

ESSEX PROPERTY TRUST INC

Form 424B5

May 07, 2009

Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5) Registration File No. 333-141726. In connection with the securities offered from the Registration Statement No. 333-141726 by means of this prospectus supplement, a filing fee of \$26,500, calculated in accordance with Rules 456(b), 457(c) and 457(r), is being paid with respect to \$467,700,000, the aggregate initial offering price of securities being registered (estimated solely for the purpose of determining the registration fee, based on the average of the high and low sales prices of our Common Stock on May 1, 2009). This paragraph shall be deemed to update the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in Registration Statement No. 333-141726.

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

(To Prospectus Dated March 30, 2007)

Up to 7,500,000 Shares of Common Stock

We have entered into a sales agreement with Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. relating to shares of common stock offered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. In accordance with the terms of the sales agreement, we may offer and sell up to 7,500,000 of our shares of common stock from time to time through Cantor Fitzgerald & Co., as our agent for the offer and sale of the shares of common stock.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "ESS." The last reported sale price of our shares of common stock on the New York Stock Exchange on May 5, 2009 was \$63.58 per share.

Sales of shares of common stock, if any, under this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus may be made in negotiated transactions or transactions that are deemed to be "at the market offerings" as defined in Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, including sales made directly on the New York Stock Exchange or sales made to or through a market maker other than on an exchange.

Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will be entitled to compensation of up to 2% of the gross sales price per share for any shares of common stock sold under the sales agreement. In connection with the sale of the shares of common stock on our behalf, Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. may be deemed to be an "underwriter" within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933, and the compensation of Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. may be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts.

Investing in our shares of common stock involves risks. See the discussion of material risks under the caption "Risk Factors" beginning on page 7 of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008, incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, and in our periodic reports and other information that we file from time to time with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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

Cantor Fitzgerald & Co.

The date of this prospectus supplement is May 6, 2009.

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ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

This document is in two parts. The first part is this prospectus supplement, which adds to and updates information contained in the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference into the accompanying prospectus. The second part is the accompanying prospectus, which gives more general information, some of which may not apply to this offering. This prospectus supplement adds, updates and changes information contained in the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference.

To the extent any inconsistency or conflict exists between the information included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the information included or incorporated by reference in the accompanying prospectus, the information included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement updates and supersedes the information in the accompanying prospectus. All references to “we,” “our,” “us,” “the Company,” or “Essex” in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus mean Essex Property Trust, Inc.

You should rely only on the information contained in or incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus.

We have not, and Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. has not, authorized any other person to provide you with additional or different information. We are not making an offer of these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus or incorporated by reference herein is accurate as of any date other than their respective dates or as of other dates which are specified in those documents. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION

This prospectus supplement contains or incorporates by reference forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, or the Exchange Act, and are subject to the “safe harbor” provisions created by these statutes. All statements, other than statements of historical facts, that address activities, events or developments that we intend, expect, project, believe or anticipate will or may occur in the future are forward-looking statements. Such statements are characterized by terminology such as “anticipates,” “projects,” “plans” and similar expressions or the negative of those terms or other comparable terminology. These forward-looking statements which include statements about our expectations, objectives, anticipations, intentions and strategies regarding the future, expected operating results, revenues and earnings, reflect only management’s current expectations and are not guarantees of future performance and are subject to risks and uncertainties, including those risks described under the heading “Risk Factors” in the accompanying prospectus, or in the documents incorporated by reference, that could cause actual results to differ materially from the results contemplated by the forward-looking statements.

All forward-looking statements included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are made as of the date hereof, based on information available to us as of the date hereof, and we assume no obligation to update any forward-looking statement or statements. It is important to note that such forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties and that our actual results could differ materially from those in such forward-looking statements. The foregoing factors, as well as those under the heading “Risk Factors” in the accompanying prospectus and in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K that we file with the SEC from time to time, among others, in some cases have affected, and in the future could affect, our actual operating results and could cause our actual consolidated operating results to differ materially from those expressed in any forward-looking statement made by us. You are cautioned not to place undue reliance on forward-looking statements contained in this prospectus supplement.

RISK FACTORS

You should carefully consider the risks and uncertainties described under the heading “Risk Factors” in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2008 and the risks and uncertainties described in our periodic reports and other information that we file from time to time with the Securities and Exchange Commission. These risks and uncertainties are not the only ones facing us and there may be additional matters that we are unaware of or that we currently consider immaterial. All of these could adversely affect our business, financial condition, results of operations and cash flows and, thus, the value of an investment in shares of our common stock.

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USE OF PROCEEDS

We expect to use the net proceeds from any sales of shares of common stock resulting from this prospectus supplement for general corporate purposes, which may from time to time include the repayment of debt, redemption or repurchase of preferred stock, funding or partially funding acquisitions of apartment communities and development or redevelopment of apartment communities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

The following information supplements the discussion set forth in the accompanying prospectus under the heading "Description of Capital Stock."

A summary of some of the important terms of our common stock is set forth on page 16 of the accompanying prospectus under the heading, "Description of Capital Stock." You should review the applicable Maryland law as well as our amended and restated charter and restated bylaws for a more complete description of our common stock. As of May 5, 2009, there were 27,454,266 shares of our common stock issued and outstanding. Our common stock is traded on the NYSE under the symbol "ESS."

As of March 31, 2009, the total number of shares of all classes of capital stock that Essex had authority to issue was 1,000,000,000 shares, consisting of 649,702,178 shares of common stock, par value \$0.0001 per share, 20,297,822 shares of preferred stock, par value \$0.0001 per share, and 330,000,000 shares of excess stock, par value \$0.0001 per share.

In November 2008, the holders of the 2,000,000 authorized and outstanding 7.875% Series D Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Units (the "Series D Preferred Units") of Essex Portfolio, L.P., exchanged those Units for 363,000 shares of Common Stock of Essex Property Trust, Inc., and \$10 million plus accrued dividends. After this transaction, there are no longer any outstanding Series D Preferred Units.

In November 2008, Essex's Stockholder Rights Plan, which was adopted in October 1998, expired by its terms. After such expiration, that Stockholder Rights Plan no longer has any force or effect. Essex has not adopted another stockholder rights plan.

During the first quarter of 2009, the Company repurchased \$58.2 million of its 4.875% Series G Cumulative Convertible Preferred Stock (the "Series G Preferred Stock"). With respect to the 3.625% Exchangeable Senior Notes due on November 1, 2025 (the "Bonds") of Essex Portfolio, L.P., as to which the Company is general partner, the Company repurchased \$53.3 million of the Bonds in the fourth quarter of 2008 and it repurchased another \$71.3 of these Bonds during the first quarter of 2009. As of March 31, 2009, the carrying value of outstanding Series G Preferred Stock was \$87.7 million and the carrying value of the outstanding Bonds was \$97.2 million.

CERTAIN MATERIAL FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS

The following discussion supersedes and replaces in its entirety the discussion set forth in the accompanying prospectus on pages 40 through 55 under the heading "Certain Material Federal Income Tax Considerations."

