

MARKEL CORP
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THE INFORMATION IN THIS PRELIMINARY PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT IS NOT COMPLETE AND MAY BE CHANGED. THIS PRELIMINARY PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT AND THE ACCOMPANYING PROSPECTUS ARE NOT AN OFFER TO SELL THESE SECURITIES AND ARE NOT A SOLICITATION OF AN OFFER TO BUY THESE SECURITIES IN ANY JURISDICTION WHERE THE OFFER OR SALE IS NOT PERMITTED.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION

PRELIMINARY PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT DATED OCTOBER 30, 2017

Prospectus Supplement

(To prospectus dated March 2, 2015)

\$

MARKEL CORPORATION

\$ % Senior Notes due 2027

\$ % Senior Notes due 2047

We are offering \$ aggregate principal amount of % senior notes due 2027 (2027 Notes) and \$ aggregate principal amount of % senior notes due 2047 (2047 Notes). We will pay interest on the notes semi-annually on and of each year, beginning , 2018. The 2027 Notes will mature on , 2027, and the 2047 Notes will mature on , 2047.

Unless otherwise indicated, references in this prospectus supplement to the notes are references to the 2027 Notes and the 2047 Notes.

We may redeem all or a portion of the notes of each series at our option, at any time or from time to time, at the applicable redemption price described in this prospectus supplement. See Description of Notes Optional Redemption. The notes will not have the benefit of any sinking fund.

The notes will be our direct, unsecured and unsubordinated obligations and will rank equally in right of payment with our existing and future unsecured and unsubordinated indebtedness. The notes will be issued in registered form in denominations of \$2,000 and integral multiples of \$1,000 in excess thereof.

The notes are new issues of securities with no established trading market. We do not intend to apply for listing of the notes on any securities exchange or for quotation of the notes on any automated dealer quotation system.

Investing in the notes involves risks that are described in the Risk Factors section beginning on page S-9 of this prospectus supplement.

	Price Per 2027 Note	Total 2027 Notes	Price Per 2047 Note	Total 2047 Notes
Public Underwriting Price	%	\$ (1)	%	\$ (1)
Underwriting Discount	%	\$	%	\$
Proceeds, before expenses, to Markel	%	\$ (1)	%	\$ (1)

(1) Plus accrued interest from _____, 2017, if settlement occurs after that date.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

Joint Book-Running Managers

Citigroup

Wells Fargo Securities

The notes will be ready for delivery in book-entry form only through The Depository Trust Company on or about _____, 2017.

The date of this prospectus supplement is _____, 2017.

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Prospectus

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This document is in two parts. The first part is this prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of the notes we are offering and certain other matters relating to us and our financial condition. The second part, the accompanying prospectus, gives more general information about securities we may offer from time to time, some of which does not apply to the notes we are offering. Generally, when we refer to this prospectus, we are referring to both parts of this document combined. To the extent the description of the notes in this prospectus supplement differs from the description of debt securities in the accompanying prospectus, you should rely on the information in this prospectus supplement.

We have not authorized anyone, and the underwriters and their affiliates have not authorized anyone, to provide you with any information or to make any representations not included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. We and the underwriters and their affiliates do not take any responsibility for, and can provide no assurances as to, the reliability of any information that others may provide to you. We are not, and the underwriters are not, making an offer to sell these securities in any jurisdiction where the

offer or sale is not permitted. You should assume that the information appearing in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference is accurate only as of their respective dates. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

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NOTE ON FORWARD-LOOKING AND CAUTIONARY STATEMENTS

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus contain or incorporate by reference statements concerning or incorporating our expectations, assumptions, plans, objectives, future financial or operating performance and other statements that are not historical facts. These statements are forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such statements may use words such as anticipate, believe, estimate, expect, intend, predict, project and similar expressions as they relate to us or management.

There are risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results to differ materially from predicted results in forward-looking statements. Factors that may cause actual results to differ are often presented with the forward-looking statements themselves. Additional factors that could cause actual results to differ from those predicted are set forth under the headings Risk Factors, Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations and Business Overview in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2016, under Item 5. Other Information in our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2017, and in the Risk Factors sections of this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or in the documents incorporated herein and therein by reference, or are included in the items listed below:

our anticipated premium volume is based on current knowledge and assumes no significant man-made or natural catastrophes, no significant changes in products or personnel and no adverse changes in market conditions;

the effect of cyclical trends, including demand and pricing in the insurance and reinsurance markets;

actions by competitors, including the application of new or disruptive technologies or business models and consolidation, and the effect of competition on market trends and pricing;

we offer insurance and reinsurance coverage against terrorist acts in connection with some of our programs, and in other instances we are legally required to offer terrorism insurance; in both circumstances, we actively manage our exposure, but if there is a covered terrorist attack, we could sustain material losses;

the frequency and severity of man-made and natural catastrophes (including earthquakes, fires and weather-related catastrophes) may exceed expectations, are unpredictable and, in the case of fires and weather-related catastrophes, may be exacerbated if, as many forecast, conditions in the oceans and atmosphere result in increased hurricane, flood, drought or other adverse weather-related activity;

emerging claim and coverage issues, changing legal and social trends, and inherent uncertainties in the loss estimation process can adversely impact the adequacy of our loss reserves and our allowance for reinsurance recoverables;

