

**Caution Regarding Forward-Looking Statements**

Bank of Montreal's public communications often include written or oral forward-looking statements. Statements of this type are included in this Annual Report, and may be included in other filings with Canadian securities regulators or the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, or in other communications. All such statements are made pursuant to the "safe harbor" provisions of, and are intended to be forward-looking statements under, the United States *Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995* and any applicable Canadian securities legislation. Forward-looking statements may involve, but are not limited to, comments with respect to our objectives and priorities for 2009 and beyond, our strategies or future actions, our targets, expectations for our financial condition or share price, and the results of or outlook for our operations or for the Canadian and U.S. economies.

By their nature, forward-looking statements require us to make assumptions and are subject to inherent risks and uncertainties. There is significant risk that predictions, forecasts, conclusions or projections will not prove to be accurate, that our assumptions may not be correct and that actual results may differ materially from such predictions, forecasts, conclusions or projections. We caution readers of this Annual Report not to place undue reliance on our forward-looking statements as a number of factors could cause actual future results, conditions, actions or events to differ materially from the targets, expectations, estimates or intentions expressed in the forward-looking statements.

The future outcomes that relate to forward-looking statements may be influenced by many factors, including but not limited to: general economic and market conditions in the countries in which we operate; weak capital and/or credit markets; interest rate and currency value fluctuations; changes in monetary policy; the degree of competition in the geographic and business areas in which we operate; changes in laws; judicial or regulatory proceedings; the accuracy and completeness of the information we obtain with respect to our customers and counterparties; our ability to execute our strategic plans and to complete and integrate acquisitions; critical accounting estimates; operational and infrastructure risks; general political conditions; global capital markets activities; the possible effects on our business of war or terrorist activities; disease or illness that impacts on local, national or international economies; disruptions to public infrastructure, such as transportation, communications, power or water supply; and technological changes.

We caution that the foregoing list is not exhaustive of all possible factors. Other factors could adversely affect our results. For more information, please see the discussion below, which outlines in detail certain key factors that may affect Bank of Montreal's future results. When relying on forward-looking statements to make decisions with respect to Bank of Montreal, investors and others should carefully consider these factors, as well as other uncertainties and potential events, and the inherent uncertainty of forward-looking statements. Bank of Montreal does not undertake to update any forward-looking statements, whether written or oral, that may be made, from time to time, by the organization or on its behalf, except as required by law. The forward-looking information contained in this document is presented for the purpose of assisting our shareholders in understanding our financial position as at and for the periods ended on the dates presented and our strategic priorities and objectives, and may not be appropriate for other purposes.

Assumptions about the level of asset sales, expected asset sale prices, net funding cost, credit quality and risk of default and losses on default of the underlying assets of the structured investment vehicles were material factors we considered when establishing our expectations regarding the structured investment vehicles discussed in this document, including the amount to be drawn under the BMO liquidity facilities, whether consolidation will be required and the expectation that the first-loss protection provided by the subordinate capital notes will exceed future losses. Key assumptions included that assets would continue to be sold with a view to reducing the size of the structured investment vehicles, under various asset price scenarios, and that the level of defaults and losses will be consistent with the credit quality of the underlying assets and our current expectations regarding continuing difficult market conditions.

Assumptions about the level of defaults and losses on defaults were material factors we considered when establishing our expectations of the future performance of the transactions that Apex Trust has entered into. Key assumptions included that the level of defaults and losses on defaults would be consistent with historical experience. Material factors that were taken into account when establishing our expectations of the future risk of credit losses in Apex Trust included industry diversification in the portfolio, initial credit quality by portfolio and the first-loss protection incorporated into the structure.

Assumptions about the performance of the Canadian and U.S. economies in 2009 and how that will affect our businesses were material factors we considered when setting our strategic priorities and objectives, and our outlook for our businesses. Key assumptions included that the Canadian and U.S. economies will contract in the first half of 2009, and that interest rates and inflation will remain low. We also assumed that housing markets in Canada will weaken in 2009 and strengthen in the second half of the year in the United States. We assumed that capital markets will improve somewhat in the second half of 2009 and that the Canadian dollar will strengthen modestly relative to the U.S. dollar. In determining our expectations for economic growth, both broadly and in the financial services sector, we primarily consider historical economic data provided by the Canadian and U.S. governments and their agencies. Tax laws in the countries in which we operate, primarily Canada and the United States, are material factors we consider when determining our sustainable effective tax rate.