

ARES CAPITAL CORP
Form 10-K
February 24, 2016

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**UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

ý **ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE
ACT OF 1934**

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2015

OR

o **TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES
EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the transition period from to

Commission File No. 814-00663

ARES CAPITAL CORPORATION

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Maryland
(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

33-1089684
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

245 Park Avenue, 44th Floor, New York, New York 10167

(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip Code)

(212) 750-7300

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

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Title of each class	Name of each exchange on which registered
Common Stock, par value \$0.001 per share	The NASDAQ Global Select Market
5.875% Senior Notes due 2022	The New York Stock Exchange
6.875% Senior Notes due 2047	The New York Stock Exchange

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: None

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days: Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (Section §232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer" and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act:

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer Non-accelerated filer Smaller reporting company
(Do not check if a smaller reporting company)

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act). Yes No

The aggregate market value of the voting stock held by non-affiliates of the registrant on June 30, 2015, based on the closing price on that date of \$16.46 on The NASDAQ Global Select Market, was approximately \$5,103,079,251. As of February 18, 2016, there were 314,347,064 shares of the registrant's common stock outstanding.

Portions of the registrant's Proxy Statement for its 2016 Annual Meeting of Stockholders to be filed not later than 120 days after the end of the fiscal year covered by this Annual Report on Form 10-K are incorporated by reference into Part III of this Form 10-K.

PART I

Item 1. Business

GENERAL

Ares Capital Corporation

Ares Capital Corporation, a Maryland corporation (together with its subsidiaries, where applicable, "Ares Capital" or the "Company," which may also be referred to as "we," "us" or "our"), is a specialty finance company that is a closed-end, non-diversified management investment company. We have elected to be regulated as a business development company, or a "BDC," under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended, and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder or the "Investment Company Act." We were founded on April 16, 2004, were initially funded on June 23, 2004 and completed our initial public offering ("IPO") on October 8, 2004. As of September 30, 2015, we were the largest BDC with approximately \$9.2 billion of total assets.

We are externally managed by our investment adviser, Ares Capital Management LLC ("Ares Capital Management" or our "investment adviser"), a subsidiary of Ares Management, L.P. (NYSE:ARES) ("Ares Management" or "Ares"), a publicly traded, leading global alternative asset manager. Our administrator, Ares Operations LLC ("Ares Operations" or our "administrator"), a subsidiary of Ares Management, provides certain administrative and other services necessary for us to operate.

Our investment objective is to generate both current income and capital appreciation through debt and equity investments. We invest primarily in U.S. middle-market companies, where we believe the supply of primary capital is limited and the investment opportunities are most attractive. However, we may from time to time invest in larger or smaller (in particular, for investments in early-stage and/or venture capital-backed) companies. We generally use the term "middle-market" to refer to companies with annual EBITDA between \$10 million and \$250 million. As used herein, EBITDA represents net income before net interest expense, income tax expense, depreciation and amortization.

We invest primarily in first lien senior secured loans (including "unitranche" loans, which are loans that combine both senior and mezzanine debt, generally in a first lien position), second lien senior secured loans and mezzanine debt, which in some cases includes an equity component. First and second lien senior secured loans generally are senior debt instruments that rank ahead of subordinated debt of a given portfolio company. Mezzanine debt is subordinated to senior loans and is generally unsecured. Our investments in corporate borrowers generally range between \$30 million and \$500 million each, investments in project finance/power generation projects generally range between \$10 million and \$200 million each and investments in early-stage and/or venture capital-backed companies generally range between \$1 million and \$25 million each. However, the investment sizes may be more or less than these ranges and may vary based on, among other things, our capital availability, the composition of our portfolio and general micro- and macro-economic factors.

To a lesser extent, we also make preferred and/or common equity investments, which have generally been non-control equity investments of less than \$20 million (usually in conjunction with a concurrent debt investment). However, we may increase the size or change the nature of these investments.

The proportion of these types of investments will change over time given our views on, among other things, the economic and credit environment in which we are operating. In connection with our investing activities, we may make commitments with respect to indebtedness or securities of a potential portfolio company substantially in excess of our final investment. In such situations, while we may initially agree to fund up to a certain dollar amount of an investment, we may subsequently syndicate or sell a portion of such amount (including, without limitation, to vehicles managed by our portfolio

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company, Ivy Hill Asset Management, L.P. ("IHAM")), such that we are left with a smaller investment than what was reflected in our original commitment. In addition to originating investments, we may also acquire investments in the secondary market (including purchases of a portfolio of investments).

The first and second lien senior secured loans in which we invest generally have stated terms of three to 10 years and the mezzanine debt investments in which we invest generally have stated terms of up to 10 years, but the expected average life of such first and second lien loans and mezzanine debt is generally between three and seven years. However, we may invest in loans and securities with any maturity or duration. The instruments in which we invest typically are not rated by any rating agency, but we believe that if such instruments were rated, they would be below investment grade (rated lower than "Baa3" by Moody's Investors Service, lower than "BBB " by Fitch Ratings or lower than "BBB " by Standard & Poor's Ratings Services), which, under the guidelines established by these entities, is an indication of having predominantly speculative characteristics with respect to the issuer's capacity to pay interest and repay principal. Bonds that are rated below investment grade are sometimes referred to as "high yield bonds" or "junk bonds." We may invest without limit in debt or other securities of any rating, as well as debt or other securities that have not been rated by any nationally recognized statistical rating organization.

We believe that our investment adviser, Ares Capital Management, is able to leverage the current investment platform, resources and existing relationships of Ares Management with financial sponsors, financial institutions, hedge funds and other investment firms to provide us with attractive investment opportunities. For purposes of this document, we refer to Ares Management and its affiliated companies (other than portfolio companies of its affiliated funds) as "Ares." In addition to deal flow, the Ares investment platform assists our investment adviser in analyzing, structuring and monitoring investments. Ares has been in existence for over 15 years and its partners have an average of over 24 years of experience in leveraged finance, private equity, distressed debt, commercial real estate finance, investment banking and capital markets. We have access to Ares' investment professionals and administrative professionals, who provide assistance in accounting, finance, legal, compliance, operations, information technology and investor relations. As of December 31, 2015, Ares had approximately 350 investment professionals and approximately 520 administrative professionals.

Ares Management, L.P.

Ares is a publicly traded, leading global alternative asset manager. As of December 31, 2015, Ares had approximately 870 employees in over 15 principal and originating offices across the United States, Europe and Asia. Since its inception in 1997, Ares has adhered to a disciplined investment philosophy that focuses on delivering strong risk-adjusted investment returns throughout market cycles. Ares believes each of its three distinct but complementary investment groups in Credit, Private Equity and Real Estate is a market leader based on investment performance. Ares was built upon the fundamental principle that each group benefits from being part of the greater whole.

Ares Capital Management LLC

Ares Capital Management, our investment adviser, is served by an origination, investment and portfolio management team of approximately 80 U.S.-based investment professionals as of December 31, 2015 and led by certain partners of the Ares Credit Group: Michael Arougheti, Kipp deVeer, Mitchell Goldstein and Michael Smith. Ares Capital Management leverages off of Ares' investment platform and benefits from the significant capital markets, trading and research expertise of Ares' investment professionals. Ares Capital Management's investment committee has 12 members comprised of certain of the U.S.-based partners of the Ares Credit Group and certain partners in the Ares Private Equity Group.

MARKET OPPORTUNITY

We believe that current market conditions present attractive opportunities for us to invest in middle-market companies, specifically:

We believe that many commercial and investment banks have, in recent years, de-emphasized their service and product offerings to middle-market businesses in favor of lending to large corporate clients and managing capital markets transactions. In addition, these lenders may be constrained in their ability to underwrite and hold bank loans and high yield securities for middle-market issuers as they seek to meet existing and future regulatory capital requirements. These factors may result in opportunities for alternative funding sources to middle-market companies and therefore more new-issue market opportunities for us.

We believe that the disruption and volatility in the credit markets between 2008 and 2009 reduced capital available to certain specialty finance companies and other capital providers, causing a reduction in competition. These market conditions may continue to create opportunities to achieve attractive risk-adjusted returns.

We believe that there is a lack of market participants that are willing to hold meaningful amounts of certain middle-market loans. As a result, we believe our ability to minimize syndication risk for a company seeking financing by being able to hold our loans without having to syndicate them is a competitive advantage.

We believe that middle-market companies have faced difficulty in raising debt through the capital markets. This approach to financing may become more difficult to the extent institutional investors seek to invest in larger, more liquid offerings, leaving less competition and fewer financing alternatives for middle-market companies.

We believe there is a large pool of un-invested private equity capital for middle-market businesses. We expect private equity firms will seek to leverage their investments by combining equity capital with senior secured loans and mezzanine debt from other sources such as us.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

We believe that we have the following competitive advantages over other capital providers to middle-market companies:

The Ares Platform

Ares operates three distinct but complementary investment groups, including the Ares Credit Group, the Ares Private Equity Group and the Ares Real Estate Group. We believe Ares' current investment platform provides a competitive advantage in terms of access to origination and marketing activities and diligence for us. In particular, we believe that the Ares platform provides us with an advantage through its deal flow generation and investment evaluation process. Ares' asset management platform also provides additional market information, company knowledge and industry insight that benefit our investment and due diligence process. Ares' professionals maintain extensive financial sponsor and intermediary relationships, which provide valuable insight and access to transactions and information.

Seasoned Management Team

The investment professionals in the Ares Credit Group and members of our investment adviser's investment committee also have significant experience investing across market cycles. This experience also provides us with a competitive advantage in identifying, originating, investing in and managing a portfolio of investments in middle-market companies.

Broad Origination Strategy

We focus on self-originating most of our investments by pursuing a broad array of investment opportunities in middle-market companies, venture capital backed businesses and power generation projects across multiple channels. We also leverage off of the extensive relationships of the broader Ares platform, including relationships with the portfolio companies in the IHAM Vehicles (as defined below), to identify investment opportunities. We believe that this allows for asset selectivity and that there is a significant relationship between proprietary deal origination and credit performance. We believe that our focus on generating proprietary deal flow and lead investing also gives us greater control over capital structure, deal terms, pricing and documentation and enables us to actively manage our portfolio investments. Moreover, by leading the investment process, we are often able to secure controlling positions in credit tranches, thereby providing additional control in investment outcomes. We also have originated substantial proprietary deal flow from middle-market intermediaries, which often allows us to act as the sole or principal source of institutional capital to the borrower.

Scale and Flexible Transaction Structuring

We believe that being one of the largest BDCs makes us a more desirable and flexible capital provider, especially in competitive markets. We are flexible with the types of investments we make and the terms associated with those investments. We believe this approach and experience enables our investment adviser to identify attractive investment opportunities throughout economic cycles and across a company's capital structure so we can make investments consistent with our stated investment objective and preserve principal while seeking appropriate risk adjusted returns. In addition, we have the flexibility to provide "one stop" financing with the ability to invest capital across the balance sheet and syndicate and hold larger investments than many of our competitors. We believe that the ability to underwrite, syndicate and hold larger investments benefits our stockholders by (a) potentially increasing net income and earnings through syndication, (b) increasing originated deal flow flexibility, (c) broadening market relationships and deal flow, (d) allowing us to optimize our portfolio composition and (e) allowing us to provide capital to a broader spectrum of middle-market companies, which we believe currently have limited access to capital from traditional lending sources. In addition, we believe that the ability to provide capital at every level of the balance sheet provides a strong value proposition to middle-market borrowers and our senior debt capabilities provide superior deal origination and relative value analysis capabilities compared to traditional "mezzanine only" lenders.

Experience with and Focus on Middle-Market Companies

Ares has historically focused on investments in middle-market companies and we benefit from this experience. In sourcing and analyzing deals, our investment adviser benefits from Ares' extensive network of relationships focused on middle-market companies, including management teams, members of the investment banking community, private equity groups and other investment firms with whom Ares has had long-term relationships. We believe this network enables us to identify well-positioned prospective portfolio company investments. The Ares Credit Group works closely with Ares' other investment professionals. As of December 31, 2015, Ares oversaw a portfolio of investments in approximately 1,100 companies, approximately 525 structured assets and approximately 155 properties across over 50 industries, which provides access to an extensive network of relationships and insights into industry trends and the state of the capital markets.

