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Reg. Section 1.1361-1(l)(1)

S Corporation defined.

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(1) Classes of stock -- (1) General rule. A corporation that has more than one class of stock does not qualify as a small business corporation. Except as provided in paragraph (l)(4) of this section (relating to instruments, obligations, or arrangements treated as a second class of stock), a corporation is treated as having only one class of stock if all outstanding shares of stock of the corporation confer identical rights to distribution and liquidation proceeds. Differences in voting rights among shares of stock of a corporation are disregarded in determining whether a corporation has more than one class of stock. Thus, if all shares of stock of an S corporation have identical rights to distribution and liquidation proceeds, the corporation may have voting and nonvoting common stock, a class of stock that may vote only on certain issues, irrevocable proxy agreements, or groups of shares that differ with respect to rights to elect members of the board of directors.

(2) Determination of whether stock confers identical rights to distribution and liquidation proceeds -- (i) In general. The determination of whether all outstanding shares of stock confer identical rights to distribution and liquidation proceeds is made based on the corporate charter, articles of incorporation, bylaws, applicable state law, and binding agreements relating to distribution and liquidation proceeds (collectively, the governing provisions). A commercial contractual agreement, such as a lease, employment agreement, or loan agreement, is not a binding agreement relating to distribution and liquidation proceeds and thus is not a governing provision unless a principal purpose of the agreement is to circumvent the one class of stock requirement of section 1361(b)(1)(D) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)(D)] and this paragraph (l). Although a corporation is not treated as having more than one class of stock so long as the governing provisions provide for identical distribution and liquidation rights, any distributions (including actual, constructive, or deemed distributions) that differ in timing or amount are to be given appropriate tax effect in accordance with the facts and circumstances.

(ii) State law requirements for payment and withholding of income tax. State laws may require a corporation to pay or withhold state income taxes on behalf of some or all of the corporation's shareholders. Such laws are disregarded in determining whether all outstanding shares of stock of the corporation confer identical rights to distribution and liquidation proceeds, within the meaning of paragraph (l)(1) of this section, provided that, when the constructive distributions resulting from the payment or withholding of taxes by the corporation are taken into account, the outstanding shares confer identical rights to distribution and liquidation proceeds. A difference in timing between the constructive distributions and the actual distributions to the other shareholders does not cause the corporation to be treated as having more than one class of stock.

(iii) Buy-sell and redemption agreements -- (A) In general. Buy-sell agreements among shareholders, agreements restricting the transferability of stock, and redemption agreements are

disregarded in determining whether a corporation's outstanding shares of stock confer identical distribution and liquidation rights unless --

(1) A principal purpose of the agreement is to circumvent the one class of stock requirement of section 1361(b)(1)(D) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)(D)] and this paragraph (1), and

(2) The agreement establishes a purchase price that, at the time the agreement is entered into, is significantly in excess of or below the fair market value of the stock.

Agreements that provide for the purchase or redemption of stock at book value or at a price between fair market value and book value are not considered to establish a price that is significantly in excess of or below the fair market value of the stock and, thus, are disregarded in determining whether the outstanding shares of stock confer identical rights. For purposes of this paragraph (1)(2)(iii)(A), a good faith determination of fair market value will be respected unless it can be shown that the value was substantially in error and the determination of the value was not performed with reasonable diligence. Although an agreement may be disregarded in determining whether shares of stock confer identical distribution and liquidation rights, payments pursuant to the agreement may have income or transfer tax consequences.

(B) Exception for certain agreements. Bona fide agreements to redeem or purchase stock at the time of death, divorce, disability, or termination of employment are disregarded in determining whether a corporation's shares of stock confer identical rights. In addition, if stock that is substantially nonvested (within the meaning of § 1.83-3(b)) is treated as outstanding under these regulations, the forfeiture provisions that cause the stock to be substantially nonvested are disregarded. Furthermore, the Commissioner may provide by Revenue Ruling or other published guidance that other types of bona fide agreements to redeem or purchase stock are disregarded.

(C) Safe harbors for determinations of book value. A determination of book value will be respected if --

(1) The book value is determined in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (including permitted optional adjustments); or

(2) The book value is used for any substantial nontax purpose.

(iv) Distributions that take into account varying interests in stock during a taxable year. A governing provision does not, within the meaning of paragraph (1)(2)(i) of this section, alter the rights to liquidation and distribution proceeds conferred by an S corporation's stock merely because the governing provision provides that, as a result of a change in stock ownership, distributions in a taxable year are to be made on the basis of the shareholders' varying interests in the S corporation's income in the current or immediately preceding taxable year. If distributions pursuant to the provision are not made within a reasonable time after the close of the taxable year in which the varying interests occur, the distributions may be recharacterized depending on the facts and circumstances, but will not result in a second class of stock.

(v) Special rule for section 338(h)(10) [26 USCS § 338(h)(10)] elections. If the shareholders of an S corporation sell their stock in a transaction for which an election is made under section 338(h)(10) [26 USCS § 338(h)(10)] and § 1.338(h)(10)-1, the receipt of varying amounts per share by the shareholders will not cause the S corporation to have more than one class of stock, provided that the varying amounts are determined in arm's length negotiations with the purchaser.

(vi) Examples. The application of paragraph (1)(2) of this section may be illustrated by the following examples. In each of the examples, the S corporation requirements of section 1361 [26

USCS § 1361] are satisfied except as otherwise stated, the corporation has in effect an S election under section 1362 [26 USCS § 1362], and the corporation has only the shareholders described.

Example 1. Determination of whether stock confers identical rights to distribution and liquidation proceeds. (i) The law of State A requires that permission be obtained from the State Commissioner of Corporations before stock may be issued by a corporation. The Commissioner grants permission to S, a corporation, to issue its stock subject to the restriction that any person who is issued stock in exchange for property, and not cash, must waive all rights to receive distributions until the shareholders who contributed cash for stock have received distributions in the amount of their cash contributions.

(ii) The condition imposed by the Commissioner pursuant to state law alters the rights to distribution and liquidation proceeds conferred by the outstanding stock of S so that those rights are not identical. Accordingly, under paragraph (l)(2)(i) of this section, S is treated as having more than one class of stock and does not qualify as a small business corporation.