The following is a summary of certain material federal income tax considerations relating to the qualification and taxation of Essex as a REIT which may be material to purchasers of its securities. This summary is based on current law, is for general information only and is not tax advice. The tax treatment of a holder of Essex's debt or equity securities will vary depending upon the terms of the specific securities acquired by such holder, as well as the holder's particular situation. Because this is a summary that is intended to address only the material federal income tax

consequences generally relevant to purchasers of Essex's securities, it may not contain all of the information that may be pertinent to you. This discussion does not attempt to address all aspects of U.S. federal income taxation relating to holders of Essex's securities. Additional material federal income tax considerations relevant to holders of particular offerings of Essex's debt or equity securities will be addressed in the applicable Prospectus Supplement for those securities. This discussion does not cover state or local tax laws or any U.S. federal tax laws other than income tax laws. You are urged to review the applicable Prospectus Supplement in connection with the purchase of any of Essex's securities, and to consult your own tax advisor regarding the specific tax consequences to you of investing in Essex's securities, of Essex's election to be taxed as a REIT and regarding potential changes in the applicable tax laws.

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General

Essex elected to be taxed as a REIT commencing with its taxable year ended December 31, 1994. Essex believes that it has operated in a manner that permits it to satisfy the requirements for taxation as a REIT under the applicable provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “Code”). Qualification and taxation as a REIT depends upon Essex’s ability to meet, through actual annual operating results, distribution levels and diversity of stock ownership, the various qualification tests imposed under the Code discussed below. Although Essex intends to continue to operate to satisfy such requirements, no assurance can be given that the actual results of Essex’s operations for any particular taxable year will satisfy such requirements. See “Certain Material Federal Income Tax Considerations — Failure to Qualify.”

The provisions of the Code, the U.S. Treasury regulations promulgated thereunder, and other U.S. federal income tax laws relating to qualification and operation as a REIT, are highly technical and complex. The following discussion sets forth the material aspects of the laws that govern the U.S. federal income tax treatment of a REIT. This summary is qualified in its entirety by the applicable Code provisions, rules and U.S. Treasury regulations thereunder, and administrative and judicial interpretations thereof. Further, the anticipated income tax treatment described in this prospectus may be changed, perhaps retroactively, by legislative, administrative or judicial action at any time.

Baker & McKenzie LLP has acted as Essex’s tax counsel in connection with the filing of this prospectus. In connection with this filing, Baker & McKenzie LLP will opine that Essex has been organized and has operated in conformity with the requirements for qualification and taxation as a REIT under the Code for each of Essex’s taxable years beginning with the taxable year ended December 31, 1994 through Essex’s taxable year ended December 31, 2008. If Essex continues to be organized and operated after December 31, 2008 in the same manner as it has prior to that date, Essex will continue to qualify as a REIT. The opinion of Baker & McKenzie LLP will be based on various assumptions and representations made by Essex as to factual matters, including representations made by Essex in a factual certificate provided by one of Essex’s officers. Moreover, Essex’s qualification and taxation as a REIT depends upon its ability to meet the various qualification tests imposed under the Code and discussed below, relating to its actual annual operating results, asset diversification, distribution levels, and diversity of stock ownership, the results of which have not been and will not be reviewed by Baker & McKenzie LLP. Accordingly, neither Baker & McKenzie LLP nor Essex can assure you that the actual results of Essex’s operations for any particular taxable year will satisfy these requirements. See “Certain Material Federal Income Tax Considerations — Failure to Qualify.”

In brief, if certain detailed conditions imposed by the REIT provisions of the Code are satisfied, entities, such as Essex, that invest primarily in real estate and that otherwise would be treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes as corporations, generally are not taxed at the corporate level on their “REIT taxable income” that is distributed currently to stockholders. If Essex fails to qualify as a REIT in any year, however, it will be subject to U.S. federal income tax as if it were an ordinary corporation and its stockholders will be taxed in the same manner as stockholders of ordinary corporations. In that event, Essex could be subject to potentially significant tax liabilities, the amount of cash available for distribution to its stockholders could be reduced and Essex would not be obligated to make any distributions. Moreover, Essex could be disqualified from taxation as a REIT for four taxable years. See “Certain Material Federal Income Tax Considerations — Failure to Qualify.”

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Taxation of Essex

The following is a general summary of the Code provisions that govern the federal income tax treatment of a REIT and its stockholders.

In any year in which Essex qualifies as a REIT, it generally will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax on that portion of its net income that it distributes to stockholders. This treatment substantially eliminates the “double taxation” (at the corporate and stockholder levels) that generally results from investment in a corporation. However, Essex will be subject to U.S. federal income tax as follows:

1. First, Essex will be taxed at regular corporate rates on any undistributed REIT taxable income, including undistributed net capital gain. (However, Essex can elect to “pass through” any of its taxes paid on its undistributed net capital gain income to its stockholders on a pro rata basis in which case, as explained further below, such taxes would be credited or refunded to the stockholder.)
2. Second, under certain circumstances, Essex may be subject to the “alternative minimum tax” on its items of tax preference.
3. Third, if Essex has (a) net income from the sale or other disposition of “foreclosure property” (including foreign currency gain that is attributable to otherwise permitted income from foreclosure property) which is held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business or (b) other nonqualifying income from foreclosure property, Essex will be subject to tax at the highest corporate rate on such income. Foreclosure property generally is property acquired on foreclosure or otherwise on default on a loan secured by such real property or a lease of such property.
4. Fourth, if Essex has net income from “prohibited transactions,” which are, in general, sales or other dispositions of property held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business, generally other than foreclosure property and property involuntarily converted, such income will be subject to a 100% penalty tax.
5. Fifth, if Essex should fail to satisfy the 75% gross income test or the 95% gross income test (as discussed below), but nonetheless maintains its qualification as a REIT because certain other requirements have been met, Essex will be subject to a 100% tax on an amount equal to (a) the gross income attributable to the greater of the amount by which Essex fails the 75% gross income test or the amount by which 95% of its gross income exceeds the amount of income qualifying under the 95% gross income test multiplied by (b) a fraction intended to reflect its profitability.
6. Sixth, if Essex should fail to satisfy the asset test (as discussed below) but nonetheless maintains its qualification as a REIT because certain other requirements have been met, Essex may be subject to a tax that would be the greater of (a) \$50,000; or (b) an amount determined by multiplying the highest rate of tax for corporations by the net income generated by the assets for the period beginning on the first date of the failure and ending on the day Essex disposes of the assets (or otherwise satisfy the requirements for maintaining REIT qualification).
7. Seventh, if Essex should fail to satisfy one or more requirements for REIT qualification, other than the 95% and 75% gross income tests and other than the asset test, but nonetheless maintains its qualification as a REIT because certain other requirements have been met, Essex may be subject to a \$50,000 penalty for each failure.
8. Eighth, if Essex should fail to distribute during each calendar year at least the sum of (1) 85% of its ordinary income for such year, (2) 95% of its net capital gain income for such year, and (3) any undistributed taxable income from prior periods, Essex will be subject to a nondeductible 4% excise tax on the excess of such required distribution over the amounts distributed.