Disciplined Investment Philosophy

In making its investment decisions, our investment adviser has adopted Ares' long-standing, consistent, credit-based investment approach that was developed over 15 years ago by its founders. Specifically, our investment adviser's investment philosophy, portfolio construction and portfolio management involve an assessment of the overall macroeconomic environment and financial markets

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and company-specific research and analysis. Its investment approach emphasizes capital preservation, low volatility and minimization of downside risk. In addition to engaging in extensive due diligence from the perspective of a long-term investor, our investment adviser's approach seeks to reduce risk in investments by focusing on:

businesses with strong franchises and sustainable competitive advantages;

industries with positive long-term dynamics;

businesses and industries with cash flows that are dependable and predictable;

management teams with demonstrated track records and appropriate economic incentives;

rates of return commensurate with the perceived risks;

securities or investments that are structured with appropriate terms and covenants; and

businesses backed by experienced private equity sponsors.

Extensive Industry Focus

We seek to concentrate our investing activities in industries with a history of predictable and dependable cash flows and in which the Ares investment professionals have had extensive investment experience. Ares investment professionals have developed long-term relationships with management teams and management consultants in over 50 industries, and have accumulated substantial information and identified potential trends within these industries. In turn, we benefit from these relationships, information and identification of potential trends in making investments.

OPERATING AND REGULATORY STRUCTURE

Our investment activities are managed by our investment adviser, Ares Capital Management, which is a subsidiary of Ares, and supervised by our board of directors, a majority of whom are independent of Ares and its affiliates. Ares Capital Management is registered under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, or the "Advisers Act." Under our Amended and Restated Investment Advisory and Management Agreement with Ares Capital Management, referred to herein as our "investment advisory and management agreement," we have agreed to pay Ares Capital Management base management fees based on our total assets, as defined under the Investment Company Act (other than cash and cash equivalents, but including assets purchased with borrowed funds) ("base management fees"), fees based on our net investment income ("income based fees") and fees based on our net capital gains ("capital gains incentive fees"). See "Investment Advisory and Management Agreement" below. Ares Operations provides us with certain administrative and other services necessary for us to operate pursuant to an Amended and Restated Administration Agreement, referred to herein as our "administration agreement." See "Administration Agreement" below.

As a BDC, we are required to comply with certain regulatory requirements. For example, we are not generally permitted to invest in any portfolio company in which a fund managed by Ares or any of its downstream affiliates (other than us and our downstream affiliates) currently has an investment. However, we may co-invest with funds managed by Ares or any of its downstream affiliates, subject to compliance with existing regulatory guidance, applicable regulations and our allocation procedures. Certain types of co-investment transactions would only be permitted pursuant to an exemptive order from the SEC, for which we have applied. Any such order will be subject to certain terms and conditions. Further there is no assurance that this application for exemptive relief will be granted by the SEC.

Also, while we may borrow funds to make investments, our ability to use debt is limited in certain significant aspects. In particular, BDCs must have at least 200% asset coverage calculated pursuant to

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the Investment Company Act (i.e., we are permitted to borrow one dollar for every dollar we have in assets less all liabilities and indebtedness not represented by senior securities issued by us) in order to incur debt or issue preferred stock (which we refer to collectively as "senior securities"), which requires us to finance our investments with at least as much equity as senior securities in the aggregate. Certain of our credit facilities also require that we maintain asset coverage of at least 200%.

In addition, as a consequence of us being a regulated investment company ("RIC") under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code") for U.S. federal income tax purposes, our asset growth is dependent on our ability to raise equity capital through the issuance of common stock. RICs generally must distribute substantially all of their investment company taxable income (as defined under the Code) to stockholders as dividends in order to preserve their status as a RIC and not to be subject to additional U.S. federal corporate-level taxes. This requirement, in turn, generally prevents us from using our earnings to support our operations, including making new investments.

INVESTMENTS

Ares Capital Corporation Portfolio

We have built an investment portfolio of primarily first and second lien senior secured loans, mezzanine debt and, to a lesser extent, equity investments in private middle-market companies. Our portfolio is well diversified by industry sector and its concentration to any single issuer is limited.

Our debt investments in corporate borrowers generally range between \$30 million and \$500 million each, investments in project finance/power generation projects generally range between \$10 million and \$200 million each and investments in early-stage and/or venture capital-backed companies generally range between \$1 million and \$25 million each. However, the sizes of our investments may be more or less than these ranges and may vary based on, among other things, our capital availability, the composition of our portfolio and general micro- and macro-economic factors.

Our preferred and/or common equity investments have generally been non-control equity investments of less than \$20 million (usually in conjunction with a concurrent debt investment). However, we may increase the size or change the nature of these investments.

In addition, the proportion of these types of investments will change over time given our views on, among other things, the economic and credit environment in which we are operating. In connection with our investing activities, we may make commitments with respect to indebtedness or securities of a potential portfolio company substantially in excess of our expected final hold size. In such situations, while we may initially agree to fund up to a certain dollar amount of an investment, we may subsequently syndicate a portion of such amount such that we are left with a smaller investment than what was reflected in our original commitment. We may also syndicate a "first out" loan to an investor and retain a "last out" loan, in which case the "first out" loan will generally receive priority with respect to payments of principal, interest and any other amounts due thereunder. In addition to originating investments, we may also acquire investments in the secondary market (including purchases of a portfolio of investments).

We make senior secured loans primarily in the form of first lien loans (including unitranche loans) and second lien loans. Our senior secured loans generally have terms of three to 10 years. In connection with our senior secured loans we generally receive a security interest in certain of the assets of the borrower and consequently such assets serve as collateral in support of the repayment of such senior secured loans. Senior secured loans are generally exposed to the least amount of credit risk because they typically hold a senior position with respect to scheduled interest and principal payments and security interests in assets of the borrower. However, unlike mezzanine debt, senior secured loans typically do not receive any stock, warrants to purchase stock or other yield enhancements. Senior secured loans may include both revolving lines of credit and term loans.

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Structurally, mezzanine debt usually ranks subordinate in priority of payment to senior secured loans and is often unsecured. However, mezzanine debt ranks senior to preferred and common equity in a borrower's capital structure. Mezzanine debt investments generally offer lenders fixed returns in the form of interest payments and will often provide lenders an opportunity to participate in the capital appreciation of a borrower, if any, through an equity interest. This equity interest typically takes the form of an equity co-investment and/or warrants. Due to its higher risk profile and often less restrictive covenants as compared to senior secured loans, mezzanine debt generally bears a higher stated interest rate than senior secured loans. The equity co-investment and warrants (if any) associated with a mezzanine debt investment typically allow lenders to receive repayment of their principal on an agreed amortization schedule while retaining their equity interest in the borrower. Equity issued in connection with mezzanine debt also may include a "put" feature, which permits the holder to sell its equity interest back to the borrower at a price determined through an agreed formula.

In making an equity investment, in addition to considering the factors discussed under " Investment Selection" below, we also consider the anticipated timing of a liquidity event, such as a public offering, sale of the company or redemption of our equity securities.

While our primary focus is to generate current income and capital appreciation through investments in first and second lien senior secured loans and mezzanine debt and, to a lesser extent, equity securities of eligible portfolio companies, we also may invest up to 30% of our portfolio in non-qualifying assets, as permitted by the Investment Company Act. See " Regulation" below. Specifically, as part of this 30% basket, we may invest in entities that are not considered "eligible portfolio companies" (as defined in the Investment Company Act), including companies located outside of the United States, entities that are operating pursuant to certain exceptions under the Investment Company Act, and publicly traded entities whose public equity market capitalization exceeds the levels provided for under the Investment Company Act.

In the first quarter of 2011, the staff of the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") (the "Staff") informally communicated to certain BDCs the Staff's belief that certain entities, which would be classified as an "investment company" under the Investment Company Act but for the exception from the definition of "investment company" set forth in Rule 3a-7 promulgated under the Investment Company Act, could not be treated as eligible portfolio companies (as defined in Section 2(a)(46) under the Investment Company Act) (i.e., not eligible to be included in a BDC's 70% "qualifying assets" basket). Subsequently, in August 2011 the SEC issued a concept release (the "Concept Release") which stated that "[a]s a general matter, the Commission presently does not believe that Rule 3a-7 issuers are the type of small, developing and financially troubled businesses in which the U.S. Congress intended BDCs primarily to invest" and requested comment on whether or not a 3a-7 issuer should be considered an "eligible portfolio company." We provided a comment letter in respect of the Concept Release and continue to believe that the language of Section 2(a)(46) of the Investment Company Act permits a BDC to treat as "eligible portfolio companies" entities that rely on the 3a-7 exception. However, given the current uncertainty in this area (including the language in the Concept Release) and subsequent discussions with the Staff, we have, solely for purposes of calculating the composition of our portfolio pursuant to Section 55(a) of the Investment Company Act, identified such entities, which include the SSLP and the SDLP (each as defined below), as "non-qualifying assets" should the Staff ultimately disagree with our position.

Joint Ventures

Senior Direct Lending Program

In December 2015, we established a joint venture with Varagon Capital Partners ("Varagon") to make certain first lien senior secured loans, including certain stretch senior and unitranche loans, to U.S. middle-market companies. Varagon was formed in 2013 as a lending platform by American

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International Group, Inc. (NYSE:AIG) and other partners. The joint venture is called the Senior Direct Lending Program (the "SDLP"). It is expected that the SDLP will commit and hold individual loans of up to \$300 million. We may directly co-invest with the SDLP to accommodate larger transactions. We will provide capital to the SDLP in the form of subordinated certificates (the "SDLP Certificates"), and Varagon will provide capital to the SDLP in the form of senior notes, intermediate funding notes and SDLP Certificates. It is expected that we and Varagon will own 87.5% and 12.5%, respectively, of any outstanding SDLP Certificates.

As of December 31, 2015, we and Varagon had agreed to make capital available to the SDLP of \$2.9 billion in the aggregate, of which no amounts were funded. The SDLP will be capitalized as transactions are completed. All portfolio decisions and generally all other decisions in respect of the SDLP must be approved by an investment committee of the SDLP consisting of representatives of ours and Varagon (with approval from a representative of each required). As of December 31, 2015, we had agreed to make available to the SDLP (subject to the approval of the investment committee of the SDLP as described above) approximately \$591 million, of which no amounts were committed or funded. The SDLP Certificates will pay a coupon of LIBOR plus a stated spread and also entitle the holders thereof to receive a portion of the excess cash flow from the loan portfolio, which may result in a return to the holders of the SDLP Certificates that is greater than the stated coupon. The SDLP Certificates are junior in right of payment to the senior notes and intermediate funding notes.

Senior Secured Loan Program

We and General Electric Capital Corporation ("GECC") and GE Global Sponsor Finance LLC (collectively, "GE") have co-invested in first lien senior secured loans of middle market companies through an unconsolidated Delaware limited liability company, the Senior Secured Loan Fund LLC (d/b/a "the Senior Secured Loan Program") or the SSLP. The SSLP has been capitalized as transactions are completed. All portfolio decisions and generally all other decisions in respect of the SSLP must be approved by an investment committee of the SSLP consisting of representatives of ours and GE (with approval from a representative of each required). We have provided capital to the SSLP in the form of subordinated certificates (the "SSLP Certificates").

In August 2015, GE completed the sale of its U.S. Sponsor Finance business, through which GE had participated with us in the SSLP, to Canada Pension Plan Investment Board ("CPPIB"). This sale excluded GE's interest in the SSLP, and we and GE continue to operate the SSLP. We and GE no longer have an obligation to present senior secured lending investment opportunities to the SSLP and since June 30, 2015, the SSLP has not made any investments related to new portfolio companies; however, we and GE may provide capital to support the SSLP's funding of existing commitments (see below) and other amounts to its portfolio companies. On August 24, 2015, we were advised that GECC, as the holder of the senior notes of the SSLP (the "Senior Notes"), directed State Street Bank and Trust Company, as trustee of the Senior Notes and the SSLP Certificates, pursuant to the terms of the indenture governing the Senior Notes and the SSLP Certificates, to apply all principal proceeds received by the SSLP from its investments to the repayment of the outstanding principal amount of the Senior Notes until paid in full (prior to the distribution of any such principal proceeds to the holders of the SSLP Certificates, which includes us). GECC had previously elected to waive its right to receive priority repayments on the Senior Notes from principal proceeds in most circumstances. Prior to closing the sale to CPPIB, GE had announced its intention to provide us and CPPIB the opportunity to work together on the SSLP on a go-forward basis. GECC has also stated that if a mutual agreement between us and CPPIB to partner on the SSLP is not reached, it intends to retain its interest in the SSLP and the SSLP would be wound down in an orderly manner. We have been in dialogue with GE and CPPIB to determine if there is an opportunity to work together; however, to date there has been no agreement in respect of the SSLP as a result of these discussions and there can be no assurance that such discussions will continue or any such agreement will be reached. In addition to discussions with CPPIB

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and GECC, we are also exploring other options with respect to the SSLP's portfolio, although there can be no assurance that we will pursue any of them.

