offering basis. FTP sells shares of the Funds to Accounts. Pursuant to the Distribution Agreement, FTP, at its own expense, finances certain activities incident to the sale and distribution of the shares of the Funds, including printing and distribution of Prospectus and SAI to other than existing shareholders and the printing and distributing of sales literature and advertising. FTP does not receive underwriting commissions for its sale of shares of the Funds, but may receive compensation pursuant to a Rule 12b-1 plan adopted by the Trust on behalf of the Funds and described herein under the section entitled "Rule 12b-1 Plan."

Administrator

The Funds pay an administration fee as set forth in the Prospectus to cover expenses incurred by Participating Insurance Companies in connection with the administration of the Funds, Accounts and the Contracts. First Trust may also pay an additional administrative fee to Participating Insurance Companies for the Funds as set forth in the Funds' Prospectus. The services provided by Participating Insurance Companies shall include, among others, the following: (i) coordinating matters relating to the operation of the Accounts with the Funds, including any necessary coordination with the custodian, transfer agent, dividend disbursing agent, recordkeeping agent, accountants, attorneys, and other parties performing services or operational functions for the Funds; (ii) coordinating the preparation of the necessary documents with the SEC and other federal and state regulatory authorities as may be required; (iii) taking such other action as may be required by applicable law with respect to the foregoing, including without limitation the rules and regulations of the SEC and of state insurance authorities and other regulatory agencies; and (iv) coordinating with First Trust regarding investment limitations and parameters imposed on funding vehicles for variable annuities by the insurance laws of the various states and by the Code. For the periods specified below, the Funds paid administration fees to the Participating Insurance Companies.

Administrative Fees Paid to Participating Insurance Companies

Fund	Fiscal Year Ended December 31,		
	2017	2016	2015
First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio	\$1,290,672	\$755,024	\$496,842
First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio	\$ 38,620	\$ 29,714	\$ 19,936

Participating Insurance Companies also may make their officers and employees available to the Trustees and officers of the Trust for consultation and discussions regarding the operations of Accounts and the Contracts in connection with the administration of the Funds and services provided to the Funds.

Transfer Agent

BNY Mellon Investment Servicing (US) Inc. ("BNY"), with corporate offices at 301 Bellevue Parkway, Wilmington, Delaware 19809, serves as the transfer and dividend disbursing agent for the Funds pursuant to a Transfer Agency Agreement (the "Transfer Agency Agreement"). Under the Transfer Agency Agreement, BNY maintains member registrations; performs services relating to member trading activity; and provides purchase and redemption services in accordance with instruction from the Trust.

Administration and Accounting Services Agreement

BNY also serves as the Trust's administrator and fund accounting agent pursuant to an Administration and Accounting Services Agreement (the "Administration Agreement"). BNY has agreed to furnish to the Trust statistical and research data, clerical, accounting and bookkeeping services, and certain other services required. In addition, BNY has agreed to prepare and file various reports with appropriate regulatory agencies. The Administration Agreement provides that BNY shall be obligated to exercise care and diligence in the performance of its duties, to act in good faith and to use its best efforts, within reasonable limits, in performing services thereunder. BNY shall be responsible for failure to perform its duties under the Administration Agreement arising out of its willful misfeasance, bad faith, gross negligence or reckless disregard. The Administration Agreement provides that BNY shall not be liable for any error of judgment or mistake of law or any loss suffered by the Trust or the Fund in connection with the performance of the agreement, except a loss resulting from willful misfeasance, gross negligence or reckless disregard by it of its duties and obligations thereunder. The fees paid to BNY for its services pursuant to the Administration Agreement are below.

Aggregate Amount Paid to Administrator

Fund	Fiscal Year Ended December 31,		
	2017	2016	2015
First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio	\$408,393	\$252,610	\$151,589
First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio	\$ 39,636	\$ 11,552	\$ 9,904

Custodian

The Bank of New York Mellon ("BONY" or the "Custodian") acts as Custodian for the Funds pursuant to a Custodian Agreement between BONY and the Trust on behalf of the Funds (the "Custodian Agreement"). The Custodian has custody of all securities and cash of the Trust maintained in the United States and attends to the collection of principal and income and payment for and collection of proceeds of securities bought and sold by the Funds.

Pursuant to a letter agreement between BONY and the Trust on behalf of the Funds, the Trust has agreed to pay BONY fees for services provided under the Custodian Agreement.

Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

The Funds' independent registered public accounting firm, Deloitte & Touche LLP ("Deloitte"), 111 South Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60606, audits the Funds' financial statements and performs other related audit services.

SUB-ADVISORS

The Advisor and the Trust on behalf of First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio have retained EIP and Stonebridge, affiliates of First Trust, to oversee the selection and on-going monitoring of certain of the securities in the First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio. Stonebridge will act as sub-advisor on a non-discretionary basis; EIP will act as sub-advisor on a discretionary basis and manage the portion of the Fund's assets allocated to it by the Advisor.

Stonebridge Advisors LLC

Stonebridge Advisors LLC serves as the Fund's non-discretionary Sub-Advisor pursuant to a sub-advisory agreement with the Advisor and the Trust on behalf of the Fund (the "*Stonebridge Sub-Advisory Agreement*"). Stonebridge is a Delaware limited liability company with principal offices located at 10 Westport Road, Suite C-101, Wilton, Connecticut 06897. Stonebridge is owned 51% by an affiliate of the Advisor and 48% by Stonebridge Asset Management LLP. Stonebridge is a registered investment advisor under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, as amended (the "*Advisers Act*"), and had approximately \$8.8 billion of assets which it managed or supervised as of January 31, 2018. Stonebridge is a research-driven firm whose personnel have longstanding experience in investing in preferred securities. Set forth below is information regarding the key executives of Stonebridge.

The Stonebridge Sub-Advisory Agreement. Stonebridge, subject to the Board of Trustees' and Advisor's supervision, provides the Fund with non-discretionary investment services. Specifically, Stonebridge will provide recommendations to the Advisor regarding the selection and on-going monitoring of the securities held by the Fund in accordance with the Fund's investment objectives, policies and restrictions as provided in the Prospectus and this SAI, as may be subsequently changed by the Board of Trustees and communicated to Stonebridge in writing. Stonebridge further agrees to conform to all applicable laws and regulations of the SEC in all material respects and to conduct its activities under the Stonebridge Sub-Advisory Agreement in all material respects in accordance with applicable regulations of any governmental authority pertaining to its investment advisory services. In the performance of its duties, Stonebridge will, in all material respects satisfy any applicable fiduciary duties it may have to the Fund, monitor the Fund's investments, and comply with the provisions of the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws, as amended from time to time, and the stated investment objectives, policies and restrictions of the Fund. The Stonebridge Sub-Advisory Agreement provides that Stonebridge shall not be liable for any loss suffered by the Fund or the Advisor (including, without limitation, by reason of the purchase, sale or retention of any security) in connection with the performance of Stonebridge's duties under the Stonebridge Sub-Advisory Agreement, except for a loss resulting from willful misfeasance, bad faith or gross negligence on the part of Stonebridge in performance of its duties under the Stonebridge Sub-Advisory Agreement, or by reason of its reckless disregard of its obligations and duties under the Stonebridge Sub-Advisory Agreement.

Pursuant to the Stonebridge Sub-Advisory Agreement among the Advisor, Stonebridge and the Trust on behalf of the Fund, the Advisor has agreed to pay for the services and facilities provided by Stonebridge through sub-advisory fees. Stonebridge's fees are paid by the Advisor out of the Advisor's management fee. The following table sets forth the sub-advisory fees paid to the Sub-Advisor by the Advisor (net of any applicable expense waiver or reimbursements) for the specified periods.

Amount of Sub Advisory Fees Paid to Stonebridge

Fiscal Year Ended December 31,		
2017	2016	2015
\$2,933	\$1,952	\$1,864

The Stonebridge Sub-Advisory Agreement for the Fund may be terminated without the payment of any penalty by First Trust, the Board of Trustees, or a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund (as defined in the 1940 Act), upon 60 days' written notice to the Sub-Advisor.

All fees and expenses are accrued daily and deducted before payment of dividends to investors. The Stonebridge Sub-Advisory Agreement for the Fund has been approved by the Board of Trustees, including a majority of the Independent Trustees, and the initial shareholder of the Fund.

Energy Income Partners, LLC

EIP serves as sub-advisor on a discretionary basis pursuant to a sub-advisory agreement (the "*EIP Sub-Advisory Agreement*"). In this capacity, EIP will act as sub-advisor for, and manage on a discretionary basis the investment and reinvestment

of only the assets of the Fund allocated to EIP by the Advisor and furnish an investment program in respect of and make investment decisions only with respect to the portion of the Fund's investment portfolio allocated to it by the Advisor. EIP is located at 10 Wright Street, Westport, Connecticut 06880, is a registered investment advisor and serves as investment advisor to investment portfolios with approximately \$6.6 billion of assets as of January 31, 2018. EIP is a Delaware limited liability company and an SEC-registered investment advisor, founded in October 2003 by James J. Murchie to provide professional asset management services in the area of energy-related MLPs and other high-payout securities in the energy infrastructure sector. EIP mainly focuses on portfolio companies that operate infrastructure assets such as pipelines, storage and terminals that receive fee-based or regulated income from their customers. In addition to serving as a sub-advisor to the Fund, EIP serves as the investment manager to two unregistered investment company and one open end mutual fund investment company as well as two separately managed accounts for high net worth individuals and institutions. EIP also provides a model portfolio for unified managed accounts. EIP also serves as a sub-advisor to the First Trust Energy Income and Growth Fund (NYSE: FEN), First Trust Energy Infrastructure Fund (NYSE: FIF), First Trust New Opportunities MLP & Energy Fund (NYSE: FPL), First Trust MLP and Energy Income Fund (NYSE: FEI), First Trust North American Energy Infrastructure Fund (NYSE: EMLP), a sleeve of the First Trust Strategic Income ETF (NYSE: FDIV) and the First Trust North American Energy Infrastructure Income UCITS Fund.

First Trust Capital Partners, LLC ("FTCP"), an affiliate of First Trust, owns, through a wholly-owned subsidiary, a 15% ownership interest in each of EIP and EIP Partners, LLC, an affiliate of EIP.

The EIP Sub-Advisory Agreement. EIP, subject to the Board of Trustees' and Advisor's supervision, provides the Fund with discretionary investment services. With respect to the portion of the Fund's assets allocated to EIP by the Advisor, EIP will furnish an investment program and manage the investment and reinvestment of such securities in accordance with the Fund's investment objectives, policies and restrictions as provided in the Prospectus and this SAI, as may be subsequently changed by the Board of Trustees and communicated to the EIP in writing.

