## FSP FAS 150-c



October 29, 2003

Director, TA&I-FSP Financial Accounting Standards Board 401 Merritt 7 P.O. Box 5116 Norwalk, CT 06856-5116

Re: Proposed FASB Staff Position No. 150-c.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on Proposed FASB Staff Position No. 150-c, entitled, <u>Effective Date and Transition for Mandatorily Redeemable Financial Instruments of Certain Nonpublic Finities of FASB Statement No. 150, Accounting for Certain Financial Instruments with Characteristics of both <u>Liabilities and Equity</u> ("Statement 150"). Callison Architecture, Inc. is a privately owned, sub-chapter S corporation with projects and clients throughout the world.</u>

Upon termination of an owner's employment (retirement, death, or otherwise), his/her equity interest is repurchased by the firm in order to maintain control over the ownership of each firm. Further, certain states' licensing provisions for professional services firms require professional employee ownership. We are very concerned about the implications of Statement 150 on our financial statements, and the ability offertively explain to our owners, clients and potential clients, financial institutions, vendors, and other users of our financial statements that the application of this new accounting standard will completely eliminate our recorded equity.

Therefore, we not only support deferral of Statement 150, but we request that the FASB reconsider the issue of mandatorily redeemable securities for nonpublic entities.

We strongly disagree that mandatorily redeemable common shares be considered liabilities. To characterize them as such is a misrepresentation of the substance of our relationship with our owners, and of their residual interests in the success and failure of each firm. Even with a mandatory redemption provision in the shareholders' or partnership agreement, the common shareholders or partners exercise ownership control and are subject to ownership risk. This control even would allow them to cancel any contractual redemption provision, for example, if they decide to sell the company to a third party. The risks are apparent should the business falter or fail, and this distinguishes the owner from all other obligees.

Clearly, in addition to controlling ownership, redemption features in owner agreements of privately-owned firms exist to provide their owners with liquidity that the "public markets" provide for public entities. By eliminating the equity sections of most nonpublic companies, Statement 150 will put nonpublic companies at a competitive disadvantage compared to similar public entities and global competitors not subject to these accounting rules. Nonpublic companies' balance sheets, on their face, will appear insolvent, when all other things being equal and assuming a going concern, there is substantively little difference between public and nonpublic entities. In addition, owners in each firm,

Proposed FSP on Statement 150 (FSP FAS 150-c)

Comment Letter No. 61

Director, TA&I-FSP Financial Accounting Standards Board October 29, 2003 Page 2

when seeking their own personal financing, will be placed at a competitive disadvantage when they are asked to submit financial statements supporting the valuation of their equity interests in the firm.

We also request the FASB reconsider this accounting change on the basis of cost-benefit for nonpublic companies and the users of their financial statements. Currently, nonpublic entities are required to disclose the redemption provisions in the notes to the financial statements; a practice incorporated, generally accepted and understood in the user community for decades. An alternative would be to carve out an exception to the mandatorily redeemable financial instruments provisions of Statement 150 for nonpublic entity ownership interests, and provide a requirement to include the wording "subject to mandatory redemption" in the equity section of the balance sheet. This would eliminate the non-productive time and expense of having nonpublic companies and their counterparties renegotiate and amend agreements containing covenants or representations related to reported equity.

It is for these reasons that we request that FASB reconsider the issue of mandatorily redeemable securities for non public entities.

Sincerely

Judy Peterson, CPA

Chief Financial Officer

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cc; Lawrence Smith, Chair, Financial Accounting Standards Board