As of December 31, 2015, we and GE had funded approximately \$8.5 billion in aggregate principal amount to the SSLP. As discussed above, we anticipate that no new investments will be made by the SSLP and that we and GE will only provide additional capital to support the SSLP's funding of existing commitments and other amounts to its portfolio companies. As of December 31, 2015, the SSLP had commitments to fund delayed draw loans to certain of its portfolio companies of \$198.6 million, which had been approved by the investment committee of the SSLP as described above. As of December 31, 2015, we had funded approximately \$2.0 billion in aggregate principal amount to the SSLP. Additionally, as of December 31, 2015, we had commitments to co-invest in the SSLP for our portion of the SSLP's commitments to fund delayed draw loans to portfolio companies of up to \$32.6 million. As of December 31, 2015, the fair value of the SSLP Certificates held by us was \$1.9 billion at fair value (including unrealized depreciation of \$50.5 million), which represented approximately 21% of our total portfolio at fair value. As of December 31, 2015, the SSLP had 41 different underlying borrowers. For more information on the SSLP, see "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Portfolio and Investment Activity Senior Secured Loan Program."

Ivy Hill Asset Management, L.P.

As of December 31, 2015, our portfolio company, IHAM, an SEC registered investment adviser, managed 15 vehicles and served as the sub-manager/sub-servicer for three other vehicles (such vehicles, the "IHAM Vehicles"). As of December 31, 2015, IHAM had assets under management of approximately \$3.2 billion. As of December 31, 2015, the amortized cost and fair value of our investment in IHAM was \$171.0 million and \$235.5 million, respectively. In connection with IHAM's registration as a registered investment adviser, on March 30, 2012, we received exemptive relief from the SEC allowing us to, subject to certain conditions, own directly or indirectly up to 100% of IHAM's outstanding equity interests and make additional investments in IHAM. From time to time, IHAM or certain IHAM Vehicles may purchase investments from us or sell investments to us, in each case for a price equal to the fair market value of such investments determined at the time of such transactions. See Note 4 to our consolidated financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2015 for more information about IHAM.

Industry Composition

We generally seek to invest in companies in the industries in which Ares' investment professionals have direct expertise. The following is a representative list of the industries in which we have invested:

Aerospace and Defense

Automotive Services

Business Services

Consumer Products

Containers and Packaging

Education

Environmental Services

Financial Services

Food and Beverage

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Investment Funds and Vehicles

Manufacturing

Oil and Gas

Other Services

Power Generation

Restaurant and Food Services

Retail

Telecommunications

However, we may invest in other industries if we are presented with attractive opportunities.

The industrial and geographic compositions of our portfolio at fair value as of December 31, 2015 and 2014 were as follows:

Industry	As of	
	December 31,	
	2015	2014
Investment Funds and Vehicles(1)	21.2%	23.3%
Healthcare Services	14.6	16.3
Other Services	9.0	8.8
Consumer Products	7.7	8.3
Power Generation	6.3	7.3
Manufacturing	6.0	3.3
Business Services	5.3	5.8
Financial Services	4.6	4.5
Education	4.6	5.0
Restaurants and Food Services	3.5	3.7
Oil and Gas	2.9	1.9
Containers and Packaging	2.8	2.8
Food and Beverage	2.5	
Automotive Services	2.3	1.1
Commercial Real Estate Finance	1.1	1.2
Other	5.6	6.7
Total	100.0%	100.0%

(1)

Includes our investment in the SSLP, which had made first lien senior secured loans to 41 and 50 different borrowers as of December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively. The portfolio companies in the SSLP are in industries similar to the companies in our

portfolio.

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Geographic Region	As of December 31,	
	2015	2014
West(1)	37.9%	46.2%
Midwest	23.8	18.1
Southeast	20.3	16.6
Mid Atlantic	13.7	15.4
Northeast	2.3	2.3
International	2.0	1.4
Total	100.0%	100.0%

(1) Includes our investment in the SSLP, which represented 20.8% and 22.9% of the total investment portfolio at fair value as of December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively.

Since our IPO on October 8, 2004 through December 31, 2015, our exited investments resulted in an aggregate cash flow realized internal rate of return (as discussed in more detail in footnote 1 to the table below) to us of approximately 13% (based on original cash invested, net of syndications, of approximately \$12.2 billion and total proceeds from such exited investments of approximately \$14.9 billion). Approximately 70% of these exited investments resulted in an aggregate cash flow realized internal rate of return to us of 10% or greater.

The aggregate cash flow realized internal rate of return, original cash invested, net of syndications, and total proceeds, in each case from exited investments, are listed below from our IPO on October 8, 2004 through the end of each period shown below.

(dollar amounts in millions)	Exited Investments IPO through December 31,											
	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Realized internal rate of return to Ares Capital(1)	13%	13%	13%	13%	14%	15%	14%	19%	21%	26%	41%	17%
Original cash invested, net of syndications	\$ 12,170	\$ 9,883	\$ 7,717	\$ 6,817	\$ 4,638	\$ 2,696	\$ 1,220	\$ 923	\$ 684	\$ 424	\$ 119	\$ 28
Total proceeds	\$ 14,903	\$ 12,121	\$ 9,445	\$ 8,264	\$ 5,627	\$ 3,256	\$ 1,405	\$ 1,104	\$ 818	\$ 511	\$ 140	\$ 32

(1) Internal rate of return is the discount rate that makes the net present value of all cash flows related to a particular investment equal to zero. Internal rate of return is gross of expenses related to investments as these expenses are not allocable to specific investments. Investments are considered to be exited when the original investment objective has been achieved through the receipt of cash and/or non-cash consideration upon the repayment of a debt investment or sale of an investment or through the determination that no further consideration was collectible and, thus, a loss may have been realized.

Additionally, since our IPO on October 8, 2004 through December 31, 2015, our realized gains exceeded our realized losses by approximately \$479 million (excluding a one-time gain on the acquisition of Allied Capital Corporation ("Allied Capital") (the "Allied Acquisition") and realized gains/losses from the extinguishment of debt and other assets). For the same time period, our average annualized net realized gain rate was approximately 1.1% (excluding a one-time gain on the Allied Acquisition and realized gains/losses from the extinguishment of debt and from other assets). Net realized gain/loss rates for a particular period are the amount of net realized gains/losses during such period divided by the average quarterly investments at amortized cost in such period.

Information included herein regarding internal rates of return, realized gains and losses and annualized net realized gain rates are historical results relating to our past performance and are not necessarily indicative of future results, the achievement of which cannot be assured.

INVESTMENT SELECTION

Ares' investment philosophy was developed over 15 years ago and has remained consistent and relevant throughout a number of economic cycles. We are managed using a similar investment philosophy used by the investment professionals of Ares in respect of its other investment funds.

This investment philosophy involves, among other things:

an assessment of the overall macroeconomic environment and financial markets and how such assessment may impact industry and asset selection;

company-specific research and analysis; and

with respect to each individual company, an emphasis on capital preservation, low volatility and minimization of downside risk.

The foundation of Ares' investment philosophy is intensive credit investment analysis, a portfolio management discipline based on both market technicals and fundamental value-oriented research, and diversification strategy. We follow a rigorous investment process based on:

a comprehensive analysis of issuer creditworthiness, including a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the issuer's business;

an evaluation of management and its economic incentives;

an analysis of business strategy and industry trends; and

an in-depth examination of capital structure, financial results and projections.

We seek to identify those companies exhibiting superior fundamental risk-reward profiles and strong defensible business franchises while focusing on the relative value of the investment across the industry as well as for the specific company.

Intensive Due Diligence

The process through which an investment decision is made involves extensive research into the target company, its industry, its growth prospects and its ability to withstand adverse conditions. If the senior investment professional responsible for the potential transaction determines that an investment opportunity should be pursued, we will engage in an intensive due diligence process. Approximately 30-40% of the investments initially reviewed by us proceed to this phase. Though each transaction will involve a somewhat different approach, the regular due diligence steps generally undertaken include:

meeting with the target company's management team to get a detailed review of the business, and to probe for potential weaknesses in business prospects;

checking management's backgrounds and references;

performing a detailed review of historical financial performance, including performance through various economic cycles, and the quality of earnings;

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reviewing both short and long term projections of the business, and sensitizing them for both upside and downside risk;

visiting headquarters and company operations and meeting with top and middle-level executives;

contacting customers and vendors to assess both business prospects and standard practices;

conducting a competitive analysis, and comparing the issuer to its main competitors on an operating, financial, market share and valuation basis;

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researching the industry for historic growth trends and future prospects as well as to identify future exit alternatives (including available Wall Street research, industry association literature and general news);

assessing asset value and the ability of physical infrastructure and information systems to handle anticipated growth; and

investigating legal risks and financial and accounting systems.

Selective Investment Process

After an investment has been identified and preliminary diligence has been completed, a credit research and analysis report is prepared. This report is reviewed by the senior investment professional in charge of the potential investment. If such senior and other investment professionals are in favor of the potential investment, then it is first presented to an underwriting committee, which is comprised of certain senior members of the Ares Credit Group.

After the investment is approved by the underwriting committee, a more extensive due diligence process is employed by the transaction team. Additional due diligence with respect to any investment may be conducted on our behalf by attorneys, independent accountants, and other third party consultants and research firms prior to the closing of the investment, as appropriate on a case-by-case basis. Approximately 7-10% of all investments initially reviewed by us will be presented to the investment committee. Approval of an investment for funding requires the approval of the majority of the investment committee of our investment adviser, although unanimous consent is sought.

Issuance of Formal Commitment

Once we have determined that a prospective portfolio company is suitable for investment, we work with the management and/or sponsor of that company and its other capital providers, including senior, junior and equity capital providers, if any, to finalize the structure of the investment. Approximately 5-7% of the investments initially reviewed by us eventually result in the issuance of formal commitments and the closing of such transactions.

Debt Investments

We invest in portfolio companies primarily in the form of first lien senior secured loans (including unitranche loans), second lien senior secured loans and mezzanine debt. The first and second lien senior secured loans generally have terms of three to 10 years. In connection with our first and second lien senior secured loans we generally receive security interests in certain assets of our portfolio companies that could serve as collateral in support of the repayment of such loans. First and second lien senior secured loans generally have floating interest rates, which may have LIBOR floors, and also may provide for some amortization of principal and excess cash flow payments, with the remaining principal balance due at maturity.

We structure our mezzanine investments primarily as unsecured subordinated loans that provide for relatively higher fixed interest rates. The mezzanine debt investments generally have terms of up to 10 years. These loans typically have interest-only payments, with amortization of principal, if any, deferred to the later years of the mezzanine investment. In some cases, we may enter into loans that, by their terms, convert into equity or additional debt or defer payments of interest (or at least cash interest) for the first few years after our investment. Also, in some cases our mezzanine debt will be secured by a subordinated lien on some or all of the assets of the borrower.

In some cases, our debt investments may provide for a portion of the interest payable to be payment-in-kind ("PIK") interest. To the extent interest is PIK, it will be payable through the increase

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of the principal amount of the loan by the amount of interest due on the then-outstanding aggregate principal amount of such loan.

In the case of our first and second lien senior secured loans and mezzanine debt, we tailor the terms of the investment to the facts and circumstances of the transaction and the prospective portfolio company, negotiating a structure that aims to protect our rights and manage our risk while creating incentives for the portfolio company to achieve its business plan and improve its profitability. For example, in addition to seeking a senior position in the capital structure of our portfolio companies, we will seek, where appropriate, to limit the downside potential of our investments by:

targeting a total return on our investments (including both interest and potential equity appreciation) that compensates us for credit risk;

incorporating "put" rights, call protection and LIBOR floors for floating rate loans, into the investment structure; and

negotiating covenants in connection with our investments that afford our portfolio companies as much flexibility in managing their businesses as possible, consistent with preservation of our capital. Such restrictions may include affirmative and negative covenants, default penalties, lien protection, change of control provisions and board rights, including either observation or participation rights.