9. Ninth, assuming Essex does not elect to instead be taxed at the time of the acquisition, if Essex acquires any asset from a C corporation (i.e., a corporation generally subject to full corporate level tax) in a transaction in which the basis of the asset in Essex's hands is determined by reference to the basis of the asset (or any other property) in the hands of the C corporation, Essex would be subject to tax at the highest corporate rate if it disposes of such asset during the 10-year period beginning on the date that Essex acquired that asset, to the extent of such property's "built-in gain" (the excess of the fair market value of such property at the time of Essex's acquisition over the adjusted basis of such property at such time). This tax is referred to as the "Built-in Gains Tax." The Built-in Gains Tax would not apply if the asset acquired in such manner was exchanged for a replacement property in a qualifying exchange under Code Section 1031. However, a sale of the replacement property within that same 10-year period would be subject to the Built-in Gains Tax.

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10. Tenth, Essex may be subject to a 100% excise tax if Essex's dealings with its taxable REIT subsidiaries, defined below, are not at arm's length.

11. Finally, any earnings that Essex derives through a taxable REIT subsidiary will effectively be subject to a corporate-level tax.

Requirements for Qualification

The Code defines a REIT as a corporation, trust or association (1) which is managed by one or more trustees or directors; (2) the beneficial ownership of which is evidenced by transferable shares, or by transferable certificates of beneficial interest; (3) which would be taxable as a domestic corporation, but for Sections 856 through 860 of the Code; (4) which is neither a financial institution nor an insurance company subject to certain provisions of the Code; (5) the beneficial ownership of which is held by 100 or more persons; (6) not more than 50% in value of the outstanding stock of which is owned, directly or indirectly, by five or fewer individuals, as defined in the Code, at any time during the last half of each taxable year; (7) which meets certain other tests, described below, regarding the nature of its income and assets; (8) that elects to be a REIT, or has made such election for a previous year, and satisfies the applicable filing and administrative requirements to maintain qualification as a REIT; and (9) that adopts a calendar year accounting period. The Code provides that conditions (1) to (4), inclusive, must be met during the entire taxable year and that condition (5) must be met during at least 335 days of a taxable year of 12 months, or during a proportionate part of a taxable year of less than 12 months. If Essex were to fail to satisfy condition (6) during a taxable year, that failure would not result in Essex's disqualification as a REIT under the Code for such taxable year as long as (i) it satisfied the stockholder demand statement requirements described in the succeeding paragraph and (ii) it did not know, or exercising reasonable diligence would not have known, whether it had failed condition (6).

Essex believes that it has issued sufficient stock with sufficient diversity of ownership to satisfy conditions (5) and (6) above. Essex may redeem, at its option, a sufficient number of shares or restrict the transfer thereof to bring or maintain the ownership of the shares in conformity with the requirements of the Code. In order to ensure compliance with the ownership tests described above, Essex also has certain restrictions on the transfer of its stock to prevent further concentration of stock ownership. Essex's Charter restricts the transfer of its shares in order to assist in satisfying the share ownership requirements.

Moreover, to evidence compliance with these requirements, Essex must maintain records which disclose the actual ownership of its outstanding stock. In fulfilling Essex's obligations to maintain records, it must and will demand written statements each year from the record holders of designated percentages of Essex stock which disclose the actual owners of such stock. A list of those persons failing or refusing to comply with such demand must be maintained as part of Essex's records. A stockholder failing or refusing to comply with Essex's written demand must submit with his federal income tax returns a similar statement disclosing the actual ownership of Essex's stock and certain other information. Although Essex intends to satisfy the stockholder demand letter rules described in this paragraph, Essex's failure to satisfy these requirements will not result in its disqualification as a REIT, but may result in the imposition by the Internal Revenue Service of penalties.

Essex currently has several direct corporate subsidiaries and may have additional corporate subsidiaries in the future. Certain of these corporate subsidiaries will be treated as "qualified REIT subsidiaries" under the Code. A corporation will qualify as a qualified REIT subsidiary of Essex if Essex owns 100% of its outstanding stock and Essex and such subsidiary do not jointly elect to treat it as a "taxable REIT subsidiary," as described below. A corporation that is a qualified REIT subsidiary is not treated as a separate corporation, and all assets, liabilities and items of income, deduction and credit of a qualified REIT subsidiary are treated as assets, liabilities and items of income, deduction and credit (as the case may be) of the parent REIT for all purposes under the Code (including all REIT qualification tests).

Thus, in applying the requirements described in this prospectus, the subsidiaries in which Essex owns a 100% interest (other than taxable REIT subsidiaries) will be ignored, and all assets, liabilities and items of income, deduction and credit of such subsidiaries will be treated as the assets, liabilities and items of income, deduction and credit of Essex. A qualified REIT subsidiary is not subject to U.S. federal income tax and Essex's ownership of the stock of such a subsidiary will not violate the REIT asset tests, described below under "— Asset Tests."

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A REIT may also hold any direct or indirect interest in a corporation that qualifies as a taxable REIT subsidiary, as long as the REIT's aggregate holdings of taxable REIT subsidiary securities do not exceed 20% of the value of the REIT's total assets. This 20% percentage limitation increases to 25% for a REIT's taxable years beginning after July 30, 2008. A taxable REIT subsidiary is a fully taxable corporation that generally is permitted to engage in businesses, own assets, and earn income that, if engaged in, owned, or earned by the REIT, might jeopardize REIT status or result in the imposition of penalty taxes on the REIT. To qualify as a taxable REIT subsidiary, the subsidiary and the REIT must make a joint election to treat the subsidiary as a taxable REIT subsidiary. A taxable REIT subsidiary also includes any corporation (other than a REIT or a qualified REIT subsidiary) in which a taxable REIT subsidiary directly or indirectly owns more than 35% of the total voting power or value. See "– Asset Tests," below. A taxable REIT subsidiary will pay tax at regular corporate income rates on any taxable income it earns. Moreover, the Code contains rules, including rules requiring the imposition of taxes on a REIT at the rate of 100% on certain reallocated income and expenses, to ensure that contractual arrangements between a taxable REIT subsidiary and its parent REIT are at arm's length.

In the case of a REIT that is a partner in a partnership, U.S. Treasury regulations provide that the REIT will be deemed to own its proportionate share, generally based on its pro rata share of capital interest in the partnership, of the assets of the partnership and will be deemed to be entitled to the gross income of the partnership attributable to such share. In addition, the character of the assets and gross income of the partnership shall retain the same character in the hands of the REIT for purposes of the gross income tests and the asset tests, described below. Thus, Essex's proportionate share of the assets, liabilities and items of income of its Operating Partnership will be treated as Essex's assets, liabilities and items of income for purposes of applying the requirements described below. See "Certain Material Federal Income Tax Considerations — Investments in Partnerships."

