

*Title 7. Banking and Securities*  
*Part 8. Joint Financial Regulatory Agencies*  
*Chapter 153. Home Equity Lending*

The Finance Commission of Texas and the Texas Credit Union Commission ("commissions") adopt amendments to the following home equity lending interpretations: §153.5, concerning Three percent fee limitation, §153.8, concerning Security of the Equity Loan, §153.13, concerning Preclosing Disclosures, §153.14, concerning One Year Prohibition, and §153.17, concerning Authorized Lenders.

The commissions adopt the amendments without changes to the proposed text as published in the July 22, 2016, issue of the *Texas Register* (41 TexReg 5309).

The commissions received no written comments on the proposal.

The amendments apply the administrative interpretation of the home equity lending provisions of Article XVI, Section 50 of the Texas Constitution ("Section 50") allowed by Section 50(u) and Texas Finance Code, §11.308 and §15.413.

In general, the purpose of the amendments to Chapter 153 is to implement changes resulting from the commissions' review of this chapter under Texas Government Code, §2001.039. The notice of intention to review 7 TAC, Chapter 153 was published in the *Texas Register* on February 26, 2016 (41 TexReg 1503). The Texas Department of Banking, the Texas Department of Savings and Mortgage Lending, the Office of Consumer Credit Commissioner, and the Texas Credit Union Department ("agencies") received one comment on the notice of intention to

review. The comment was submitted by Black, Mann & Graham, L.L.P.

The agencies prepared an initial draft of amendments with technical corrections and updates to Chapter 153. The agencies distributed the initial draft to home equity stakeholders for precomments, in order to prepare an informed and well-balanced proposal for the commissions. The agencies received written precomments from several stakeholders. The agencies incorporated suggestions offered by stakeholders into the amendments. The agencies believe that this early participation of stakeholders has greatly benefited the resulting adoption.

The individual purposes of the adopted amendments to each rule are provided in the following paragraphs.

The purpose of the amendments to §153.5 is to use terminology that is consistent with other interpretations. In paragraphs (3)(B) and (7), the amendments add "equity" before "loan" to ensure that the provisions use the term "equity loan," which is defined in §153.1(7).

The purpose of the amendment to §153.8(5) is to make a technical correction in a citation to Section 50(a)(6)(H). In the comment on the notice of intention to review, the commenter notes that this section currently contains an incorrect reference to "Section 50(a)(H)." In response to this comment, the amendment corrects the provision to cite Section 50(a)(6)(H).

The purpose of the adopted amendments to §153.13 is to specify how lenders can

comply with the preclosing disclosure requirement in Section 50(a)(6)(M)(ii), and to include updated citations to federal rules. Under Section 50(a)(6)(M)(ii), a home equity loan may not be closed before "one business day after the date that the owner of the homestead receives . . . a final itemized disclosure of the actual fees, points, interest, costs, and charges that will be charged at closing." Previously, §153.13(3) explained that lenders could comply with this requirement by providing a properly completed HUD-1 form from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) recently adopted a closing disclosure that integrates and replaces the HUD-1 form. The CFPB's rules containing the requirements for the integrated closing disclosure are located at Regulation Z, 12 C.F.R. §1026.19(f) and §1026.38. The requirement to provide the closing disclosure went into effect on October 3, 2015. The requirement generally applies to closed-end residential mortgage loans for which the lender or servicer received a loan application on or after that date. For loans where the application was received before October 3, 2015, the HUD-1 form (rather than the CFPB closing disclosure) was the appropriate form for lenders to use. The closing disclosure requirement does not apply to home equity lines of credit, which require separate account-opening disclosures under a different section of Regulation Z, 12 C.F.R. §1026.6(a).

In the comment on the notice of intention to review, the commenter recommends replacing the reference to the HUD-1 form in §153.13(3) with a reference to the CFPB's closing disclosure. Based on this recommendation and the federal rules discussed above, the adopted amendments to

§153.13(3) delete the reference to the HUD-1 form, and add new references to the disclosures currently required under Regulation Z: the closing disclosure (for closed-end equity loans) and the account-opening disclosures (for home equity lines of credit). When these disclosures are properly completed, they provide borrowers with a final itemized disclosure of the actual fees, points, interest, costs, and charges that will be charged at closing, in accordance with Section 50(a)(6)(M)(ii).

The purpose of the amendment to §153.14(2)(A) is to update a citation to federal law. Previously, this provision cited the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act. In 2003, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act replaced the former Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act. The amendment to §153.14(2)(A) replaces a citation to the previous law with a citation to the current law.

The purpose of the amendments to §153.17 is to specify who is authorized to make a home equity loan, in light of recent changes in federal policy and amendments to the licensing provisions of Texas Finance Code, Chapters 156 and 342. Section 50(a)(6)(P) lists the types of lenders that are authorized to make home equity loans, including "a person approved as a mortgagee by the United States government to make federally insured loans," "a person licensed to make regulated loans, as provided by statute of this state," and "a person regulated by this state as a mortgage broker."