We generally require financial covenants and terms that require an issuer to reduce leverage, thereby enhancing credit quality. These methods include: (a) maintenance leverage covenants requiring a decreasing ratio of indebtedness to cash flow over time, (b) maintenance cash flow covenants requiring an increasing ratio of cash flow to the sum of interest expense and capital expenditures and (c) indebtedness incurrence prohibitions, limiting a company's ability to take on additional indebtedness. In addition, by including limitations on asset sales and capital expenditures we may be able to prevent a borrower from changing the nature of its business or capitalization without our consent.

Our debt investments may include equity features, such as warrants or options to buy a minority interest in the portfolio company. Warrants we receive with our debt investments may require only a nominal cost to exercise, and thus, as a portfolio company appreciates in value, we may achieve additional investment return from this equity interest. We may structure the warrants to provide provisions protecting our rights as a minority-interest holder, as well as puts, or rights to sell such securities back to the portfolio company, upon the occurrence of specified events. In many cases, we also obtain registration rights in connection with these equity interests, which may include demand and "piggyback" registration rights.

Equity Investments

To a lesser extent, we also make preferred and/or common equity investments, which have generally been non-control equity investments of less than \$20 million (usually in conjunction with a concurrent debt investment). However, we may increase the size or change the nature of these investments.

ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITIES

We believe the recent volatility in the credit markets has increased the likelihood of further consolidation in our industry. To that end, we are evaluating (and expect to continue to evaluate in the future) a number of potential strategic opportunities, including acquisitions of:

asset portfolios;

other private and public finance companies, business development companies and asset managers; and

selected secondary market assets.

We have been in, and from time to time may engage in, discussions with counterparties in respect of various potential strategic acquisition and investment transactions, including potential acquisitions of other finance companies, business development companies and asset managers. Some of these transactions could be material to our business and, if consummated, could be difficult to integrate, result in increased leverage or dilution and/or subject us to unexpected liabilities. However, none of these discussions has progressed to the point at which the consummation of any such transaction could be deemed to be probable or reasonably certain as of the date of this Annual Report. Consummation of any such transaction would be subject to completion of due diligence, finalization of key business and financial terms (including price) and negotiation of final definitive documentation as well as a number of other factors and conditions including, without limitation, the approval of our board of directors, any required third party consents and, in certain cases, the approval of our stockholders. We cannot predict how quickly the terms of any such transaction could be finalized, if at all. Accordingly, there can be no assurance that such transaction would be consummated. In connection with evaluating potential strategic acquisition and investment transactions, we have, and may in the future, incur significant expenses for the evaluation and due diligence investigation of these potential transactions.

ON-GOING RELATIONSHIPS WITH AND MONITORING OF PORTFOLIO COMPANIES

We closely monitor each investment we make, maintain a regular dialogue with both the management team and other stakeholders and seek specifically tailored financial reporting. In addition, senior investment professionals may take board seats or obtain board observation rights in connection with our portfolio companies. As of December 31, 2015, of our 218 portfolio companies, we were entitled to board seats or board observation rights on 37% of these companies and these companies represented approximately 63% of our portfolio at fair value.

We seek to exert significant influence post-investment, in addition to covenants and other contractual rights and through board participation, when appropriate, by actively working with management on strategic initiatives. We often introduce managers of companies in which we have invested to other portfolio companies to capitalize on complementary business activities and best practices.

Our investment adviser employs an investment rating system to categorize our investments. In addition to various risk management and monitoring tools, our investment adviser grades the credit risk of all investments on a scale of 1 to 4 no less frequently than quarterly. This system is intended primarily to reflect the underlying risk of a portfolio investment relative to our initial cost basis in respect of such portfolio investment (i.e., at the time of origination or acquisition), although it may also take into account under certain circumstances the performance of the portfolio company's business, the collateral coverage of the investment and other relevant factors. Under this system, investments with a grade of 4 involve the least amount of risk to our initial cost basis. The trends and risk factors for this investment since origination or acquisition are generally favorable, which may include the performance of the portfolio company or a potential exit. Investments graded 3 involve a level of risk to our initial cost basis that is similar to the risk to our initial cost basis at the time of origination or acquisition. This portfolio company is generally performing as expected and the risk factors to our ability to ultimately recoup the cost of our investment are neutral to favorable. All investments or acquired investments in new portfolio companies are initially assessed a grade of 3. Investments graded 2 indicate that the risk to our ability to recoup the initial cost basis of such investment has increased materially since origination or acquisition, including as a result of factors such as declining performance and non-compliance with debt covenants; however, payments are generally not more than 120 days past

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due. An investment grade of 1 indicates that the risk to our ability to recoup the initial cost basis of such investment has substantially increased since origination or acquisition, and the portfolio company likely has materially declining performance. For debt investments with an investment grade of 1, most or all of the debt covenants are out of compliance and payments are substantially delinquent. For investments graded 1, it is anticipated that we will not recoup our initial cost basis and may realize a substantial loss of our initial cost basis upon exit. For investments graded 1 or 2, our investment adviser enhances its level of scrutiny over the monitoring of such portfolio company. The grade of a portfolio investment may be reduced or increased over time.

As of December 31, 2015, the weighted average grade of our portfolio at fair value was 3.0. For more information, see "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Portfolio and Investment Activity."

MANAGERIAL ASSISTANCE

As a BDC, we must offer, and must provide upon request, significant managerial assistance to certain of our portfolio companies. This assistance could involve, among other things, monitoring the operations of our portfolio companies, participating in board and management meetings, consulting with and advising officers of portfolio companies and providing other organizational and financial guidance. Ares Operations may provide all or a portion of this assistance pursuant to our administration agreement, the costs of which will be reimbursed by us. We may receive fees for these services.

COMPETITION

Our primary competitors include public and private funds, commercial and investment banks, commercial finance companies, other BDCs and private equity funds, each of which we compete with for financing opportunities. Many of our competitors are substantially larger and have considerably greater financial and marketing resources than we do. For example, some competitors may have access to funding sources that are not available to us. In addition, some of our competitors may have higher risk tolerances or different risk assessments, which could allow them to consider more investments and establish more relationships than we do. Furthermore, many of our competitors are not subject to the regulatory restrictions that the Investment Company Act imposes on us as a BDC. For additional information concerning the competitive risks we face, see "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Our Business We operate in a highly competitive market for investment opportunities".

We believe that the relationships of the members of our investment adviser's investment committee and of the partners of Ares enable us to learn about, and compete effectively for, financing opportunities with attractive middle-market companies in the industries in which we seek to invest. We believe that Ares' professionals' deep and long-standing direct sponsor relationships and the resulting proprietary transaction opportunities that these relationships often present, provide valuable insight and access to transactions and information. We use the industry information of Ares' investment professionals to which we have access to assess investment risks and determine appropriate pricing for our investments in portfolio companies.

STAFFING

We do not currently have any employees and do not expect to have any employees. Services necessary for our business are provided by individuals who are employees or affiliates of our investment adviser, Ares Capital Management, and our administrator, Ares Operations, each of which is a subsidiary of Ares Management, pursuant to the terms of our investment advisory and management agreement and our administration agreement, respectively, each as described below. Each of our executive officers is an employee or affiliate of our investment adviser or our administrator. Our

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day-to-day investment activities are managed by our investment adviser. Most of the services necessary for the origination of our investment portfolio are provided by investment professionals employed by Ares Capital Management. Ares Capital Management had approximately 80 U.S.-based investment professionals as of December 31, 2015 who focus on origination, transaction development, investment and the ongoing monitoring of our investments. See " Investment Advisory and Management Agreement" below. We reimburse both our investment adviser and our administrator for a certain portion of expenses incurred in connection with such staffing, as described in more detail below. Because we have no employees, Ares Capital does not have a formal employee relations policy.

INVESTMENT ADVISORY AND MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

Management Services

Ares Capital Management serves as our investment adviser and is registered as an investment adviser under the Advisers Act. Subject to the overall supervision of our board of directors, our investment adviser manages the day-to-day operations of, and provides investment advisory and management services to, Ares Capital. Under the terms of the investment advisory and management agreement, our investment adviser:

determines the composition of our portfolio, the nature and timing of the changes to our portfolio and the manner of implementing such changes;

identifies, evaluates and negotiates the structure of the investments we make (including performing due diligence on our prospective portfolio companies);

closes and monitors the investments we make;

determines the investments and other assets that we purchase, retain or sell; and

provides us with such other investment advisory and research and related services as we may from time to time reasonably require.

Ares Capital Management's services to us under the investment advisory and management agreement are not exclusive, and it is free to furnish similar services to other entities. Similarly, affiliates of our investment adviser may directly or indirectly manage funds or other investment vehicles with investment objectives similar to ours. Accordingly, we may compete with these Ares funds or other investment vehicles managed by our investment adviser and its affiliates for capital and investment opportunities. Ares Capital Management endeavors to allocate investment opportunities in a fair and equitable manner, and in any event consistent with any fiduciary duties owed to Ares Capital. Nevertheless, it is possible that we may not be given the opportunity to participate in certain investments made by investment funds or other investment vehicles managed by Ares Capital Management or its affiliates.

Base Management Fee

Pursuant to the investment advisory and management agreement and subject to the overall supervision of our board of directors, our investment adviser provides investment advisory and management services to us. For providing these services, our investment adviser receives fees from us consisting of a base management fee, an income based fee and a capital gains incentive fee.

The base management fee is calculated at an annual rate of 1.5% based on the average value of our total assets (other than cash or cash equivalents but including assets purchased with borrowed funds) at the end of the two most recently completed calendar quarters. The base management fee is payable quarterly in arrears.

Income Based Fee

The income based fee is calculated and payable quarterly in arrears based on our net investment income excluding income based fees and capital gains incentive fees ("pre-incentive fee net investment income") for the quarter. Pre-incentive fee net investment income means interest income, dividend income and any other income (including any other fees such as commitment, origination, structuring, diligence and consulting fees or other fees that we receive from portfolio companies but excluding fees for providing managerial assistance) accrued during the calendar quarter, minus operating expenses for the quarter (including the base management fee, any expenses payable under the administration agreement, and any interest expense and dividends paid on any outstanding preferred stock, but excluding the income based fee and capital gains incentive fee accrued under U.S. generally accepted accounting principles ("GAAP")). Pre-incentive fee net investment income includes, in the case of investments with a deferred interest feature such as market discount, debt instruments with PIK interest, preferred stock with PIK dividends and zero coupon securities, accrued income that we have not yet received in cash. Our investment adviser is not under any obligation to reimburse us for any part of the income based fees it received that were based on accrued interest that we never actually received. See "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Our Business There are significant potential conflicts of interest that could impact our investment returns" and "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Our Business We may be obligated to pay our investment adviser certain fees even if we incur a loss."

Pre-incentive fee net investment income does not include any realized capital gains, realized capital losses, unrealized capital appreciation, unrealized capital depreciation or income tax expense related to realized gains and losses. Because of the structure of the income based fee, it is possible that we may pay such fees in a quarter where we incur a loss. For example, if we receive pre-incentive fee net investment income in excess of the hurdle rate (as defined below) for a quarter, we will pay the applicable income based fee even if we have incurred a loss in that quarter due to realized and/or unrealized capital losses.

Pre-incentive fee net investment income, expressed as a rate of return on the value of our net assets (defined as total assets less indebtedness and before taking into account any income based fees and capital gains incentive fees payable during the period) at the end of the immediately preceding calendar quarter, is compared to a fixed "hurdle rate" of 1.75% per quarter. If market credit spreads rise, we may be able to invest in debt instruments that provide for a higher return, which may increase our pre-incentive fee net investment income and make it easier for our investment adviser to surpass the fixed hurdle rate and receive an income based fee based on such net investment income. To the extent we have retained pre-incentive fee net investment income that has been used to calculate the income based fee, it is also included in the amount of our total assets (other than cash and cash equivalents but including assets purchased with borrowed funds) used to calculate the 1.5% base management fee.

We pay our investment adviser an income based fee with respect to our pre-incentive fee net investment income in each calendar quarter as follows:

no income based fee in any calendar quarter in which our pre-incentive fee net investment income does not exceed the hurdle rate;

100% of our pre-incentive fee net investment income with respect to that portion of such pre-incentive fee net investment income, if any, that exceeds the hurdle rate but is less than 2.1875% in any calendar quarter. We refer to this portion of our pre-incentive fee net investment income (which exceeds the hurdle rate but is less than 2.1875%) as the "catch-up" provision. The "catch-up" is meant to provide our investment adviser with 20% of the pre-incentive fee net investment income as if a hurdle rate did not apply if this net investment income exceeded 2.1875% in any calendar quarter; and

20% of the amount of our pre-incentive fee net investment income, if any, that exceeds 2.1875% in any calendar quarter.