reinsurance reserves are subject to greater uncertainty than insurance reserves, primarily because of reliance upon the original underwriting decisions made by ceding companies and the longer lapse of time from the

occurrence of loss events to their reporting to the reinsurer for ultimate resolution;

changes in the assumptions and estimates used in establishing reserves for our life and annuity reinsurance book (which is in runoff), for example, changes in assumptions and estimates of mortality, longevity, morbidity and interest rates, could result in material increases in our estimated loss reserves for such business;

adverse developments in insurance coverage litigation or other legal or administrative proceedings could result in material increases in our estimates of loss reserves;

the failure or inadequacy of any loss limitation methods we employ;

changes in the availability, costs and quality of reinsurance coverage, which may impact our ability to write or continue to write certain lines of business;

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industry and economic conditions, deterioration in reinsurer credit quality and coverage disputes can affect the ability or willingness of reinsurers to pay balances due;

after the commutation of ceded reinsurance contracts, any subsequent adverse development in the re-assumed loss reserves will result in a charge to earnings;

regulatory actions can impede our ability to charge adequate rates and efficiently allocate capital;

general economic and market conditions and industry specific conditions, including extended economic recessions or expansions; prolonged periods of slow economic growth; inflation or deflation; fluctuations in foreign currency exchange rates, commodity and energy prices and interest rates; volatility in the credit and capital markets; and other factors;

economic conditions, actual or potential defaults in municipal bonds or sovereign debt obligations, volatility in interest and foreign currency exchange rates and changes in market value of concentrated investments can have a significant impact on the fair value of our fixed maturity and equity securities, as well as the carrying value of our other assets and liabilities, and this impact may be heightened by market volatility;

economic conditions may adversely affect our access to capital and credit markets;

the effects of government intervention, including material changes in the monetary policies of central banks, to address financial downturns and economic and currency concerns;

the impacts that political and civil unrest and regional conflicts may have on our businesses and the markets they serve or that any disruptions in regional or worldwide economic conditions generally arising from these situations may have on our businesses, industries or investments;

the impacts that health epidemics and pandemics may have on our business operations and claims activity;

the impact on our businesses of the repeal, in part or in whole, or modification of U.S. health care reform legislation and regulations;

changes in U.S. tax laws or in the tax laws of other jurisdictions in which we operate;

we are dependent upon operational effectiveness and security of our enterprise information technology systems and those maintained by third parties; if one or more of those systems fail or suffer a security breach, our businesses or reputation could be adversely impacted;

our acquisition of insurance and non-insurance businesses may increase our operational and control risks for a period of time;

we may not realize the contemplated benefits, including cost savings and synergies, of our acquisitions;

any determination requiring the write-off of a significant portion of our goodwill and intangible assets;

the loss of services of any executive officer or other key personnel could adversely impact one or more of our operations;

our substantial international operations and investments expose us to increased political, operational and economic risks, including foreign currency exchange rate and credit risk;

the vote by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, which could have adverse consequences for our businesses, particularly our London-based international insurance operations;

our ability to raise third party capital for existing or new investment vehicles and risks related to our management of third party capital;

the effectiveness of our procedures for compliance with existing and ever increasing guidelines, policies and legal and regulatory standards, rules, laws and regulations;

the impact of economic and trade sanctions and embargo programs on our businesses, including instances in which the requirements and limitations applicable to the global operations of U.S. companies and their affiliates are more restrictive than those applicable to non-U.S. companies and their affiliates;

a number of additional factors may adversely affect our non-insurance operations, and the markets they serve, and negatively impact their revenues and profitability, including, among others: changes in government support for education, healthcare and infrastructure projects; changes in capital spending levels; changes in the housing market; and volatility in commodity prices and interest and foreign currency exchange rates; and

adverse changes in our assigned financial strength or debt ratings could adversely impact us, including our ability to attract and retain business and the availability and cost of capital.

Our premium volume, underwriting and investment results and results from our non-insurance operations have been and will continue to be potentially materially affected by these factors. By making forward-looking statements, we do not intend to become obligated to publicly update or revise any such statements whether as a result of new information, future events or other changes. You should not place undue reliance on any forward-looking statements, which speak only as at their dates.

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SUMMARY

This summary highlights selected information from this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus to help you understand us and the terms of the notes. The Description of Notes section of this prospectus supplement and the Description of Debt Securities section of the accompanying prospectus contain more detailed information regarding the terms of the notes. You should carefully read this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus to fully understand the terms of the notes and the other considerations that are important to you in making a decision about whether to invest in the notes.

Unless otherwise indicated, references in this prospectus supplement to Markel, we, us and our are to Markel Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries.

Markel Corporation

We are a diverse financial holding company serving a variety of niche markets. Our principal business markets and underwrites specialty insurance products.

In each of our businesses, we seek to provide quality products and excellent customer service so that we can be a market leader.

Our financial goals are to earn consistent underwriting and operating profits and superior investment returns to build shareholder value.

We are a Virginia corporation headquartered at 4521 Highwoods Parkway, Glen Allen, Virginia 23060-6148, telephone number (804) 747-0136.

Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges

The following table sets forth our historical ratio of earnings to fixed charges for each of the last five fiscal years and the nine-month period ended September 30, 2017.

Nine Months Ended September 30,	Year Ended December 31,				
2017⁽¹⁾	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
	5.4	6.6	4.5	3.8	4.0

The ratio of earnings to fixed charges is computed by dividing pretax income from continuing operations before fixed charges by fixed charges. Fixed charges consist of interest charges and amortization of debt expense and discount or premium related to indebtedness, whether expensed or capitalized, and that portion of rental expense we believe to be representative of interest.

(1) Earnings were insufficient to cover fixed charges by \$61.6 million for the nine months ended September 30, 2017.

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The Offering

Issuer	Markel Corporation.
Notes Offered	\$ million aggregate principal amount of % senior notes due 2027 (2027 Notes) and \$ million aggregate principal amount of % senior notes due 2047 (2047 Notes). We refer to the 2027 Notes and the 2047 Notes, collectively, as the notes.
Maturity Dates	The 2027 Notes will mature on , 2027 and the 2047 Notes will mature on , 2047.
Interest Payment Dates	and of each year, beginning , 2018.
Optional Redemption	We may redeem either or both series of notes at our option, in whole at any time or in part from time to time, at the applicable redemption price described in Description of Notes Optional Redemption plus accrued and unpaid interest to, but excluding, the redemption date.
Sinking Fund	None.
Ranking	<p>The notes will be our direct, unsecured and unsubordinated obligations, ranking equally in right of payment with all of our existing and future unsecured and unsubordinated indebtedness. The notes will be effectively junior to any secured indebtedness to the extent of the value of the assets securing such indebtedness. The notes will also be effectively junior to all of the liabilities of our subsidiaries.</p> <p>As of September 30, 2017, we had \$2.5 billion of unsubordinated indebtedness outstanding on a consolidated basis. Markel currently has no secured debt. Of the reported outstanding indebtedness at September 30, 2017, our consolidated subsidiaries had \$526 million of outstanding indebtedness for borrowed money.</p>
Covenants	The supplemental indentures for the notes contain limitations on our ability to incur certain liens securing debt. See Description of Notes Limitation on Liens. The indenture also contains restrictions on our ability to enter into some consolidations, mergers or transfers of all or substantially all of our assets. Other than as described above, the provisions of the indenture and the supplemental indentures do not afford

holders of the notes protection in the event of a takeover, recapitalization or highly leveraged or similar transaction.

Use of Proceeds

We intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of the notes for general corporate purposes. See Use of Proceeds.

Risk Factors

Investing in the notes involves risks. You should carefully consider all information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and, in particular, should carefully read the section entitled Risk Factors on page S-9 before purchasing any of the notes.

Clearance and Settlement	The notes will be cleared through The Depository Trust Company.
Form and Denomination	The notes will be issued only in fully registered form in denominations of \$2,000 and integral multiples of \$1,000 in excess thereof.
Trustee and Paying Agent	The Bank of New York Mellon will act as trustee and paying agent for the notes.
Governing Law	The indenture, the supplemental indentures, and the notes will be governed by the laws of the State of New York.

RISK FACTORS

An investment in the notes involves risks. In addition to the matters addressed in Note on Forward-Looking and Cautionary Statements and other information included or incorporated in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, you should consider the following risk factors in determining whether to purchase the notes.

RISK FACTORS RELATING TO THE OFFERING

Our holding company structure results in structural subordination which may affect our ability to make payments on the notes.

The notes are obligations exclusively of Markel Corporation. We are a holding company and, accordingly, substantially all of our operations are conducted through our subsidiaries. As a result, our cash flow and our ability to service our debt, including the notes, are dependent upon the earnings of our subsidiaries and on the distribution of earnings, loans or other payments by our subsidiaries to us. In addition, payment of dividends by our insurance subsidiaries may require prior regulatory notice or approval. The notes will be structurally subordinated to all obligations of our subsidiaries, which means that holders of obligations of our subsidiaries have claims on the assets of those subsidiaries that have priority to claims of holders of the notes. The indenture governing the notes does not limit the amount of debt that we or any of our subsidiaries may incur. Our consolidated subsidiaries had \$526 million of outstanding indebtedness for borrowed money at September 30, 2017.

A ratings decline could adversely affect the value of the notes.

The notes may be rated by one or more nationally recognized statistical rating organizations. The ratings of the notes will primarily reflect our financial strength and will change in accordance with the rating of our financial strength. Any rating is not a recommendation to purchase, sell or hold any particular security, including the notes. Ratings do not comment as to market price or suitability for a particular investor. In addition, ratings at any time may be lowered or withdrawn in their entirety. The ratings of the notes may not reflect the potential impact of all risks related to structure and other factors on any trading market for, or trading value of, the notes. Actual or anticipated changes or downgrades in our credit ratings, including any announcement that our ratings are under further review for a downgrade, could affect the market value of the notes and increase our corporate borrowing costs.

A public market does not currently exist for the notes and a market may not develop or be sustained.

