

FINRA

**FINANCIAL INDUSTRY REGULATORY AUTHORITY
LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE, WAIVER AND CONSENT**

2014 SEP 16 AM 11:43

NO. 20100229508-01

TO: Department of Market Regulation
Financial Industry Regulatory Authority ("FINRA")

RE: Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated, Respondent
Broker-Dealer
CRD No. 7691

Pursuant to FINRA Rule 9216 of FINRA's Code of Procedure, Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated (the "firm") submits this Letter of Acceptance, Waiver and Consent ("AWC") for the purpose of proposing a settlement of the alleged rule violations described below. This AWC is submitted on the condition that, if accepted, FINRA will not bring any future actions against the firm alleging violations based on the same factual findings described herein.

I.

ACCEPTANCE AND CONSENT

- A. The firm hereby accepts and consents, without admitting or denying the findings, and solely for the purposes of this proceeding and any other proceeding brought by or on behalf of FINRA, or to which FINRA is a party, prior to a hearing and without an adjudication of any issue of law or fact, to the entry of the following findings by FINRA:

BACKGROUND

The firm became a member of FINRA on January 26, 1937, and its registration remains in effect.

RELEVANT DISCIPLINARY HISTORY

The firm has no relevant disciplinary history.

SUMMARY

This matter involves a review by the Trading Analysis Team of the Department of Market Regulation (the "staff") of wash transaction activity identified in the firm's MPIDs "MLCO" and "BCEP" and the firm's supervision of such activity during the period from August 19, 2009 through March 25, 2011 (the "review period").

FACTS AND VIOLATIVE CONDUCT

1. During the review period, the firm's supervisory system did not provide for supervision reasonably designed to achieve compliance with respect to the applicable securities laws and regulations, and the Rules of NASD and FINRA, concerning the detection of orders for the purchase and sale of securities that resulted in no change of beneficial ownership. Specifically, the firm's supervisory system failed to detect and review trades emanating from customer orders that did not include the value "USD" in the currency indicator field, which left a gap in the firm's surveillance system that resulted in the firm failing to review in its wash trade surveillance program numerous trades, representing millions of shares in various securities across 83 customer accounts, and allowed wash transactions to occur undetected by the firm. The conduct described in this paragraph constitutes a violation of NASD Rule 3010 and FINRA Rule 2010.

- B. The firm also consents to the imposition of the following sanctions:

A censure, a fine of \$250,000, and an undertaking to revise the firm's written supervisory procedures with respect to the areas described in paragraph A.1. Within 30 business days of acceptance of this AWC by the NAC, a registered principal of the Respondent shall submit to the COMPLIANCE ASSISTANT, LEGAL SECTION, MARKET REGULATION DEPARTMENT, 9509 KEY WEST AVENUE, ROCKVILLE, MD 20850, a signed, dated letter, or an e-mail from a work-related account of the registered principal to MarketRegulationComp@finra.org, providing the following information: (1) a reference to this matter; (2) a representation that the firm has revised its written supervisory procedures to address the deficiencies described in paragraph A.1.; and, (3) the date the revised procedures were implemented.

The firm agrees to pay the monetary sanction upon notice that this AWC has been accepted and that such payment is due and payable. It has submitted an Election of Payment form showing the method by which it proposes to pay the fine imposed.

The firm specifically and voluntarily waives any right to claim that it is unable to pay, now or at any time hereafter, the monetary sanction imposed in this matter.

The sanction imposed herein shall be effective on a date set by FINRA staff.

II.

WAIVER OF PROCEDURAL RIGHTS

The firm specifically and voluntarily waives the following rights granted under FINRA's Code of Procedure:

- A. To have a Complaint issued specifying the allegations against the firm;
- B. To be notified of the Complaint and have the opportunity to answer the allegations in writing;

- C. To defend against the allegations in a disciplinary hearing before a hearing panel, to have a written record of the hearing made and to have a written decision issued; and
- D. To appeal any such decision to the National Adjudicatory Council (“NAC”) and then to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and a U.S. Court of Appeals.

Further, the firm specifically and voluntarily waives any right to claim bias or prejudgment of the Chief Legal Officer, the NAC, or any member of the NAC, in connection with such person’s or body’s participation in discussions regarding the terms and conditions of this AWC, or other consideration of this AWC, including acceptance or rejection of this AWC.

The firm further specifically and voluntarily waives any right to claim that a person violated the ex parte prohibitions of FINRA Rule 9143 or the separation of functions prohibitions of FINRA Rule 9144, in connection with such person’s or body’s participation in discussions regarding the terms and conditions of this AWC, or other consideration of this AWC, including its acceptance or rejection.

III.

OTHER MATTERS

The firm understands that:

- A. Submission of this AWC is voluntary and will not resolve this matter unless and until it has been reviewed and accepted by the NAC, a Review Subcommittee of the NAC, or the Office of Disciplinary Affairs (“ODA”), pursuant to FINRA Rule 9216;
- B. If this AWC is not accepted, its submission will not be used as evidence to prove any of the allegations against the firm; and
- C. If accepted:
 - 1. this AWC will become part of the firm’s permanent disciplinary record and may be considered in any future actions brought by FINRA or any other regulator against the firm;
 - 2. this AWC will be made available through FINRA's public disclosure program in response to public inquiries about the firm’s disciplinary record;
 - 3. FINRA may make a public announcement concerning this agreement and the subject matter thereof in accordance with FINRA Rule 8313; and
 - 4. The firm may not take any action or make or permit to be made any public statement, including in regulatory filings or otherwise, denying, directly or indirectly, any finding in this AWC or create the impression that the AWC is without factual basis. The firm may not take any position in any proceeding

brought by or on behalf of FINRA, or to which FINRA is a party, that is inconsistent with any part of this AWC. Nothing in this provision affects the firm's: (i) testimonial obligations; or (ii) right to take legal or factual positions in litigation or other legal proceedings in which FINRA is not a party.

- D. The firm may attach a Corrective Action Statement to this AWC that is a statement of demonstrable corrective steps taken to prevent future misconduct. The firm understands that it may not deny the charges or make any statement that is inconsistent with the AWC in this Statement. This Statement does not constitute factual or legal findings by FINRA, nor does it reflect the views of FINRA or its staff.

The undersigned, on behalf of the firm, certifies that a person duly authorized to act on its behalf has read and understands all of the provisions of this AWC and has been given a full opportunity to ask questions about it; that it has agreed to the AWC's provisions voluntarily; and that no offer, threat, inducement, or promise of any kind, other than the terms set forth herein and the prospect of avoiding the issuance of a Complaint, has been made to induce the firm to submit it.

9/12/14
Date

Respondent
Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner
& Smith Incorporated

By: [Signature]
Name: JOHN GOELER
Title: M.D.

Reviewed by:

James O. Van De Graff
Attorney Name James O. Van De Graff
Counsel for Respondent
Firm Name Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP
Address 525 West Monroe, Suite 1900
City/State/Zip Chicago, IL 60661-3693
Phone Number 312/902-5227

Accepted by FINRA:

10-20-2014
Date

Signed on behalf of the
Director of ODA, by delegated authority

[Signature]
Robert A. Marchman
Executive Vice President, Legal Section
Department of Market Regulation