Example 2. Distributions that differ in timing. (i) S, a corporation, has two equal shareholders, A and B. Under S's bylaws, A and B are entitled to equal distributions. S distributes \$ 50,000 to A in the current year, but does not distribute \$ 50,000 to B until one year later. The circumstances indicate that the difference in timing did not occur by reason of a binding agreement relating to distribution or liquidation proceeds.

(ii) Under paragraph (l)(2)(i) of this section, the difference in timing of the distributions to A and B does not cause S to be treated as having more than one class of stock. However, section 7872 [26 USCS § 7872] or other recharacterization principles may apply to determine the appropriate tax consequences.

Example 3. Treatment of excessive compensation. (i) S, a corporation, has two equal shareholders, C and D, who are each employed by S and have binding employment agreements with S. The compensation paid by S to C under C's employment agreement is reasonable. The compensation paid by S to D under D's employment agreement, however, is found to be excessive. The facts and circumstances do not reflect that a principal purpose to D's employment agreement is to circumvent the one class of stock requirement of section 1361(b)(1)(D) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)(D)] and this paragraph (l).

(ii) Under paragraph (l)(2)(i) of this section, the employment agreements are not governing provisions. Accordingly, S is not treated as having more than one class of stock by reason of the employment agreements, even though S is not allowed a deduction for the excessive compensation paid to D.

Example 4. Agreement to pay fringe benefits. (i) S, a corporation, is required under binding agreements to pay accident and health insurance premiums on behalf of certain of its employees who are also shareholders. Different premium amounts are paid by S for each employee-shareholder. The facts and circumstances do not reflect that a principal purpose of the agreements is to circumvent the one class of stock requirement of section 1361(b)(1)(D) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)(D)] and this paragraph (l).

(ii) Under paragraph (l)(2)(i) of this section, the agreements are not governing provisions. Accordingly, S is not treated as having more than one class of stock by reason of the agreements. In addition, S is not treated as having more than one class of stock by reason of the payment of fringe benefits.

Example 5. Below-market corporation-shareholder loan. (i) E is a shareholder of S, a corporation. S makes a below-market loan to E that is a corporation-shareholder loan to which

section 7872 [26 USCS § 7872] applies. Under section 7872 [26 USCS § 7872], E is deemed to receive a distribution with respect to S stock by reason of the loan. The facts and circumstances do not reflect that a principal purpose of the loan is to circumvent the one class of stock requirement of section 1361(b)(1)(D) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)(D)] and this paragraph (l).

(ii) Under paragraph (l)(2)(i) of this section, the loan agreement is not a governing provision. Accordingly, S is not treated as having more than one class of stock by reason of the below-market loan to E.

Example 6. Agreement to adjust distributions for state tax burdens. (i) S, a corporation, executes a binding agreement with its shareholders to modify its normal distribution policy by making upward adjustments of its distributions to those shareholders who bear heavier state tax burdens. The adjustments are based on a formula that will give the shareholders equal after-tax distributions.

(ii) The binding agreement relates to distribution or liquidation proceeds. The agreement is thus a governing provision that alters the rights conferred by the outstanding stock of S to distribution proceeds so that those rights are not identical. Therefore, under paragraph (l)(2)(i) of this section, S is treated as having more than one class of stock.

Example 7. State law requirements for payment and withholding of income tax. (i) The law of State X requires corporations to pay state income taxes on behalf of nonresident shareholders. The law of State X does not require corporations to pay state income taxes on behalf of resident shareholders. S is incorporated in State X. S's resident shareholders have the right (for example, under the law of State X or pursuant to S's bylaws or a binding agreement) to distributions that take into account the payments S makes on behalf of its nonresident shareholders.

(ii) The payment by S of state income taxes on behalf of its nonresident shareholders are generally treated as constructive distributions to those shareholders. Because S's resident shareholders have the right to equal distributions, taking into account the constructive distributions to the nonresident shareholders, S's shares confer identical rights to distribution proceeds. Accordingly, under paragraph (l)(2)(ii) of this section, the state law requiring S to pay state income taxes on behalf of its nonresident shareholders is disregarded in determining whether S has more than one class of stock.

(iii) The same result would follow if the payments of state income taxes on behalf of nonresident shareholders are instead treated as advances to those shareholders and the governing provisions require the advances to be repaid or offset by reductions in distributions to those shareholders.

Example 8. Redemption agreements. (i) F, G, and H are shareholders of S, a corporation. F is also an employee of S. By agreement, S is to redeem F's shares on the termination of F's employment.

(ii) On these facts, under paragraph (l)(2)(iii)(B) of this section, the agreement is disregarded in determining whether all outstanding shares of S's stock confer identical rights to distribution and liquidation proceeds.

Example 9. Analysis of redemption agreements. (i) J, K, and L are shareholders of S, a corporation. L is also an employee of S. L's shares were not issued to L in connection with the performance of services. By agreement, S is to redeem L's shares for an amount significantly below their fair market value on the termination of L's employment or if S's sales fall below certain levels.

(ii) Under paragraph (l)(2)(iii)(B) of this section, the portion of the agreement providing for redemption of L's stock on termination of employment is disregarded. Under paragraph (l)(2)(iii)(A), the portion of the agreement providing for redemption of L's stock if S's sales fall below certain levels is disregarded unless a principal purpose of that portion of the agreement is to circumvent the one class of stock requirement of section 1361(b)(1)(D) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)(D)] and this paragraph (l).

(3) Stock taken into account. Except as provided in paragraphs (b) (3), (4), and (5) of this section (relating to restricted stock, deferred compensation plans, and straight debt), in determining whether all outstanding shares of stock confer identical rights to distribution and liquidation proceeds, all outstanding shares of stock of a corporation are taken into account. For example, substantially nonvested stock with respect to which an election under section 83(b) [26 USCS § 83(b)] has been made is taken into account in determining whether a corporation has a second class of stock, and such stock is not treated as a second class of stock if the stock confers rights to distribution and liquidation proceeds that are identical, within the meaning of paragraph (l)(1) of this section, to the rights conferred by the other outstanding shares of stock.