The notes are new issues of securities with no established trading market. We do not intend to apply for listing of the notes on any national securities exchange or for quotation of the notes on any automated dealer quotation system. We have been advised by the underwriters that they presently intend to make a market in the notes after completion of the offering. However, the underwriters are under no obligation to do so and may discontinue any market-making activities at any time without any notice. We cannot assure the liquidity of the trading market for the notes or that an active public market for the notes will develop. If an active public trading market for the notes does not develop, the market price and liquidity of the notes may be adversely affected.

RISK FACTORS RELATING TO OUR BUSINESS

We may experience losses from catastrophes.

As a property and casualty insurance company, we may experience losses from man-made or natural catastrophes. Catastrophes may have a material adverse effect on operations. Catastrophes include, but are not limited to, windstorms, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, hail, severe winter weather and fires and may include events related

to terrorism and political unrest. While we employ catastrophe modeling tools in our underwriting

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process, we cannot predict how severe a particular catastrophe will be before it occurs. The extent of losses from catastrophes is a function of the total amount of losses incurred, the number of insureds affected, the frequency and severity of the events, the effectiveness of our catastrophe risk management program and the adequacy of our reinsurance coverage. Most catastrophes occur over a small geographic area; however, some catastrophes may produce significant damage in large, heavily populated areas. If, as many forecast, climate change results in an increase in the frequency and severity of weather-related catastrophes, we may experience additional catastrophe-related losses, which may be material.

Our results may be affected because actual insured or reinsured losses differ from our loss reserves.

Significant periods of time often elapse between the occurrence of an insured or reinsured loss, the reporting of the loss to us and our payment of that loss. To recognize liabilities for unpaid losses, we establish reserves as balance sheet liabilities representing estimates of amounts needed to pay reported and unreported losses and the related loss adjustment expenses. The process of estimating loss reserves is a difficult and complex exercise involving many variables and subjective judgments. This process may become more difficult if we experience a period of rising inflation. As part of the reserving process, we review historical data and consider the impact of such factors as:

trends in claim frequency and severity,

changes in operations,

emerging economic and social trends,

trends in insurance rates,

inflation or deflation, and

changes in the regulatory and litigation environments.

This process assumes that past experience, adjusted for the effects of current developments and anticipated trends, is an appropriate basis for predicting future events. There is no precise method, however, for evaluating the impact of any specific factor on the adequacy of reserves, and actual results will differ from original estimates. As part of the reserving process, we regularly review our loss reserves and make adjustments as necessary. Future increases in loss reserves will result in additional charges to earnings, which may be material.

In addition, reinsurance reserves are subject to greater uncertainty than insurance reserves primarily because a reinsurer relies on (i) the original underwriting decisions made by ceding companies and (ii) information and data from ceding companies. As a result, we are subject to the risk that our ceding companies may not have adequately evaluated the risks reinsured by us and the premiums ceded may not adequately compensate us for the risks we assume. In addition, reinsurance reserves may be less reliable than insurance reserves because there is generally a longer lapse of time from the occurrence of the event to the reporting of the loss or benefit to the reinsurer and ultimate resolution or settlement of the loss.

Changes in the assumptions and estimates used in establishing reserves for our life and annuity reinsurance book could result in material increases in our estimated loss reserves for such business.

Our run-off life and annuity reinsurance book exposes us to mortality risk, which is the risk that the level of death claims may differ from that which we assumed in establishing the reserves for our life and annuity reinsurance contracts. Some of our life and annuity reinsurance contracts expose us to longevity risk, which is the risk that an insured person will live longer than expected when the reserves were established, or morbidity risk, which is the risk that an insured person will become critically ill or disabled. Our reserving process for the life and annuity reinsurance book is designed with the objective of establishing appropriate reserves for the risks we assumed. Among other things, these processes rely heavily on analysis of mortality, longevity and morbidity trends, lapse rates, interest rates and expenses. As of September 30, 2017, our reserves for life and annuity benefits totaled \$1.1 billion.

We expect mortality, morbidity, longevity, and lapse experience to fluctuate somewhat from period to period, but believe they should remain reasonably predictable over a period of many years. Mortality, longevity, morbidity or lapse experience that is less favorable than the mortality, longevity, morbidity or lapse rates that we used in establishing the reserves for a reinsurance agreement will negatively affect our net income because the reserves we originally set for the risks we assumed may not be sufficient to cover the future claims and expense payments. Furthermore, even if the total benefits paid over the life of the contract do not exceed the expected amount, unexpected increases in the incidence of deaths or illness can cause us to pay more benefits in a given reporting period than expected, adversely affecting our net income in any particular reporting period. Fluctuations in interest rates will impact the performance of our investments. If there are changes to any of the above factors to the point where a reserve deficiency exists, a charge to earnings will be recorded, which may have a material adverse impact on our results of operations and financial condition.

We are subject to regulation by insurance regulatory authorities that may affect our ability to implement and achieve our business objectives.

Our insurance subsidiaries are subject to supervision and regulation by the insurance regulatory authorities in the various jurisdictions in which they conduct business. This regulation is intended for the benefit of policyholders rather than shareholders or holders of debt securities. Insurance regulatory authorities have broad regulatory, supervisory and administrative powers relating to solvency standards, licensing, coverage requirements, policy rates and forms and the form and content of financial reports. Regulatory and legislative authorities continue to implement enhanced or new regulatory requirements intended to prevent future financial crises or otherwise assure the stability of financial institutions. Regulatory authorities also may seek to exercise their supervisory or enforcement authority in new or more aggressive ways, such as imposing increased capital requirements. Any such actions, if they occur, could affect the competitive market and the way we conduct our business and manage our capital. As a result, such actions could materially affect our results of operations, financial condition and liquidity.