The following is a graphical representation of the calculation of the income based fee:

Quarterly Income Based Fee Based on Net Investment Income
Pre-incentive fee net investment income return
(expressed as a percentage of the value of net assets)

Percentage of pre-incentive fee net investment income
allocated to income based fee

These calculations are adjusted for any share issuances or repurchases during the quarter.

Capital Gains Incentive Fee

The capital gains incentive fee is determined and payable in arrears as of the end of each calendar year (or, upon termination of our investment advisory and management agreement, as of the termination date) and is calculated at the end of each applicable year by subtracting (a) the sum of our cumulative aggregate realized capital losses and aggregate unrealized capital depreciation from (b) our cumulative aggregate realized capital gains, in each case calculated from October 8, 2004, (the date we completed our IPO). Realized capital gains and losses include gains and losses on investments and foreign currencies, gains and losses on extinguishment of debt and other assets, as well as any income tax expense related to realized gains and losses. If such amount is positive at the end of such year, then the capital gains incentive fee for such year is equal to 20% of such amount, less the aggregate amount of capital gains incentive fees paid in all prior years. If such amount is negative, then there is no capital gains incentive fee for such year.

The cumulative aggregate realized capital gains are calculated as the sum of the differences, if positive, between (a) the net sales price of each investment in our portfolio when sold and (b) the accreted or amortized cost basis of such investment.

The cumulative aggregate realized capital losses are calculated as the sum of the amounts by which (a) the net sales price of each investment in our portfolio when sold is less than (b) the accreted or amortized cost basis of such investment.

The aggregate unrealized capital depreciation is calculated as the sum of the differences, if negative, between (a) the valuation of each investment in our portfolio as of the applicable capital gains incentive fee calculation date and (b) the accreted or amortized cost basis of such investment.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, as a result of an amendment to the capital gains incentive fee under the investment advisory and management agreement that was adopted on June 6, 2011, if we are required by GAAP to record an investment at its fair value as of the time of acquisition instead of at the actual amount paid for such investment by us (including, for example, as a result of the application of the acquisition method of accounting), then solely for the purposes of calculating the capital gains incentive fee, the "accreted or amortized cost basis" of an investment shall be an amount (the "Contractual Cost Basis") equal to (1) (x) the actual amount paid by us for such investment plus (y) any amounts recorded in our financial statements as required by GAAP that are attributable to the accretion of such investment plus (z) any other adjustments made to the cost basis included in our financial statements, including PIK interest or additional amounts funded (net of repayments) minus

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(2) any amounts recorded in our financial statements as required by GAAP that are attributable to the amortization of such investment, whether such calculated Contractual Cost Basis is higher or lower than the fair value of such investment (as determined in accordance with GAAP) at the time of acquisition.

We defer cash payment of any income based fee and the capital gains incentive fee otherwise earned by our investment adviser if during the most recent four full calendar quarter period ending on or prior to the date such payment is to be made the sum of (a) the aggregate distributions to our stockholders and (b) the change in net assets (defined as total assets less indebtedness and before taking into account any income based fees or capital gains incentive fees accrued during the period) is less than 7.0% of our net assets (defined as total assets less indebtedness) at the beginning of such period. Any such deferred fees are carried over for payment in subsequent calculation periods to the extent such payment is payable under our investment advisory and management agreement.

Payment of Our Expenses

The services of all investment professionals and staff of our investment adviser, when and to the extent engaged in providing investment advisory and management services to us and routine overhead expenses of such personnel allocable to such services, are provided and paid for by our investment adviser. We bear all other costs and expenses of our operations and transactions, including, but not limited to, those relating to: rent; organization; calculation of our net asset value (including, but not limited to, the cost and expenses of any independent valuation firm); expenses incurred by our investment adviser payable to third parties, including agents, consultants or other advisers, in monitoring our financial and legal affairs and in monitoring our investments (including the cost of consultants hired to develop information technology systems designed to monitor our investments) and performing due diligence on our prospective portfolio companies; interest payable on indebtedness, if any, incurred to finance our investments (including payments to third party vendors for financial information services); offerings of our common stock and other securities; investment advisory and management fees; administration fees; fees payable to third parties, including agents, consultants or other advisers, relating to, or associated with, evaluating and making investments regardless of whether such transactions are ultimately consummated; transfer agent and custodial fees; registration fees; listing fees; taxes; independent directors' fees and expenses; costs of preparing and filing reports or other documents with the SEC; the costs of any reports, proxy statements or other notices to stockholders, including printing costs; to the extent we are covered by any joint insurance policies, our allocable portion of the insurance premiums for such policies; direct costs and expenses of administration, including auditor and legal costs; and all other expenses incurred by us or our administrator in connection with administering our business as described in more detail under " Administration Agreement" below.

Duration, Termination and Amendment

At an in-person meeting of our board of directors on March 16, 2011, the form of our current investment advisory and management agreement, including two proposed amendments to our then existing investment advisory and management agreement, was approved by our board of directors with the recommendation that our stockholders vote to approve the proposed amendments. On June 6, 2011, our stockholders approved the proposed amendments and we entered into a restated investment advisory and management agreement, reflecting such amendments on June 6, 2011. At an in-person meeting of our board of directors on April 29, 2015, our board of directors, including a majority of the directors who are not "interested persons" of the Company as defined in the Investment Company Act, voted to approve the continuation of the investment advisory and management agreement to June 6, 2016. A discussion regarding the basis for our board of directors' approval of the 2011 adoption of the form of our current investment advisory and management agreement is available in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011.

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Unless terminated earlier, the investment advisory and management agreement will automatically renew for successive annual periods if approved annually by our board of directors or by the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of our outstanding voting securities, including, in either case, approval by a majority of our directors who are not "interested persons" of the Company (as defined in the Investment Company Act). The investment advisory and management agreement will automatically terminate in the event of its assignment. The investment advisory and management agreement may be terminated by either party without penalty upon 60 days' written notice to the other party.

In voting to approve the continuation of the investment advisory and management agreement, the independent directors had the opportunity to consult in executive session with counsel to the Company regarding the approval of such agreement. In reaching a decision to approve the continuation of the investment advisory and management agreement, our board of directors reviewed a significant amount of information and considered, among other things:

- (i) the nature, extent and quality of the advisory and other services to be provided to the Company by our investment adviser;
- (ii) the long and short-term investment performance of the Company and our investment adviser;
- (iii) the costs of the services to be provided by our investment adviser (including the base management fee, the income based fee and the capital gains incentive fee (including hurdle rates) and expense ratios) and comparative data based on publicly available information;
- (iv) the limited potential for economies of scale in investment management associated with a larger capital base for investments in first and second lien senior loans and mezzanine debt and whether such limited economies of scale would benefit our stockholders;
- (v) our investment adviser's estimated pro forma profitability with respect to managing us based on financial information provided by our investment adviser;
- (vi) the limited potential for additional benefits to be derived by our investment adviser and its affiliates as a result of our relationship with our investment adviser, including soft dollar arrangements; and
- (vii) various other matters, including the alignment of interests of our stockholders.

In voting to approve the continuation of the investment advisory and management agreement, our board of directors, including all of the directors who are not "interested persons," of the Company, made the following conclusions:

Nature, Extent and Quality of Services. Our board of directors considered the nature, extent and quality of the investment selection process employed by our investment adviser, including the flow of transaction opportunities resulting from Ares Capital Management's investment professionals' significant capital markets, trading and research expertise, the employment of Ares Capital Management's investment philosophy, diligence procedures, credit recommendation process, investment structuring, and ongoing relationships with and monitoring of portfolio companies, in light of the investment objective of the Company. Our board of directors also considered our investment adviser's personnel and their prior experience in connection with the types of investments made by us, including such personnel's network of relationships with intermediaries focused on middle-market companies. Our board of directors also considered the benefit and increasing costs of our investment adviser continuing to be able to recruit and retain top talent. In addition, our board of directors considered the other terms and conditions of the investment advisory and management agreement. Our board of directors determined that the substantive terms of the investment advisory and management agreement (other than the fees payable thereunder, which our board of directors reviewed separately), including the services to be provided, are generally the same as those of comparable BDCs described in the available

market data and that it would be difficult to obtain similar services of similar quality on a comparable basis from other third party service providers or through an internally managed structure. In addition, our board of directors considered the fact that we have the ability to terminate the investment advisory and management agreement without penalty upon 60 days' written notice to our investment adviser. Our board of directors further determined that our investment adviser is served by a dedicated origination, transaction development and investment team of investment professionals, and that these investment professionals have historically focused on investments in middle-market companies and have developed an investment evaluation process and an extensive network of relationships with financial sponsors and intermediaries focused on middle-market companies, which experience and relationships coincide with our investment objective and generally equal or exceed those of the management teams or investment advisers of other comparable BDCs described in the available market data.

Investment Performance. Our board of directors reviewed the long-term and short-term investment performance of the Company and our investment adviser, as well as comparative data with respect to the long-term and short-term investment performance of other externally managed BDCs and their investment advisers. Our board of directors determined that our investment adviser was delivering results consistent with the investment objective of the Company and that the Company's investment performance was generally above average when compared to comparable BDCs. Our board of directors further determined that in light of the performance history of the Company, our investment adviser's extensive experience with our particular investment objectives and policies and our investment adviser's commitment to the Company, the investment performance of the Company was likely to remain consistent with the approval of the continuation of the investment advisory and management agreement.

Costs of the Services Provided to the Company. Our board of directors considered (i) comparative data based on publicly available information with respect to services rendered and the advisory fees (including the base management fee, the income based fee and the capital gains incentive fee or similar fees (including applicable hurdle rates and/or other payment conditions)) of other BDCs with similar investment objectives, our operating expenses and expense ratios compared to other BDCs of similar size and with similar investment objectives and (ii) the administrative services that our administrator will provide to us at cost. Based upon its review, our board of directors determined that the fees to be paid under the investment advisory and management agreement are generally equal to or less than those payable under agreements of comparable BDCs described in the available market data. In addition, after a detailed discussion with management and examining market data and information prepared by management, our board of directors determined that while our total expenses (adjusted for certain non-recurring items and including interest expense and credit facility fees) as a percentage of assets for the year ended December 31, 2014 were slightly above average as compared to those disclosed in market data by comparable externally managed BDCs, our total expenses (adjusted for certain non-recurring items and excluding interest expense and credit facility fees) as a percentage of assets for the year ended December 31, 2014 were similar to or lower than those disclosed by comparable externally managed BDCs. Our board of directors noted that the slightly above average total expenses as a percentage of assets were attributable to increased interest expense as a result of our strategy of decreasing our balance sheet risk by extending debt maturities and refinancing short-term borrowings under floating rate secured debt with long-term fixed rate unsecured debt. Our board of directors further noted that many of our BDC competitors have been unable to access such unsecured debt. Our board of directors also noted that the terms of the investment advisory and management agreement provide that the Company will defer cash payment of any income based fee and capital gains incentive fee otherwise earned by our investment adviser if during the most recent four full calendar quarter period ending on or prior to the date such payment is to be made the sum of

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(a) the aggregate distributions to the stockholders and (b) the change in net assets (before taking into account any income based fees or capital gains incentive fees accrued during the period) is less than 7.0% of net assets at the beginning of such period, to be carried over for payment in a subsequent calculation period (compared to a number of the Company's competitors that did not have similar deferral of payment conditions).

Economies of Scale. Our board of directors considered information about the potential of our stockholders to experience economies of scale as the Company grows in size. Our board of directors considered that the direct lending business is one of the least scalable businesses because it requires additional resources as it grows and also considered that because there are no break points in our investment adviser's fees, any benefits resulting from the growth in the Company's assets where the Company's fixed costs did not increase proportionately would not inure to the benefit of the stockholders. Taking into account such information, our board of directors determined that the advisory fee structure with respect to the investment advisory and management agreement was reasonable and that no changes were currently necessary to reflect economies of scale.