EIP further agrees to conform to all applicable laws and regulations of the SEC in all material respects and to conduct its activities under the EIP Sub-Advisory Agreement in all material respects in accordance with applicable regulations of any governmental authority pertaining to its investment advisory services. In the performance of its duties, EIP will, in all material respects satisfy any applicable fiduciary duties it may have to the Fund, monitor the Fund's investments for the portion allocated to it, and comply with the provisions of the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws, as amended from time to time, and the stated investment objectives, policies and restrictions of the Fund. The EIP Sub-Advisory Agreement provides that EIP shall not be liable for any loss suffered by the Fund or the Advisor (including, without limitation, by reason of the purchase, sale or retention of any security) in connection with the performance of the EIP's duties under the Sub-Advisory Agreement, except for a loss resulting from willful misfeasance, bad faith or gross negligence on the part of EIP in performance of its duties under the EIP Sub-Advisory Agreement, or by reason of its reckless disregard of its obligations and duties under the EIP Sub-Advisory Agreement.

Pursuant to the EIP Sub-Advisory Agreement among EIP, the Advisor and the Trust on behalf of the Fund, the Advisor has agreed to pay for the services and facilities provided by EIP through sub-advisory fees. EIP's fees are paid by the Advisor out of the Advisor's management fee. The following table sets forth the sub-advisory fees paid to the Sub-Advisor by the Advisor (net of any applicable expense waiver or reimbursements) for the specified periods.

Amount of Sub Advisory Fees Paid to EIP

<u>Fiscal Year Ended December 31,</u>		
<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
\$ -	\$17	\$303

The EIP Sub-Advisory Agreement for the Fund may be terminated without the payment of any penalty by First Trust, the Board of Trustees, or a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund (as defined in the 1940 Act), upon 60 days' written notice to the Sub-Advisor.

All fees and expenses are accrued daily and deducted before payment of dividends to investors. The EIP Sub-Advisory Agreement for the Fund has been approved by the Board of Trustees, including a majority of the Independent Trustees, and the initial shareholder of the Fund.

RULE 12B-1 PLAN

The Trust has adopted a plan (the "Plan") pursuant to Rule 12b-1 under the 1940 Act, which provides that Class I shares of the Funds will be subject to an annual 12b-1 service fee. Class II shares of the Funds are not subject to the 12b-1

service fee. The Trust has adopted the Plan to encourage each Participating Insurance Company to provide services to owners of shares of the Funds and to promote future sales of the Funds.

First Trust Portfolios serves as selling agent of the Funds. In this capacity, FTP manages the offering of the Funds' shares and is responsible for all sales and promotional activities. In order to compensate FTP for its costs in connection with these activities, the Funds have adopted a service plan for Class I shares under Rule 12b-1 under the 1940 Act. FTP uses the service fee to compensate each Participating Insurance Company for providing account services to Contract owners. These services include establishing and maintaining Contract owners' accounts, supplying information to Contract owners, delivering fund materials to Contract owners, answering inquiries, and providing other personal services to Contract owners. The Funds may spend up to 0.25% per year of the average daily net assets attributable to Class I shares as a service fee under the Plan. Class II shares are not subject to the 12b-1 service fee. In addition, the Plan permits First Trust to use a portion of its advisory fee to compensate FTP for expenses incurred in connection with the sale of the Funds' shares including, without limitation, compensation of its sales force, expenses of printing and distributing the Prospectus to persons other than shareholders or Contract owners, expenses of preparing, printing and distributing advertising and sales literature and reports to shareholders and Contract owners used in connection with the sale of the Funds' shares, certain other expenses associated with the servicing of shares of the Funds, and any service-related expenses that may be authorized from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2017, the First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio and First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio paid \$1,613,278 and \$48,170, respectively, to Participating Insurance Companies under the Plan for providing account services.

As a result, none of the 12b-1 service fees were paid by FTP for: advertising, printing, and mailing of Prospectus to other than current interest holders, compensation to underwriters, compensation to broker/dealers, compensation to sales personnel, interest, carrying, or other financing charges and any other charges.

Under the Trust's Plan, the Trust will report quarterly to the Board of Trustees for its review all amounts expended under the Plan. The Plan may be terminated at any time with respect to the Fund, without the payment of any penalty, by a vote of a majority of the Trustees who are not "interested persons" and who have no direct or indirect financial interest in the Plan or by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of such Fund on not more than sixty (60) days' written notice. The Plan may be renewed from year to year if approved by a vote of the Board of Trustees and a vote of the non-interested Trustees who have no direct or indirect financial interest in the Plan cast in person at a meeting called for the purpose of voting on the Plan. The Plan may be continued only if the Trustees who vote to approve such continuance conclude, in the exercise of reasonable business judgment and in light of their fiduciary duties under the applicable law, that there is a reasonable likelihood that the Plan will benefit the applicable Fund and its shareholders. The Plan may not be amended to increase materially the cost which the Fund may bear under the Plan without the approval of the shareholders of such Fund, and any other material amendments of the Plan must be approved by the Independent Trustees by a vote cast in person at a meeting called for the purpose of considering such amendments. During the existence of the Plan, the selection and nomination of the Independent Trustees of the Trust will be committed to the discretion of the Independent Trustees then in office. With the exception of FTP and its affiliates, no "interested person" of the Trust (as that term is defined in the 1940 Act) and no Trustee of the Trust has a direct or indirect financial interest in the operation of the Plan or any related agreement.

OTHER PAYMENTS TO FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

In addition to the administrative fees and certain payments related to 12b-1 service fees paid by FTP to Participating Insurance Companies and other financial intermediaries as previously described, First Trust or its affiliates may from time to time make additional payments, out of its own resources, to Participating Insurance Companies or other financial intermediaries that sell shares of the Funds in order to promote the sales and retention of shares of the Funds by those firms and their customers. The amounts of these payments vary by Participating Insurance Company or financial intermediary and, with respect to a given firm, are typically calculated by reference to the amount of the firm's recent gross sales of Fund shares and/or total assets of such Fund held by the firm's customers. The level of payments that First Trust is willing to provide to a particular Participating Insurance Company or financial intermediary may be affected by, among other factors, the firm's total assets held in and recent net investments into the Funds, the firm's level of participation in Funds sales and marketing programs and the firm's compensation program for its registered representatives who sell Fund shares and provide services to Fund shareholders. First Trust or its affiliates may also make payments to Participating Insurance Companies or financial intermediaries in connection with sales meetings, due diligence meetings, prospecting seminars and other meetings at which First Trust or its affiliates promotes its products and services. First Trust may also make payments to Participating Insurance Companies or certain financial intermediaries for certain administrative services, including record keeping and sub-accounting of shareholder accounts pursuant

to a sub-transfer agency, omnibus account service or sub-accounting agreement. All fees payable by First Trust under this category of services may be charged back to the applicable Fund, subject to approval by the Board.

Each Fund also pays an administrative services fee to Participating Insurance Companies equal to 0.20% of the Fund's average daily net assets. The administrative services fee reimburses the Participating Insurance Companies for various recordkeeping and other administrative services related to the Contracts.

BROKERAGE ALLOCATIONS

First Trust is responsible for decisions to buy and sell securities for the Funds and for the placement of the Funds' securities business, the negotiation of the commissions to be paid on brokered transactions, the prices for principal trades in securities, and the allocation of portfolio brokerage and principal business. It is the policy of First Trust to seek the best execution at the best security price available with respect to each transaction, and with respect to brokered transactions in light of the overall quality of brokerage and research services provided to First Trust and its clients. The best price to a Fund means the best net price without regard to the mix between purchase or sale price and commission, if any. Purchases may be made from underwriters, dealers and, on occasion, the issuers. Commissions will be paid on such Fund's futures and options transactions, if any. The purchase price of portfolio securities purchased from an underwriter or dealer may include underwriting commissions and dealer spreads. The Funds may pay markups on principal transactions. In selecting broker-dealers and in negotiating commissions, First Trust considers, among other things, the firm's reliability, the quality of its execution services on a continuing basis and its financial condition. Fund portfolio transactions may be effected with broker-dealers who have assisted investors in the purchase of shares.

Section 28(e) of the 1934 Act permits an investment advisor, under certain circumstances, to cause an account to pay a broker or dealer who supplies brokerage and research services a commission for effecting a transaction in excess of the amount of commission another broker or dealer would have charged for effecting the transaction. Brokerage and research services include (a) furnishing advice as to the value of securities, the advisability of investing, purchasing or selling securities, and the availability of securities or purchasers or sellers of securities; (b) furnishing analyses and reports concerning issuers, industries, securities, economic factors and trends, portfolio strategy and the performance of accounts; and (c) effecting securities transactions and performing functions incidental thereto (such as clearance, settlement and custody). Such brokerage and research services are often referred to as "soft dollars." First Trust has advised the Board of Trustees that it does not currently intend to use soft dollars.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, in selecting brokers, First Trust may in the future consider investment and market information and other research, such as economic, securities and performance measurement research, provided by such brokers, and the quality and reliability of brokerage services, including execution capability, performance and financial responsibility. Accordingly, the commissions charged by any such broker may be greater than the amount another firm might charge if First Trust determines in good faith that the amount of such commissions is reasonable in relation to the value of the research information and brokerage services provided by such broker to First Trust or the Trust. In addition, First Trust must determine that the research information received in this manner provides the Funds with benefits by supplementing the research otherwise available to the Funds. The Investment Management Agreement provides that such higher commissions will not be paid by the Funds unless First Trust determines in good faith that the amount is reasonable in relation to the services provided. The investment advisory fees paid by the Funds to First Trust under the Investment Management Agreement would not be reduced as a result of receipt by First Trust of research services.

First Trust places portfolio transactions for other advisory accounts advised by it, and research services furnished by firms through which The Funds effect their securities transactions may be used by First Trust in servicing all of its accounts; not all of such services may be used by First Trust in connection with the Funds. First Trust believes it is not possible to measure separately the benefits from research services to each of the accounts (including the Funds) advised by it. Because the volume and nature of the trading activities of the accounts are not uniform, the amount of commissions in excess of those charged by another broker paid by each account for brokerage and research services will vary. However, First Trust believes such costs to the Funds will not be disproportionate to the benefits received by the Funds on a continuing basis. First Trust seeks to allocate portfolio transactions equitably whenever concurrent decisions are made to purchase or sell securities by the Funds and another advisory account. In some cases, this procedure could have an adverse effect on the price or the amount of securities available to the Funds. In making such allocations between the Funds and other advisory accounts, the main factors considered by First Trust are the respective investment objectives, the relative size of portfolio holding of the same or comparable securities, the availability of cash for investment and the size of investment commitments generally held.