(4) Other instruments, obligations, or arrangements treated as a second class of stock -- (i) In general. Instruments, obligations, or arrangements are not treated as a second class of stock for purposes of this paragraph (l) unless they are described in paragraph (l)(5) (ii) or (iii) of this section. However, in no event are instruments, obligations, or arrangements described in paragraph (b)(4) of this section (relating to deferred compensation plans), paragraphs (l)(4)(iii) (B) and (C) of this section (relating to the exceptions and safe harbor for options), paragraph (l)(4)(ii)(B) of this section (relating to the safe harbors for certain short-term unwritten advances and proportionally-held debt), or paragraph (l)(5) of this section (relating to the safe harbor for straight debt), treated as a second class of stock for purposes of this paragraph (l).

(ii) Instruments, obligations, or arrangements treated as equity under general principles -- (A) In general. Except as provided in paragraph (l)(4)(i) of this section, any instrument, obligation, or arrangement issued by a corporation (other than outstanding shares of stock described in paragraph (l)(3) of this section), regardless of whether designated as debt, is treated as a second class of stock of the corporation --

(1) If the instrument, obligation, or arrangement constitutes equity or otherwise results in the holder being treated as the owner of stock under general principles of Federal tax law; and

(2) A principal purpose of issuing or entering into the instrument, obligation, or arrangement is to circumvent the rights to distribution or liquidation proceeds conferred by the outstanding shares of stock or to circumvent the limitation on eligible shareholders contained in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(B) Safe harbor for certain short-term unwritten advances and proportionately held obligations -- (1) Short-term unwritten advances. Unwritten advances from a shareholder that do not exceed \$ 10,000 in the aggregate at any time during the taxable year of the corporation, are treated as debt by the parties, and are expected to be repaid within a reasonable time are not treated as a second class of stock for that taxable year, even if the advances are considered equity under general principles of Federal tax law. The failure of an unwritten advance to meet this safe harbor will not result in a second class of stock unless the advance is considered equity under paragraph (l)(4)(ii)(A)(1) of this section and a principal purpose of the advance is to circumvent the rights of the outstanding shares of stock or the limitation on eligible shareholders under paragraph (l)(4)(ii)(A)(2) of this section.

(2) Proportionately-held obligations. Obligations of the same class that are considered equity under general principles of Federal tax law, but are owned solely by the owners of, and in the same proportion as, the outstanding stock of the corporation, are not treated as a second class of stock. Furthermore, an obligation or obligations owned by the sole shareholder of a corporation are always held proportionately to the corporation's outstanding stock. The obligations that are considered equity that do not meet this safe harbor will not result in a second class of stock unless a principal purpose of the obligations is to circumvent the rights of the outstanding shares of stock or the limitation on eligible shareholders under paragraph (1)(4)(ii)(A)(2) of this section.

(iii) Certain call options, warrants or similar instruments -- (A) In general. Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph (1)(4)(iii), a call option, warrant, or similar instrument (collectively, call option) issued by a corporation is treated as a second class of stock of the corporation if, taking into account all the facts and circumstances, the call option is substantially certain to be exercised (by the holder or a potential transferee) and has a strike price substantially below the fair market value of the underlying stock on the date that the call option is issued, transferred by a person who is an eligible shareholder under paragraph (b)(1) of this section to a person who is not an eligible shareholder under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, or materially modified. For purposes of this paragraph (1)(4)(iii), if an option is issued in connection with a loan and the time period in which the option can be exercised is extended in connection with (and consistent with) a modification of the terms of the loan, the extension of the time period in which the option may be exercised is not considered a material modification. In addition, a call option does not have a strike price substantially below fair market value if the price at the time of exercise cannot, pursuant to the terms of the instrument, be substantially below the fair market value of the underlying stock at the time of exercise.

(B) Certain exceptions. (1) A call option is not treated as a second class of stock for purposes of this paragraph (1) if it is issued to a person that is actively and regularly engaged in the business of lending and issued in connection with a commercially reasonable loan to the corporation. This paragraph (1)(4)(iii)(B)(1) continues to apply if the call option is transferred with the loan (or if a portion of the call option is transferred with a corresponding portion of the loan). However, if the call option is transferred without a corresponding portion of the loan, this paragraph (1)(4)(iii)(B)(1) ceases to apply. Upon that transfer, the call option is tested under paragraph (1)(4)(iii)(A) (notwithstanding anything in that paragraph to the contrary) if, but for this paragraph, the call option would have been treated as a second class of stock on the date it was issued.

(2) A call option that is issued to an individual who is either an employee or an independent contractor in connection with the performance of services for the corporation or a related corporation (and that is not excessive by reference to the services performed) is not treated as a second class of stock for purposes of this paragraph (1) if --

(i) The call option is nontransferable within the meaning of § 1.83-3(d); and

(ii) The call option does not have a readily ascertainable fair market value as defined in § 1.83-7(b) at the time the option is issued.

If the call option becomes transferable, this paragraph (1)(4)(iii)(B)(2) ceases to apply. Solely for purposes of this paragraph (1)(4)(iii)(B)(2), a corporation is related to the issuing corporation if more than 50 percent of the total voting power and total value of its stock is owned by the issuing corporation.

(3) The Commissioner may provide other exceptions by Revenue Ruling or other published guidance.

(C) Safe harbor for certain options. A call option is not treated as a second class of stock if, on the date the call option is issued, transferred by a person who is an eligible shareholder under paragraph (b)(1) of this section to a person who is not an eligible shareholder under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, or materially modified, the strike price of the call option is at least 90 percent of the fair market value of the underlying stock on that date. For purposes of this paragraph (l)(4)(iii)(C), a good faith determination of fair market value by the corporation will be respected unless it can be shown that the value was substantially in error and the determination of the value was not performed with reasonable diligence to obtain a fair value. Failure of an option to meet this safe harbor will not necessarily result in the option being treated as a second class of stock.