Estimated Pro Forma Profitability of the Investment Adviser. Our board of directors considered information about our investment adviser's budget and determined that, based on the information available to our board of directors, our investment adviser's estimated pro forma profitability with respect to managing the Company was generally equal to or less than the profitability of investment advisers managing comparable BDCs though not much market data was available for such advisers and relying, in particular, on the fact that the management fee payable to our investment adviser is 1.50% (compared to 1.75% or 2.00% for a number of the Company's competitors) and is not paid on cash or cash equivalents held by the Company (unlike several of the Company's competitors).

Limited Potential for Additional Benefits Derived by the Investment Adviser. Our board of directors believed that there was limited potential for additional benefits, such as soft dollar arrangements with brokers, to be derived by our investment adviser and its affiliates as a result of our relationship with our investment adviser.

Other Matters Considered. Our board of directors considered the interests of senior management and determined that the judgment and performance of our senior management were not impaired by those interests.

In view of the wide variety of factors that our board of directors considered in connection with its evaluation of the investment advisory and management agreement, it is not practical to quantify, rank or otherwise assign relative weights to the specific factors it considered in reaching its decision. Our board of directors did not undertake to make any specific determination as to whether any particular factor, or any aspect of any particular factor, was favorable or unfavorable to the ultimate determination of our board of directors. Rather, our board of directors based its approval on the totality of information presented to, and the investigation conducted by, it. In considering the factors discussed above, individual directors may have given different weights to different factors.

Based on the information reviewed and the factors discussed above, our directors (including those directors who are not "interested persons" of the Company) concluded that the terms of the investment advisory and management agreement, including the fee rates thereunder, are fair and reasonable in relation to the services provided and approved the continuation of the investment advisory and management agreement with our investment adviser as being in the best interests of the Company and its stockholders.

Conflicts of interest may arise if our investment adviser seeks to change the terms of our investment advisory and management agreement, including, for example, the amount of the base

management fee, the income based fee, the capital gains incentive fee or other compensation terms. Material amendments to our investment advisory and management agreement must be approved by the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of our outstanding voting securities and by a majority of our independent directors, and we may from time to time decide it is appropriate to seek the requisite approval to change the terms of the agreement.

Indemnification

The investment advisory and management agreement provides that, absent willful misfeasance, bad faith or gross negligence in the performance of its duties or by reason of the reckless disregard of its duties and obligations, our investment adviser, its members and their respective officers, managers, partners, agents, employees, controlling persons and members and any other person or entity affiliated with it are entitled to indemnification from us for any damages, liabilities, costs and expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fees and amounts reasonably paid in settlement) arising from the rendering of our investment adviser's services under the investment advisory and management agreement or otherwise as our investment adviser.

Organization of our Investment Adviser

Our investment adviser is a Delaware limited liability company that is registered as an investment adviser under the Advisers Act. The principal executive offices of Ares Capital Management are located at 2000 Avenue of the Stars, 12th Floor, Los Angeles, California 90067.

ADMINISTRATION AGREEMENT

We are also party to an administration agreement, referred to herein as the "administration agreement", with our administrator, Ares Operations. Our board of directors approved the continuation of our administration agreement on April 29, 2015, which extended the term of the agreement until June 1, 2016. Pursuant to the administration agreement, Ares Operations furnishes us with office equipment and clerical, bookkeeping and record keeping services at our office facilities. Under the administration agreement, Ares Operations also performs, or oversees the performance of, our required administrative services, which include, among other things, providing assistance in accounting, legal, compliance, operations, investor relations and technology, being responsible for the financial records that we are required to maintain and preparing reports to our stockholders and reports filed with the SEC. In addition, Ares Operations assists us in determining and publishing our net asset value, assists us in providing managerial assistance to our portfolio companies, oversees the preparation and filing of our tax returns and the printing and dissemination of reports to our stockholders, and generally oversees the payment of our expenses and the performance of administrative and professional services rendered to us by others. Payments under the administration agreement are equal to an amount based upon our allocable portion of Ares Operations' overhead and other expenses (including travel expenses) incurred by Ares Operations in performing its obligations under the administration agreement, including our allocable portion of the compensation of certain of our officers (including our chief compliance officer, chief financial officer, chief accounting officer, general counsel, treasurer and assistant treasurer) and their respective staffs. The administration agreement may be terminated by either party without penalty upon 60 days' written notice to the other party.

For the years ended December 31, 2015, 2014 and 2013, the Company incurred \$14.2 million, \$13.7 million and \$12.3 million in administrative fees. As of December 31, 2015 and 2014, \$3.7 million and \$4.0 million of these fees were unpaid and included in "accounts payable and other liabilities" in the Company's December 31, 2015 and 2014 consolidated balance sheets, respectively.

Indemnification

The administration agreement provides that, absent willful misfeasance, bad faith or negligence in the performance of its duties or by reason of the reckless disregard of its duties and obligations, Ares Operations, its members and their respective officers, managers, partners, agents, employees, controlling persons and members and any other person or entity affiliated with it are entitled to indemnification from us for any damages, liabilities, costs and expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fees and amounts reasonably paid in settlement) arising from the rendering of Ares Operations' services under the administration agreement or otherwise as our administrator.

LEVERAGE

We may from time to time borrow funds to make investments, a practice known as "leverage," to attempt to increase returns to our stockholders. With certain limited exceptions, we are only allowed to borrow amounts such that our asset coverage, as calculated in accordance with the Investment Company Act, equals at least 200% after such borrowing. The amount of leverage that we employ at any particular time will depend on our investment adviser's and our board of directors' assessments of market and other factors at the time of any proposed borrowing. As of February 18, 2016, we had \$3.9 billion of total principal debt outstanding under the various debt instruments described below. See "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Our Business We borrow money, which magnifies the potential for gain or loss on amounts invested and may increase the risk of investing with us."

We may from time to time seek to retire or repurchase our common stock through cash purchases, as well as retire, cancel or purchase our outstanding debt through cash purchases and/or exchanges, in open market purchases, privately negotiated transactions or otherwise. Such repurchases or exchanges, if any, will depend on prevailing market conditions, our liquidity requirements, contractual and regulatory restrictions and other factors. The amounts involved may be material.

We are party to a revolving credit facility, which allows us to borrow up to \$1.29 billion at any one time outstanding (the "Revolving Credit Facility"). The Revolving Credit Facility also includes an "accordion" feature that allows us, under certain circumstances, to increase the size of the facility to a maximum of \$1.9 billion. The Revolving Credit Facility provides for a revolving period until May 4, 2019 and a stated maturity of May 4, 2020. Subject to certain exceptions, the interest rate charged on the Revolving Credit Facility is based on an applicable spread of either 1.75% or 2.00% over LIBOR or 0.75% or 1.00% over an "alternative base rate" (as defined in the agreements governing the Revolving Credit Facility), in each case, determined monthly based on the total amount of the borrowing base relative to the total commitments of the Revolving Credit Facility and other debt, if any, secured by the same collateral as the Revolving Credit Facility.

Our consolidated subsidiary, Ares Capital CP Funding LLC ("Ares Capital CP"), is party to a revolving funding facility, which allows us to borrow up to \$540 million at any one time outstanding (the "Revolving Funding Facility"). The Revolving Funding Facility provides for a feature that allows, under certain circumstances, for an increase in the size of the facility to a maximum of \$865 million. The Revolving Funding Facility provides for a reinvestment period until May 14, 2017 and a stated maturity of May 14, 2019. Subject to certain exceptions, the interest rate charged on the Revolving Funding Facility is based on applicable spreads ranging from 2.25% to 2.50% over LIBOR or ranging from 1.25% to 1.50% over a "base rate" (as defined in the agreements governing the Revolving Funding Facility) in each case, determined monthly based on the composition of the borrowing base relative to outstanding borrowings under the Revolving Funding Facility.

Our consolidated subsidiary, Ares Capital JB Funding LLC ("ACJB LLC") is party to a revolving funding facility with Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation ("SMBC"), which allows us to borrow up to \$400 million at any one time outstanding (the "SMBC Funding Facility" and together with the Revolving Credit Facility and the Revolving Funding Facility, the "Facilities"). The SMBC Funding

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Facility provides for a reinvestment period until September 14, 2017 and a stated maturity of September 14, 2022. The reinvestment period and the stated maturity date are both subject to two one-year extensions by mutual agreement. Subject to certain exceptions, the interest rate charged on the SMBC Funding Facility is based on an applicable spread of either 1.75% or 2.00% over LIBOR or 0.75% or 1.00% over a "base rate" (as defined in the agreements governing the SMBC Funding Facility), in each case, determined monthly based on the amount of the average borrowings outstanding under the SMBC Funding Facility.

Our consolidated subsidiary, Ares Venture Finance, L.P. ("AVF LP") received a license from the Small Business Administration ("SBA") to operate as a Small Business Investment Company ("SBIC"), which allows us to borrow up to \$150 million at any one time outstanding (the "SBA Debentures"). The SBA Debentures are non-recourse to us, have interest payable semi-annually, have a 10-year maturity and may be prepaid at any time without penalty. The interest rate for the SBA Debentures is fixed at the time the SBA Debentures and other applicable SBA-guaranteed debentures can be pooled and sold to the public and is based on a spread over U.S. treasury notes with 10-year maturities. The pooling of newly issued SBA Debentures occurs twice per year. The spread includes an annual charge as determined by the SBA as well as a market-driven component. As of December 31, 2015, the weighted average interest rate in effect for the SBA Debenture was 3.19%.

As of February 18, 2016, we had approximately \$1.0 billion aggregate principal amount of convertible senior unsecured notes outstanding comprised of \$230.0 million aggregate principal amount of convertible senior unsecured notes that mature on June 1, 2016 and bear interest at a rate of 5.125% (the "June 2016 Convertible Notes"), \$162.5 million aggregate principal amount of convertible senior unsecured notes that mature on March 15, 2017 and bear interest at rate of 4.875% (the "2017 Convertible Notes"), \$270.0 million aggregate principal amount of convertible senior unsecured notes that mature on January 15, 2018 and bear interest at a rate of 4.75% (the "2018 Convertible Notes"), and \$300.0 million aggregate principal amount of convertible senior unsecured notes that mature on January 15, 2019 and bear interest at a rate of 4.375% (the "2019 Convertible Notes", and together with the June 2016 Convertible Notes, the 2017 Convertible Notes and the 2018 Convertible Notes, the "Convertible Unsecured Notes").

As of February 18, 2016, we had approximately \$1.8 billion aggregate principal amount of senior unsecured notes outstanding comprised of \$750.0 million aggregate principal amount of senior unsecured notes that mature on November 30, 2018 and bear interest at a rate of 4.875% (the "2018 Notes"), \$600.0 million aggregate principal amount of senior unsecured notes that mature on January 15, 2020 and bear interest at a rate of 3.875% (the "2020 Notes"), \$182.5 million aggregate principal amount of senior unsecured notes that mature on October 1, 2022 and bear interest at a rate of 5.875% (the "October 2022 Notes") and \$229.6 million aggregate principal amount of senior unsecured notes that mature on April 15, 2047 and bear interest at a rate of 6.875% (the "2047 Notes" and together with the 2018 Notes, the 2020 Notes and the October 2022 Notes, the "Unsecured Notes"). The October 2022 Notes and the 2047 Notes are listed on The New York Stock Exchange.

We intend to continue borrowing under the Facilities in the future and we may increase the size of the Facilities, add additional credit facilities or otherwise issue additional debt securities or other evidences of indebtedness in the future, although there can be no assurance that we will be able to do so.

For more information on our debt, see "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Financial Condition, Liquidity and Capital Resources."

REGULATION

We have elected to be regulated as a BDC under the Investment Company Act and have elected to be treated as a RIC under the Code. As with other companies regulated by the Investment

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Company Act, a BDC must adhere to certain substantive regulatory requirements. The Investment Company Act contains prohibitions and restrictions relating to certain transactions between BDCs and certain affiliates (including any investment advisers or sub-advisers), principal underwriters and certain affiliates of those affiliates or underwriters. Among other things, we generally cannot invest in any portfolio company in which a fund managed by Ares or any of its downstream affiliates other than us and our downstream affiliates) currently has an investment (although we may co-invest with funds managed by Ares or any of its downstream affiliates, subject to compliance with existing regulatory guidance, applicable regulations and our allocation procedures). Certain types of co-investment transactions would only be permitted pursuant to an exemptive order from the SEC, for which we have applied. Any such order will be subject to certain terms and conditions. Further, there is no assurance that the application for exemptive relief will be granted by the SEC.