Brokerage Commissions

The following table sets forth the aggregate amount of brokerage commissions paid by each Fund for the specified periods. During the last fiscal year, the First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio held securities of Bank of America Corp., Citigroup, Inc., Goldman Sachs & Co., JPMorgan Chase & Co., Morgan Stanley and Wells Fargo, each a regular broker or dealer of the Fund as defined in Rule 10b-1 under the 1940 Act. As of December 31, 2017, the Fund's investment in Bank of America Corp., Citigroup, Inc., Credit Suisse First Boston Corp., Goldman Sachs & Co., JPMorgan Chase & Co., Morgan Stanley and Wells Fargo was 1.63%, 2.03%, 0.07%, 1.80%, 1.51%, 1.42% and 1.44%, respectively, of the Fund's net assets. During the last fiscal year, the First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio held securities of Jefferies & Co., JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Wells Fargo, each a regular broker or dealer of the Fund as defined in Rule 10b-1 under the 1940 Act. As of December 31, 2017, the Fund's investment in Credit Suisse First Boston Corp., JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Wells Fargo was 0.03%, 0.57% and 0.37%, respectively, of the Fund's net assets.

Aggregate Amount of Brokerage Commissions

Fund	Fiscal Year Ended December 31,		
	2017	2016	2015
First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Portfolio	\$94,927	\$80,733	\$55,090
First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio	\$ 3,696	\$ 3,572	\$ 3,724

FREQUENT TRADING AND MARKET TIMING

The Funds have adopted a market timing/frequent trading policy (the "*Frequent Trading Policy*"). Market timing may be generally described as the practice of frequently buying and selling investment company shares in order to take advantage of a perceived arbitrage opportunity. Most often the practice has involved Funds that invest principally in non-U.S. securities. Market timing can have negative consequences for long-term investors in the Funds. First of all, the practice has the effect of "*siphoning*" a portion of the fund's gains and effectively diluting the returns to long-term investors. Additionally, if such activity occurs frequently and involves large amounts, it will affect how the portfolio manager manages the fund (likely forcing the manager to hold a larger portion of the fund's assets in cash or otherwise interfering with the efficient management of the portfolio). The practice would also likely have the effect of increasing transaction costs, which would be borne by all investors. All interests of the Funds are issued to, and redeemed from, Accounts. Furthermore, such sales and redemptions are affected only in response to purchases and redemptions of the related variable annuity sub-accounts sold by Participating Insurance Companies to their policyholders or transfers among the sub-accounts. Therefore, the Funds' risk of exposure to market timing is limited to such attempts as might be made through the sub-accounts.

Due to the fact that all shares of the Funds are issued to, and redeemed from, Accounts, it is difficult for the Funds to monitor trading by a particular investor. However, FTP has entered into an agreement with each Participating Insurance Company that permits the Funds, or its designee, to receive certain identity and transaction information and requires each Participating Insurance Company to follow any Fund instructions regarding the restriction or prohibition of certain future purchases or exchanges by shareholders in certain circumstances. The Funds may rely on each Participating Insurance Company to adopt policies and procedures or may rely on their own policies and procedures with respect to transfers into or from the Account. In addition, First Trust's portfolio management personnel will monitor activity within the portfolios of the Funds and will report any unusual activity to the Trust's Chief Compliance Officer.

Technical limitations in operational systems at Participating Insurance Companies or at FTP may limit a Fund ability to detect and prevent frequent trading. In addition, a Fund may permit Participating Insurance Companies to enforce their own internal policies and procedures concerning frequent trading. Such policies may differ from a Fund Frequent Trading Policy and may be approved for use in instances where a Fund reasonably believes that the Participating Insurance Company's policies and procedures effectively discourage inappropriate trading activity. Shareholders holding their accounts with Participating Insurance Companies may wish to contact the Participating Insurance Company for information regarding its frequent trading policy. Although the Funds do not knowingly permit frequent trading, they cannot guarantee that it will be able to identify and restrict all frequent trading activity.

Each Fund reserves the right in its sole discretion to waive unintentional or minor violations (including transactions below certain dollar thresholds) if it determines that doing so would not harm the interests of such Fund's shareholders. These include, among others, redemptions pursuant to systematic withdrawal plans, redemptions in connection with the total disability or death of the investor and involuntary redemptions by operation of law, redemptions in payment of account or plan fees.

Each Fund may also modify or suspend the Frequent Trading Policy without notice during periods of market stress or other unusual circumstances.

Each Fund reserves the right to impose restrictions on purchases or exchanges that are more restrictive than those stated above if it determines, in its sole discretion that a transaction or a series of transactions involves market timing or excessive trading that may be detrimental to such Fund's shareholders. The Funds also reserve the right to reject any purchase orders, including exchange purchases, for any reason. For example, a Fund may refuse purchase orders if such Fund would be unable to invest the proceeds from the purchase order in accordance with the Fund's investment policies and/or objective(s), or if the Fund would be adversely affected by the size of the transaction, the frequency of trading in the account or various other factors.

POLICY REGARDING DISCLOSURE OF PORTFOLIO HOLDINGS

The Trust has adopted a policy regarding the disclosure of portfolio holdings (the "*Disclosure Policy*"). The purpose of the Disclosure Policy is to outline the Funds' policies and procedures with respect to the disclosure of portfolio holdings in order to comply with SEC requirements.

A listing of the portfolio holdings of the Funds generally shall not be provided to any person, including any investor of the Fund, until such time as the portfolio holdings have been filed with the SEC on Form N-Q or Form N-CSR, as applicable, and posted on the Funds' website. Any person, including any investor of a Fund that requests a listing of such Fund's portfolio holdings, shall be provided with the portfolio holdings list most recently made publicly available pursuant to this Disclosure Policy (and/or portfolio holdings as of earlier periods that previously have been made publicly available, if requested).

Neither the Funds, First Trust, nor any other party shall receive any compensation whatsoever in connection with the disclosure of information about the portfolio securities of the Funds.

A Fund may on occasion release certain nonpublic portfolio information to selected parties if (i) the Trust's CCO determines such disclosure is consistent with a legitimate business purpose of such Fund; and (ii) the recipient is subject to a duty of confidentiality with respect to the information, including a duty not to trade on the nonpublic information. In this connection, selective disclosure of portfolio holdings will be made on an ongoing basis in the normal course of investment and administrative operations to service providers, which, to the best of the Trust's knowledge, include proxy voting services (including ISS), fund accountants and custodians (including BNY and BONY), as well as its financial printers (including Fitzgerald Marketing & Communications, LLC) and mailing service (GComm and Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc.), performance attribution vendors (including Factset Research Systems), tracking agencies (including Lipper, Inc., Morningstar, Inc., Standard & Poor's and Thomson Financial), accounting and auditing services (including Deloitte) and legal counsel to the Funds, the Independent Trustees or investment advisor (including Vedder Price P.C. and Chapman and Cutler LLP). All such third parties shall be bound by a Code of Ethics or similar insider trading policy or confidentiality agreement or duty prohibiting their use of any portfolio holdings information in an improper manner.

The Disclosure Policy will be monitored by the Trust's CCO. Any violations of the Disclosure Policy will be reported by the Trust's CCO to the Trust's Board of Trustees at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

These procedures were designed to ensure that disclosure of information about portfolio securities is in the best interests of the Funds, including the procedures to address conflicts between the interests of a Fund's shareholders, on the one hand, and those of such Fund's investment advisor; principal underwriter; or any of their respective affiliated persons, on the other.

VOTING RIGHTS AND GENERAL FUND INFORMATION

Shareholders are entitled to one vote for each share held. Shareholders may vote on the election of Trustees and on other matters submitted to meetings of shareholders.

To the extent required by applicable law, Participating Insurance Companies will solicit voting instructions from owners of variable annuity and variable life insurance Contracts. All shares in a Fund will be voted by Participating Insurance Companies in accordance with voting instructions received from such Contract owners. A Participating Insurance Company will vote all of the shares, which it is entitled to vote in the same proportion as the voting instructions given by Contract owners, on the issues presented. Participating Insurance Companies will also vote all shares owned in their own names proportional to such ownership. As a result of this proportional voting, a small number of Contract owners may have the ability to determine the outcome of any item voted on by the Fund.

Each issued and outstanding share of a Fund is entitled to participate equally in dividends and distributions, if any, declared by such Fund, and in the net assets of the Fund remaining upon liquidation or dissolution after outstanding liabilities are satisfied. The shares of the Fund, when issued, are fully paid and non-assessable. They have no preemptive, conversion, cumulative dividend or similar rights. A Fund can only be owned by Accounts. Shares in the Fund do not have cumulative rights. This means that owners of more than half of the Trust's shares voting for election of Trustees can elect all the Trustees if they so choose. Then, the remaining shareholders would not be able to elect any Trustees.

The Board of Trustees has the right to establish additional series in the future, to change Fund series, if applicable, and to determine the preferences, voting powers, rights and privileges thereof.

The Funds are not required and do not intend to hold annual meetings of shareholders. Shareholders owning more than 10% of the outstanding shares of the Fund have the right to call a special meeting to remove Trustees or for any other purpose.

SHARE CLASSES

Each class of shares of the Fund represents an interest in the same portfolio of investments. Each class of shares is identical in all respects except that each class bears its own class expenses, including service expenses, if applicable, and each class has exclusive voting rights with respect to any distribution or service plan applicable to its shares. As a result of the differences in the expenses borne by each class of shares, net income per share, dividends per share and net asset value per share will vary among a Fund's classes of shares.

Shareholders of each class will share expenses proportionately for services that are received equally by all shareholders. A particular class of shares will bear only those expenses that are directly attributable to that class, where the type or amount of services received by a class varies from one class to another. For example, class-specific expenses generally will include 12b-1 service fees for Class I shares.

Class I Shares

Class I shares may be purchased at a public offering price equal to the applicable net asset value per share without any sales charge. Class I shares are also subject to an annual 12b-1 service fee of 0.25% to compensate Participating Insurance Companies for providing you with ongoing financial advice and other account services. See the section entitled "Rule 12B-1 Plan." Class I shares are not subject to a distribution fee.

Class II Shares

Class II shares may be purchased at a public offering price equal to the applicable net asset value per share without any sales charge. Class II shares are not subject to 12b-1 service or distribution fees. Contact your Participating Insurance Company for more information regarding the availability of Class II shares.

PURCHASES, REDEMPTIONS AND PRICING OF SHARES

Accounts will purchase shares of the Funds at their net asset value. Shares are purchased using premiums received on Contracts issued by Accounts. Accounts are funded by shares of the Funds.

All investments in the Trust are credited to the shareholder's account in the form of full and fractional shares of the applicable Fund (rounded to the nearest 1/1000 of a share). The Trust does not issue share certificates.