(iv) Convertible debt. A convertible debt instrument is considered a second class of stock if -

(A) It would be treated as a second class of stock under paragraph (l)(4)(ii) of this section (relating to instruments, obligations, or arrangements treated as equity under general principles); or

(B) It embodies rights equivalent to those of a call option that would be treated as a second class of stock under paragraph (l)(4)(iii) of this section (relating to certain call options, warrants, and similar instruments).

(v) Examples. The application of this paragraph (l)(4) may be illustrated by the following examples. In each of the examples, the S corporation requirements of section 1361 [26 USCS § 1361] are satisfied except as otherwise stated, the corporation has in effect an S election under section 1362 [26 USCS § 1362], and the corporation has only the shareholders described.

Example 1. Transfer of call option by eligible shareholder to ineligible shareholder. (i) S, a corporation, has 10 shareholders. S issues call options to A, B, and C, individuals who are U.S. residents. A, B, and C are not shareholders, employees, or independent contractors of S. The options have a strike price of \$ 40 and are issued on a date when the fair market value of S stock is also \$ 40. A year later, P, a partnership, purchases A's option. On the date of transfer, the fair market value of S stock is \$ 80.

(ii) On the date the call option is issued, its strike price is not substantially below the fair market value of the S stock. Under paragraph (l)(4)(iii)(A) of this section, whether a call option is a second class of stock must be redetermined if the call option is transferred by a person who is an eligible shareholder under paragraph (b)(1) of this section to a person who is not an eligible shareholder under paragraph (b)(1) of this section. In this case, A is an eligible shareholder of S under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, but P is not. Accordingly, the option is retested on the date it is transferred to D.

(iii) Because on the date the call option is transferred to P its strike price is 50% of the fair market value, the strike price is substantially below the fair market value of the S stock. Accordingly, the call option is treated as a second class of stock as of the date it is transferred to P if, at that time, it is determined that the option is substantially certain to be exercised. The determination of whether the option is substantially certain to be exercised is made on the basis of all the facts and circumstances.

Example 2. Call option issued in connection with the performance of services. (i) E is a bona fide employee of S, a corporation. S issues to E a call option in connection with E's performance of services. At the time the call option is issued, it is not transferable and does not have a readily ascertainable fair market value. However, the call option becomes transferable before it is exercised by E.

(ii) While the option is not transferable, under paragraph (1)(4)(iii)(B)(2) of this section, it is not treated as a second class of stock, regardless of its strike price. When the option becomes transferable, that paragraph ceases to apply, and the general rule of paragraph (1)(4)(iii)(A) of this section applies. Accordingly, if the option is materially modified or is transferred to a person who is not an eligible shareholder under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, and on the date of such modification or transfer, the option is substantially certain to be exercised and has a strike price substantially below the fair market value of the underlying stock, the option is treated as a second class of stock.

(iii) If E left S's employment before the option became transferable, the exception provided by paragraph (1)(4)(iii)(B)(2) would continue to apply until the option became transferable.

(5) Straight debt safe harbor -- (i) In general. Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(4) of this section, straight debt is not treated as a second class of stock. For purposes of section 1361(c)(5) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(5)] and this section, the term straight debt means a written unconditional obligation, regardless of whether embodied in a formal note, to pay a sum certain on demand, or on a specified due date, which --

(A) Does not provide for an interest rate or payment dates that are contingent on profits, the borrower's discretion, the payment of dividends with respect to common stock, or similar factors;

(B) Is not convertible (directly or indirectly) into stock or any other equity interest of the S corporation; and

(C) Is held by an individual (other than a nonresident alien), an estate, or a trust described in section 1361(c)(2) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)].

(ii) Subordination. The fact that an obligation is subordinated to other debt of the corporation does not prevent the obligation from qualifying as straight debt.

(iii) Modification or transfer. An obligation that originally qualifies as straight debt ceases to so qualify if the obligation --

(A) Is materially modified so that it no longer satisfies the definition of straight debt; or

(B) Is transferred to a third party who is not an eligible shareholder under paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(iv) Treatment of straight debt for other purposes. An obligation of an S corporation that satisfies the definition of straight debt in paragraph (1)(5)(i) of this section is not treated as a second class of stock even if it is considered equity under general principles of Federal tax law. Such an obligation is generally treated as debt and when so treated is subject to the applicable rules governing indebtedness for other purposes of the Code. Accordingly, interest paid or accrued with respect to a straight debt obligation is generally treated as interest by the corporation and the recipient and does not constitute a distribution to which section 1368 [26 USCS § 1368] applies. However, if a straight debt obligation bears a rate of interest that is unreasonably high, an appropriate portion of the interest may be recharacterized and treated as a payment that is not interest. Such a recharacterization does not result in a second class of stock.

(v) Treatment of C corporation debt upon conversion to S status. If a C corporation has outstanding an obligation that satisfies the definition of straight debt in paragraph (1)(5)(i) of this section, but that is considered equity under general principles of Federal tax law, the obligation is not treated as a second class of stock for purposes of this section if the C corporation converts to S status. In addition, the conversion from C corporation status to S corporation status is not treated as an exchange of debt for stock with respect to such an instrument.

(6) Inadvertent terminations. See section 1362(f) [26 USCS § 1362(f)] and the regulations thereunder for rules relating to inadvertent terminations in cases where the one class of stock requirement has been inadvertently breached.

(7) Effective date. Section 1.1361-1(l) generally applies to taxable years of a corporation beginning on or after May 28, 1992. However, § 1.1361-1(l) does not apply to: an instrument, obligation, or arrangement issued or entered into before May 28, 1992, and not materially modified after that date; a buy-sell agreement, redemption agreement, or agreement restricting transferability entered into before May 28, 1992, and not materially modified after that date; or a call option or similar instrument issued before May 28, 1992, and not materially modified after that date. In addition, a corporation and its shareholders may apply this § 1.1361-1(l) to prior taxable years.

(m) Electing small business trust (ESBT) -- (1) Definition -- (i) General rule. An electing small business trust (ESBT) means any trust if it meets the following requirements: the trust does not have as a beneficiary any person other than an individual, an estate, an organization described in section 170(c)(2) through (5) [26 USCS § 170(c)(2) -- (5)], or an organization described in section 170(c)(1) [26 USCS § 170(c)(1)] that holds a contingent interest in such trust and is not a potential current beneficiary; no interest in the trust has been acquired by purchase; and the trustee of the trust makes a timely ESBT election for the trust.

