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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

26 CFR Part 1

[TD 8993]

RIN 1545-AY60

Debt Instruments with Original Issue Discount; Annuity Contracts

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Final regulations.

SUMMARY: This document contains final regulations relating to the federal income tax treatment of annuity contracts issued by certain insurance companies. The regulations provide guidance on whether certain annuity contracts are excluded from the definition of a debt instrument under the original issue discount provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

DATES: Effective Date: These regulations are effective June 6, 2002.

Applicability Dates: For dates of applicability, see § 1.1275-1(k)(3).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patrick E. White, (202) 622-3920 (not a toll-free number).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Sections 163(e) and 1271 through 1275 of the Internal Revenue Code (Code) provide rules for the treatment of debt instruments with original issue discount (OID). Section 1275(a)(1)(A) defines the term debt instrument to include a bond, debenture, note, or certificate

or other evidence of indebtedness. Sections 1275(a)(1)(B)(i) and (ii), however, exclude certain annuity contracts from the definition of a debt instrument. This document contains rules concerning the exception for annuities described in section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii). A notice of proposed rulemaking (REG-125237-00, 2001-12 I.R.B. 919) was published in the **Federal Register** (66 FR 2852) on January 12, 2001. One individual commented anonymously on the proposed regulations. The individual primarily expressed concern that the proposed guidance should not limit the investment options of U.S. investors. No public hearing was requested or held. The proposed regulations are adopted as proposed.

Explanation of Provisions

In general, the OID provisions apply to issuers and holders of debt instruments. The term debt instrument generally means any instrument or contractual arrangement that constitutes indebtedness under general principles of income tax law. See section 1275(a)(1)(A) and §1.1275-1(d) of the Income Tax Regulations.

If a contract is a debt instrument with OID, section 1272 generally requires the holder of the contract to include OID in income currently on a constant yield basis, regardless of the holder's overall method of accounting. By contrast, the holder of an annuity contract to which section 72 applies generally is allowed to defer recognizing economically earned income until distributions are made on the contract.

Section 1275(a)(1)(B) excepts two types of annuity contracts from the definition of a debt instrument. First, section 1275(a)(1)(B)(i) excepts an annuity contract to which section 72 applies if the contract "depends (in whole or in substantial part) on the life expectancy of 1 or more individuals." Second, section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii) excepts an annuity contract to which

section 72 applies under certain circumstances if the contract “is issued by an insurance company subject to tax under subchapter L (or by an entity described in section 501(c) and exempt from tax under section 501(a) which would be subject to tax under subchapter L were it not so exempt)....”

The regulations provide that an annuity contract issued by a foreign insurance company is treated under section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii) as issued by an insurance company subject to tax under subchapter L if the insurance company is subject to tax under subchapter L with respect to income earned on the annuity contract. The IRS and Treasury conclude that this is the most appropriate application of the language of section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii) and is consistent with the use of that phrase elsewhere in the Code and regulations. See, e.g., sections 953(e)(3)(C) and 1297(b)(2)(B); §1.848-2(h).

Special Analyses

It has been determined that this Treasury decision is not a significant regulatory action as defined in Executive Order 12866. Therefore, a regulatory assessment is not required. It also has been determined that section 553(b) of the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. chapter 5) does not apply to these regulations, and because these regulations do not impose a collection of information on small entities, the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. chapter 6) does not apply. Pursuant to section 7805(f) of the Code, the notice of proposed rulemaking preceding these regulations was submitted to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration for comment on its impact on small business.

Drafting Information

The principal author of these regulations is Patrick E. White, Office of the Associate Chief Counsel (Financial Institutions & Products). However, other personnel from the IRS and Treasury Department participated in their development.

Adoption of Amendments to the Regulations

Accordingly, 26 CFR part 1 is amended as follows:

PART 1--INCOME TAXES

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

Authority: 26 U.S.C. 7805 * * *

Par. 2. Section 1.1271-0 is amended by adding entries for paragraphs (k) through (k)(3) to §1.1275-1 to read as follows:

§1.1271-0 Original issue discount; effective dates; table of contents.