As stated in the Prospectus, the net asset value of a Fund's shares is determined once each day the New York Stock Exchange (the "NYSE") is open at the close of the regular trading session on the NYSE (normally 4:00 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday). The net asset value of a Fund's shares is not determined on days when the NYSE is closed. The NYSE holidays are generally: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

The Fund per-share net asset value for each class of the Fund is determined by dividing the total value of the securities and other assets attributable to such class, less liabilities attributable to such class, by the total number of shares outstanding for such class. The Fund net asset value may not be calculated on days during which such Fund receives no orders to purchase

shares and no shares are tendered for redemption. In determining net asset value, portfolio securities for the Fund for which accurate market quotations are readily available will be valued by the fund accounting agent as follows:

- (1) Common stocks and other equity securities listed on any national or foreign exchange other than The Nasdaq Stock Market LLC and the London Stock Exchange Alternative Investment Market ("AIM") will be valued at the last sale price on the exchange on which they are principally traded, or the official closing price for Nasdaq and AIM securities. Portfolio securities traded on more than one securities exchange are valued at the last sale price or official closing price, as applicable, on the Business Day as of which such value is being determined at the close of the exchange representing the principal market for such securities.
- (2) Shares of open-end funds are valued at fair value which is based on net asset value per share.
- (3) Securities traded in the OTC market are fair valued at the mean of their most recent bid and asked price, if available, and otherwise at their closing bid price.
- (4) Exchange traded options and futures contracts are valued at the closing price in the market where such contracts are principally traded. OTC options and futures contracts are valued at the mean of the most recent bid and asked price, if available, and otherwise at their closing bid price.
- (5) Forward foreign currency contracts are fair valued at the current day's interpolated foreign exchange rate, as calculated using the current day's spot rate, and the 30-, 60-, 90- and 180-day forward rates provided by an independent pricing service or by certain independent dealers in such contracts.

In addition, the following types of securities will be valued as follows:

- (1) Corporate bonds, corporate notes, U.S. government securities and other debt securities are fair valued on the basis of valuations provided by dealers who make markets in such securities or by an independent pricing service approved by the Trusts' Board of Trustees, which may use the following valuation inputs when available:
 - (i) benchmark yields;
 - (ii) reported trades;
 - (iii) broker/dealer quotes;
 - (iv) issuer spreads;
 - (v) benchmark securities;
 - (vi) bids and offers; and
 - (vii) reference data including market research publications.

Securities traded in an OTC market are fair valued at the mean of their most recent bid and asked price, if available, and otherwise at their closing bid price.

- (2) Fixed-income and other debt securities having a remaining maturity of 60 days or less when purchased are fair valued at cost adjusted for amortization of premiums and accretion of discounts (amortized cost), provided the Advisor's Pricing Committee has determined that the use of amortized cost is an appropriate reflection of fair value given market and issuer specific conditions existing at the time of the determination. Factors that may be considered in determining the appropriateness of the use of amortized cost include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - (i) the credit conditions in the relevant market and changes thereto;
 - (ii) the liquidity conditions in the relevant market and changes thereto;
 - (iii) the interest rate conditions in the relevant market and changes thereto (such as significant changes in interest rates);
 - (iv) issuer-specific conditions (such as significant credit deterioration); and
 - (v) any other market-based data the Advisor's Pricing Committee considers relevant. In this regard, the

Advisor's Pricing Committee may use last-obtained market-based data to assist it when valuing portfolio securities using amortized cost.

- (3) Repurchase agreements will be valued as follows. Overnight repurchase agreements will be fair valued at cost when it represents the best estimate of fair value. Term repurchase agreements (*i.e.*, those whose maturity exceeds seven days) will be fair valued by First Trust at the average of the bid quotations obtained daily from at least two recognized dealers.

The value of any portfolio security held by a Fund for which market quotations are not readily available will be determined by First Trust in a manner that most fairly reflects fair value of the security on the valuation date, based on a consideration of all available information.

Certain securities may not be able to be priced by pre-established pricing methods. Such securities may be valued by the Board of Trustees or its delegate, the Advisor's Pricing Committee, at fair value. These securities generally include, but are not limited to, restricted securities (securities that may not be publicly sold without registration under the 1933 Act) for which a pricing service is unable to provide a market price; securities whose trading has been formally suspended; a security whose market or fair value price is not available from a pre-established pricing source; a security with respect to which an event has occurred that is likely to materially affect the value of the security after the market has closed but before the calculation of Fund net asset value (as may be the case in foreign markets on which the security is primarily traded) or is likely to make it difficult or impossible to obtain a reliable market quotation; and a security whose price, as provided by the pricing service, does not reflect the security's fair value. As a general principle, the current fair value of an issue of securities would appear to be the amount that the owner might reasonably expect to receive for them upon their current sale. A variety of factors may be considered in determining the fair value of such securities.

CERTAIN FEDERAL INCOME TAX MATTERS

The Funds intend to qualify annually and to elect to be treated as a "regulated investment company" under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (the "Code"). All of the beneficial interests in the Fund are expected to be held by the Accounts of the Participating Insurance Companies and public access to such Fund is expected to be available exclusively through the purchase of a variable annuity or a variable life insurance contract (the "Contracts") offered by Participating Insurance Companies. This section does not discuss the federal income tax consequences of investing in the Fund or of owning the Contracts. This may not be sufficient for the purpose of avoiding penalties under federal tax law. Participating Insurance Companies and owners of Contracts should seek advice based on their individual circumstances from their own tax advisor. Tax disclosure relating to the Contracts that offer the Fund as an investment alternative is to be contained in the Prospectus for those Contracts.

Section 817(h) of the Code imposes certain diversification standards on the underlying assets of segregated asset accounts on which variable annuity and variable life insurance contracts such as the Contracts are based. Failure to satisfy those standards at any time would result in imposition of Federal income tax on a Contract owner in a manner different from, and generally less favorable than, the federal income tax treatment otherwise applicable to owners of variable annuity and variable life insurance contracts. Generally, if all of the beneficial interests in the Fund are held by segregated asset accounts of insurance companies and public access to such Fund is available exclusively through the purchase of certain variable contracts, the segregated asset accounts are treated as holding a *pro rata* portion of each asset of the Fund directly for purposes of the diversification rules of Section 817(h) of the Code.

Section 817(h)(2) provides that a segregated asset account upon which contracts such as the Contracts is based is treated as meeting the diversification standards if, as of the close of each quarter, the assets in the account meet the diversification requirements for a regulated investment company and no more than 55% of the value of those assets consist of cash, cash items, U.S. government securities and securities of other regulated investment companies. The Treasury Regulations amplify the diversification standards set forth in Section 817(h) and provide an alternative to the provision described above. Under the regulations, the investments of a segregated asset account generally will be deemed adequately diversified only if: (i) no more than 55% of the value of the total assets of the account is represented by any one investment; (ii) no more than 70% of such value is represented by any two investments; (iii) no more than 80% of such value is represented by any three investments; and (iv) no more than 90% of such value is represented by any four investments. For purposes of these Regulations, all securities of the same issuer are treated as a single investment, but in the case of U.S. government securities, each United States government agency or instrumentality is treated as a separate issuer.

The Funds will be managed with the intention of complying with these diversification requirements. It is possible that, in order to comply with these requirements, less desirable investment decisions may be made which could affect the investment performance of the Fund.

Capital Loss Carry-forward

Under the Regulated Investment Company Modernization Act of 2010, net capital losses of a Fund incurred in taxable years beginning after December 22, 2010 may be carried forward indefinitely, and their character is retained as short-term and/or long-term losses. To the extent that these loss carry-forwards are used to offset future capital gains, it is probable that the capital gains so offset will not be distributed to Fund shareholders. As of December 31, 2017, the First Trust Multi Income Allocation Portfolio had a capital loss carry-forward of \$127,844 outstanding for federal income tax purposes. The First Trust/Dow Jones Dividend & Income Allocation Fund had no capital loss carry-forward outstanding for federal income tax purposes. The Funds are subject to certain limitations, under U.S. tax rules, on the use of capital loss carry-forwards and net unrealized built-in losses. These limitations generally apply when there has been a 50% change in ownership.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Shareholder Inquiries

All inquiries regarding the Funds should be directed your Participating Insurance Company who can contact the Funds on your behalf by calling (888) 373-5776, or by mail to the Trust, c/o BNY Mellon Investment Servicing (US) Inc., P.O. Box 9788, Providence, RI 02940.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The audited financial statements and notes thereto for the Funds, contained in the Annual Report to Shareholders dated December 31, 2017, are incorporated by reference into this Statement of Additional Information and have been audited by Deloitte & Touche LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, whose report also appears in the Annual Report and are also incorporated by reference herein. No other parts of the Annual Report are incorporated by reference herein. The Annual Report is available without charge by calling (800) 621-1675 or by visiting the SEC's website at www.sec.gov.



United States

Concise Proxy Voting Guidelines

Benchmark Policy Recommendations

Effective for Meetings on or after February 1, 2018

Published January 9, 2018

The policies contained herein are a sampling only of selected key ISS U.S. proxy voting guidelines, and are not intended to be exhaustive. The complete guidelines can be found at: <https://www.issgovernance.com/policy-gateway/voting-policies/>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Voting on Director Nominees in Uncontested Elections

- **General Recommendation:** Generally vote for director nominees, except under the following circumstances:

Independence

Vote against¹ or withhold from non-independent directors (Executive Directors and Non-Independent Non-Executive Directors per ISS' Categorization of Directors) when:

- Independent directors comprise 50 percent or less of the board;
- The non-independent director serves on the audit, compensation, or nominating committee;
- The company lacks an audit, compensation, or nominating committee so that the full board functions as that committee; or
- The company lacks a formal nominating committee, even if the board attests that the independent directors fulfill the functions of such a committee.

Composition

Attendance at Board and Committee Meetings: Generally vote against or withhold from directors (except new nominees, who should be considered case-by-case²) who attend less than 75 percent of the aggregate of their board and committee meetings for the period for which they served, unless an acceptable reason for absences is disclosed in the proxy or another SEC filing. Acceptable reasons for director absences are generally limited to the following:

- Medical issues/illness;
- Family emergencies; and
- Missing only one meeting (when the total of all meetings is three or fewer).

If the proxy disclosure is unclear and insufficient to determine whether a director attended at least 75 percent of the aggregate of his/her board and committee meetings during his/her period of service, vote against or withhold from the director(s) in question.

Overboarded Directors: Generally vote against or withhold from individual directors who:

- Sit on more than five public company boards; or
- Are CEOs of public companies who sit on the boards of more than two public companies besides their own – withhold only at their outside boards³.

¹ In general, companies with a plurality vote standard use "Withhold" as the contrary vote option in director elections; companies with a majority vote standard use "Against". However, it will vary by company and the proxy must be checked to determine the valid contrary vote option for the particular company.

² New nominees who served for only part of the fiscal year are generally exempted from the attendance policy.

³ Although all of a CEO's subsidiary boards will be counted as separate boards, ISS will not recommend a withhold vote for the CEO of a parent company board or any of the controlled (>50 percent ownership) subsidiaries of that parent, but may do so at subsidiaries that are less than 50 percent controlled and boards outside the parent/subsidiary relationships.