Our ability to make payments on debt or other obligations depends on the receipt of funds from our subsidiaries.

We are a holding company, and substantially all of our insurance operations are conducted through our regulated insurance subsidiaries. As a result, our cash flow and our ability to service our debt are dependent upon the earnings of our subsidiaries and on the distribution of earnings, loans or other payments by our subsidiaries to us. In addition, payment of dividends by our insurance subsidiaries may require prior regulatory notice or approval.

Our investment results may be impacted by changes in interest rates, U.S. and international monetary and fiscal policies as well as broader economic conditions.

We receive premiums from customers for insuring their risks. We invest these funds until they are needed to pay policyholder claims or until they are recognized as profits. Fluctuations in the value of our investment portfolio can occur as a result of changes in interest rates and U.S. and international monetary and fiscal policies as well as broader economic conditions (including, for example, equity market conditions and significant inflation or deflation). Our investment results may be materially impacted by one or more of these factors.

Competition in the insurance and reinsurance markets could reduce our underwriting profits.

Insurance and reinsurance markets are highly competitive. We compete on an international and regional basis with major U.S., Bermuda, European, and other international insurers and reinsurers and with underwriting syndicates, some of which have greater financial, marketing, and management resources than we do. Recent industry consolidation, including business combinations among insurance and other financial services companies, has resulted in larger competitors with even greater financial resources. We also compete with new

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companies that continue to be formed to enter the insurance and reinsurance markets, particularly companies with new or disruptive technologies or business models. In addition, capital market participants have created alternative products that are intended to compete with reinsurance products. Increased competition could result in fewer submissions, lower premium rates, and less favorable policy terms and conditions, which could reduce our underwriting profits and have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition.

The historical cyclical nature of the property and casualty insurance industry could adversely affect our ability to improve or maintain underwriting profits or to grow or maintain premium volume.

The insurance and reinsurance markets have historically been cyclical, characterized by periods of intense price competition due to excessive underwriting capacity as well as periods when shortages of capacity permitted more favorable rate levels. Among our competitive strengths have been our specialty product focus and our niche market strategy. These strengths also make us vulnerable in periods of intense competition to actions by other insurance companies who seek to write additional premiums without appropriate regard for underwriting profitability. During soft markets, it is very difficult for us to grow or maintain premium volume levels without sacrificing underwriting profits. If we are not successful in maintaining rates or achieving rate increases, it may be difficult for us to improve or maintain underwriting profits or to grow or maintain premium volume levels.

We invest a significant portion of our invested assets in equity securities, which may result in significant variability in our investment results and may adversely impact shareholders' equity. Additionally, our equity investment portfolio is concentrated, and declines in the value of these significant investments could adversely affect our financial results.

Equity securities were 64% and 56% of our shareholders' equity at September 30, 2017 and December 31, 2016, respectively. Equity securities have historically produced higher returns than fixed maturity securities; however, investing in equity securities may result in significant variability in investment returns from one period to the next. In volatile financial markets, we could experience significant declines in the fair value of our equity investment portfolio, which would result in a material decrease in shareholders' equity. Our equity portfolio is concentrated in particular issuers and industries and, as a result, a decline in the fair value of these concentrated investments also could result in a material decrease in shareholders' equity. A material decrease in shareholders' equity may adversely impact our ability to carry out our business plans.

General economic, market or industry conditions could lead to investment losses, adverse effects on our businesses and limit our access to the capital markets.

General economic and market conditions and industry specific conditions, including extended economic recessions or expansions; prolonged periods of slow economic growth; inflation or deflation; fluctuations in foreign currency exchange rates, commodity and energy prices and interest rates; volatility in the credit and capital markets; and other factors, could lead to substantial realized and unrealized investment losses in future periods, declines in demand for or increased claims made under our insurance products or limited or no access to the capital markets, any of which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, debt and financial strength ratings or our insurance subsidiaries' capital.

We rely on the purchase of reinsurance and bear collection risk if the reinsurer fails to meet its obligations under the reinsurance agreement.

We purchase reinsurance and retrocessional reinsurance to manage our net retention on individual risks and overall exposure to losses, while providing us with the ability to offer policies with sufficient limits to meet policyholder needs. The ceding of insurance does not legally discharge us from our primary liability for the full amount of the policies. Reliance on reinsurance may create credit risk as a result of the reinsurer's inability or unwillingness to pay

reinsurance claims when due. Deterioration in the credit quality of existing reinsurers or disputes over the terms of reinsurance could result in charges to earnings, which may have a material adverse

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impact on our results of operations and financial condition. The availability and cost of reinsurance are determined by market conditions beyond our control. There is no guarantee that our desired amounts of reinsurance or retrocessional reinsurance will be available in the marketplace in the future.

Our information technology systems could fail or suffer a security breach, which could adversely affect our business or reputation or result in the loss of sensitive information.