(ii) Qualified beneficiaries -- (A) In general. For purposes of this section, a beneficiary includes a person who has a present, remainder, or reversionary interest in the trust.

(B) Distributee trusts. A distributee trust is the beneficiary of the ESBT only if the distributee trust is an organization described in section 170(c)(2) or (3) [26 USCS § 170(c)(2) or (3)]. In all other situations, any person who has a beneficial interest in a distributee trust is a beneficiary of the ESBT. A distributee trust is a trust that receives or may receive a distribution from an ESBT, whether the rights to receive the distribution are fixed or contingent, or immediate or deferred.

(C) Powers of appointment. A person in whose favor a power of appointment could be exercised is not a beneficiary of an ESBT until the holder of the power of appointment actually exercises the power in favor of such person.

(D) Nonresident aliens. A nonresident alien as defined in section 7701(b)(1)(B) [26 USCS § 7701(b)(1)(B)] is an eligible beneficiary of an ESBT. However, see paragraph (m)(4)(i) and (m)(5)(iii) of this section if the nonresident alien is a potential current beneficiary of the ESBT (which would result in an ineligible shareholder and termination of the S corporation election).

(iii) Interests acquired by purchase. A trust does not qualify as an ESBT if any interest in the trust has been acquired by purchase. Generally, if a person acquires an interest in the trust and thereby becomes a beneficiary of the trust as defined in paragraph (m)(1)(ii)(A), and any portion of the basis in the acquired interest in the trust is determined under section 1012 [26 USCS § 1012], such interest has been acquired by purchase. This includes a net gift of a beneficial interest in the trust, in which the person acquiring the beneficial interest pays the gift tax. The trust itself may acquire S corporation stock or other property by purchase or in a part-gift, part-sale transaction.

(iv) Ineligible trusts. An ESBT does not include --

(A) Any qualified subchapter S trust (as defined in section 1361(d)(3) [26 USCS § 1361(d)(3)]) if an election under section 1361(d)(2) [26 USCS § 1361(d)(2)] applies with respect to any corporation the stock of which is held by the trust;

(B) Any trust exempt from tax or not subject to tax under subtitle A; or

(C) Any charitable remainder annuity trust or charitable remainder unitrust (as defined in section 664(d) [26 USCS § 664(d)]).

(2) ESBT election -- (i) In general. The trustee of the trust must make the ESBT election by signing and filing, with the service center where the S corporation files its income tax return, a statement that meets the requirements of paragraph (m)(2)(ii) of this section. If there is more than one trustee, the trustee or trustees with authority to legally bind the trust must sign the election statement. If any one of several trustees can legally bind the trust, only one trustee needs to sign the election statement. Generally, only one ESBT election is made for the trust, regardless of the number of S corporations whose stock is held by the ESBT. However, if the ESBT holds stock in multiple S corporations that file in different service centers, the ESBT election must be filed with all the relevant service centers where the corporations file their income tax returns. This requirement applies only at the time of the initial ESBT election; if the ESBT later acquires stock in an S corporation which files its income tax return at a different service center, a new ESBT election is not required.

(ii) Election statement. The election statement must include --

(A) The name, address, and taxpayer identification number of the trust, the potential current beneficiaries, and the S corporations in which the trust currently holds stock. If the trust includes a power described in paragraph (m)(4)(vi)(B) of this section, then the election statement must include a statement that such a power is included in the instrument, but does not need to include the name, address, or taxpayer identification number of any particular charity or any other information regarding the power.

(B) An identification of the election as an ESBT election made under section 1361(e)(3) [26 USCS § 1361(e)(3)];

(C) The first date on which the trust owned stock in each S corporation;

(D) The date on which the election is to become effective (not earlier than 15 days and two months before the date on which the election is filed); and

(E) Representations signed by the trustee stating that --

(1) The trust meets the definitional requirements of section 1361(e)(1) [26 USCS § 1361(e)(1)]; and

(2) All potential current beneficiaries of the trust meet the shareholder requirements of section 1361(b)(1) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)].

(iii) Due date for ESBT election. The ESBT election must be filed within the time requirements prescribed in paragraph (j)(6)(iii) of this section for filing a qualified subchapter S trust (QSST) election.

(iv) Election by a trust described in section 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii) or (iii) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii) or (iii)]. A trust that is a qualified S corporation shareholder under section 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii) or (iii) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii) or (iii)] may elect ESBT treatment at any time during the 2-year period described in those sections or the 16-day-and-2-month period beginning on the date after the end of the 2-year period. If the trust makes an ineffective ESBT election, the trust will continue nevertheless to qualify as an eligible S corporation shareholder for the remainder of the period described in section 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii) or (iii) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii) or (iii)].

(v) No protective election. A trust cannot make a conditional ESBT election that would be effective only in the event the trust fails to meet the requirements for an eligible trust described in section 1361(c)(2)(A)(i) through (iv) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii) -- (iv)]. If a trust attempts to make such a conditional ESBT election and it fails to qualify as an eligible S corporation shareholder under section 1361(c)(2)(A)(i) through (iv) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)(i) -- (iv)], the S corporation election will be ineffective or will terminate because the corporation will have an ineligible shareholder. Relief may be available under section 1362(f) [26 USCS § 1362(f)] for an inadvertent ineffective S corporation election or an inadvertent S corporation election termination. In addition, a trust that qualifies as an ESBT may make an ESBT election notwithstanding that the trust is a wholly-owned grantor trust.

(3) Effect of ESBT election -- (i) General rule. If a trust makes a valid ESBT election, the trust will be treated as an ESBT for purposes of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code as of the effective date of the ESBT election.

(ii) Employer Identification Number. An ESBT has only one employer identification number (EIN). If an existing trust makes an ESBT election, the trust continues to use the EIN it currently uses.

