

## **Windstream Pension Plan**

### **Section 436 Notice - FAQ**

Q-1: Why are certain restrictions on payment forms being imposed on new pension payments under the Windstream Pension Plan?

A: In accordance with Internal Revenue Service rules and Federal pension law, the Plan is required to impose certain restrictions on new pension payments when the company files for Bankruptcy.

Q-2: I heard about payment restrictions under the pension plan, do these apply to me?

A: The restrictions apply to you only if you were eligible to receive your pension in a restricted form of payment under the pension plan. Your summary plan description lists the generally available payment forms.

Q-3: What payment forms are restricted during the Bankruptcy?

A: The following payment forms are restricted during the Bankruptcy:

1. Lump-sums over \$5,000.
2. Social Security level income payments, which provide that you receive an increased monthly benefit before Social Security eligibility and then a reduced amount thereafter, so that your total benefits (pension plus estimated Social Security) will remain about the same throughout your retirement.
3. 10-year certain only payments, which provide that you receive monthly payments for 120 months, then all payments stop. If you should die prior to receiving 120 monthly payments, payments will continue for the balance of the 120-month period to a beneficiary you designate.
4. Lump sum death benefits other than payments of \$5,000 or less.
5. Employee contribution refunds. These are refunds of employee contributions that generally were made before 1974.

6. VAF Refunds. These are cash surrender value on certain individual insurance policies that generally were acquired before 1974.

7. Certain Conestoga Death Benefits.

Q-4: When did the restrictions on payment forms become effective?

A: The restrictions on payment forms became effective on Feb. 25, 2019, when the company filed for Bankruptcy.

Q-5: If I have an election kit with a commencement date before Feb. 25, 2019, can I elect a lump sum or other restricted payment form?

A: Generally, yes. Please contact a Bank of America Merrill Lynch representative at 1-800-228-4015 to verify if your commencement kit will be honored.

Q-6: If I have an election kit with a commencement date after Feb. 25, 2019 OR if I already elected a lump sum using an election kit with a commencement date that is on or after February 25, 2019, will my election be honored?

A: No. If your election kit has a commencement date that is on or after February 25, 2019, your election of any lump sum or other restricted payment form will not be honored. If you have already submitted your election forms to Merrill Lynch electing a restricted option, you will automatically receive a revised election kit within the next few weeks. Please contact a Bank of America Merrill Lynch representative at 1-800-228-4015 if you have questions.

Q-7: If my election will not be honored, what can I do?

A: You can make a new election of one of the permissible forms of payment (for example, a qualified joint and survivor annuity with your spouse or a life annuity). You can also defer commencement of payments to a later date, but no later than your attainment of age 70-1/2. You will automatically receive a revised election kit within the next few weeks. Please contact a Bank of America Merrill Lynch representative at 1-800-228-4015 if you have questions.

Q-8: Will lump sum payments be made available again?

A: The restrictions on payment forms will be lifted if the Plan's funding status improves to at least 100%, as determined by the Plan's actuaries, or when Windstream emerges from Bankruptcy. If the Plan is terminated as part of a distress termination in the Bankruptcy, the restricted forms including a lump sum will not be available again.

Q-9: If I am actively employed and no longer want to retire because lump sums are not available, what can I do?

A: You should contact your Human Resources Business Partner regarding revoking your retirement.

Q-10: If the pension plan is terminated, will I lose my pension benefits?

A: If the pension plan is terminated without being fully funded, which means there is not enough money in the trust fund to pay all current and projected future benefits, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, a Federal agency ("PBGC"), will step in to pay pension benefits. Most people receive all their pension benefits, but some people may not have access to all options. No decision has been made by Windstream or the PBGC regarding termination of the pension plan.

The PBGC guarantee generally covers: (1) normal and early retirement benefits; (2) disability benefits if you become disabled before Feb. 25, 2019; and (3) certain benefits for your survivors. The PBGC guarantee generally does not cover: (1) benefits greater than the maximum guaranteed amount set by law for 2019; (2) some or all of benefit increases and new benefits based on plan provisions that have been in place for fewer than five years as of Feb. 25, 2019; (3) benefits for which you have not met all of the requirements as of Feb. 25, 2019; (4) certain early retirement payments (such as supplemental benefits that stop when you become eligible for Social Security) that result in an early retirement monthly benefit greater than your monthly benefit at the pension plan's normal retirement age; and (5) non-pension benefits (for example, certain death benefits).

Q-11: I went on Merrill Lynch's internet site and saw that lump sums are still available, is that correct?

A: No. The Merrill Lynch pension system is being updated for these changes. Election kits that consider the new changes should be completed by April 1, 2019. In the interim, while the programming changes are being completed, a special process is being established for Merrill Lynch to begin producing election kits to reflect the new restrictions.

Q-12: Who should I contact with questions?

A: You should contact a Bank of America Merrill Lynch representative at 1-800-228-4015. You may also contact the Plan Administrator at Windstream Benefits Committee, 4001 Rodney Parham Rd., Little Rock, AR 72212.