Asset Tests

At the close of each quarter of Essex's taxable year, Essex generally must satisfy three tests relating to the nature of its assets. First, at least 75% of the value of Essex's total assets must be represented by interests in real property, interests in mortgages on real property, shares in other REITs, cash, cash items and government securities (as well as certain temporary investments in stock or debt instruments purchased with the proceeds of new capital raised by Essex). Beginning with Essex's 2009 tax year, "cash" includes foreign currency if Essex or any "qualified business unit" uses such foreign currency as its functional currency, but only to the extent such foreign currency is held for use in the normal course of the activities of Essex or the "qualified business unit" giving rise to income in the numerator for the 75% income test or the 95% income test (discussed below), or directly related to acquiring or holding assets qualifying for the numerator in the 75% assets test, and is not held in connection with a trade or business of trading or dealing in certain securities. Second, although the remaining 25% of Essex's assets generally may be invested without restriction, securities in this class generally may not exceed either (1) 5% of the value of its total assets as to any one nongovernment issuer (the "5% asset test"), (2) 10% of the outstanding voting securities of any one issuer (the "10% voting securities test"), or (3) 10% of the value of the outstanding securities of any one issuer (the "10% value test"). Third, not more than 20% of the total value of Essex's assets can be represented by securities of one or more taxable REIT subsidiaries. This 20% percentage limitation increases to 25% beginning with Essex's 2009 tax year. Securities for purposes of the above 5% and 10% asset tests may include debt securities, including debt issued by a partnership.

Debt of an issuer will not count as a security for purposes of the 10% value test if the security qualifies for any of a number of applicable exceptions, for example, as "straight debt," as specially defined for this purpose to include certain debt issued by partnerships, and to include certain other debt that is not considered to be abusive and that presents minimal opportunity to share in the business profits of the issuer. For tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2005, solely for purposes of the 10% value test, a REIT's interest in the assets of a partnership will be based upon the REIT's proportionate interest in any securities issued by the partnership (including, for this purpose, the REIT's interest as a

partner in the partnership and any debt securities issued by the partnership, but excluding any securities qualifying for the “straight debt” or other exceptions described above), valuing any debt instrument at its adjusted issue price.

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Essex and a corporation in which it owns stock may make a joint election for such subsidiary to be treated as a “taxable REIT subsidiary.” A taxable REIT subsidiary also includes any corporation other than a REIT with respect to which a taxable REIT subsidiary owns securities possessing more than 35% of the total voting power or value of the outstanding securities of such corporation. Other than some activities relating to lodging and health care facilities, a taxable REIT subsidiary may generally engage in any business, including the provision of customary or non-customary services to tenants of its parent REIT. The securities of a taxable REIT subsidiary are not subject to the 5% asset test and the 10% vote and value tests described above. Instead, as discussed above, a separate asset test applies to taxable REIT subsidiaries. The rules regarding taxable REIT subsidiaries contain provisions generally intended to insure that transactions between a REIT and its taxable REIT subsidiary occur “at arm’s length” and on commercially reasonable terms. These requirements include a provision that prevents a taxable REIT subsidiary from deducting interest on direct or indirect indebtedness to its parent REIT if, under a specified series of tests, the taxable REIT subsidiary is considered to have an excessive interest expense level or debt-to-equity ratio. In addition, a 100% penalty tax can be imposed on the REIT if its loans, or rental, service or other agreements with its taxable REIT subsidiaries are determined not to be on arm’s length terms. No assurances can be given that Essex’s loans to or rental, service or other agreements with its taxable REIT subsidiary will be on arm’s length terms. A taxable REIT subsidiary is subject to a corporate level tax on its net taxable income, as a result of which Essex’s earnings derived through a taxable REIT subsidiary are effectively subject to a corporate level tax notwithstanding Essex’s status as a REIT. To the extent that a taxable REIT subsidiary pays dividends to Essex in a particular calendar year, Essex may designate a corresponding portion of the dividends that it pays to its stockholders during that year as “qualified dividend income” eligible to be taxed at reduced rates to noncorporate recipients. See “Certain Material Federal Income Tax Considerations — Taxation of Taxable U.S. Holders.”

Essex has made elections to treat several of its corporate subsidiaries as taxable REIT subsidiaries. Essex believes that the value of the securities that it holds in its taxable REIT subsidiaries does not, and will not, represent more than 20% of its total assets, and that all transactions between Essex and its taxable REIT subsidiaries are conducted on arm’s length terms. For its 2009 tax year, Essex believes that the value of the securities that it holds in its taxable REIT subsidiaries does not, and will not, represent more than 25% of its total assets. In addition, Essex believes that the amount of Essex’s assets that are not qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% asset test will continue to represent less than 25% of Essex’s total assets, and will satisfy the 5% and both 10% asset tests.

Essex believes that substantially all of Essex’s assets consist of, and will continue to consist of, (1) real properties, (2) stock or debt investments that earn qualified temporary investment income, (3) other qualified real estate assets, and (4) cash, cash items and government securities. Essex may also invest in securities of other entities, provided that such investments will not prevent it from satisfying the asset and income tests for REIT qualification set forth above.

For tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2005, if Essex fails to satisfy the 5% and/or 10% asset tests for a particular quarter, Essex will not lose its REIT status if the failure is due to the ownership of assets the total value of which does not exceed a specified de minimis threshold, provided that Essex comes into compliance with the asset tests within six months after the last day of the quarter in which Essex identifies the failure. In addition, for tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2005, other failures to satisfy the asset tests generally will not result in a loss of REIT status if (1) following Essex’s identification of the failure, Essex files a schedule with the Internal Revenue Service describing each asset that caused the failure; (2) the failure was due to reasonable cause and not to willful neglect; (3) Essex comes into compliance with the asset tests within six months after the last day of the quarter in which the failure was identified; and (4) Essex pays an excise tax equal to the greater of \$50,000 or an amount determined by multiplying the highest corporate tax rate by the net income generated by the prohibited assets for the period beginning on the first date of the failure and ending on the date Essex comes into compliance with the asset tests. Notwithstanding the above, beginning with its 2009 tax year, if Essex meets the asset tests at the close of any quarter, it will not lose its qualification as a REIT for failure to satisfy the asset tests at the end of a later quarter solely by reason of changes in the foreign currency exchange rate used by Essex to value a foreign asset.

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Gross Income Tests

Essex must satisfy two separate percentage tests relating to the sources of its gross income for each taxable year. For purposes of these tests, where Essex invests in a partnership, Essex will be treated as receiving its pro rata share based on its capital interest in the partnership of the gross income and loss of the partnership, and the gross income of the partnership will retain the same character in Essex's hands as it has in the hands of the partnership. See "Certain Material Federal Income Tax Considerations — Investments in Partnerships."

