Uniform Law Commission
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF COMMISSIONERS ON UNIFORM STATE LAWS

111 N. Wabash Ave.
Suite 1010
Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 450-6600 tel
(312) 450-6601 fax
www.uniformlaws.org

THE UNIFORM PROTECTED SERIES ACT

- A Summary -

In response to the growing popularity of series limited liability companies in the United States, the Uniform Law Commission promulgated the Uniform Protected Series Act (UPSA). The UPSA is drafted as a "module" to be inserted into the enacting state's existing LLC act and may be adopted whether or not the state's LLC statute is based on the Uniform Limited Liability Company Act.

Article 1 contains general provisions, such as: definitions, a description of the nature of a protected series, as well as its power, purpose, and duration; how the protected series is governed by the operating agreement of the LLC; and rules for applying certain provisions of the state's existing LLC act to protected series. The act uses the term "protected series" to highlight the internal liability shields which are a defining characteristic of the act, and to avoid confusion with the term "series," which is often used to refer to classes of interests in business entities that do not affect liabilities to third parties. If the requirements of the UPSA are satisfied, then assets (referred to as "associated assets") of one series are not available to satisfy claims of creditors of the LLC or of other protected series of the LLC.

Article 2 explains how to establish a protected series. As a default matter, all members must consent to establish a protected series. Further, the LLC must deliver a protected series designation to the Secretary of State, signed by the company. Article 2 also provides name, registered agent, and service of process provisions, as well as methods to obtain a certificate of good standing and reporting requirements.

Article 3 includes the record-keeping requirements that must be satisfied for an asset to qualify as an "associated asset" under the act. Unless provided otherwise in the operating agreement, the owner of an asset is responsible for meeting the record-keeping requirements for the asset. These provisions are designed to provide transparency of series transactions. Article 3 also provides rules for associating members with the protected series and addresses series transferable interests, management, and non-associated members' rights to information.

Article 4 covers limitations on liability and enforcement of claims. The act provides two types of liability shields: vertical and horizontal. The traditional vertical shield protects equity holders and managers from status-based liability for an organization's obligations. The horizontal shield protects a protected series of a series LLC and its associated assets from liability for the debts, obligations, or other liabilities of the company or another protected series of the company. This article contains provisions for claims seeking to disregard limitation of liability, protected series-level charging orders for judgment creditors, and enforcement of judgments against certain assets of the company. A creditor may enforce a judgment against another protected series of a series LLC by pursuing assets owned by the company or another protected series of the company if the act's requirements are not satisfied for these other assets (or "non-associated assets").

Article 5 addresses grounds for dissolution and provisions for winding up. Under the act, dissolution of a series LLC immediately dissolves every protected series of the company. Reinstatement of an administratively dissolved series or the rescinding of a voluntarily dissolved company has the same retroactive effect at the protected series level.

Article 6 includes restrictions on mergers and other entity transactions involving LLCs and protected series. The article provides additional definitions, and provides that a protected series may not be a party to an entity transaction. A series LLC may be a party to a merger if each other party to the merger is an LLC, and the surviving company is not created in a merger. Furthermore, Article 6 includes provisions dealing with plans, statements that must be filed with appropriate authorities, and effects of mergers. It also provides that a creditor's right that existed immediately before a merger may be enforced after the merger.

Article 7 addresses foreign protected series. The law of the jurisdiction of formation of a foreign series LLC governs certain aspects of a foreign protected series. Article 7 also provides guidelines for determining whether a foreign series LLC or foreign protected series of the company is doing business in the state. With respect to foreign LLCs, this act follows the common law approach and applies an enacting state's jurisprudence on piercing and affiliate liability companies and foreign protected series in carefully and narrowly delineated circumstances. The article also provides registration requirements for foreign protected series and disclosure requirements in cases where a foreign LLC or foreign protected series is a party to a proceeding in the state.

Article 8 contains miscellaneous provisions as well as transition rules for pre-existing series limited liability companies and protected series.

For further information about the UPSA, please contact ULC Legislative Counsel Kari Bearman at (312) 450-6617 or by email at kbearman@uniformlaws.org.