

Internal Revenue Service, Treasury

§ 1.856-1

election applies (not including such dividends with respect to which an election has been made for a prior year under section 855) for the purpose of determining whether the aggregate of the designated capital gain dividends with respect to such taxable year of the company is greater than the excess of the net long-term capital gain over the net short-term capital loss of the company. See section 852(b)(3)(C) and paragraph (c) of § 1.852-4.

(f) *Foreign tax election.* Section 855(d) provides that in the case of an election made under section 853 (relating to foreign taxes), the shareholder of the investment company shall consider the foreign income received, and the foreign tax paid, as received and paid, respectively, in the shareholder's taxable year in which distribution is made.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11910, Nov. 26, 1960, as amended by T.D. 6921, 32 FR 8757, June 20, 1967]

REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS

§ 1.856-0 Revenue Act of 1978 amendments not included.

The regulations under part II of subchapter M of the Code do not reflect the amendments made by the Revenue Act of 1978, other than the changes made by section 362 of the Act, relating to deficiency dividends.

(Sec. 856(d)(4) (90 Stat. 1750; 26 U.S.C. 856(d)(4)); sec. 856(e)(5) (88 Stat. 2113; 26 U.S.C. 856(e)(5)); sec. 856(f)(2) (90 Stat. 1751; 26 U.S.C. 856(f)(2)); sec. 856(g)(2) (90 Stat. 1753; 26 U.S.C. 856(g)(2)); sec. 858(a) (74 Stat. 1008; 26 U.S.C. 858(a)); sec. 859(c) (90 Stat. 1743; 26 U.S.C. 859(c)); sec. 859(e) (90 Stat. 1744; 26 U.S.C. 859(e)); sec. 6001 (68A Stat. 731; 26 U.S.C. 6001); sec. 6011 (68A Stat. 732; 26 U.S.C. 6011); sec. 6071 (68A Stat. 749; 26 U.S.C. 6071); sec. 6091 (68A Stat. 752; 26 U.S.C. 6091); sec. 7805 (68A Stat. 917; 26 U.S.C. 7805), Internal Revenue Code of 1954; 860(e) (92 Stat. 2849; 26 U.S.C. 860(e)); sec. 860(g) (92 Stat. 2850; 26 U.S.C. 860(g))

[T.D. 7767, 46 FR 11265, Feb. 6, 1981, as amended by T.D. 7936, 49 FR 2106, Jan. 18, 1984]

§ 1.856-1 Definition of real estate investment trust.

(a) *In general.* The term "real estate investment trust" means a corporation, trust, or association which (1) meets the status conditions in section 856(a) and paragraph (b) of this section,

and (2) satisfies the gross income and asset diversification requirements under the limitations of section 856(c) and § 1.856-2. (See, however, paragraph (f) of this section, relating to the requirement that, for taxable years beginning before October 5, 1976, a real estate investment trust must be an unincorporated trust or unincorporated association).

(b) *Qualifying conditions.* To qualify as a "real estate investment trust", an organization must be one—

(1) Which is managed by one or more trustees or directors,

(2) The beneficial ownership of which is evidenced by transferable shares or by transferable certificates of beneficial interest,

(3) Which would be taxable as a domestic corporation but for the provisions of part II, subchapter M, chapter 1 of the Code,

(4) Which, in the case of a taxable year beginning before October 5, 1976, does not hold any property (other than foreclosure property) primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of its trade or business,

(5) Which is neither (i) a financial institution to which section 585, 586, or 593 applies, nor (ii) an insurance company to which subchapter L applies,

(6) The beneficial ownership of which is held by 100 or more persons, and

(7) Which would not be a personal holding company (as defined in section 542) if all of its gross income constituted personal holding company income (as defined in section 543).