(iii) Taxable year. If an ESBT election is effective on a day other than the first day of the trust's taxable year, the ESBT election does not cause the trust's taxable year to close. The termination of the ESBT election (including a termination caused by a conversion of the ESBT to a QSST) other than on the last day of the trust's taxable year also does not cause the trust's taxable year to close. In either case, the trust files one tax return for the taxable year.

(iv) Allocation of S corporation items. If, during the taxable year of an S corporation, a trust is an ESBT for part of the year and an eligible shareholder under section 1361(c)(2)(A)(i) through (iv) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)(i) -- (iv)] for the rest of the year, the S corporation items are allocated between the two types of trusts under section 1377(a) [26 USCS § 1377(a)]. See § 1.1377-1(a)(2)(iii).

(v) Estimated taxes. If an ESBT election is effective on a day other than the first day of the trust's taxable year, the trust is considered one trust for purposes of estimated taxes under section 6654 [26 USCS § 6654].

(4) Potential current beneficiaries -- (i) In general. For purposes of determining whether a corporation is a small business corporation within the meaning of section 1361(b)(1) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)], each potential current beneficiary of an ESBT generally is treated as a shareholder of the corporation. Subject to the provisions of this paragraph (m)(4), a potential current beneficiary generally is, with respect to any period, any person who at any time during such period is entitled to, or in the discretion of any person may receive, a distribution from the principal or income of the trust. A person is treated as a shareholder of the S corporation at any moment in time when that person is entitled to, or in the discretion of any person may, receive a distribution of principal or income of the trust. No person is treated as a potential current beneficiary solely because that person holds any future interest in the trust.

(ii) Grantor trusts. If all or a portion of an ESBT is treated as owned by a person under subpart E, part I, subchapter J, chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code, such owner is a potential current beneficiary in addition to persons described in paragraph (m)(4)(i) of this section.

(iii) Special rule for dispositions of stock. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (m)(4)(i) of this section, if a trust disposes of all of the stock which it holds in an S corporation, then, with respect to that corporation, any person who first met the definition of a potential

current beneficiary during the 1-year period ending on the date of such disposition is not a potential current beneficiary and thus is not a shareholder of that corporation.

(iv) Distributee trusts -- (A) In general. This paragraph (m)(4)(iv) contains the rules for determining who are the potential current beneficiaries of an ESBT if a distributee trust becomes entitled to, or at the discretion of any person, may receive a distribution from principal or income of an ESBT. A distributee trust does not include a trust that is not currently in existence. For this purpose, a trust is not currently in existence if the trust has no assets and no items of income, loss, deduction, or credit. Thus, if a trust instrument provides for a trust to be funded at some future time, the future trust is not currently a distributee trust.

(B) If the distributee trust is not a trust described in section 1361(c)(2)(A) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)], then the distributee trust is the potential current beneficiary of the ESBT and the corporation's S corporation election terminates.

(C) If the distributee trust is a trust described in section 1361(c)(2)(A) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)], the persons who would be its potential current beneficiaries (as defined in paragraphs (m)(4)(i) and (ii) of this section) if the distributee trust were an ESBT are treated as the potential current beneficiaries of the ESBT. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, however, if the distributee trust is a trust described in section 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii) or (iii) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii) or (iii)], the estate described in section 1361(c)(2)(B) (ii) or (iii) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(B)(ii) or (iii)] is treated as the potential current beneficiary of the ESBT for the 2-year period during which such trust would be permitted as a shareholder.

(D) For the purposes of paragraph (m)(4)(iv)(C) of this section, a trust will be deemed to be described in section 1361(c)(2)(A) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)] if such trust would qualify for a QSST election under section 1361(d) [26 USCS § 1361(d)] or an ESBT election under section 1361(e) [26 USCS § 1361(e)] if it owned S corporation stock.

(v) Contingent distributions. A person who is entitled to receive a distribution only after a specified time or upon the occurrence of a specified event (such as the death of the holder of a power of appointment) is not a potential current beneficiary until such time or the occurrence of such event.

(vi) Currently exercisable powers of appointment and other powers -- (A) Powers of appointment. A person to whom a distribution may be made during any period pursuant to a power of appointment (as described for transfer tax purposes in section 2041 [26 USCS § 2041] and § 20.2041-1(b) of this chapter and section 2514 [26 USCS § 2514] and § 25.2514-1(b) of this chapter) is not a potential current beneficiary unless the power is exercised in favor of that person during the period. It is immaterial for purposes of this paragraph (m)(4)(vi)(A) whether such power of appointment is a "general power of appointment" for transfer tax purposes as described in §§ 20.2041-1(c) and 25.2514-1(c) of this chapter. The mere existence of one or more powers of appointment during the lifetime of a power holder that would permit current distributions from the trust to be made to more than the number of persons described in section 1361(b)(1)(A) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)(A)] or to a person described in section 1361(b)(1)(B) or (C) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)(B) or (C)] will not cause the S corporation election to terminate unless one or more of such powers are exercised, collectively, in favor of an excessive number of persons or in favor of a person who is ineligible to be an S corporation shareholder. For purposes of this paragraph (m)(4)(vi)(A), a "power of appointment" includes a power, regardless of by whom held, to add a beneficiary or class of beneficiaries to the class of potential current beneficiaries, but generally does not include a power held by a fiduciary who is not also a beneficiary of the trust to spray or sprinkle trust distributions among beneficiaries. Nothing in

this paragraph (m)(4)(vi)(A) alters the definition of "power of appointment" for purposes of any provision of the Internal Revenue Code or the regulations.

(B) Powers to distribute to certain organizations not pursuant to powers of appointment. If a trustee or other fiduciary has a power (that does not constitute a power of appointment for transfer tax purposes as described in §§ 20.2041-1(b) and 25.2514-1(b) of this chapter) to make distributions from the trust to one or more members of a class of organizations described in section 1361(c)(6) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(6)], such organizations will be counted collectively as only one potential current beneficiary for purposes of this paragraph (m), except that each organization receiving a distribution also will be counted as a potential current beneficiary. This paragraph (m)(4)(vi)(B) shall not apply to a power to currently distribute to one or more particular charitable organizations described in section 1361(c)(6) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(6)]. Each of such organizations is a potential current beneficiary of the trust.