The Investment Company Act contains certain restrictions on certain types of investments we may make. Specifically, we may only invest up to 30% of our portfolio in entities that are not considered "eligible portfolio companies" (as defined in the Investment Company Act), including companies located outside of the United States, entities that are operating pursuant to certain exceptions under the Investment Company Act, and publicly traded entities whose public equity market capitalization exceeds the levels provided for under the Investment Company Act.

The Investment Company Act also requires that a majority of our directors be persons other than "interested persons," as that term is defined in Section 2(a)(19) of the Investment Company Act, referred to herein as "independent directors." In addition, the Investment Company Act provides that we may not change the nature of our business so as to cease to be, or to withdraw our election as, a BDC unless that change is approved by holders of at least a majority of our outstanding voting securities. Under the Investment Company Act, the vote of holders of at least a "majority of outstanding voting securities" means the vote of the holders of the lesser of: (a) 67% or more of the outstanding shares of our common stock present at a meeting or represented by proxy if holders of more than 50% of the shares of our common stock are present or represented by proxy or (b) more than 50% of the outstanding shares of our common stock.

We may invest up to 100% of our assets in securities acquired directly from issuers in privately negotiated transactions. Our intention is to not write (sell) or buy put or call options to manage risks associated with the publicly traded securities of our portfolio companies. We may enter into hedging transactions to manage the risks associated with interest rate and currency fluctuations. We may purchase or otherwise receive warrants or options to purchase the common stock of our portfolio companies in connection with acquisition financings or other investments. In connection with such an acquisition, we may acquire rights to require the issuers of acquired securities or their affiliates to repurchase them under certain circumstances.

We also do not intend to acquire securities issued by any investment company that exceed the limits imposed by the Investment Company Act. Under these limits, we generally cannot acquire more than 3% of the voting stock of any investment company (as defined in the Investment Company Act), invest more than 5% of the value of our total assets in the securities of one investment company or invest more than 10% of the value of our total assets in the securities of investment companies in the aggregate. With regard to that portion of our portfolio invested in securities issued by investment companies, it should be noted that such investments might subject our stockholders to additional expenses.

SBA REGULATION

In April 2015, our wholly owned subsidiary, AVF LP, received a license from the SBA to operate as a SBIC under the provisions of Section 301(c) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, as amended. The SBA places certain limitations on the financing of investments by SBICs in portfolio

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companies, including regulating the types of financings, restricting investments to only include small businesses with certain characteristics or in certain industries, and requiring capitalization thresholds that may limit distributions to the Company. AVF LP will invest in small businesses, as such term is defined in the SBA regulations, in accordance with SBA regulations and expects that such investments will primarily be in early-stage and/or venture capital-backed companies.

The license from the SBA allows AVF LP to obtain leverage by issuing SBA-guaranteed debentures (the "SBA Debentures"), subject to the issuance of a capital commitment by the SBA and other customary procedures. The SBA Debentures carry long-term fixed rates that are generally lower than rates on comparable bank and other debt. Leverage through the SBA Debentures is subject to required capitalization thresholds. Current SBA regulations limit the amount that any SBIC may borrow to \$150 million. Debentures guaranteed by the SBA have a maturity of ten years, require semi-annual payments of interest and do not require any principal payments prior to maturity. AVF LP is subject to regulation and oversight by the SBA, including requirements with respect to reporting financial information, such as the extent of capital impairment if applicable, on a regular basis and annual examinations conducted by the SBA. The SBA, as a creditor, will have a superior claim to AVF LP's assets over the Company's stockholders in the event AVF LP is liquidated or the SBA exercises its remedies under the SBA Debentures issued by AVF LP upon an event of default.

SBICs are designed to stimulate the flow of private investor capital to eligible small businesses as defined by the SBA. Under SBA regulations, SBICs may make loans to eligible small businesses, invest in the equity securities of such businesses and provide them with consulting and advisory services. Under present SBA regulations, eligible small businesses generally include businesses that (together with their affiliates) have a tangible net worth not exceeding \$19.5 million for the most recent fiscal year and have average annual net income after U.S. federal income taxes not exceeding \$6.5 million (average net income to be computed without benefit of any carryover loss) for the two most recent fiscal years. In addition, an SBIC must invest 25% of its investment capital in "smaller enterprises," as defined by the SBA. The definition of a smaller enterprise generally includes businesses that have a tangible net worth not exceeding \$6.0 million for the most recent fiscal year and have average annual net income after U.S. federal income taxes not exceeding \$2.0 million (average net income to be computed without benefit of any net carryover loss) for the two most recent fiscal years. SBA regulations also provide alternative size standard criteria to determine eligibility for designation as an eligible small business or smaller enterprise, which criteria depend on the primary industry in which the business is engaged and is based on such factors as the number of employees and gross revenue. However, once an SBIC has invested in an eligible small business, it may continue to make follow on investments in the company, regardless of the size of the company at the time of the follow on investment.

The SBA prohibits an SBIC from providing funds to small businesses with certain characteristics, such as businesses with the majority of their employees located outside the U.S., or from investing in project finance, real estate, farmland, financial intermediaries or "passive" (i.e., non-operating) businesses. Without prior SBA approval, an SBIC may not invest an amount equal to more than approximately 30% of the SBIC's regulatory capital in any one company and its affiliates.

The SBA places certain limitations on the financing terms of investments by SBICs in portfolio companies (such as limiting the permissible interest rate on debt securities held by an SBIC in a portfolio company). An SBIC may exercise control over a small business for a period of up to seven years from the date on which the SBIC initially acquires its control position. This control period may be extended for an additional period of time with the SBA's prior written approval.

The SBA restricts the ability of an SBIC to lend money to any of its officers, directors and employees or to invest in associates thereof. The SBA also prohibits, without prior SBA approval, a "change of control" of an SBIC or transfers that would result in any person (or a group of persons

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acting in concert) owning 10% or more of a class of capital stock of a licensed SBIC. A "change of control" is any event which would result in the transfer of the power, direct or indirect, to direct the management and policies of an SBIC, whether through ownership, contractual arrangements or otherwise.

The SBA regulations require, among other things, an annual periodic examination of a licensed SBIC by an SBA examiner to determine the SBIC's compliance with the relevant SBA regulations, and the performance of a financial audit by an independent auditor.

PRIVACY PRINCIPLES

We are committed to maintaining the privacy of our stockholders and to safeguarding their non-public personal information. The following information is provided to help you understand what personal information we collect, how we protect that information and why, in certain cases, we may share information with select other parties.

Generally, we do not receive any non-public personal information relating to our stockholders, although certain non-public personal information of our stockholders may become available to us. The non-public personal information that we may receive falls into the following categories:

information we receive from stockholders, whether we receive it orally, in writing or electronically. This includes stockholders' communications to us concerning their investment;

information about stockholders' transactions and history with us; or

other general information that we may obtain about stockholders, such as demographic and contact information such as a person's address.

We do not disclose any non-public personal information about our stockholders or former stockholders to anyone, except:

to our affiliates (such as our investment adviser and administrator) and their employees that have a legitimate business need for the information;

to our service providers (such as our accountants, attorneys, custodians, transfer agent, underwriters and proxy solicitors) and their employees, as is necessary to service recordholder accounts or otherwise provide the applicable services;

to comply with court orders, subpoenas, lawful discovery requests or other legal or regulatory requirements; or

as allowed or required by applicable law or regulation.

When we share non-public stockholder personal information referred to above, the information is made available for limited business purposes and under controlled circumstances designed to protect our stockholders' privacy. We do not permit use of stockholder information for any non-business or marketing purpose, nor do we permit third parties to rent, sell, trade or otherwise release or disclose information to any other party.

Our service providers, such as its investment adviser, administrator and transfer agent, are required to maintain physical, electronic, and procedural safeguards to protect stockholder non-public personal information to prevent unauthorized access or use and to dispose of such information when it is no longer required.

Personnel of our affiliates may access stockholder information only for business purposes. The degree of access is based on the sensitivity of the information and on personnel need for the information to service a stockholder's account or comply with legal requirements.

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If a stockholder ceases to be a stockholder, we will adhere to the privacy policies and practices as described above. We may choose to modify our privacy policies at any time. Before we do so, we will notify stockholders and provide a description of our privacy policy.

In the event of a corporate change in control resulting from, for example, a sale to, or merger with, another entity, or in the event of a sale of assets, we reserve the right to transfer stockholders' non-public personal information to the new party in control or the party acquiring assets.

AVAILABLE INFORMATION

We file with or submit to the SEC annual, quarterly and current periodic reports, proxy statements and other information meeting the informational requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the "Exchange Act"). This information is available free of charge by calling us collect at (310) 201-4200 or on our website at www.arescapitalcorp.com. Information contained on our website is not incorporated into this Annual Report and you should not consider such information to be part of this Annual Report. You also may inspect and copy these reports, proxy statements and other information, as well as the Annual Report and related exhibits and schedules, at the Public Reference Room of the SEC at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549, the SEC's Northeast Regional Office at 3 World Financial Center, Suite 400, New York, NY 10281 and the SEC's Midwest Regional Office at 175 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 900, Chicago, IL 60604. Such information is also available from the EDGAR database on the SEC's web site at <http://www.sec.gov>. You also can obtain copies of such information, after paying a duplicating fee, by sending a request by e-mail to publicinfo@sec.gov or by writing the SEC's Public Reference Branch, Office of Consumer Affairs and Information Services, Securities and Exchange Commission, Washington, D.C. 20549. You may obtain information on the operation of the SEC's Public Reference Room by calling the SEC at (202) 551-8090 or (800) SEC-0330.

Item 1A. Risk Factors

RISK FACTORS

You should carefully consider the risk factors described below, together with all of the other information included in this Annual Report, including our consolidated financial statements and the related notes thereto, before you decide whether to make an investment in our securities. The risks set out below are not the only risks we face. Additional risks and uncertainties not currently known to us or that we currently deem to be immaterial also may materially adversely affect our business, financial condition and/or operating results. If any of the following events occur, our business, financial condition and results of operations could be materially adversely affected. In such case, the net asset value of our common stock and the trading price of our securities could decline, and you may lose all or part of your investment.

RISKS RELATING TO OUR BUSINESS

The capital markets may experience periods of disruption and instability. Such market conditions may materially and adversely affect debt and equity capital markets, which may have a negative impact on our business and operations.

From time to time, capital markets may experience periods of disruption and instability. For example, between 2008 and 2009, the global capital markets were unstable as evidenced by periodic disruptions in liquidity in the debt capital markets, significant write-offs in the financial services sector, the re-pricing of credit risk in the broadly syndicated credit market and the failure of major financial institutions. Despite actions of the U.S. federal government and foreign governments, these events contributed to worsening general economic conditions that materially and adversely impacted the broader financial and credit markets and reduced the availability of debt and equity capital for the market as a whole and financial services firms in particular. While market conditions have largely recovered from the events of 2008 and 2009, there have been continuing periods of volatility, some lasting longer than others. For example, in the latter half of 2015 and continuing through the date of this Annual Report, economic uncertainty and market volatility in China and geopolitical unrest in the Middle East, combined with continued volatility of oil prices, among other factors, have caused disruption in the capital markets, including the markets in which we participate. There can be no assurance these market conditions will not continue or worsen in the future.

Equity capital may be difficult to raise during periods of adverse or volatile market conditions because, subject to some limited exceptions, as a BDC, we are generally not able to issue additional shares of our common stock at a price less than net asset value without first obtaining approval for such issuance from our stockholders and our independent directors. We generally seek approval from our stockholders so that we have the flexibility to issue up to 25% of our then outstanding shares of our common stock at a price below net asset value. Pursuant to approval granted at a special meeting of stockholders held on April 29, 2015, we currently are permitted to sell or otherwise issue shares of our common stock at a price below net asset value, subject to certain limitations and determinations that must be made by our board of directors. Such stockholder approval expires on April 29, 2016.

Volatility and dislocation in the capital markets can also create a challenging environment in which to raise or access debt capital. The reappearance of market conditions similar to those experienced from 2008 through 2009 for any substantial length of time could make it difficult to extend the maturity of or refinance our existing indebtedness or obtain new indebtedness with similar terms and any failure to do so could have a material adverse effect on our business. The debt capital that will be available to us in the future, if at all, may be at a higher cost and on less favorable terms and conditions than what we currently experience. If we are unable to raise or refinance debt, then our equity investors may not benefit from the potential for increased returns on equity resulting from leverage and we may be limited in our ability to make new commitments or to fund existing commitments to our portfolio companies.