Diversity: Highlight boards with no gender diversity. However, no adverse vote recommendations will be made due to any lack of gender diversity.

Responsiveness

Vote case-by-case on individual directors, committee members, or the entire board of directors as appropriate if:

- ▶ The board failed to act on a shareholder proposal that received the support of a majority of the shares cast in the previous year. Factors that will be considered are:
 - ▶ Disclosed outreach efforts by the board to shareholders in the wake of the vote;
 - ▶ Rationale provided in the proxy statement for the level of implementation;
 - ▶ The subject matter of the proposal;
 - ▶ The level of support for and opposition to the resolution in past meetings;
 - ▶ Actions taken by the board in response to the majority vote and its engagement with shareholders;
 - ▶ The continuation of the underlying issue as a voting item on the ballot (as either shareholder or management proposals); and
 - ▶ Other factors as appropriate.
- ▶ The board failed to act on takeover offers where the majority of shares are tendered;
- ▶ At the previous board election, any director received more than 50 percent withhold/against votes of the shares cast and the company has failed to address the issue(s) that caused the high withhold/against vote.

Vote case-by-case on Compensation Committee members (or, in exceptional cases, the full board) and the Say on Pay proposal if:

- ▶ The company's previous say-on-pay received the support of less than 70 percent of votes cast. Factors that will be considered are:
 - ▶ The company's response, including:
 - ▶ Disclosure of engagement efforts with major institutional investors, including the frequency and timing of engagements and the company participants (including whether independent directors participated);
 - ▶ Disclosure of the specific concerns voiced by dissenting shareholders that led to the say-on-pay opposition;
 - ▶ Disclosure of specific and meaningful actions taken to address shareholders' concerns;
 - ▶ Other recent compensation actions taken by the company;
 - ▶ Whether the issues raised are recurring or isolated;
 - ▶ The company's ownership structure; and
 - ▶ Whether the support level was less than 50 percent, which would warrant the highest degree of responsiveness.
- ▶ The board implements an advisory vote on executive compensation on a less frequent basis than the frequency that received the plurality of votes cast.

Accountability

Vote against or withhold from the entire board of directors (except new nominees⁴, who should be considered case-by-case) for the following:

⁴ A "new nominee" is any current nominee who has not already been elected by shareholders and who joined the board after the problematic action in question transpired. If ISS cannot determine whether the nominee joined the board before or after the problematic action transpired, the nominee will be considered a "new nominee" if he or she joined the board within the 12 months prior to the upcoming shareholder meeting.

Problematic Takeover Defenses/Governance Structure

Poison Pills: Vote against or withhold from all nominees (except new nominees, who should be considered case-by-case) if:

- ▶ The company has a poison pill that was not approved by shareholders⁵. However, vote case-by-case on nominees if the board adopts an initial pill with a term of one year or less, depending on the disclosed rationale for the adoption, and other factors as relevant (such as a commitment to put any renewal to a shareholder vote).
- ▶ The board makes a material adverse modification to an existing pill, including, but not limited to, extension, renewal, or lowering the trigger, without shareholder approval.

Classified Board Structure: The board is classified, and a continuing director responsible for a problematic governance issue at the board/committee level that would warrant a withhold/against vote recommendation is not up for election. All appropriate nominees (except new) may be held accountable.

Removal of Shareholder Discretion on Classified Boards: The company has opted into, or failed to opt out of, state laws requiring a classified board structure.

Director Performance Evaluation: The board lacks mechanisms to promote accountability and oversight, coupled with sustained poor performance relative to peers. Sustained poor performance is measured by one- and three-year total shareholder returns in the bottom half of a company's four-digit GICS industry group (Russell 3000 companies only). Take into consideration the company's five-year total shareholder return and operational metrics. Problematic provisions include but are not limited to:

- ▶ A classified board structure;
- ▶ A supermajority vote requirement;
- ▶ Either a plurality vote standard in uncontested director elections, or a majority vote standard in contested elections;
- ▶ The inability of shareholders to call special meetings;
- ▶ The inability of shareholders to act by written consent;
- ▶ A multi-class capital structure; and/or
- ▶ A non-shareholder-approved poison pill.

Unilateral Bylaw/Charter Amendments and Problematic Capital Structures: Generally vote against or withhold from directors individually, committee members, or the entire board (except new nominees, who should be considered case-by-case) if the board amends the company's bylaws or charter without shareholder approval in a manner that materially diminishes shareholders' rights or that could adversely impact shareholders, considering the following factors:

- ▶ The board's rationale for adopting the bylaw/charter amendment without shareholder ratification;
- ▶ Disclosure by the company of any significant engagement with shareholders regarding the amendment;
- ▶ The level of impairment of shareholders' rights caused by the board's unilateral amendment to the bylaws/charter;
- ▶ The board's track record with regard to unilateral board action on bylaw/charter amendments or other entrenchment provisions;
- ▶ The company's ownership structure;
- ▶ The company's existing governance provisions;
- ▶ The timing of the board's amendment to the bylaws/charter in connection with a significant business development; and,
- ▶ Other factors, as deemed appropriate, that may be relevant to determine the impact of the amendment on shareholders.

Unless the adverse amendment is reversed or submitted to a binding shareholder vote, in subsequent years vote case-by-case on director nominees. Generally vote against (except new nominees, who should be considered case-by-case) if the directors:

- ▶ Classified the board;
- ▶ Adopted supermajority vote requirements to amend the bylaws or charter; or

⁵ Public shareholders only, approval prior to a company's becoming public is insufficient.

- ▶ Eliminated shareholders' ability to amend bylaws.

Problematic Governance Structure – Newly public companies: For newly public companies, generally vote against or withhold from directors individually, committee members, or the entire board (except new nominees, who should be considered case-by-case) if, prior to or in connection with the company's public offering, the company or its board adopted bylaw or charter provisions materially adverse to shareholder rights, or implemented a multi-class capital structure in which the classes have unequal voting rights considering the following factors:

- ▶ The level of impairment of shareholders' rights;
- ▶ The disclosed rationale;
- ▶ The ability to change the governance structure (e.g., limitations on shareholders' right to amend the bylaws or charter, or supermajority vote requirements to amend the bylaws or charter);
- ▶ The ability of shareholders to hold directors accountable through annual director elections, or whether the company has a classified board structure;
- ▶ Any reasonable sunset provision; and
- ▶ Other relevant factors.

Unless the adverse provision and/or problematic capital structure is reversed or removed, vote case-by-case on director nominees in subsequent years.

Restrictions on Shareholders' Rights

Restricting Binding Shareholder Proposals: Generally vote against or withhold from the members of the governance committee if:

- ▶ The company's governing documents impose undue restrictions on shareholders' ability to amend the bylaws. Such restrictions include, but are not limited to: outright prohibition on the submission of binding shareholder proposals, or share ownership requirements or time holding requirements in excess of SEC Rule 14a-8. Vote against on an ongoing basis.

Problematic Audit-Related Practices

Generally vote against or withhold from the members of the Audit Committee if:

- ▶ The non-audit fees paid to the auditor are excessive;
- ▶ The company receives an adverse opinion on the company's financial statements from its auditor; or
- ▶ There is persuasive evidence that the Audit Committee entered into an inappropriate indemnification agreement with its auditor that limits the ability of the company, or its shareholders, to pursue legitimate legal recourse against the audit firm.

Vote case-by-case on members of the Audit Committee and potentially the full board if:

- ▶ Poor accounting practices are identified that rise to a level of serious concern, such as: fraud; misapplication of GAAP; and material weaknesses identified in Section 404 disclosures. Examine the severity, breadth, chronological sequence, and duration, as well as the company's efforts at remediation or corrective actions, in determining whether withhold/against votes are warranted.

Problematic Compensation Practices

In the absence of an Advisory Vote on Executive Compensation (Say on Pay) ballot item or in egregious situations, vote against or withhold from the members of the Compensation Committee and potentially the full board if:

- ▶ There is a significant misalignment between CEO pay and company performance (pay for performance) (see Primary Evaluation Factors for Executive Pay);

- ▶ The company maintains significant problematic pay practices (see Problematic Pay Practices); or
- ▶ The board exhibits a significant level of poor communication and responsiveness (see Compensation Committee Communications and Responsiveness) to shareholders.

Generally vote against or withhold from the Compensation Committee chair, other committee members, or potentially the full board if:

- ▶ The company fails to include a Say on Pay ballot item when required under SEC provisions, or under the company's declared frequency of say on pay; or
- ▶ The company fails to include a Frequency of Say on Pay ballot item when required under SEC provisions.

Generally vote against members of the board committee responsible for approving/setting non-employee director compensation if there is a pattern (i.e. two or more years) of awarding excessive non-employee director compensation without disclosing a compelling rationale or other mitigating factors.

Problematic Pledging of Company Stock:

Vote against the members of the committee that oversees risks related to pledging, or the full board, where a significant level of pledged company stock by executives or directors raises concerns. The following factors will be considered:

- ▶ The presence of an anti-pledging policy, disclosed in the proxy statement, that prohibits future pledging activity;
- ▶ The magnitude of aggregate pledged shares in terms of total common shares outstanding, market value, and trading volume;
- ▶ Disclosure of progress or lack thereof in reducing the magnitude of aggregate pledged shares over time;
- ▶ Disclosure in the proxy statement that shares subject to stock ownership and holding requirements do not include pledged company stock; and
- ▶ Any other relevant factors.

Governance Failures

Under extraordinary circumstances, vote against or withhold from directors individually, committee members, or the entire board, due to:

- ▶ Material failures of governance, stewardship, risk oversight⁶, or fiduciary responsibilities at the company;
- ▶ Failure to replace management as appropriate; or
- ▶ Egregious actions related to a director's service on other boards that raise substantial doubt about his or her ability to effectively oversee management and serve the best interests of shareholders at any company.

Voting on Director Nominees in Contested Elections

Vote-No Campaigns

- ▶ **General Recommendation:** In cases where companies are targeted in connection with public "vote-no" campaigns, evaluate director nominees under the existing governance policies for voting on director nominees in uncontested elections. Take into consideration the arguments submitted by shareholders and other publicly available information.

⁶ Examples of failure of risk oversight include, but are not limited to: bribery; large or serial fines or sanctions from regulatory bodies; significant adverse legal judgments or settlement; or hedging of company stock.

Proxy Contests/Proxy Access — Voting for Director Nominees in Contested Elections

- **General Recommendation:** Vote case-by-case on the election of directors in contested elections, considering the following factors:
 - Long-term financial performance of the company relative to its industry;
 - Management's track record;
 - Background to the contested election;
 - Nominee qualifications and any compensatory arrangements;
 - Strategic plan of dissident slate and quality of the critique against management;
 - Likelihood that the proposed goals and objectives can be achieved (both slates); and
 - Stock ownership positions.