In §153.17(2), an adopted amendment removes a reference to "Approved correspondents" and replaces it with "Loan correspondents." In 2010, the Department of Housing and Urban Development ended its

program of approving loan correspondents, as described in mortgagee letter 2010-20. As amended by the adoption, §153.17(2) explains that loan correspondents to an approved mortgagee are not authorized lenders unless they qualify under another provision of Section 50(a)(6)(P). In addition, in the comment on the notice of intention to review, the commenter recommends correcting a reference in §153.17(2) to "another section of (a)(6)(P)." In response to this recommendation, an adopted amendment replaces this phrase with "another provision of Section 50(a)(6)(P)."

Adopted new §153.17(3) explains that a person who is licensed under Texas Finance Code, Chapter 156 is a person regulated by this state as a mortgage broker for purposes of Section 50(a)(6)(P)(vi). Until 2011, Chapter 156 of the Texas Finance Code described the licensing requirements for mortgage brokers. In 2011, the chapter was amended to replace the term "mortgage broker" with the terms "residential mortgage loan company" and "residential mortgage loan originator." In 2011, the Texas Department of Savings and Mortgage Lending published a "Home Equity Terminology Advisory Bulletin," explaining that a person licensed under Chapter 156 is a mortgage broker for purposes of the constitution. In the comment on the notice of intention to review, the commenter recommends an amendment to §153.17 describing this interpretation. In response to this comment, adopted new §153.17(3) explains that a person licensed under Chapter 156 is a mortgage broker for purposes of the constitution.

Adopted new §153.17(4) replaces former paragraphs (3) and (4), and explains that a Chapter 342 licensee is a regulated lender for purposes of the constitution.

Former §153.17(3) explained that a nondepository lender must hold a license under Chapter 342 to make, transact, or negotiate a secondary mortgage loan. Former §153.17(4) explained that if a person does not meet the definition of Section 50(a)(6)(P)(i), (ii), (iv), (v), or (vi), the person must obtain a Chapter 342 license to be authorized to make home equity loans. In 2007, Texas Finance Code, §342.051 was amended to include an exemption for a person licensed under Chapter 156. In a precomment, one stakeholder recommends deleting former paragraph (3), because the paragraph does not acknowledge the exemption for Chapter 156 licensees, and because current paragraph (1) already explains that lenders must comply with statutory licensing requirements. In response to this precomment, the adoption replaces paragraphs (3) and (4) with a new paragraph (4). The new paragraph explains that a Chapter 342 licensee is a regulated lender for purposes of the constitution, and that if a person is not described by Section 50(a)(6)(P)(i), (ii), (iv), (v), or (vi), the person must obtain a Chapter 342 license to be authorized to make home equity loans.

The amendments are adopted under Article XVI, Section 50(u) of the Texas Constitution and Texas Finance Code, §11.308 and §15.413, which authorize the commissions to adopt interpretations of Article XVI, Section 50(a)(5) - (7), (e) - (p), (t), and (u) of the Texas Constitution. The constitutional provisions affected by the adopted amendments are contained in Article XVI, Section 50 of the Texas Constitution.

*§153.5. Three percent fee limitation: Section 50(a)(6)(E).*

An equity loan must not require the owner or the owner's spouse to pay, in addition to any interest, fees to any person that are necessary to originate, evaluate, maintain, record, insure, or service the extension of credit that exceed, in the aggregate, three percent of the original principal amount of the extension of credit.

(1) - (2) (No change.)

(3) Charges that are Interest. Charges an owner or an owner's spouse is required to pay that constitute interest under §153.1(11) of this title (relating to Definitions) are not fees subject to the three percent limitation.

(A) (No change.)

(B) Legitimate discount points are interest and are not subject to the three percent limitation. Discount points are legitimate if the discount points truly correspond to a reduced interest rate and are not necessary to originate, evaluate, maintain, record, insure, or service the equity loan. A lender may rely on an established system of verifiable procedures to evidence that the discount points it offers are legitimate. This system may include documentation of options that the owner is offered in the course of negotiation, including a contract rate without discount points and a lower contract rate based on discount points.

(4) - (6) (No change.)

(7) Charges Paid to Third Parties. Charges an owner or an owner's spouse is required to pay to third parties for separate and additional consideration for activities

relating to originating an equity [a] loan are fees subject to the three percent limitation. Charges those third parties absorb, and do not charge an owner or an owner's spouse that the owner or owner's spouse might otherwise be required to pay are unrestricted and not fees subject to the three percent limitation. Examples of these charges include attorneys' fees for document preparation and mortgage brokers' fees to the extent authorized by applicable law.

(8) - (16) (No change.)

*§153.8. Security of the Equity Loan: Section 50(a)(6)(H).*

An equity loan must not be secured by any additional real or personal property other than the homestead. The definition of "homestead" is located at Section 51 of Article XVI, Texas Constitution, and Chapter 41 of the Texas Property Code.