Our businesses are dependent upon the operational effectiveness and security of our enterprise systems and those maintained by third parties. Among other things, we rely on these systems to interact with producers, insureds, customers, clients, and other third parties, to perform actuarial and other modeling functions, to underwrite business, to prepare policies and process premiums, to process claims and make claims payments, to prepare internal and external financial statements and information, as well as to engage in a wide variety of other business activities. A significant failure of our enterprise systems, or those of third parties upon which we may rely, whether because of a breakdown, natural disaster or a cyber-attack on our systems, could compromise our personal, confidential and proprietary information as well as that of our customers and business partners, impede or interrupt our business operations and could result in other negative consequences, including remediation costs, loss of revenue, additional regulatory scrutiny and fines, litigation and monetary and reputational damages. Although we have implemented controls and take protective actions to reduce the risk of an enterprise failure and protect against a security breach, such measures may be insufficient to prevent, or mitigate the effects of, a breakdown, natural disaster or a cyber-attack on our systems that could result in liability to us, cause our data to be corrupted or stolen and cause us to commit resources, management time and money to prevent or correct those failures.

In addition, we are subject to numerous data privacy laws and regulations enacted in the jurisdictions in which we do business. A misuse or mishandling of confidential or proprietary information being sent to or received from a client, employee or third party could result in legal liability, regulatory action and reputational harm. Third parties to whom we outsource certain functions are also subject to these risks, and their failure to adhere to these laws and regulations could negatively impact us.

Further, we routinely transmit, receive and store personal, confidential and proprietary information by email and other electronic means. Although we attempt to protect this confidential and proprietary information, we may be unable to do so in all cases, especially with customers, business partners and other third parties who may not have or use appropriate controls to protect confidential information.

While we maintain cyber risk insurance providing first party and third party coverages, such insurance may not cover all costs associated with the consequences of personal and confidential and proprietary information being compromised. As a result, in the event of a material cyber security breach, our results of operations could be materially, adversely affected.

We may not find suitable acquisition candidates or new insurance or non-insurance ventures and even if we do, we may not successfully integrate any such acquired companies or successfully invest in such ventures.

As part of our growth strategy, we continue to evaluate possible acquisition transactions on an ongoing basis, and at any given time we may be engaged in discussions with respect to possible acquisitions and new ventures. We may not be able to identify suitable acquisition targets or ventures, any such transactions may not be financed or completed on acceptable terms and our future acquisitions or ventures may not be successful.

The integration of acquired companies may not be as successful as we anticipate.

We have recently engaged in a number of acquisitions in an effort to achieve profitable growth in our insurance operations and to create additional value on a diversified basis in our non-insurance operations.

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Acquisitions present operational, strategic and financial risks, as well as risks associated with liabilities arising from the previous operations of the acquired companies. All of these risks are magnified in the case of a large acquisition. Assimilation of the operations and personnel of acquired companies may prove more difficult than anticipated, which may result in failure to achieve financial objectives associated with the acquisition or diversion of management attention. In addition, integration of formerly privately-held companies into the management and internal control and financial reporting systems of a publicly-held company presents additional risks.

Impairments in the value of our goodwill could have a material adverse effect on our operating results and financial condition.

Goodwill represents the excess of amounts paid for acquiring businesses over the fair value of the net assets acquired. Goodwill is evaluated for impairment annually, or more frequently if conditions warrant, by comparing the carrying value of a reporting unit to its estimated fair value. Declines in operating results, divestitures, sustained market declines and other factors that impact the fair value of a reporting unit could result in a goodwill impairment and, in turn, a charge to net income. Such a charge could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations or financial condition.

The failure of any of the loss limitation methods we employ could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition or on our results of operations.

We seek to limit our loss exposure in a variety of ways, including adhering to maximum limitations on policies written in defined geographical zones, limiting program size for each client, establishing per risk and per occurrence limitations for each event, employing coverage restrictions and following prudent underwriting guidelines for each program written. We also seek to limit our loss exposure through geographic diversification. Underwriting is a matter of judgment, involving assumptions about matters that are inherently unpredictable and beyond our control, and for which historical experience and probability analysis may not provide sufficient guidance. One or more future events could result in claims that substantially exceed our expectations, which could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and our results of operations, possibly to the extent of eliminating our shareholders' equity. In addition, we seek to limit loss exposures by policy terms, exclusion from coverage and choice of legal forum. Disputes relating to coverage and choice of legal forum also arise. As a result, various provisions of our policies, such as choice of forum, limitations or exclusions from coverage may not be enforceable in the manner we intend and some or all of our loss limitation methods may prove ineffective.

The effects of emerging claim and coverage issues on our business are uncertain.

As industry practices and legal, judicial, social and other environmental conditions change, unexpected and unintended issues related to claims and coverage may emerge. These issues may adversely affect our business by either broadening coverage beyond our underwriting intent or by increasing the number or size of claims. In some instances, these changes may not become apparent until sometime after we have issued insurance or reinsurance contracts that are affected by the changes. As a result, the full extent of liability under our insurance or reinsurance contracts may not be known for many years after a contract is issued.

We could be adversely affected by the loss of one or more key executives or by an inability to attract and retain qualified personnel.