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§1.1275-1 Definitions.

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(k) Exception under section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii) for annuities issued by an insurance company subject to tax under subchapter L of the Internal Revenue Code.

(1) Rule.

(2) Examples.

(3) Effective date.

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Par. 3. Section 1.1275-1 is amended by adding paragraph (k) to read as follows:

§1.1275-1 Definitions.

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(k) Exception under section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii) for annuities issued by an insurance company subject to tax under subchapter L of the Internal Revenue Code--(1) Rule. For purposes of section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii), an annuity contract issued by a foreign insurance company

is considered as issued by an insurance company subject to tax under subchapter L if the insurance company is subject to tax under subchapter L with respect to income earned on the annuity contract.

(2) Examples. The following examples illustrate the rule of paragraph (k)(1) of this section. Each example assumes that the annuity contract is a contract to which section 72 applies and was issued in a transaction where there is no consideration other than cash or another qualifying annuity contract, pursuant to the exercise of an election under an insurance contract by a beneficiary thereof on the death of the insured party, or in a transaction involving a qualified pension or employee benefit plan. The examples are as follows:

Example 1. Company X is an insurance company that is organized, licensed and doing business in Country Y. Company X does not have a U.S. trade or business and is not, under section 842, subject to U.S. income tax under subchapter L with respect to income earned on annuity contracts. A, a U.S. taxpayer, purchases an annuity contract from Company X in Country Y. The annuity contract is not excepted from the definition of a debt instrument by section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii).

Example 2. The facts are the same as in Example 1, except that Company X has a U.S. trade or business. A purchased the annuity from Company X's U.S. trade or business. Under section 842(a), Company X is subject to tax under subchapter L with respect to income earned on the annuity contract. Under these facts, the annuity contract is excepted from the definition of a debt instrument by section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii).

Example 3. The facts are the same as in Example 2, except that there is a tax treaty between Country Y and the United States. Company X is a resident of Country Y for purposes of the U.S.-Country Y tax treaty. Company X's activities in the U.S. do not constitute a permanent establishment under the U.S.-Country Y tax treaty. Because Company X does not have a U.S. permanent establishment, Company X is not subject to tax under subchapter L with respect to income earned on the annuity contract. Thus, the annuity contract is not excepted from the definition of a debt instrument by section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii).

Example 4. The facts are the same as in Example 1, except that Company X is a foreign insurance corporation controlled by a U.S. shareholder. Company X does not make an election

under section 953(d) to be treated as a domestic corporation. The controlling U.S. shareholder is required under sections 953 and 954 to include income earned on the annuity contract in its taxable income under subpart F. However, Company X is not subject to tax under subchapter L with respect to income earned on the annuity contract. Thus, the annuity contract is not excepted from the definition of a debt instrument by section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii).

Example 5. The facts are the same as in Example 4, except that Company X properly elects under section 953(d) to be treated as a domestic corporation. By reason of its election, Company X is subject to tax under subchapter L with respect to income earned on the annuity contract. Thus, the annuity contract is excepted from the definition of a debt instrument by section 1275(a)(1)(B)(ii).

(3) Effective date. This paragraph (k) is applicable for interest accruals on or after June 6, 2002. This paragraph (k) does not apply to an annuity contract that was purchased before January 12, 2001. For purposes of this paragraph (k), if any additional investment in a contract purchased before

January 12, 2001, is made on or after January 12, 2001, and the additional investment is not required to be made under a binding written contractual obligation that was entered into before that date, then the additional investment is treated as the purchase of a contract after January 12, 2001.

David A. Mader
Acting Deputy Commissioner of Internal Revenue

Approved: April 26, 2002

Pamela F. Olson
Acting Assistant Secretary of the Treasury