(c) *Determination of status.* The conditions described in subparagraphs (1) through (5) of paragraph (b) of this section must be met during the entire taxable year and the condition described in subparagraph (6) of paragraph (b) of this section must exist during at least 335 days of a taxable year of 12 months or during a proportionate part of a taxable year of less than 12 months. The days during which the latter condition must exist need not be consecutive. In determining the minimum number of days during which the condition described in paragraph (b)(6) of this section is required to exist in a taxable year of less than 12 months, fractional days shall be disregarded. For example, in a taxable year of 310 days, the actual

number of days prescribed would be 284 $\frac{38}{73}$ days ($\frac{310}{365}$ of 335). The fractional day is disregarded so that the required condition in such taxable year need exist for only 284 days.

(d) *Rules applicable to status requirements.* For purposes of determining whether an organization meets the conditions and requirements in section 856(a), the following rules shall apply.

(1) *Trustee.* The term “trustee” means a person who holds legal title to the property of the real estate investment trust, and has such rights and powers as will meet the requirement of “centralization of management” under paragraph (c) of §301.7701-2 of this chapter (Regulations on Procedure and Administration). Thus, the trustee must have continuing exclusive authority over the management of the trust, the conduct of its affairs, and (except as limited by section 856(d)(3) and §1.856-4) the management and disposition of the trust property. For example, such authority will be considered to exist even though the trust instrument grants to the shareholders any or all of the following rights and powers: To elect or remove trustees; to terminate the trust; and to ratify amendments to the trust instrument proposed by the trustee. The existence of a mere fiduciary relationship does not, in itself, make one a trustee for purposes of section 856(a)(1). The trustee will be considered to hold legal title to the property of the trust, for purposes of this subparagraph, whether the title is held in the name of the trust itself, in the name of one or more of the trustees, or in the name of a nominee for the exclusive benefit of the trust.

(2) *Beneficial ownership.* Beneficial ownership shall be evidenced by transferable shares, or by transferable certificates of beneficial interest, and (subject to the provisions of paragraph (c) of this section) must be held by 100 or more persons, determined without reference to any rules of attribution. Provisions in the trust instrument or corporate charter or bylaws which permit the trustee or directors to redeem shares or to refuse to transfer shares in any case where the trustee or directors, in good faith, believe that a failure to redeem shares or that a transfer

of shares would result in the loss of status as a real estate investment trust will not render the shares “non-transferable.” For purposes of the regulations under part II of subchapter M, the terms “stockholder,” “stockholders,” “shareholder,” and “shareholders” include holders of beneficial interest in a real estate investment trust, the terms “stock,” “shares,” and “shares of stock” include certificates of beneficial interest, and the term “shares” includes shares of stock.

(3) *Unincorporated organization taxable as a domestic corporation.* The determination of whether an unincorporated organization would be taxable as a domestic corporation, in the absence of the provisions of part II of subchapter M, shall be made in accordance with the provisions of section 7701(a) (3) and (4) and the regulations thereunder and for such purposes an otherwise qualified real estate investment trust is deemed to satisfy the “objective to carry on business” requirement of paragraph (a) of §301.7701-2 of this chapter. (Regulations on Procedure and Administration).

(4) *Property held for sale to customers.* In the case of a taxable year beginning before October 5, 1976, a real estate investment trust may not hold any property (other than foreclosure property) primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of its trade or business. Whether property is held for sale to customers in the ordinary course of the trade or business of a real estate investment trust depends upon the facts and circumstances in each case.

(5) *Personal holding company.* A corporation, trust, or association, even though it may otherwise meet the requirements of part II of subchapter M, will not be a real estate investment trust if, by considering all of its gross income as personal holding company income under section 543, it would be a personal holding company as defined in section 542. Thus, if at any time during the last half of the trust’s taxable year more than 50 percent in value of its outstanding stock is owned (directly or indirectly under the provisions of section 544) by or for not more than 5 individuals, the stock ownership requirement in section 542(a)(2) will be met

and the trust would be a personal holding company. See §1.857-8, relating to record requirements for purposes of determining whether the trust is a personal holding company.