(vii) Number of shareholders. Each potential current beneficiary of the ESBT, as defined in paragraphs (m)(4)(i) through (vi) of this section, is counted as a shareholder of any S corporation whose stock is owned by the ESBT. During any period in which the ESBT has no potential current beneficiaries, the ESBT is counted as the shareholder. A person is counted as only one shareholder of an S corporation even though that person may be treated as a shareholder of the S corporation by direct ownership and through one or more eligible trusts described in section 1361(c)(2)(A) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)]. Thus, for example, if a person owns stock in an S corporation and is a potential current beneficiary of an ESBT that owns stock in the same S corporation, that person is counted as one shareholder of the S corporation. Similarly, if a husband owns stock in an S corporation and his wife is a potential current beneficiary of an ESBT that owns stock in the same S corporation, the husband and wife will be counted as one shareholder of the S corporation.

(viii) Miscellaneous. Payments made by an ESBT to a third party on behalf of a beneficiary are considered to be payments made directly to the beneficiary. The right of a beneficiary to assign the beneficiary's interest to a third party does not result in the third party being a potential current beneficiary until that interest is actually assigned.

(5) ESBT terminations -- (i) Ceasing to meet ESBT requirements. A trust ceases to be an ESBT on the first day the trust fails to meet the definition of an ESBT under section 1361(e) [26 USCS § 1361(e)]. The last day the trust is treated as an ESBT is the day before the date on which the trust fails to meet the definition of an ESBT.

(ii) Disposition of S stock. In general, a trust ceases to be an ESBT on the first day following the day the trust disposes of all S corporation stock. However, if the trust is using the installment method to report income from the sale or disposition of its stock in an S corporation, the trust ceases to be an ESBT on the day following the earlier of the day the last installment payment is received by the trust or the day the trust disposes of the installment obligation.

(iii) Potential current beneficiaries that are ineligible shareholders. If a potential current beneficiary of an ESBT is not an eligible shareholder of a small business corporation within the meaning of section 1361(b)(1) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)], the S corporation election terminates. For example, the S corporation election will terminate if a nonresident alien becomes a potential current beneficiary of an ESBT. Such a potential current beneficiary is treated as an ineligible shareholder beginning on the day such person becomes a potential current beneficiary, and the S corporation election terminates on that date. However, see the special rule of paragraph (m)(4)(iii) of this section. If the S corporation election terminates, relief may be available under section 1362(f) [26 USCS § 1362(f)].

(6) Revocation of ESBT election. An ESBT election may be revoked only with the consent of the Commissioner. The application for consent to revoke the election must be submitted to the Internal Revenue Service in the form of a letter ruling request under the appropriate revenue procedure.

(7) Converting an ESBT to a QSST. For a trust that seeks to convert from an ESBT to a QSST, the consent of the Commissioner is hereby granted to revoke the ESBT election as of the effective date of the QSST election, if all the following requirements are met:

(i) The trust meets all of the requirements to be a QSST under section 1361(d) [26 USCS § 1361(d)].

(ii) The trustee and the current income beneficiary of the trust sign the QSST election. The QSST election must be filed with the service center where the S corporation files its income tax return. This QSST election must state at the top of the document "ATTENTION ENTITY CONTROL -- CONVERSION OF AN ESBT TO A QSST PURSUANT TO SECTION 1.1361-1(m)" and include all information otherwise required for a QSST election under § 1.1361-1(j)(6). A separate QSST election must be made with respect to the stock of each S corporation held by the trust.

(iii) The trust has not converted from a QSST to an ESBT within the 36-month period preceding the effective date of the new QSST election.

(iv) The date on which the QSST election is to be effective cannot be more than 15 days and two months prior to the date on which the election is filed and cannot be more than 12 months after the date on which the election is filed. If an election specifies an effective date more than 15 days and two months prior to the date on which the election is filed, it will be effective on the day that is 15 days and two months prior to the date on which it is filed. If an election specifies an effective date more than 12 months after the date on which the election is filed, it will be effective on the day that is 12 months after the date it is filed.

(8) Examples. The provisions of this paragraph (m) are illustrated by the following examples in which it is assumed, unless otherwise specified, that all noncorporate persons are citizens or residents of the United States:

Example 1. (i) ESBT election with section 663(c) [26 USCS § 663(c)] separate shares. On January 1, 2003, M contributes S corporation stock to Trust for the benefit of M's three children A, B, and C. Pursuant to section 663(c) [26 USCS § 663(c)], each of Trust's separate shares for A, B, and C will be treated as separate trusts for purposes of determining the amount of distributable net income (DNI) in the application of sections 661 and 662 [26 USCS §§ 661 and 662]. On January 15, 2003, the trustee of Trust files a valid ESBT election for Trust effective January 1, 2003. Trust will be treated as a single ESBT and will have a single S portion taxable under section 641(c) [26 USCS § 641(c)].

(ii) ESBT acquires stock of an additional S corporation. On February 15, 2003, Trust acquires stock of an additional S corporation. Because Trust is already an ESBT, Trust does not need to make an additional ESBT election.

(iii) Section 663(c) [26 USCS § 663(c)] shares of ESBT convert to separate QSSTs. Effective January 1, 2004, A, B, C, and Trust's trustee elect to convert each separate share of Trust into a separate QSST pursuant to paragraph (m)(7) of this section. For each separate share, they file a separate election for each S corporation whose stock is held by Trust. Each separate share will be treated as a separate QSST.

Example 2. (i) Invalid potential current beneficiary. Effective January 1, 2005, Trust makes a valid ESBT election. On January 1, 2006, A, a nonresident alien, becomes a potential current beneficiary of Trust. Trust does not dispose of all of its S corporation stock within one year after January 1, 2006. As of January 1, 2006, A is the potential current beneficiary of Trust and therefore is treated as a shareholder of the S corporation. Because A is not an eligible shareholder of an S corporation under section 1361(b)(1) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)], the S corporation election of any corporation in which Trust holds stock terminates effective January 1, 2006. Relief may be available under section 1362(f) [26 USCS § 1362(f)].