In the case of candidates nominated pursuant to proxy access, vote case-by-case considering any applicable factors listed above or additional factors which may be relevant, including those that are specific to the company, to the nominee(s) and/or to the nature of the election (such as whether or not there are more candidates than board seats).

Independent Chair (Separate Chair/CEO)

- **General Recommendation:** Generally vote for shareholder proposals requiring that the chairman's position be filled by an independent director, taking into consideration the following:
 - The scope of the proposal;
 - The company's current board leadership structure;
 - The company's governance structure and practices;
 - Company performance; and
 - Any other relevant factors that may be applicable.

Regarding the scope of the proposal, consider whether the proposal is precatory or binding and whether the proposal is seeking an immediate change in the chairman role or the policy can be implemented at the next CEO transition.

Under the review of the company's board leadership structure, ISS may support the proposal under the following scenarios absent a compelling rationale: the presence of an executive or non-independent chair in addition to the CEO; a recent recombination of the role of CEO and chair; and/or departure from a structure with an independent chair. ISS will also consider any recent transitions in board leadership and the effect such transitions may have on independent board leadership as well as the designation of a lead director role.

When considering the governance structure, ISS will consider the overall independence of the board, the independence of key committees, the establishment of governance guidelines, board tenure and its relationship to CEO tenure, and any other factors that may be relevant. Any concerns about a company's governance structure will weigh in favor of support for the proposal.

The review of the company's governance practices may include, but is not limited to, poor compensation practices, material failures of governance and risk oversight, related-party transactions or other issues putting director independence at risk, corporate or management scandals, and actions by management or the board with potential or realized negative impact on shareholders. Any such practices may suggest a need for more independent oversight at the company thus warranting support of the proposal.

ISS' performance assessment will generally consider one-, three-, and five-year TSR compared to the company's peers and the market as a whole. While poor performance will weigh in favor of the adoption of an independent chair policy, strong performance over the long term will be considered a mitigating factor when determining whether the proposed leadership change warrants support.

Proxy Access

- **General Recommendation:** Generally vote for management and shareholder proposals for proxy access with the following provisions:
 - **Ownership threshold:** maximum requirement not more than three percent (3%) of the voting power;
 - **Ownership duration:** maximum requirement not longer than three (3) years of continuous ownership for each member of the nominating group;
 - **Aggregation:** minimal or no limits on the number of shareholders permitted to form a nominating group;
 - **Cap:** cap on nominees of generally twenty-five percent (25%) of the board.
- Review for reasonableness any other restrictions on the right of proxy access.
- Generally vote against proposals that are more restrictive than these guidelines.

CAPITAL/RESTRUCTURING

Common Stock Authorization

- **General Recommendation:** Vote for proposals to increase the number of authorized common shares where the primary purpose of the increase is to issue shares in connection with a transaction on the same ballot that warrants support.
- Vote against proposals at companies with more than one class of common stock to increase the number of authorized shares of the class of common stock that has superior voting rights.
- Vote against proposals to increase the number of authorized common shares if a vote for a reverse stock split on the same ballot is warranted despite the fact that the authorized shares would not be reduced proportionally.
- Vote case-by-case on all other proposals to increase the number of shares of common stock authorized for issuance. Take into account company-specific factors that include, at a minimum, the following:
- Past Board Performance:
 - The company's use of authorized shares during the last three years
 - The Current Request:
 - Disclosure in the proxy statement of the specific purposes of the proposed increase;
 - Disclosure in the proxy statement of specific and severe risks to shareholders of not approving the request; and
 - The dilutive impact of the request as determined relative to an allowable increase calculated by ISS (typically 100 percent of existing authorized shares) that reflects the company's need for shares and total shareholder returns.
- ISS will apply the relevant allowable increase below to requests to increase common stock that are for general corporate purposes (or to the general corporate purposes portion of a request that also includes a specific need):
- A. Most companies: **100 percent** of existing authorized shares.
 - B. Companies with less than 50 percent of existing authorized shares either outstanding or reserved for issuance: **50 percent** of existing authorized shares.
 - C. Companies with one- and three-year total shareholder returns (TSRs) in the bottom 10 percent of the U.S. market as of the end of the calendar quarter that is closest to their most recent fiscal year end: **50 percent** of existing authorized shares.

- D. Companies at which both conditions (B and C) above are both present: **25 percent** of existing authorized shares.

If there is an acquisition, private placement, or similar transaction on the ballot (not including equity incentive plans) that ISS is recommending FOR, the allowable increase will be the greater of (i) twice the amount needed to support the transactions on the ballot, and (ii) the allowable increase as calculated above.

Mergers and Acquisitions

- **General Recommendation:** Vote case-by-case on mergers and acquisitions. Review and evaluate the merits and drawbacks of the proposed transaction, balancing various and sometimes countervailing factors including:
- *Valuation* - Is the value to be received by the target shareholders (or paid by the acquirer) reasonable? While the fairness opinion may provide an initial starting point for assessing valuation reasonableness, emphasis is placed on the offer premium, market reaction, and strategic rationale.
 - *Market reaction* - How has the market responded to the proposed deal? A negative market reaction should cause closer scrutiny of a deal.
 - *Strategic rationale* - Does the deal make sense strategically? From where is the value derived? Cost and revenue synergies should not be overly aggressive or optimistic, but reasonably achievable. Management should also have a favorable track record of successful integration of historical acquisitions.
 - *Negotiations and process* - Were the terms of the transaction negotiated at arm's-length? Was the process fair and equitable? A fair process helps to ensure the best price for shareholders. Significant negotiation "wins" can also signify the deal makers' competency. The comprehensiveness of the sales process (e.g., full auction, partial auction, no auction) can also affect shareholder value.
 - *Conflicts of interest* - Are insiders benefiting from the transaction disproportionately and inappropriately as compared to non-insider shareholders? As the result of potential conflicts, the directors and officers of the company may be more likely to vote to approve a merger than if they did not hold these interests. Consider whether these interests may have influenced these directors and officers to support or recommend the merger. The CIC figure presented in the "ISS Transaction Summary" section of this report is an aggregate figure that can in certain cases be a misleading indicator of the true value transfer from shareholders to insiders. Where such figure appears to be excessive, analyze the underlying assumptions to determine whether a potential conflict exists.
 - *Governance* - Will the combined company have a better or worse governance profile than the current governance profiles of the respective parties to the transaction? If the governance profile is to change for the worse, the burden is on the company to prove that other issues (such as valuation) outweigh any deterioration in governance.

COMPENSATION

Executive Pay Evaluation

Underlying all evaluations are five global principles that most investors expect corporations to adhere to in designing and administering executive and director compensation programs:

1. Maintain appropriate pay-for-performance alignment, with emphasis on long-term shareholder value: This principle encompasses overall executive pay practices, which must be designed to attract, retain, and appropriately motivate the key employees who drive shareholder value creation over the long term. It will take into consideration, among other factors, the link between pay and performance; the mix between fixed and variable pay; performance goals; and equity-based plan costs;

2. Avoid arrangements that risk “pay for failure”: This principle addresses the appropriateness of long or indefinite contracts, excessive severance packages, and guaranteed compensation;
3. Maintain an independent and effective compensation committee: This principle promotes oversight of executive pay programs by directors with appropriate skills, knowledge, experience, and a sound process for compensation decision-making (e.g., including access to independent expertise and advice when needed);
4. Provide shareholders with clear, comprehensive compensation disclosures: This principle underscores the importance of informative and timely disclosures that enable shareholders to evaluate executive pay practices fully and fairly;
5. Avoid inappropriate pay to non-executive directors: This principle recognizes the interests of shareholders in ensuring that compensation to outside directors is reasonable and does not compromise their independence and ability to make appropriate judgments in overseeing managers’ pay and performance. At the market level, it may incorporate a variety of generally accepted best practices.

Advisory Votes on Executive Compensation – Management Proposals (Management Say-on-Pay)

- **General Recommendation:** Vote case-by-case on ballot items related to executive pay and practices, as well as certain aspects of outside director compensation.

Vote against Advisory Votes on Executive Compensation (Say-on-Pay or “SOP”) if:

- There is a significant misalignment between CEO pay and company performance (pay for performance) (see Primary Evaluation Factors for Executive Pay);
- The company maintains significant problematic pay practices (see Problematic Pay Practices);
- The board exhibits a significant level of poor communication and responsiveness (see Compensation Committee Communications and Responsiveness) to shareholders.

Vote against or withhold from the members of the Compensation Committee and potentially the full board if:

- There is no SOP on the ballot, and an against vote on an SOP is warranted due to pay-for-performance misalignment, problematic pay practices, or the lack of adequate responsiveness on compensation issues raised previously, or a combination thereof;
- The board fails to respond adequately to a previous SOP proposal that received less than 70 percent support of votes cast;
- The company has recently practiced or approved problematic pay practices, including option repricing or option backdating; or
- The situation is egregious.

Primary Evaluation Factors for Executive Pay

Pay-for-Performance Evaluation

ISS annually conducts a pay-for-performance analysis to identify strong or satisfactory alignment between pay and performance over a sustained period. With respect to companies in the Russell 3000 or Russell 3000E Indices⁷, this analysis considers the following:

⁷ The Russell 3000E Index includes approximately 4,000 of the largest U.S. equity securities.

Peer Group⁸ Alignment:

- The degree of alignment between the company's annualized TSR rank and the CEO's annualized total pay rank within a peer group, each measured over a three-year period.
 - The rankings of CEO total pay and company financial performance within a peer group, each measured over a three-year period.
 - The multiple of the CEO's total pay relative to the peer group median in the most recent fiscal year.
2. Absolute Alignment⁹ – the absolute alignment between the trend in CEO pay and company TSR over the prior five fiscal years – *i.e.*, the difference between the trend in annual pay changes and the trend in annualized TSR during the period.

If the above analysis demonstrates significant unsatisfactory long-term pay-for-performance alignment or, in the case of companies outside the Russell indices, misaligned pay and performance are otherwise suggested, our analysis may include any of the following qualitative factors, as relevant to evaluating how various pay elements may work to encourage or to undermine long-term value creation and alignment with shareholder interests:

- The ratio of performance- to time-based equity awards;
- The overall ratio of performance-based compensation;
- The completeness of disclosure and rigor of performance goals;
- The company's peer group benchmarking practices;
- Actual results of financial/operational metrics, such as growth in revenue, profit, cash flow, etc., both absolute and relative to peers;
- Special circumstances related to, for example, a new CEO in the prior FY or anomalous equity grant practices (e.g., bi-annual awards);
- Realizable pay¹⁰ compared to grant pay; and
- Any other factors deemed relevant.