The 75% Test

At least 75% of Essex's gross income for a taxable year must be "qualifying income." Qualifying income generally includes (1) rents from real property (except as modified below); (2) interest on obligations collateralized by mortgages on, or interests in, real property; (3) gains from the sale or other disposition of interests in real property and real estate mortgages, other than gain from property held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of Essex's trade or business ("dealer property"); (4) dividends or other distributions on shares in other REITs, as well as gain from the sale of such shares; (5) abatements and refunds of real property taxes; (6) income from the operation, and gain from the sale, of property acquired at or in lieu of a foreclosure of the mortgage collateralized by such property ("foreclosure property"); (7) commitment fees received for agreeing to make loans collateralized by mortgages on real property or to purchase or lease real property; and (8) income from temporary investments in stock or debt instruments purchased with the proceeds of new capital raised by Essex. For transactions occurring after July 30, 2008, the computation of qualifying income for purposes of the 75% income test excludes "real estate foreign exchange gain." Real estate foreign exchange gain is foreign currency gain which is attributable to (1) any item of income qualifying for the numerator for the 75% income test; (2) the acquisition or ownership of obligations secured by mortgages on real property or interests in real property; or (3) becoming or being the obligor under obligations secured by mortgages on real property or interests in real property. Real estate foreign exchange gain also includes certain foreign currency gains attributable to certain "qualified business units" of a REIT. For transactions occurring after July 30, 2008, and for purposes of the 75% income test, "passive foreign exchange gain" is included in gross income and treated as non-qualifying income to the extent that it is not real estate foreign exchange gain. Passive foreign exchange gain includes all real estate foreign exchange gain, and in addition includes foreign currency gain which is attributable to (1) any item of income or gain included in the numerator for the 95% income test; (2) acquisition or ownership of obligations; (3) becoming the obligor under obligations; and (4) any other foreign currency gain to be determined by the IRS. Notwithstanding the above, however, and except in the case of certain income excluded under the hedging rules, foreign currency exchange gain derived from engaging in dealing, or substantial and regular trading, in certain securities, constitutes gross income that does not qualify under the 75% income test.

Rents received from a tenant will not, however, qualify as rents from real property in satisfying the 75% test (or the 95% test described below) if Essex, or an owner of 10% or more of Essex's equity securities, directly or constructively owns (1) in the case of any tenant that is a corporation, stock possessing 10% or more of the total combined voting power of all classes of stock entitled to vote, or 10% or more of the total value of shares of all classes of stock of such tenant or (2) in the case of any tenant that is not a corporation, an interest of 10% or more in the assets or net profits of such tenant (such tenants that are described under (1) or (2) being a "related party tenant"), unless the related party tenant is a taxable REIT subsidiary and certain other requirements are satisfied. In addition, if rent attributable to personal property, leased in connection with a lease of real property, is greater than 15% of the total rent received under the lease, then the portion of rent attributable to such personal property will not qualify as rents from real property. Moreover, an amount received or accrued generally will not qualify as rents from real property (or as interest income) for purposes of the 75% test and 95% test (described below) if it is based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person. Rent or interest will not be disqualified, however, solely by reason of being based on a fixed percentage or percentages of receipts or sales. Finally, for rents received to qualify as rents from real property, Essex

generally must not operate or manage the property or furnish or render certain services to tenants, other than through an “independent contractor” who is adequately compensated and from whom Essex derives no revenue or through a taxable REIT subsidiary. The independent contractor and taxable REIT subsidiary requirements, however, do not apply to the extent that the services provided by Essex are “usually or customarily rendered” in connection with the rental of space for occupancy only, and are not otherwise considered “rendered to the occupant.” For both the related party tenant rules and determining whether an entity qualifies as an independent contractor of a REIT, certain attribution rules of the Code apply, pursuant to which ownership interests in certain entities held by one entity are deemed held by certain other related entities.

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In general, if a REIT provides impermissible services to its tenants, all of the rent from that property will be disqualified from satisfying the 75% test and 95% test (described below). However, rents will not be disqualified if a REIT provides de minimis impermissible services. For this purpose, services provided to tenants of a property are considered de minimis where income derived from the services rendered equals 1% or less of all income derived from the property (as determined on a property-by-property basis). For purposes of the 1% threshold, the amount treated as received for any service shall not be less than 150% of the direct cost incurred by the REIT in furnishing or rendering the service.

Essex does not receive any rent that is based on the income or profits of any person. In addition, Essex does not own, directly or indirectly, 10% or more of any tenant (other than, perhaps, a tenant that is a taxable REIT subsidiary where other requirements are satisfied). Furthermore, Essex believes that any personal property rented in connection with Essex's apartment facilities is well within the 15% restriction. Finally, Essex does not believe that it provides services, other than within the 1% de minimis exception described above, to its tenants that are not customarily furnished or rendered in connection with the rental of property, other than through an independent contractor or a taxable REIT subsidiary. Essex does not intend to rent to any related party, to base any rent on the income or profits of any person (other than rents that are based on a fixed percentage or percentages of receipts or sales), or to charge rents that would otherwise not qualify as rents from real property.

The 95% Test

In addition to deriving 75% of its gross income from the sources listed above, at least 95% of Essex's gross income for a taxable year must be derived from the above-described qualifying income, or from dividends, interest or gains from the sale or disposition of stock or other securities that are not dealer property. Dividends from a corporation (including a taxable REIT subsidiary) and interest on any obligation not collateralized by an interest on real property are included for purposes of the 95% test, but not (except with respect to dividends from a REIT) for purposes of the 75% test. For purposes of determining whether Essex complies with the 75% and 95% tests, gross income does not include income from "prohibited transactions" (discussed below). For transactions occurring after July 30, 2008, both real estate foreign exchange gain and passive foreign exchange gain (described above) are excluded from the computation of qualifying income for purposes of the 95% income test. Notwithstanding the above, however, and except in the case of certain income excluded under the hedging rules, foreign currency exchange gain derived from engaging in dealing, or substantial and regular trading, in certain securities, constitutes gross income that does not qualify under the 95% income test.

From time to time, Essex may enter into hedging transactions with respect to one or more of Essex's assets or liabilities. Essex's hedging activities may include entering into interest rate or other swaps, caps and floors, or options to purchase such items, and futures and forward contracts. Commencing with our 2005 taxable year, income and gain from "hedging transactions" will be excluded from gross income for purposes of the 95% income test, but not the 75% income test. For hedging transactions entered into after July 30, 2008, income and gain from "hedging transactions" will be excluded from gross income for purposes of both the 75% and the 95% income tests. A "hedging transaction" means either (1) any transaction entered into in the normal course of Essex's trade or business primarily to manage the risk of interest rate, price changes or currency fluctuations with respect to borrowings made or to be made, or ordinary obligations incurred or to be incurred, to acquire to carry real estate assets, or (2) for transactions entered into after July 30, 2008, any transaction entered into primarily to manage risk of currency fluctuations with respect to any item of income or gain that would be qualified income under the 75% income test or the 95% income test (or any property which generates such income or gain), including gain from the termination of such a transaction. Essex will be required to clearly identify any such hedging transaction before the close of the day on which it was acquired, originated, or entered into and to satisfy other identification requirements. To the extent that Essex enters into other types of hedging transactions, the income from such transactions may be treated as non-qualifying income for purposes of both the 75% income test and the 95% income test. Essex intends to structure any hedging transactions in

a manner that does not jeopardize its status as a REIT.