Our success depends on our ability to retain the services of our existing key executives and to attract and retain additional qualified personnel in the future. The loss of the services of any of our key executives or the inability to hire and retain other highly qualified personnel in the future could adversely affect our ability to conduct or grow our business.

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We have substantial international operations and investments, which expose us to increased political, operational and economic risks.

A substantial portion of our revenues and income is derived from our operations and investments outside the U.S., including from the United Kingdom, Bermuda, Europe, Asia, South America and the Middle East. Our international operations and investments expose us to increased political, operational and economic risks. These risks include foreign currency and credit risk. Changes in the value of the U.S. dollar relative to other currencies could have an adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition. Our investments in non-U.S. dollar-denominated securities are subject to fluctuations in non-U.S. securities and currency markets, and those markets can be volatile.

Deterioration or volatility in foreign and international financial markets or general economic and political conditions could adversely affect our operating results, financial condition and liquidity. Concerns about the economic conditions, capital markets, political and economic stability and solvency of certain countries have contributed to global market volatility. Political changes in the jurisdictions where we operate and elsewhere, some of which may be disruptive, can also interfere with our customers and our activities in a particular location. Our international operations also may be subject to a number of additional risks, particularly in emerging economies, including restrictions such as price controls, capital controls, currency exchange limits, ownership limits and other restrictive or anti-competitive governmental actions or requirements, which could have an adverse effect on our businesses.

Changes in U.S. tax laws or in the tax laws of other jurisdictions in which we operate could adversely impact us.

Tax laws may change in ways that adversely impact us. Under the current U.S. administration, there exists the potential for comprehensive tax reform in the United States that may significantly change the tax rules applicable to U.S. domiciled corporations and their non-U.S. operations. Changes such as lower corporate tax rates, repatriation allowances, removal of the interest expense deduction, removal of the municipal bond tax exemption or the introduction of a border adjustment tax could impact us as a U.S. taxpayer. For example, a significant portion of our invested assets consist of tax exempt securities and we receive certain tax benefits relating to such securities based on current laws and regulations. Our portfolio has also benefited from certain other laws and regulations, including among others, tax credits. Federal or state tax legislation could be enacted in connection with deficit reduction or various types of fundamental tax reform that would lessen or eliminate some or all of the tax advantages currently benefiting us and therefore could materially and adversely impact our results of operations.

In addition, tax reform or policy changes could adversely impact our non-U.S. businesses. For example, if a significant tax were to be levied on non-U.S. entities providing insurance or reinsurance inside the U.S., it could adversely affect the international insurance and reinsurance industry. Other changes proposed or under consideration by the current U.S. administration could reduce the attractiveness of operating from non-U.S. locations. These changes, as well as the uncertainty associated with them, could adversely affect our insurance, reinsurance and insurance-linked securities investment management operations located in the U.K. and Bermuda.

We are rated by Best, S&P, Fitch and Moody's, and a downgrade or potential downgrade in one or more of these ratings could adversely affect our businesses, financial condition, results of operations and liquidity.

Financial strength ratings are an important factor in establishing the competitive position of insurance and reinsurance companies. Our senior debt ratings also affect the availability and cost of capital. Certain of our insurance and reinsurance company subsidiaries are rated by Best, S&P, Fitch or Moody's, and our senior debt securities, and those of certain of our subsidiaries, also are rated by Best, S&P, Fitch or Moody's. Our financial strength and debt ratings are subject to periodic review, and we cannot be sure that we will be able to retain our

current or any future ratings. If our ratings are reduced from their current levels by one or more rating agencies, our competitive position in our target markets within the insurance industry could suffer and it would be more difficult for us to market our products. A significant downgrade could:

result in a substantial loss of business as policyholders and ceding company clients move to other companies with higher claims-paying and financial strength ratings; and

trigger contract provisions that allow cedents to terminate their reinsurance contracts on terms disadvantageous to us or require us to collateralize our obligations through trusts or letters of credit.

A ratings downgrade could also adversely affect our liquidity, including the availability of our letter of credit facilities, and limit our access to capital markets, increase our cost of borrowing or issuing debt and require us to post collateral.

We depend on a few brokers for a large portion of our revenues and the loss of business provided by any one of them could adversely affect us.

We market our insurance and reinsurance worldwide through insurance and reinsurance brokers. For the year ended December 31, 2016, our top three independent brokers represented approximately 28% of our gross premiums written. Loss of all or a substantial portion of the business provided by one or more of these brokers could have a material adverse effect on our business.

Employee error and misconduct may be difficult to detect and prevent and may result in significant losses.

There have been a number of cases involving misconduct by employees in a broad range of industries in recent years, and we run the risk that employee misconduct could occur. Instances of fraud, illegal acts, errors, failure to document transactions properly or to obtain proper internal authorization, or failure to comply with regulatory requirements or our internal policies may result in losses. It is not always possible to deter or prevent employee errors or misconduct, and the controls that we have in place to prevent and detect this activity may not be effective in all cases.

We are subject to applicable laws and regulations relating to economic and trade sanctions and bribery and corruption, the violation of which could have a material adverse effect on us.