Problematic Pay Practices

The focus is on executive compensation practices that contravene the global pay principles, including:

- Problematic practices related to non-performance-based compensation elements;
- Incentives that may motivate excessive risk-taking; and
- Options backdating.

Problematic Pay Practices related to Non-Performance-Based Compensation Elements

Pay elements that are not directly based on performance are generally evaluated case-by-case considering the context of a company's overall pay program and demonstrated pay-for-performance philosophy. Please refer to ISS' Compensation FAQ document for detail on specific pay practices that have been identified as potentially problematic and may lead to negative recommendations if they are deemed to be inappropriate or unjustified relative to executive pay best practices. The list below highlights the problematic practices that carry significant weight in this overall consideration and may result in adverse vote recommendations:

⁸ The revised peer group is generally comprised of 14-24 companies that are selected using market cap, revenue (or assets for certain financial firms), GICS industry group, and company's selected peers' GICS industry group, with size constraints, via a process designed to select peers that are comparable to the subject company in terms of revenue/assets and industry, and also within a market-cap bucket that is reflective of the company's. For Oil, Gas & Consumable Fuels companies, market cap is the only size determinant.

⁹ Only Russell 3000 Index companies are subject to the Absolute Alignment analysis.

¹⁰ ISS research reports include realizable pay for S&P1500 companies.

- Repricing or replacing of underwater stock options/SARS without prior shareholder approval (including cash buyouts and voluntary surrender of underwater options);
- Extraordinary perquisites or tax gross-ups, including any gross-up related to a secular trust or restricted stock vesting, or lifetime perquisites;
- New or extended agreements that provide for:
 - Excessive CIC payments (generally exceeding 3 times base salary and average/target/most recent bonus);
 - CIC severance payments without involuntary job loss or substantial diminution of duties ("single" or "modified single" triggers);
 - CIC payments with excise tax gross-ups (including "modified" gross-ups);
 - Multi-year guaranteed awards that are not at risk due to rigorous performance conditions;
 - Liberal CIC definition combined with any single-trigger CIC benefits;
- Insufficient executive compensation disclosure by externally-managed issuers (EMIs) such that a reasonable assessment of pay programs and practices applicable to the EMI's executives is not possible;
- Any other provision or practice deemed to be egregious and present a significant risk to investors.

Incentives that may Motivate Excessive Risk-Taking

- Multi-year guaranteed awards;
- A single or common performance metric used for short- and long-term incentives;
- Lucrative severance packages;
- High pay opportunities relative to industry peers;
- Disproportionate supplemental pensions; or
- Mega equity grants that provide overly large upside opportunity.

Factors that potentially mitigate the impact of risky incentives include rigorous claw-back provisions, robust stock ownership/holding guidelines, and limitations on accelerated vesting triggers.

Options Backdating

The following factors should be examined case-by-case to allow for distinctions to be made between "sloppy" plan administration versus deliberate action or fraud:

- Reason and motive for the options backdating issue, such as inadvertent vs. deliberate grant date changes;
- Duration of options backdating;
- Size of restatement due to options backdating;
- Corrective actions taken by the board or compensation committee, such as canceling or re-pricing backdated options, the recouping of option gains on backdated grants; and
- Adoption of a grant policy that prohibits backdating, and creates a fixed grant schedule or window period for equity grants in the future.

Compensation Committee Communications and Responsiveness

Consider the following factors case-by-case when evaluating ballot items related to executive pay on the board's responsiveness to investor input and engagement on compensation issues:

- Failure to respond to majority-supported shareholder proposals on executive pay topics; or
- Failure to adequately respond to the company's previous say-on-pay proposal that received the support of less than 70 percent of votes cast, taking into account:
 - The company's response, including:

- Disclosure of engagement efforts with major institutional investors, including the frequency and timing of engagements and the company participants (including whether independent directors participated);
- Disclosure of the specific concerns voiced by dissenting shareholders that led to the say-on-pay opposition;
- Disclosure of specific and meaningful actions taken to address shareholders' concerns;
- Other recent compensation actions taken by the company;
- Whether the issues raised are recurring or isolated;
- The company's ownership structure; and
- Whether the support level was less than 50 percent, which would warrant the highest degree of responsiveness.

Equity-Based and Other Incentive Plans

- **General Recommendation:** Vote case-by-case on certain equity-based compensation plans¹¹ depending on a combination of certain plan features and equity grant practices, where positive factors may counterbalance negative factors, and vice versa, as evaluated using an "equity plan scorecard" (EPSC) approach with three pillars:
 - **Plan Cost:** The total estimated cost of the company's equity plans relative to industry/market cap peers, measured by the company's estimated Shareholder Value Transfer (SVT) in relation to peers and considering both:
 - SVT based on new shares requested plus shares remaining for future grants, plus outstanding unvested/unexercised grants; and
 - SVT based only on new shares requested plus shares remaining for future grants.
 - **Plan Features:**
 - Discretionary or automatic single-triggered award vesting upon a change in control (CIC);
 - Discretionary vesting authority;
 - Liberal share recycling on various award types;
 - Lack of minimum vesting period for grants made under the plan;
 - Dividends payable prior to award vesting.
 - **Grant Practices:**
 - The company's three year burn rate relative to its industry/market cap peers;
 - Vesting requirements in most recent CEO equity grants (3-year look-back);
 - The estimated duration of the plan (based on the sum of shares remaining available and the new shares requested, divided by the average annual shares granted in the prior three years);
 - The proportion of the CEO's most recent equity grants/awards subject to performance conditions;
 - Whether the company maintains a claw-back policy;
 - Whether the company has established post exercise/vesting share-holding requirements.

Generally vote against the plan proposal if the combination of above factors indicates that the plan is not, overall, in shareholders' interests, or if any of the following egregious factors apply:

- Awards may vest in connection with a liberal change-of-control definition;
- The plan would permit repricing or cash buyout of underwater options without shareholder approval (either by expressly permitting it – for NYSE and Nasdaq listed companies – or by not prohibiting it when the company has a history of repricing – for non-listed companies);

¹¹ Proposals evaluated under the EPSC policy generally include those to approve or amend (1) stock option plans for employees and/or employees and directors, (2) restricted stock plans for employees and/or employees and directors, and (3) omnibus stock incentive plans for employees and/or employees and directors; amended plans will be further evaluated case-by-case.

- ▶ The plan is a vehicle for problematic pay practices or a significant pay-for-performance disconnect under certain circumstances; or
- ▶ Any other plan features are determined to have a significant negative impact on shareholder interests.

SOCIAL/ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Global Approach

Issues covered under the policy include a wide range of topics, including consumer and product safety, environment and energy, labor standards and human rights, workplace and board diversity, and corporate political issues. While a variety of factors goes into each analysis, the overall principle guiding all vote recommendations focuses on how the proposal may enhance or protect shareholder value in either the short or long term.

- ▶ **General Recommendation:** Generally vote case-by-case, taking into consideration whether implementation of the proposal is likely to enhance or protect shareholder value, and in addition the following will also be considered:
 - ▶ If the issues presented in the proposal are more appropriately or effectively dealt with through legislation or government regulation;
 - ▶ If the company has already responded in an appropriate and sufficient manner to the issue(s) raised in the proposal;
 - ▶ Whether the proposal's request is unduly burdensome (scope or timeframe) or overly prescriptive;
 - ▶ The company's approach compared with any industry standard practices for addressing the issue(s) raised by the proposal;
 - ▶ If the proposal requests increased disclosure or greater transparency, whether or not reasonable and sufficient information is currently available to shareholders from the company or from other publicly available sources; and
 - ▶ If the proposal requests increased disclosure or greater transparency, whether or not implementation would reveal proprietary or confidential information that could place the company at a competitive disadvantage.

Climate Change/Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

- ▶ **General Recommendation:** Generally vote for resolutions requesting that a company disclose information on the financial, physical, or regulatory risks it faces related to climate change on its operations and investments or on how the company identifies, measures, and manages such risks, considering:
 - ▶ Whether the company already provides current, publicly-available information on the impact that climate change may have on the company as well as associated company policies and procedures to address related risks and/or opportunities;
 - ▶ The company's level of disclosure compared to industry peers; and
 - ▶ Whether there are significant controversies, fines, penalties, or litigation associated with the company's climate change-related performance.

Generally vote for proposals requesting a report on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from company operations and/or products and operations, unless:

- ▶ The company already discloses current, publicly-available information on the impacts that GHG emissions may have on the company as well as associated company policies and procedures to address related risks and/or opportunities;
- ▶ The company's level of disclosure is comparable to that of industry peers; and
- ▶ There are no significant, controversies, fines, penalties, or litigation associated with the company's GHG emissions.

Vote case-by-case on proposals that call for the adoption of GHG reduction goals from products and operations, taking into account:

- Whether the company provides disclosure of year-over-year GHG emissions performance data;
- Whether company disclosure lags behind industry peers;
- The company's actual GHG emissions performance;
- The company's current GHG emission policies, oversight mechanisms, and related initiatives; and
- Whether the company has been the subject of recent, significant violations, fines, litigation, or controversy related to GHG emissions.

Board Diversity

- **General Recommendation:** Generally vote for requests for reports on a company's efforts to diversify the board, unless:
 - The gender and racial minority representation of the company's board is reasonably inclusive in relation to companies of similar size and business; and
 - The board already reports on its nominating procedures and gender and racial minority initiatives on the board and within the company.

Vote case-by-case on proposals asking a company to increase the gender and racial minority representation on its board, taking into account:

- The degree of existing gender and racial minority diversity on the company's board and among its executive officers;
- The level of gender and racial minority representation that exists at the company's industry peers;
- The company's established process for addressing gender and racial minority board representation;
- Whether the proposal includes an overly prescriptive request to amend nominating committee charter language;
- The independence of the company's nominating committee;
- Whether the company uses an outside search firm to identify potential director nominees; and
- Whether the company has had recent controversies, fines, or litigation regarding equal employment practices.

Gender Pay Gap

- **General Recommendation:** Generally vote case-by-case on requests for reports on a company's pay data by gender, or a report on a company's policies and goals to reduce any gender pay gap, taking into account:
 - The company's current policies and disclosure related to both its diversity and inclusion policies and practices and its compensation philosophy and fair and equitable compensation practices;
 - Whether the company has been the subject of recent controversy, litigation, or regulatory actions related to gender pay gap issues; and
 - Whether the company's reporting regarding gender pay gap policies or initiatives is lagging its peers.

Data Security, Privacy, and Internet Issues

- **General Recommendation:** Vote case-by-case on proposals requesting the disclosure or implementation of data security, privacy, or information access and management policies and procedures, considering:
 - The level of disclosure of company policies and procedures relating to data security, privacy, freedom of speech, information access and management, and Internet censorship;
 - Engagement in dialogue with governments or relevant groups with respect to data security, privacy, or the free flow of information on the Internet;

- ▶ The scope of business involvement and of investment in countries whose governments censor or monitor the Internet and other telecommunications;
- ▶ Applicable market-specific laws or regulations that may be imposed on the company; and
- ▶ Controversies, fines, or litigation related to data security, privacy, freedom of speech, or Internet censorship.