Essex's investment in apartment communities generally gives rise to rental income that is qualifying income for purposes of the 75% and 95% gross income tests. Gains on sales of apartment communities, other than from prohibited transactions, as described below, or of Essex's interest in a partnership, generally will be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% and 95% gross income tests. Essex anticipates that income on its other investments will not cause it to fail the 75% or 95% gross income test for any year.

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Even if Essex fails to satisfy one or both of the 75% or 95% tests for any taxable year, it may still qualify as a REIT for such year if it is entitled to relief under certain provisions of the Code. These relief provisions will generally be available if Essex's failure to comply was due to reasonable cause and not to willful neglect, and Essex timely complies with requirements for reporting each item of its income to the Internal Revenue Service. It is not possible, however, to state whether in all circumstances Essex would be entitled to the benefit of these relief provisions. Even if these relief provisions applied, a 100% penalty tax would be imposed on the amount by which Essex failed the 75% gross income test or the amount by which 95% of Essex's gross income exceeds the amount of income qualifying under the 95% gross income test (whichever amount is greater), multiplied by a fraction intended to reflect Essex's profitability.

Subject to certain safe harbor exceptions, any gain realized by Essex on the sale of any property held as inventory or other property held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business will be treated as income from a prohibited transaction that is subject to a 100% penalty tax. Such prohibited transaction income may also have an adverse effect upon Essex's ability to qualify as a REIT. Under existing law, whether property is held as inventory or primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business is a question of fact that depends on all the facts and circumstances with respect to the particular transaction.

Annual Distribution Requirements

To qualify as a REIT, Essex is required to distribute dividends (other than capital gain dividends) to its stockholders each year in an amount equal to at least (A) the sum of (i) 90% of Essex's REIT taxable income (computed without regard to the dividends paid deduction and Essex's net capital gain) and (ii) 90% of the net income (after tax), if any, from foreclosure property, minus (B) the sum of certain items of non-cash income over 5% of Essex's REIT taxable income. Such distributions must be paid in the taxable year to which they relate, or in the following taxable year if declared before Essex timely files its tax return for such year and if paid on or before the first regular dividend payment after such declaration, provided that such payment is made during the 12-month period following the close of such taxable year. These distributions are taxable to stockholders in the year in which paid, even though the distributions relate to Essex's prior taxable year for purposes of the 90% distribution requirement.

To the extent that Essex does not distribute all of its net capital gain, or does not distribute at least 90%, but less than 100%, of its REIT taxable income, as adjusted, Essex will be subject to tax on the undistributed amount at regular corporate tax rates, as the case may be. (However, Essex can elect to "pass through" any of the taxes paid on Essex's undistributed net capital gain income to its stockholders on a pro rata basis.) Furthermore, if Essex should fail to distribute during each calendar year at least the sum of (1) 85% of its ordinary income for such year, (2) 95% of its net capital gain income for such year, and (3) any undistributed taxable income from prior periods, Essex would be subject to a non-deductible 4% excise tax on the excess of such required distribution over the sum of the amounts actually distributed and the amount of any net capital gains Essex elected to retain and pay tax on. For these and other purposes, dividends declared by Essex in October, November or December of one taxable year and payable to a stockholder of record on a specific date in any such month shall be treated as both paid by Essex and received by the stockholder during such taxable year, provided that the dividend is actually paid by Essex by January 31 of the following taxable year.

If Essex fails to meet the distribution requirements as a result of an adjustment to its tax return by the Internal Revenue Service or Essex determines that it understated its income on a filed return, Essex may retroactively cure the failure by paying a "deficiency dividend" (plus applicable penalties and interest) within a specified period.

Essex believes that it has made timely distributions sufficient to satisfy the annual distribution requirements. It is possible that in the future Essex may not have sufficient cash or other liquid assets to meet the distribution requirements, due to timing differences between the actual receipt of income and actual payment of expenses on the

one hand, and the inclusion of such income and deduction of such expenses in computing Essex's REIT taxable income on the other hand. Further, as described below, it is possible that, from time to time, Essex may be allocated a share of net capital gain attributable to the sale of depreciated property that exceeds Essex's allocable share of cash attributable to that sale. To avoid any problem with the distribution requirements, Essex will closely monitor the relationship between its REIT taxable income and cash flow and, if necessary, will borrow funds or issue preferred or common stock to satisfy the distribution requirement. Essex may be required to borrow funds at times when market conditions are not favorable.

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Prohibited Transaction Rules

A REIT will incur a 100% penalty tax on the net income derived from a sale or other disposition of property, other than foreclosure property, that the REIT holds primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business (a “prohibited transaction”). Under a safe harbor provision in the Code, however, income from certain sales of real property held by the REIT for at least four years (or, for sales made after July 30, 2008, two years) at the time of the disposition will not be treated as income from a prohibited transaction if certain other requirements are also satisfied. Whether a REIT holds an asset “primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business” depends, however, on the facts and circumstances in effect from time to time, including those related to a particular asset. Effective after July 30, 2008, foreign currency gain or loss that is attributable to any prohibited transaction is taken into account in determining the amount of prohibited transactions net income subject to the 100% prohibited transactions tax. Although Essex will attempt to ensure that none of its sales of property will constitute a prohibited transaction, it cannot assure you that none of such sales will be so treated.

Failure to Qualify

For tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2005, if Essex should fail to satisfy one or more requirements for REIT qualification, other than the gross income tests and asset tests, Essex may retain its REIT qualification if the failures are due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect, and if it pays a penalty of \$50,000 for each such failure.

If Essex fails to qualify for taxation as a REIT in any taxable year and the relief provisions do not apply, Essex will be subject to tax (including any applicable alternative minimum tax) on its taxable income at regular corporate rates. Distributions to stockholders in any year in which Essex fails to qualify will not be deductible by Essex, nor will they be required to be made. In such event, to the extent of Essex’s current and accumulated earnings and profits, all distributions to stockholders will be taxable as ordinary income, and, subject to certain limitations in the Code, corporate distributees may be eligible for the dividends received deduction and noncorporate distributees may be eligible to treat the dividends as “qualified dividend income” taxable at capital gain rates. See “Certain Material Federal Income Tax Considerations — Taxation of Taxable U.S. Holders.” Unless entitled to relief under specific statutory provisions, Essex will also be disqualified from taxation as a REIT for the four taxable years following the year during which qualification was lost. It is not possible to state whether Essex would be entitled to such statutory relief.