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Significant changes or volatility in the capital markets may also have a negative effect on the valuations of our investments. While most of our investments are not publicly traded, applicable accounting standards require us to assume as part of our valuation process that our investments are sold in a principal market to market participants (even if we plan on holding an investment through its maturity). Significant changes in the capital markets may also affect the pace of our investment activity and the potential for liquidity events involving our investments. Thus, the illiquidity of our investments may make it difficult for us to sell such investments to access capital if required, and as a result, we could realize significantly less than the value at which we have recorded our investments if we were required to sell them for liquidity purposes. An inability to raise or access capital could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Uncertainty about the financial stability of the United States, China and several countries in the European Union (EU) could have a significant adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

Due to federal budget deficit concerns, S&P downgraded the federal government's credit rating from AAA to AA+ for the first time in history on August 5, 2011. Further, Moody's and Fitch had warned that they may downgrade the federal government's credit rating. Further downgrades or warnings by S&P or other rating agencies, and the United States government's credit and deficit concerns in general, could cause interest rates and borrowing costs to rise, which may negatively impact both the perception of credit risk associated with our debt portfolio and our ability to access the debt markets on favorable terms. In addition, a decreased U.S. government credit rating could create broader financial turmoil and uncertainty, which may weigh heavily on our financial performance and the value of our common stock.

In 2010, a financial crisis emerged in Europe, triggered by high budget deficits and rising direct and contingent sovereign debt in Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain, which created concerns about the ability of these nations to continue to service their sovereign debt obligations. While the financial stability of many of such countries has improved significantly, risks resulting from any future debt crisis in Europe or any similar crisis could have a detrimental impact on the global economic recovery, sovereign and non-sovereign debt in these countries and the financial condition of European financial institutions. In July and August 2015, Greece reached agreements with its international creditors for bailouts that provide aid in exchange for austerity terms that had previously been rejected by Greek voters. Market and economic disruptions have affected, and may in the future affect, consumer confidence levels and spending, personal bankruptcy rates, levels of incurrence and default on consumer debt and home prices, among other factors. We cannot assure you that market disruptions in Europe, including the increased cost of funding for certain governments and financial institutions, will not impact the global economy, and we cannot assure you that assistance packages will be available, or if available, be sufficient to stabilize countries and markets in Europe or elsewhere affected by a financial crisis. To the extent uncertainty regarding any economic recovery in Europe negatively impacts consumer confidence and consumer credit factors, our business, financial condition and results of operations could be significantly and adversely affected.

In the second quarter of 2015, stock prices in China experienced a significant drop, resulting primarily from continued sell-off of shares trading in Chinese markets. In addition, in August 2015, Chinese authorities sharply devalued China's currency. Since then, the Chinese capital markets have continued to experience periods of instability. These market and economic disruptions have affected, and may in the future affect, the U.S. capital markets, which could adversely affect our business, financial condition or results of operations.

In October 2014, the Federal Reserve announced that it was concluding its bond-buying program, or quantitative easing, which was designed to stimulate the economy and expand the Federal Reserve's holdings of long-term securities, suggesting that key economic indicators, such as the unemployment

rate, had showed signs of improvement since the inception of the program. It is unclear what effect, if any, the conclusion of the Federal Reserve's bond-buying program will have on the value of our investments. Additionally, in December 2015, the Federal Reserve, raised the federal funds rate. These developments, along with the United States government's credit and deficit concerns, the European sovereign debt crisis and the economic slowdown in China, could cause interest rates and borrowing costs to rise, which may negatively impact our ability to access the debt markets on favorable terms.

A failure on our part to maintain our status as a BDC would significantly reduce our operating flexibility.

If we fail to maintain our status as a BDC, we might be regulated as a closed-end investment company that is required to register under the Investment Company Act, which would subject us to additional regulatory restrictions and significantly decrease our operating flexibility. In addition, any such failure could cause an event of default under our outstanding indebtedness, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

We are dependent upon certain key personnel of Ares for our future success and upon their access to other Ares investment professionals.

We depend on the diligence, skill and network of business contacts of certain key personnel of the Ares Credit Group. We also depend, to a significant extent, on access to the investment professionals of other groups within Ares and the information and deal flow generated by Ares' investment professionals in the course of their investment and portfolio management activities. Our future success depends on the continued service of certain key personnel of the Ares Credit Group. The departure of any of these individuals, or of a significant number of the investment professionals or partners of Ares, could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations. In addition, we cannot assure you that Ares Capital Management will remain our investment adviser or that we will continue to have access to Ares' investment professionals or its information and deal flow. Further, there can be no assurance that Ares Capital will replicate its own or Ares' historical success, and we caution you that our investment returns could be substantially lower than the returns achieved by other Ares-managed funds.

Our financial condition and results of operations depend on our ability to manage future growth effectively.

Our ability to achieve our investment objective depends on our ability to acquire suitable investments and monitor and administer those investments, which depends, in turn, on our investment adviser's ability to identify, invest in and monitor companies that meet our investment criteria.

Accomplishing this result on a cost-effective basis is largely a function of the structuring of our investment process and the ability of our investment adviser to provide competent, attentive and efficient services to us. Our executive officers and the members of our investment adviser's investment committee have substantial responsibilities in connection with their roles at Ares and with the other Ares funds, as well as responsibilities under the investment advisory and management agreement. They may also be called upon to provide significant managerial assistance to certain of our portfolio companies. These demands on their time, which will increase as the number of investments grow, may distract them or slow the rate of investment. In order to grow, Ares will need to hire, train, supervise, manage and retain new employees. However, we cannot assure you that Ares will be able to do so effectively. Any failure to manage our future growth effectively could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

In addition, as we grow, we may open up new offices in new geographic regions that may increase our direct operating expenses without corresponding revenue growth.

Our ability to grow depends on our ability to raise capital.

We will need to periodically access the capital markets to raise cash to fund new investments in excess of our repayments, and we may also need to access the capital markets to refinance existing debt obligations to the extent such maturing obligations are not repaid with cash flows from operations. We have elected to be treated as a RIC and operate in a manner so as to qualify for the U.S. federal income tax treatment applicable to RICs. Among other things, in order to maintain our RIC status, we must distribute to our stockholders on a timely basis generally an amount equal to at least 90% of our investment company taxable income, and, as a result, such distributions will not be available to fund investment originations or repay maturing debt. We must continue to borrow from financial institutions and issue additional securities to fund our growth. Unfavorable economic or capital market conditions may increase our funding costs or limit our access to the capital markets, or could result in a decision by lenders not to extend credit to us. An inability to successfully access the capital markets may limit our ability to refinance our existing debt obligations as they become due and/or to fully execute our business strategy and could limit our ability to grow or cause us to have to shrink the size of our business, which could decrease our earnings, if any.

In addition, with certain limited exceptions, we are only allowed to borrow amounts or issue debt securities or preferred stock, which we refer to collectively as "senior securities," such that our asset coverage, as calculated pursuant to the Investment Company Act, equals at least 200% immediately after such borrowing, which, in certain circumstances, may restrict our ability to borrow or issue debt securities or preferred stock. The amount of leverage that we employ will depend on our investment adviser's and our board of directors' assessments of market and other factors at the time of any proposed borrowing or issuance of senior securities. We cannot assure you that we will be able to maintain our current Facilities, obtain other lines of credit or issue senior securities at all or on terms acceptable to us.

Regulations governing our operation as a BDC affect our ability to, and the way in which we, raise additional capital.

We may issue senior securities or borrow money from banks or other financial institutions, up to the maximum amount permitted by the Investment Company Act. Under the provisions of the Investment Company Act, we are permitted, as a BDC, to incur indebtedness or issue senior securities only in amounts such that our asset coverage, as calculated pursuant to the Investment Company Act, equals at least 200% after each such incurrence or issuance. If the value of our assets declines, we may be unable to satisfy this test, which may prohibit us from paying dividends and could prevent us from maintaining our status as a RIC or may prohibit us from repurchasing shares of our common stock. In addition, our inability to satisfy this test could cause an event of default under our existing indebtedness. If we cannot satisfy this test, we may be required to sell a portion of our investments at a time when such sales may be disadvantageous and, depending on the nature of our leverage, repay a portion of our indebtedness. Accordingly, any failure to satisfy this test could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations. As of December 31, 2015, our asset coverage calculated in accordance with the Investment Company Act was 222%. Also, to generate cash for funding new investments, we may in the future seek to issue additional debt or to securitize certain of our loans. The Investment Company Act may impose restrictions on the structure of any such securitization.

We are not generally able to issue and sell our common stock at a price below net asset value per share. We may, however, sell our common stock, or warrants, options or rights to acquire our common stock, at a price below the current net asset value per share of our common stock if our board of directors determines that such sale is in our best interests and the best interests of our stockholders, and our stockholders approve such sale. Any such sale would be dilutive to the net asset value per share of our common stock. In any such case, the price at which our securities are to be issued and

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sold may not be less than a price that, in the determination of our board of directors, closely approximates the market value of such securities (less any commission or discount). If our common stock trades at a discount to net asset value, this restriction could adversely affect our ability to raise capital.

Pursuant to approval granted at a special meeting of stockholders held on April 29, 2015, we currently are permitted to sell or otherwise issue shares of our common stock at a price below net asset value, subject to certain limitations and determinations that must be made by our board of directors. Such stockholder approval expires on April 29, 2016.

We borrow money, which magnifies the potential for gain or loss on amounts invested and may increase the risk of investing with us.

Borrowings, also known as leverage, magnify the potential for gain or loss on amounts invested and, therefore, increase the risks associated with investing in our securities. We currently borrow under our Facilities and have issued or assumed other senior securities, and in the future may borrow from, or issue additional senior securities to, banks, insurance companies, funds, institutional investors and other lenders and investors. Lenders and holders of such senior securities have fixed dollar claims on our consolidated assets that are superior to the claims of our common stockholders or any preferred stockholders. If the value of our consolidated assets increases, then leveraging would cause the net asset value per share of our common stock to increase more sharply than it would have had we not incurred leverage.

Conversely, if the value of our consolidated assets decreases, leveraging would cause net asset value to decline more sharply than it otherwise would have had we not incurred leverage. Similarly, any increase in our consolidated income in excess of consolidated interest payable on the borrowed funds would cause our net income to increase more than it would had we not incurred leverage, while any decrease in our consolidated income would cause net income to decline more sharply than it would have had we not incurred leverage. Such a decline could negatively affect our ability to make common stock dividend payments. There can be no assurance that a leveraging strategy will be successful.

As of December 31, 2015, we had approximately \$875.0 million of outstanding borrowings under the Facilities, approximately \$22.0 million in aggregate principal amount outstanding of the SBA Debentures, approximately \$1,537.5 million in aggregate principal amount outstanding of the Convertible Unsecured Notes and approximately \$1,762.1 million in aggregate principal amount outstanding of the Unsecured Notes. In order for us to cover our annual interest payments on our outstanding indebtedness at December 31, 2015, we must achieve annual returns on our December 31, 2015 total assets of at least 2.1%. The weighted average stated interest rate charged on our principal amount of outstanding indebtedness as of December 31, 2015 was 4.4%. We intend to continue borrowing under the Facilities in the future and we may increase the size of the Facilities or issue additional debt securities or other evidences of indebtedness (although there can be no assurance that we will be successful in doing so). For more information on our indebtedness, see "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Financial Condition, Liquidity and Capital Resources." Our ability to service our debt depends largely on our financial performance and is subject to prevailing economic conditions and competitive pressures. The amount of leverage that we employ at any particular time will depend on our investment adviser's and our board of directors' assessments of market and other factors at the time of any proposed borrowing.

The Facilities, the SBA Debentures, the Convertible Unsecured Notes and the Unsecured Notes impose financial and operating covenants that restrict our business activities, including limitations that could hinder our ability to finance additional loans and investments or to make the distributions required to maintain our status as a RIC. A failure to renew the Facilities or to add new or

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replacement debt facilities or to issue additional debt securities or other evidences of indebtedness could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

The following table illustrates the effect on return to a holder of our common stock of the leverage created by our use of borrowing at the weighted average stated interest rate of 4.4% as of December 31, 2015, together with (a) our total value of net assets as of December 31, 2015; (b) approximately \$4,196.6 million in aggregate principal amount of indebtedness outstanding as of December 31, 2015 and (c) hypothetical annual returns on our portfolio of minus 15% to plus 15%.