(e) *Other rules applicable.* To the extent that other provisions of chapter 1 of the Code are not inconsistent with those under part II of subchapter M there of and the regulations thereunder, such provisions will apply with respect to both the real estate investment trust and its shareholders in the same manner that they would apply to any other organization which would be taxable as a domestic corporation. For example:

(1) Taxable income of a real estate investment trust is computed in the same manner as that of a domestic corporation;

(2) Section 301, relating to distributions of property, applies to distributions by a real estate investment trust in the same manner as it would apply to a domestic corporation;

(3) Sections 302, 303, 304, and 331 are applicable in determining whether distributions by a real estate investment trust are to be treated as in exchange for stock;

(4) Section 305 applies to distributions by a real estate investment trust of its own stock;

(5) Section 311 applies to distributions by a real estate investment trust;

(6) Except as provided in section 857(d), earnings and profits of a real estate investment trust are computed in the same manner as in the case of a domestic corporation;

(7) Section 316, relating to the definition of a dividend, applies to distributions by a real estate investment trust; and

(8) Section 341, relating to collapsible corporations, applies to gain on the sale or exchange of, or a distribution which is in exchange for, stock in a real estate investment trust in the same manner that it would apply to a domestic corporation.

(f) *Unincorporated status required for certain taxable years.* In the case of a taxable year beginning before October 5, 1976, a real estate investment trust must be an unincorporated trust or unincorporated association. Accordingly, in applying the regulations under part

II of subchapter M of the Code with respect to such a taxable year, the term "an unincorporated trust or unincorporated association" is to be substituted for the term "a corporation, trust, or association" each place it appears, and the references to "directors" and "corporate charter or bylaws" are to be disregarded.

(Sec. 856(d)(4) (90 Stat. 1750; 26 U.S.C. 856(d)(4)); sec. 856(e)(5) (88 Stat. 2113; 26 U.S.C. 856(e)(5)); sec. 856(f)(2) (90 Stat. 1751; 26 U.S.C. 856(f)(2)); sec. 856(g)(2) (90 Stat. 1753; 26 U.S.C. 856(g)(2)); sec. 858(a) (74 Stat. 1008; 26 U.S.C. 858(a)); sec. 859(c) (90 Stat. 1743; 26 U.S.C. 859(c)); sec. 859(e) (90 Stat. 1744; 26 U.S.C. 859(e)); sec. 6001 (68A Stat. 731; 26 U.S.C. 6001); sec. 6011 (68A Stat. 732; 26 U.S.C. 6011); sec. 6071 (68A Stat. 749; 26 U.S.C. 6071); sec. 6091 (68A Stat. 752; 26 U.S.C. 6091); sec. 7805 (68A Stat. 917; 26 U.S.C. 7805), Internal Revenue Code of 1954)

[T.D. 6598, 27 FR 4082, Apr. 28, 1962, as amended by T.D. 6928, 32 FR 13221, Sept. 19, 1967; T.D. 7767, 46 FR 11265, Feb. 6, 1981]

§ 1.856-2 Limitations.

(a) *Effective date.* The provisions of part II, subchapter M, chapter 1 of the Code, and the regulations thereunder apply only to taxable years of a real estate investment trust beginning after December 31, 1960.

(b) *Election.* Under the provisions of section 856(c)(1), a trust, even though it satisfies the other requirements of part II of subchapter M for the taxable year, will not be considered a "real estate investment trust" for such year, within the meaning of such part II, unless it elects to be a real estate investment trust for such taxable year, or has made such an election for a previous taxable year which has not been terminated or revoked under section 856(g)(1) or (2). The election shall be made by the trust by computing taxable income as a real estate investment trust in its return for the first taxable year for which it desires the election to apply, even though it may have otherwise qualified as a real estate investment trust for a prior year. No other method of making such election is permitted. An election cannot be revoked with respect to a taxable year beginning before October 5, 1976. Thus, the failure of an organization to be a qualified real estate investment trust for a taxable year beginning before October 5, 1976,