Investments in Partnerships

General; Classification

Essex holds a direct ownership interest in the Operating Partnership. In general, partnerships are “pass-through” entities which are not subject to U.S. federal income tax. Rather, partners are allocated their proportionate shares of the items of income, gain, loss, deduction and credit of a partnership, and are potentially subject to tax thereon, without regard to whether the partners receive a distribution from the partnership. The allocation of partnership income or loss must comply with rules for allocating partnership income or loss under Section 704(b) of the Code and the U.S. Treasury regulations thereunder. The Operating Partnership’s allocations of taxable income and loss are intended to comply with the requirements of Section 704(b) of the Code and the U.S. Treasury regulations thereunder. Essex includes its allocable share of items of partnership income, gain, loss deduction and credit in the computation of its REIT taxable income. Moreover, Essex includes its proportionate share, based on its capital interest in a partnership, of the foregoing partnership items for purposes of the various REIT income tests. See “Certain Material Federal Income Tax Considerations — Taxation of Essex” and “ — Gross Income Tests,” above. Any resultant increase in Essex’s REIT taxable income increases its distribution requirements, but is not subject to U.S. federal income tax in Essex’s hands provided that such income is distributed to its stockholders. See “Certain Material Federal Income Tax Considerations — Annual Distribution Requirements.” In addition, for purposes of the REIT asset tests, Essex includes its proportionate share,

generally based on its capital interest in the partnership, of the assets held by the partnerships. See “— Asset Tests,” above.

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An organization with at least two owners or members will be classified as a partnership, rather than a corporation, for U.S. federal income tax purposes if (i) it is treated as a partnership under the Treasury regulations relating to entity classification (the “check-the-box regulations”); and (ii) it is not a “publicly traded partnership.” Under the check-the-box regulations, an unincorporated entity with at least two owners or members may elect to be classified either as an association taxable as a corporation or as a partnership. If such an entity does not make an election, it generally will be treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes. A publicly traded partnership is a partnership whose interests are traded on an established securities market or are readily tradable on a secondary market (or a substantial equivalent). A publicly traded partnership is generally treated as a corporation for federal income tax purposes, but will not be so treated if at least 90% of the partnership’s gross income consisted of specified passive income, including real property rents (which includes rents that would be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% income test, with certain modifications that make it easier for the rents to qualify for the 90% passive income exception), gains from the sale or other disposition of real property, interest, and dividends (the “90% passive income exception”).

Additionally, the Treasury regulations provide limited safe harbors from treatment as a publicly traded partnership. Pursuant to one of those safe harbors (the “private placement exclusion”), interests in a partnership will not be treated as readily tradable on a secondary market or the substantial equivalent thereof if (i) all interests in the partnership were issued in a transaction or transactions that were not required to be registered under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and (ii) the partnership does not have more than 100 partners at any time during the partnership’s taxable year. For the determination of the number of partners in a partnership, a person owning an interest in a partnership, grantor trust, or S corporation that owns an interest in the partnership is treated as a partner in the partnership only if (i) substantially all of the value of the owner’s interest in the entity is attributable to the entity’s direct or indirect interest in the partnership and (ii) a principal purpose of the use of the entity is to permit the partnership to satisfy the 100-partner limitation.

It is expected that the Operating Partnership will qualify for the private placement exclusion. Accordingly, it is expected that the Operating Partnership will not be treated as a publicly traded partnership and taxed as a corporation. The Operating Partnership has not requested, nor does it intend to request, however, a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service that it will be treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes.

Tax Allocations with Respect to the Properties

Pursuant to Section 704(c) of the Code, income, gain, loss and deduction attributable to appreciated or depreciated property that is contributed to a partnership in exchange for an interest in the partnership (such as some of Essex’s properties), must be allocated in a manner such that the contributing partner is charged with, or benefits from, respectively, the unrealized gain or unrealized loss associated with the property at the time of the contribution. The amount of such unrealized gain or unrealized loss generally is equal to the difference between the fair market value of contributed property at the time of contribution, and the adjusted tax basis of such property at the time of contribution (a “book-tax difference”). Such allocations are solely for U.S. federal income tax purposes and do not affect the book capital accounts or other economic or legal arrangements among the partners. The Operating Partnership has property subject to book-tax differences. Consequently, the partnership agreement of the Operating Partnership requires such allocations to be made in a manner consistent with Section 704(c) of the Code.

In general, the partners who contributed appreciated assets to the Operating Partnership will be allocated lower amounts of depreciation deductions for tax purposes and increased taxable income and gain on sale by the Operating Partnership of the contributed assets (including some of Essex’s properties). This will tend to eliminate the book-tax difference over time. However, the special allocation rules under Section 704(c) of the Code do not always entirely rectify the book-tax difference on an annual basis or with respect to a specific taxable transaction, such as a sale. Thus, the carryover basis of the contributed assets in the hands of the Operating Partnership can be expected to cause Essex to be allocated lower depreciation and other deductions, and possibly greater amounts of taxable income in the event

of a sale of such contributed assets, in excess of the economic or book income allocated to Essex as a result of such sale. This may cause Essex to recognize taxable income in excess of cash proceeds, which might adversely affect its ability to comply with the REIT distribution requirements. See “Certain Material Federal Income Tax Considerations — Annual Distribution Requirements.”

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Certain Loss Limitations

The American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 (the “2004 Act”) added new Section 470 to the Code, which provides certain limitations on the utilization of losses allocable to leased property owned by a partnership having both taxable and tax-exempt partners, such as the Operating Partnership. Currently, it is unclear how the transition rules and effective dates set forth in the 2004 Act will apply to entities such as the Operating Partnership. Moreover, it is uncertain how the general rules of this provision will apply. However, the Internal Revenue Service issued a notice stating that it will not apply Section 470 to partnerships for taxable years beginning before January 1, 2007 based solely on the fact that a partnership had both taxable and tax-exempt partners. It is important to note that this notice provides relief for the Operating Partnership’s taxable years ending December 31, 2005 and December 31, 2006 only. Accordingly, commencing with Essex’s taxable year beginning January 1, 2007, unless Congress passes corrective legislation which addresses this issue or some other form of relief, certain losses generated with respect to properties owned by the Operating Partnership may be disallowed until future years. This could increase the amount of distributions Essex is required to make in a particular year in order to meet the REIT distribution requirements, and also could increase the portion of distributions to its stockholders that are taxable as dividends.

Like-Kind Exchanges

Essex may dispose of properties in transactions intended to qualify as like-kind exchanges under the Code. Such like-kind exchanges are intended to result in the deferral of gain for federal income tax purposes. The failure of any such transaction to qualify as a like-kind exchange could subject Essex to federal income tax, possibly including the 100% prohibited transaction tax, depending on the facts and circumstances surrounding the particular transaction.

Possible Legislative or Other Actions Affecting Tax Considerations

Prospective investors should recognize that the present U.S. federal income tax treatment of an investment in Essex may be modified by legislative, judicial or administrative action at any time, and that any such action may affect investments and commitments previously made. The rules dealing with U.S. federal income taxation are constantly under review by persons involved in the legislative process and by the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Treasury Department, resulting in revisions of the U.S. Treasury regulations and revised interpretations of established concepts as well as statutory changes. Revisions in U.S. federal tax laws and interpretations thereof could adversely affect the tax consequences of an investment in Essex.