Lobbying

- ▶ **General Recommendation:** Vote case-by-case on proposals requesting information on a company's lobbying (including direct, indirect, and grassroots lobbying) activities, policies, or procedures, considering:
 - ▶ The company's current disclosure of relevant lobbying policies, and management and board oversight;
 - ▶ The company's disclosure regarding trade associations or other groups that it supports, or is a member of, that engage in lobbying activities; and
 - ▶ Recent significant controversies, fines, or litigation regarding the company's lobbying-related activities.

Political Contributions

- ▶ **General Recommendation:** Generally vote for proposals requesting greater disclosure of a company's political contributions and trade association spending policies and activities, considering:
 - ▶ The company's policies, and management and board oversight related to its direct political contributions and payments to trade associations or other groups that may be used for political purposes;
 - ▶ The company's disclosure regarding its support of, and participation in, trade associations or other groups that may make political contributions; and
 - ▶ Recent significant controversies, fines, or litigation related to the company's political contributions or political activities.

Vote against proposals barring a company from making political contributions. Businesses are affected by legislation at the federal, state, and local level; barring political contributions can put the company at a competitive disadvantage.

Vote against proposals to publish in newspapers and other media a company's political contributions. Such publications could present significant cost to the company without providing commensurate value to shareholders.

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EXHIBIT B – CREDIT RATING DEFINITIONS

Standard & Poor's

A Standard & Poor's issue credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to a specific financial obligation, a specific class of financial obligations, or a specific financial program (including ratings on medium-term note programs and commercial paper programs). It takes into consideration the creditworthiness of guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation and takes into account the currency in which the obligation is denominated. The opinion reflects Standard & Poor's view of the obligor's capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments as they come due, and may assess terms, such as collateral security and subordination, which could affect ultimate payment in the event of default.

LONG-TERM ISSUE CREDIT RATINGS

Issue credit ratings are based, in varying degrees, on the following considerations:

1. Likelihood of payment: capacity and willingness of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on an obligation in accordance with the terms of the obligation;
2. Nature of and provisions of the obligation and the promise S&P imputes;
3. Protection afforded by, and relative position of, the obligation in the event of bankruptcy, reorganization, or other arrangement under the laws of bankruptcy and other laws affecting creditors' rights.

The issue rating definitions are an assessment of default risk, but may incorporate an assessment of relative seniority or ultimate recovery in the event of default. Junior obligations are typically rated lower than senior obligations, to reflect the lower priority in bankruptcy, as noted above. (Such differentiation may apply when an entity has both senior and subordinated obligations, secured and unsecured obligations, or operating company and holding company obligations.)

AAA	An obligation rated "AAA" has the highest rating assigned by Standard & Poor's. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is extremely strong.
AA	An obligation rated "AA" differs from the highest rated obligations only in small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is very strong.
A	An obligation rated "A" is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher rated categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is still strong.
BBB	An obligation rated "BBB" exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

Obligations rated "BB," "B," "CCC," "CC" and "C" are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. "BB" indicates the least degree of speculation and "C" the highest. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposures to adverse conditions.

BB	An obligation rated "BB" is less vulnerable to nonpayment than other speculative issues. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions which could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
B	An obligation rated "B" is more vulnerable to nonpayment than obligations rated "BB," but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
CCC	An obligation rated "CCC" is currently vulnerable to nonpayment, and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
CC	An obligation rated "CC" is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment. The "CC" rating is used when a default has not yet occurred but S&P expects default to be a virtual certainty regardless of the anticipated time to default.

C	An obligation rated "C" is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment and the obligation is expected to have lower relative seniority or lower ultimate recovery compared to obligations that are rated higher.
D	An obligation rated "D" is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the "D" rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due unless S&P believes that such payments will be made within five business days in the absence of a stated grace period or within the earlier of the stated grace period or 30 calendar days. The "D" rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

Plus (+) or Minus (-): The ratings from "AA" to "CCC" may be modified by the addition of a plus or minus sign to show relative standing within the major rating categories.

Moody's Investors Service, Inc.

A brief description of the applicable Moody's Investors Service, Inc. ("*Moody's*") rating symbols and their meanings (as published by Moody's) follows.

Ratings assigned on Moody's global long-term and short-term rating scales are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial obligations issued by non-financial corporates, financial institutions, structured finance vehicles, project finance vehicles, and public sector entities. Long-term ratings are assigned to issuers or obligations with an original maturity of one year or more and reflect both on the likelihood of a default on contractually promised payments and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default. Short-term ratings are assigned to obligations with an original maturity of thirteen months or less and reflect the likelihood of a default on contractually promised payments.

LONG-TERM OBLIGATION RATINGS

Aaa	Obligations rated Aaa are judged to be of the highest quality, subject to the lowest level of credit risk.
Aa	Obligations rated Aa are judged to be of high quality and are subject to very low credit risk.
A	Obligations rated A are judged to be upper-medium grade and are subject to low credit risk.
Baa	Obligations rated Baa are judged to be medium-grade and subject to moderate credit risk and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics.
Ba	Obligations rated Ba are judged to be speculative and are subject to substantial credit risk.
B	Obligations rated B are considered speculative and are subject to high credit risk.
Caa	Obligations rated Caa are judged to be speculative of poor standing and are subject to very high credit risk.
Ca	Obligations rated Ca are highly speculative and are likely in, or very near, default, with some prospect of recovery of principal and interest.
C	Obligations rated C are the lowest rated and are typically in default, with little prospect for recovery of principal or interest.

Note: Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa. The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category.

Fitch Ratings

A brief description of the applicable Fitch Ratings ("*Fitch*") ratings symbols and meanings (as published by Fitch) follows:

Fitch's credit ratings provide an opinion on the relative ability of an entity to meet financial commitments, such as interest, preferred dividends, repayment of principal, insurance claims or counterparty obligations. Credit ratings are used by investors as indications of the likelihood of receiving the money owed to them in accordance with the terms on which they invested. The agency's credit ratings cover the global spectrum of corporate, sovereign (including supranational and sub-national), financial, bank, insurance, municipal and other public finance entities and the securities or other obligations they issue, as well as structured finance securities backed by receivables or other financial assets.

The terms "investment grade" and "speculative grade" have established themselves over time as shorthand to describe the categories 'AAA' to 'BBB' (investment grade) and 'BB' to 'D' (speculative grade). The terms "investment grade" and "speculative grade" are market conventions, and do not imply any recommendation or endorsement of a specific security for investment

purposes. "Investment grade" categories indicate relatively low to moderate credit risk, while ratings in the "speculative" categories either signal a higher level of credit risk or that a default has already occurred.

A designation of "Not Rated" or "NR" is used to denote securities not rated by Fitch where Fitch has rated some, but not all, securities comprising an issuance capital structure.

Credit ratings express risk in relative rank order, which is to say they are ordinal measures of credit risk and are not predictive of a specific frequency of default or loss.

Fitch's credit ratings do not directly address any risk other than credit risk. In particular, ratings do not deal with the risk of a market value loss on a rated security due to changes in interest rates, liquidity and other market considerations. However, in terms of payment obligation on the rated liability, market risk may be considered to the extent that it influences the ability of an issuer to pay upon a commitment. Ratings nonetheless do not reflect market risk to the extent that they influence the size or other conditionality of the obligation to pay upon a commitment (for example, in the case of index-linked bonds).

In the default components of ratings assigned to individual obligations or instruments, the agency typically rates to the likelihood of non-payment or default in accordance with the terms of that instrument's documentation. In limited cases, Fitch may include additional considerations (i.e. rate to a higher or lower standard than that implied in the obligation's documentation). In such cases, the agency will make clear the assumptions underlying the agency's opinion in the accompanying rating commentary.

INTERNATIONAL LONG-TERM RATINGS

Issuer Credit Rating Scales

AAA	Highest credit quality. 'AAA' ratings denote the lowest expectation of default risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.
AA	Very high credit quality. 'AA' ratings denote expectations of very low default risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.
A	High credit quality. 'A' ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.
BBB	Good credit quality. 'BBB' ratings indicate that expectations of default risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.
BB	Speculative. 'BB' ratings indicate an elevated vulnerability to default risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time; however, business or financial flexibility exists which supports the servicing of financial commitments.
B	Highly speculative. 'B' ratings indicate that material default risk is present, but a limited margin of safety remains. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.
CCC	Substantial credit risk. Default is a real possibility.
CC	Very high levels of credit risk. Default of some kind appears probable.
C	Exceptionally high levels of credit risk. Default is imminent or inevitable, or the issuer is in standstill. Conditions that are indicative of a 'C' category rating for an issuer include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the issuer has entered into a grace or cure period following non-payment of a material financial obligation; • the issuer has entered into a temporary negotiated waiver or standstill agreement following a payment default on a material financial obligation; or • Fitch otherwise believes a condition of 'RD' or 'D' to be imminent or inevitable, including through the formal announcement of a distressed debt exchange.

RD	<p>Restricted default. 'RD' ratings indicate an issuer that in Fitch's opinion has experienced an uncured payment default on a bond, loan or other material financial obligation but which has not entered into bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other formal winding-up procedure, and which has not otherwise ceased operating. This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the selective payment default on a specific class or currency of debt; • the uncured expiry of any applicable grace period, cure period or default forbearance period following a payment default on a bank loan, capital markets security or other material financial obligation; • the extension of multiple waivers or forbearance periods upon a payment default on one or more material financial obligations, either in series or in parallel; or • execution of a distressed debt exchange on one or more material financial obligations.
D	<p>Default. 'D' ratings indicate an issuer that in Fitch's opinion has entered into bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other formal winding-up procedure, or which has otherwise ceased business.</p>

Default ratings are not assigned prospectively to entities or their obligations; within this context, non-payment on an instrument that contains a deferral feature or grace period will generally not be considered a default until after the expiration of the deferral or grace period, unless a default is otherwise driven by bankruptcy or other similar circumstance, or by a distressed debt exchange.

"Imminent" default typically refers to the occasion where a payment default has been intimated by the issuer, and is all but inevitable. This may, for example, be where an issuer has missed a scheduled payment, but (as is typical) has a grace period during which it may cure the payment default. Another alternative would be where an issuer has formally announced a distressed debt exchange, but the date of the exchange still lies several days or weeks in the immediate future.

In all cases, the assignment of a default rating reflects the agency's opinion as to the most appropriate rating category consistent with the rest of its universe of ratings, and may differ from the definition of default under the terms of an issuer's financial obligations or local commercial practice.