(ii) Invalid potential current beneficiary and disposition of S stock. Assume the same facts as in Example 2 (i) except that within one year after January 1, 2006, trustee of Trust disposes of all Trust's S corporation stock. A is not considered a potential current beneficiary of Trust and therefore is not treated as a shareholder of any S corporation in which Trust previously held stock.

Example 3 . Subpart E trust. M transfers stock in X, an S corporation, and other assets to Trust for the benefit of B and B 's siblings. M retains no powers or interest in Trust. Under section 678(a) [26 USCS § 678(a)], B is treated as the owner of a portion of Trust that includes a portion of the X stock. No beneficiary has acquired any portion of his or her interest in Trust by purchase, and Trust is not an ineligible trust under paragraph (m)(1)(iv) of this section. Trust is eligible to make an ESBT election.

Example 4. Subpart E trust continuing after grantor's death. On January 1, 2003, M transfers stock in X, an S corporation, and other assets to Trust. Under the terms of Trust, the trustee of Trust has complete discretion to distribute the income or principal to M during M 's lifetime and to M 's children upon M 's death. During M 's life, M is treated as the owner of Trust under section 677 [26 USCS § 677]. The trustee of Trust makes a valid election to treat Trust as an ESBT effective January 1, 2003. On March 28, 2004, M dies. Under applicable local law, Trust does not terminate on M 's death. Trust continues to be an ESBT after M 's death, and no additional ESBT election needs to be filed for Trust after M 's death.

Example 5. Potential current beneficiaries and distributee trust holding S corporation stock. Trust-1 has a valid ESBT election in effect. The trustee of Trust-1 has the power to make distributions to A directly or to any trust created for the benefit of A. On January 1, 2003, M creates Trust-2 for the benefit of A. Also on January 1, 2003, the trustee of Trust-1 distributes some S corporation stock to Trust-2. A, as the current income beneficiary of Trust-2, makes a timely and effective election to treat Trust-2 as a QSST. Because Trust-2 is a valid S corporation shareholder, the distribution to Trust-2 does not terminate the ESBT election of Trust-1. Trust-2 itself will not be counted toward the shareholder limit of section 1361(b)(1)(A) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)(A)]. Additionally, because A is already counted as an S corporation shareholder because of A 's status as a potential current income beneficiary of Trust-1, A is not counted again by reason of A 's status as the deemed owner of Trust-2.

Example 6. Potential current beneficiaries and distributee trust not holding S corporation stock. (i) Distributee trust that would itself qualify as an ESBT. Trust-1 holds stock in X, an S corporation, and has a valid ESBT election in effect. Under the terms of Trust-1, the trustee has discretion to make distributions to A, B, and Trust-2, a trust for the benefit of C, D, and E. Trust-2 would qualify to be an ESBT, but it owns no S corporation stock and has made no ESBT election. Under paragraph (m)(4)(iv) of this section, Trust-2's potential current beneficiaries are treated as the potential current beneficiaries of Trust-1 and are counted as shareholders for purposes of section 1361(b)(1) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)]. Thus, A, B, C, D, and E are potential current beneficiaries of Trust-1 and are counted as shareholders for purposes of section

1361(b)(1) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)]. Trust-2 itself will not be counted as a shareholder of Trust-1 for purposes of section 1361(b)(1) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)].

(ii) Distributee trust that would not qualify as an ESBT or a QSST. Assume the same facts as in paragraph (i) of this Example 6 except that D is a nonresident alien. Trust-2 would not be eligible to make an ESBT or QSST election if it owned S corporation stock and therefore Trust-2 is a potential current beneficiary of Trust-1. Since Trust-2 is not an eligible shareholder, X's S corporation election terminates.

(iii) Distributee trust that is a section 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii)] trust. Assume the same facts as in paragraph (i) of this Example 6 except that Trust-2 is a trust treated as owned by A under section 676 [26 USCS § 676] because A has the power to revoke Trust-2 at any time prior to A's death. On January 1, 2003, A dies. Because Trust-2 is a trust described in section 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(A)(ii)] during the 2-year period beginning on the day of A's death, under paragraph (m)(4)(iv)(C) of this section, Trust-2's only potential current beneficiary is the person listed in section 1361(c)(2)(B)(ii) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(2)(B)(ii)], A's estate. Thus, B and A's estate are potential current beneficiaries of Trust-1 and are counted as shareholders for purposes of section 1361(b)(1) [26 USCS § 1361(b)(1)].

Example 7. Potential current beneficiaries and powers of appointment. M creates Trust from which A has a right to all net income and funds it with S corporation stock. A also has a currently exercisable power to appoint income or principal to anyone except A, A's creditors, A's estate, and the creditors of A's estate. The potential current beneficiaries of Trust for any period will be A and each person who receives a distribution from Trust pursuant to A's exercise of A's power of appointment during that period.

Example 8. Power to distribute to an unlimited class of charitable organizations not pursuant to a power of appointment. M creates Trust from which A has a right to all net income and funds it with S corporation stock. In addition, the trustee of Trust, who is not A or a descendant of M, has the power to make discretionary distributions of principal to the living descendants of M and to any organizations described in section 1361(c)(6) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(6)]. The potential current beneficiaries of Trust for any period will be A, each then-living descendant of M, and each exempt organization described in section 1361(c)(6) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(6)] that receives a distribution during that period. In addition, the class of exempt organizations will be counted as one potential current beneficiary.

Example 9. Power to distribute to a class of named charitable organizations not pursuant to a power of appointment. M creates Trust from which A has a right to all net income and funds it with S corporation stock. In addition, the trustee of Trust, who is not A or a descendant of M, has the power to make discretionary distributions of principal to the living descendants of M and to X, Y, and Z, each of which is an organization described in section 1361(c)(6) [26 USCS § 1361(c)(6)]. The potential current beneficiaries of Trust for any period will be A, X, Y, Z, and each living descendant of M.

(9) Effective date. This paragraph (m) is applicable for taxable years of ESBTs beginning on and after May 14, 2002. Paragraphs (m)(2)(ii)(A), (m)(4)(iii) and (vi), and (m)(8), Example 2, Example 5, Example 7, Example 8, and Example 9 of this section are effective on August 14, 2008.