(1) - (4) (No change.)

(5) Any equity loan on an urban homestead that is secured by more than ten acres is secured by additional real property in violation of Section 50(a)(6)(H) [~~50(a)(H)~~].

*§153.13. Preclosing Disclosures: Section 50(a)(6)(M)(ii).*

An equity loan may not be closed before one business day after the date that the owner of the homestead receives a copy of the loan application, if not previously provided, and a final itemized disclosure of the actual fees, points, interest, costs, and charges that will be charged at closing. If a bona fide emergency or another good cause exists and the lender obtains the written consent of the owner, the lender may

provide the preclosing disclosure to the owner or the lender may modify the previously provided preclosing disclosure on the date of closing.

(1) - (2) (No change.)

(3) The lender must deliver to the owner a final itemized disclosure of the actual fees, points, interest, costs, and charges that will be charged at closing.

(A) For a closed-end equity loan, the lender may satisfy this requirement by delivering a properly completed closing disclosure under Regulation Z, 12 C.F.R. §1026.19(f) and §1026.38.

(B) For a home equity line of credit, the lender may satisfy this requirement by delivering properly completed account-opening disclosures under Regulation Z, 12 C.F.R. §1026.6(a).

~~[(3) A lender may satisfy the disclosure requirement of providing a final itemized disclosure of the actual fees, points, interest, costs, and charges that will be charged at closing by delivery to the borrower of a properly completed Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) disclosure Form HUD-1 or HUD-1A.]~~

(4) - (7) (No change.)

*§153.14. One Year Prohibition: Section 50(a)(6)(M)(iii).*

An equity loan may not be closed before the first anniversary of the closing date of any other equity loan secured by the same homestead property.

(1) (No change.)

(2) Section 50(a)(6)(M)(iii) does not prohibit modification of an equity loan before one year has elapsed since the loan's closing date. A modification of a home equity loan occurs when one or more terms of an existing equity loan is modified, but the note is not satisfied and replaced. A home equity loan and a subsequent modification will be considered a single transaction. The home equity requirements of Section 50(a)(6) will be applied to the original loan and the subsequent modification as a single transaction.

(A) A modification of an equity loan must be agreed to in writing by the borrower and lender, unless otherwise required by law. An example of a modification that is not required to be in writing is the modification required under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. app. §§501-597b [~~Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act~~].

(B) - (D) (No change.)

*§153.17. Authorized Lenders: Section 50(a)(6)(P).*

An equity loan must be made by one of the following that has not been found by a federal regulatory agency to have engaged in the practice of refusing to make loans because the applicants for the loans reside or the property proposed to secure the loans is located in a certain area: a bank, savings and loan association, savings bank, or credit union doing business under the laws of this state or the United States; a federally chartered lending instrumentality or a person approved as a mortgagee by the United States government to make federally insured loans; a person licensed to make regulated loans, as provided by statute of this state; a person who sold the homestead property to

the current owner and who provided all or part of the financing for the purchase; a person who is related to the homestead owner within the second degree of affinity and consanguinity; or a person regulated by this state as a mortgage broker.

(1) An authorized lender under Texas Finance Code, Chapter 341 [~~-, Texas Finance Code,~~] must meet both constitutional and statutory qualifications to make an equity loan.

(2) A HUD-approved mortgagee is a person approved as a mortgagee by the United States government to make federally insured loans for purposes of Section 50(a)(6)(P)(ii). Loan [~~Approved~~] correspondents to a HUD-approved mortgagee are not authorized lenders of equity loans unless qualifying under another provision of Section 50(a)(6)(P) [~~section of (a)(6)(P)~~].

(3) A person who is licensed under Texas Finance Code, Chapter 156 is a person regulated by this state as a mortgage broker for purposes of Section 50(a)(6)(P)(vi).

(4) A person who is licensed under Texas Finance Code, Chapter 342 is a person licensed to make regulated loans for purposes of Section 50(a)(6)(P)(iii). If a person is not described by Section 50(a)(6)(P)(i), (ii), (iv), (v), or (vi), then the person must obtain a license under Texas Finance Code, Chapter 342 in order to be authorized to make an equity loan under Section 50(a)(6)(P)(iii).

~~[(3) A non-depository lender or broker that makes, negotiates, arranges, or transacts a secondary mortgage loan that is governed by Chapter 342, Texas Finance~~

~~Code, must comply with the licensing provisions of Chapter 342, Texas Finance Code.]~~

~~[(4) A lender who does not meet the definition of Section 50(a)(6)(P)(i), (ii), (iv), (v), or (vi), must obtain a regulated loan license under Chapter 342 of the Texas Finance Code to meet the provisions of subsection (iii).]~~

### Certification

The agencies hereby certify that the adoption has been reviewed by legal counsel and found to be within the commissions' legal authority to adopt.

Issued in Austin, Texas on October 21, 2016.

Leslie Pettijohn  
Consumer Credit Commissioner  
Joint Financial Regulatory Agencies