We are required to comply with the economic and trade sanctions and embargo programs administered by the United States Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control and similar multi-national bodies and governmental agencies worldwide, as well as applicable anti-corruption laws and regulations of the United States and other jurisdictions where we operate. A violation of a sanction, embargo program, or anti-corruption law, could subject us, and individual employees, to a regulatory enforcement action as well as significant civil and criminal penalties. In addition, a violation could result in defaults under our outstanding indebtedness or credit facilities or damage our businesses or our reputation. Those penalties or defaults, or damage to our businesses or reputation, could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition. In some cases the requirements and limitations applicable to the global operations of U.S. companies and their affiliates are more restrictive than those applicable to non-U.S. companies and their affiliates, which also could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition.

The legal and regulatory requirements applicable to our businesses are extensive. Failure to comply could have a material adverse effect on us.

Our businesses are highly dependent on our ability to engage on a daily basis in a large number of financial and operational activities, including among others insurance underwriting, claim processing, investment activities and the management of third party capital, many of which are highly complex. These activities are subject to internal guidelines and policies, as well as legal and regulatory standards, including, among others, those related to privacy, anti-corruption, anti-bribery and global finance and insurance matters. Our continued expansion into new businesses and markets has brought about additional requirements. While we believe that we have adopted

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appropriate risk management and compliance programs, compliance risks will continue to exist, particularly as we become subject to new rules and regulations. Failure to comply with, or to obtain, appropriate authorizations and/or exemptions under any applicable laws and regulations could result in restrictions on our ability to do business or undertake activities that are regulated in one or more of the jurisdictions in which we conduct business and could subject us to fines, penalties, equitable relief and changes to our business practices. In addition, a failure to comply could result in defaults under our outstanding indebtedness or credit facilities or damage our businesses or our reputation. Compliance with applicable laws and regulations is time consuming and personnel-intensive, and changes in these laws and regulations could materially increase our direct and indirect compliance and other expenses of doing business, and have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition.

We may be exposed to risk in connection with our management of third party capital.

Some of our operating subsidiaries may owe certain legal duties and obligations to third party investors. A failure to fulfill any such duties or obligations could result in significant liabilities, penalties or other losses, and harm our businesses and results of operations. In addition, third party investors may decide not to renew their interests in the funds we manage, which could materially impact the financial condition of those funds, and could, in turn, have an adverse impact on our results of operations and financial condition. Moreover, we may not be able to raise additional third party capital for the funds we manage or for potential new funds and therefore we may forego existing or potential fee income and other income generating opportunities.

The United Kingdom's vote to leave, and the eventual exit of the United Kingdom from, the European Union could adversely affect us.

On June 23, 2016, the United Kingdom (U.K.) voted to exit the European Union (E.U.) (Brexit), and on March 29, 2017, the U.K. government delivered formal notice to the other E.U. member countries that it is leaving the E.U. A two-year period has now commenced during which the U.K. and the E.U. will negotiate the future terms of the U.K.'s relationship with the E.U., including the terms of trade between the U.K. and the E.U. Unless this period is extended, the U.K. will automatically exit the E.U., with or without an agreement in place, after two years. During this period the U.K. will remain a part of the E.U. After Brexit terms are agreed, Brexit could be implemented in stages over a multi-year period.

The effects of Brexit will depend in part on any agreements the U.K. makes to retain access to E.U. markets either during a transitional period or more permanently. Brexit could impair or end the ability of both Markel International Insurance Company Limited (MIICL) and our Lloyd's syndicate to transact business in E.U. countries from our U.K. offices and MIICL's ability to maintain its current branches in E.U. member countries and in Switzerland. We have started the process to obtain regulatory approval to establish an insurance company in Germany in order to continue transacting E.U. business if U.K. access to E.U. markets ceases or is materially impaired. The Society of Lloyd's has announced that it will be setting up a new European insurance company in Brussels in order to maintain access to E.U. business for Lloyd's syndicates. Access to E.U. markets through a solution devised by the Society of Lloyd's may supplement, or serve as an alternative to, a new E.U.-based insurance carrier for business we transact in the E.U.

The eventual exit of the U.K. from the E.U., and negotiations leading up to that exit, could continue to contribute to instability in global financial markets, including foreign currency markets, and adversely affect European and worldwide economic or market conditions. In addition, no member country has previously left the E.U., and the rules for exit (contained in Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union) are brief. Accordingly, there are significant uncertainties related to the political, monetary and economic impacts of Brexit, including related tax, accounting and financial reporting implications. Brexit could also lead to legal uncertainty and potentially a large number of new and divergent national laws and regulations, including new tax rules, as the U.K. determines which E.U. laws to replace or replicate. Any of these effects of Brexit, and others we cannot anticipate, could adversely affect our business, business opportunities, results of operations, financial condition and cash flows.

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USE OF PROCEEDS

We estimate that the net proceeds of the offering, after deducting the underwriting discount but before expenses, will be approximately \$. We intend to use the net proceeds for general corporate purposes.

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DESCRIPTION OF NOTES

Set forth below is a description of the specific terms of the notes. This description supplements, and should be read together with, the description of the general terms and provisions of the senior Debt Securities set forth in the accompanying prospectus under the caption "Description of Debt Securities" and, to the extent it is inconsistent with the accompanying prospectus, replaces the description in the accompanying prospectus. The 2027 Notes and 2047 Notes will