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Joint Press Release

February 05, 2010

Regulators Issue Statement on Lending to Creditworthy Small Businesses

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

National Credit Union Administration

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency

Office of Thrift Supervision

Conference of State Bank Supervisors

For immediate release

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The federal financial regulatory agencies and the Conference of State Bank Supervisors (the regulators) issued a statement today on prudent lending to creditworthy small business borrowers.¹ The regulators recognize that small businesses play an important role in the economy and know that some are experiencing difficulty in obtaining or renewing credit.

The statement emphasizes that financial institutions that engage in prudent small business lending after performing a comprehensive review of a borrower's financial condition will not be subject to supervisory criticism for small business loans made on that basis. Financial institutions should understand the long-term viability of the borrower's business and focus on the strength of a borrowers' business plan to manage risk rather than using portfolio management models that rely primarily on general inputs, such as a borrower's geographic location or

industry.

The regulators are working with the industry and supervisory staff to ensure that supervisory policies and actions do not inadvertently curtail the availability of credit to sound small business borrowers. The statement builds upon principles in existing guidance, including the *Interagency Statement on Meeting the Needs of Creditworthy Borrowers*² issued in November 2008 and the *Policy Statement on Prudent Commercial Real Estate Loan Workouts*³ issued in October 2009.

Attachment: *Interagency Statement on Meeting the Credit Needs of Creditworthy Small Business Borrowers (38 KB PDF)*

1. Financial institutions should apply the principles of this statement in accordance with their internal definitions of small business loans or as appropriate in their loan portfolios. Small business lending includes loans to small businesses and farms, such as working capital lines of credit, secured and unsecured term loans, as well as unsecured revolving credit. [Return to text](#)

2. <http://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/press/bcreg/20081112a.htm>
[Return to text](#)

3. <http://www.ffiec.gov/press/pr103009.htm> [Return to text](#)

Media Contacts:

Federal Reserve Board	Barbara Hagenbaugh	202-452-2955
FDIC	David Barr	202-898-6992
OCC	Dean DeBuck	202-874-5770
NCUA	Cherie Umbel	703-518-6337
OTS	William Ruberry	202-906-6677
CSBS	Catherine Woody	202-728-5733





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