Investment in Essex’s Stock

The following summary describes certain U.S. federal income tax consequences relating to the purchase, ownership and disposition of Essex’s stock as of the date hereof. Except where noted, this summary deals only with stock held as a capital asset and does not deal with special situations, such as those persons whose functional currency for U.S. federal income tax purposes is not the U.S. dollar, persons liable for the alternative minimum tax, dealers in securities or currencies, tax-exempt organizations, individual retirement accounts and other tax deferred accounts, financial institutions, life insurance companies, or persons holding Essex’s stock as a part of a hedging or conversion transaction or a straddle. Furthermore, the discussion below is based upon the current U.S. federal income tax laws and interpretations thereof as of the date hereof. Such authorities may be repealed, revoked, or modified (possibly with retroactive effect) so as to result in U.S. federal income tax consequences different from those discussed below. In addition, except as otherwise indicated, the following summary does not consider the effect of any applicable foreign, state, local, or other tax laws or estate or gift tax considerations.

If an entity treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes holds Essex’s stock, the tax treatment of a partner in that partnership will generally depend upon the status of the partner and the activities of the partnership. If

you are a partner of a partnership holding Essex's stock, you should consult your tax advisor regarding the tax consequences of the ownership and disposition of Essex's stock.

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U.S. Holders

As used herein, a “U.S. Holder” of Essex’s stock means a holder that for U.S. federal income tax purposes is (i) a citizen or resident of the United States; (ii) a corporation or other entity treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes that is created or organized in or under the laws of the United States or any political subdivision thereof; (iii) an estate the income of which is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source; or (iv) a trust if (a) a U.S. court is able to exercise primary supervision over the administration of the trust and one or more U.S. persons have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust or (b) it has a valid election in place to be treated as a U.S. person or otherwise is treated as a U.S. person.

Taxation of Taxable U.S. Holders

Distributions. As long as Essex qualifies as a REIT, distributions made to its taxable U.S. Holders out of current or accumulated earnings and profits (and not designated as capital gain dividends or “qualified dividend income”) will be taken into account by them as ordinary income, and U.S. Holders that are corporations will not be entitled to a dividends received deduction. “Qualified dividend income” generally includes dividends received from ordinary U.S. corporations and from certain qualified foreign corporations, provided that certain stock holding period requirements are met. “Qualified dividend income” of noncorporate taxpayers is currently taxed as net capital gain, thus reducing the maximum tax rate on such dividends to 15% for taxable years ending after December 31, 2002 and beginning before January 1, 2011.

In general, dividends paid by REITs are not eligible for the 15% tax rate on “qualified dividend income” and, as a result, Essex’s ordinary REIT dividends will continue to be taxed at the ordinary income tax rate. Dividends received by a noncorporate stockholder could be treated as “qualified dividend income,” however, to the extent that Essex has received dividend income from taxable corporations (such as a taxable REIT subsidiary) and to the extent such dividends are attributable to income that is subject to tax at the REIT level (for example, if Essex distributed less than 100% of its taxable income). In general, to qualify for the reduced tax rate on qualified dividend income, a stockholder must hold Essex’s stock for more than 60 days during the 121-day period beginning on the date that is 60 days before the date on which Essex’s stock becomes ex-dividend.

To the extent that Essex makes distributions in excess of its current and accumulated earnings and profits, these distributions are treated first as a tax-free return of capital to the U.S. Holder, reducing the tax basis of a U.S. Holder’s stock by the amount of such distribution (but not below zero), with distributions in excess of the U.S. Holder’s tax basis treated as proceeds from a sale of stock, the tax treatment of which is described below. Distributions will generally be taxable, if at all, in the year of the distribution. However, any dividend declared by Essex in October, November or December of any year and payable to a U.S. Holder who held Essex’s stock on a specified record date in any such month shall be treated as both paid by Essex and received by the U.S. Holder on December 31 of such year, provided that the dividend is actually paid by Essex during January of the following calendar year.

In general, distributions which are designated by Essex as capital gain dividends will be taxable to U.S. Holders as gain from the sale of assets held for greater than one year, or “long-term capital gain.” That treatment will apply regardless of the period for which a U.S. Holder has held the stock upon which the capital gain dividend is paid. However, corporate U.S. Holders may be required to treat up to 20% of certain capital gain dividends as ordinary income. Noncorporate taxpayers are generally taxable at a current maximum tax rate of 15% for long-term capital gain attributable to sales or exchanges. A portion of any capital gain dividends received by noncorporate taxpayers might be subject to tax at a 25% rate to the extent attributable to gains realized on the sale of real property that correspond to Essex’s “unrecaptured Section 1250 gain.”

Essex may elect to retain, rather than distribute as a capital gain dividend, its net long-term capital gains. In such event, Essex would pay tax on such retained net long-term capital gains. In addition, to the extent designated by Essex, a U.S. Holder generally would (1) include his proportionate share of such undistributed long-term capital gains in computing his long-term capital gains for his taxable year in which the last day of Essex's taxable year falls (subject to certain limitations as to the amount so includable), (2) be deemed to have paid the capital gains tax imposed on Essex on the designated amounts included in such U.S. Holder's long-term capital gains, (3) receive a credit or refund for such amount of tax deemed paid by the U.S. Holder, (4) increase the adjusted basis of his stock by the difference between the amount of such includable gains and the tax deemed to have been paid by him, and (5) in the case of a U.S. Holder that is a corporation, appropriately adjust its earnings and profits for the retained capital gains in accordance with U.S. Treasury regulations (which have not yet been issued).

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Distributions made by Essex and gain arising from the sale or exchange by a U.S. Holder of stock will not be treated as passive activity income, and as a result, U.S. Holders generally will not be able to apply any “passive losses” against this income or gain. U.S. Holders may not include in their individual income tax returns any of Essex’s net operating losses or capital losses.

Disposition of Stock. Upon any taxable sale or other disposition of Essex’s stock, a U.S. Holder will recognize gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes in an amount equal to the difference between (1) the amount of cash and the fair market value of any property received on the sale or other disposition except with respect to amounts attributable to accrued but unpaid dividends and (2) the U.S. Holder’s adjusted basis in the stock for tax purposes.

This gain or loss will be a capital gain or loss, and will be long-term capital gain or loss, respectively, if Essex’s stock has been held for more than one year at the time of the disposition. Noncorporate U.S. Holders are generally taxable at a current maximum rate of 15% on long-term capital gain. The Internal Revenue Service has the authority to prescribe, but has not yet prescribed, regulations that would apply a capital gain tax rate of 25% to a portion of capital gain realized by a noncorporate U.S. Holder on the sale of REIT stock that would correspond to the REIT’s “unrecaptured Section 1250 gain.” U.S. Holders are urged to consult with their own tax advisors with respect to their capital gain tax liability. A corporate U.S. Holder will be subject to tax at a maximum rate of 35% on capital gain from the sale of Essex’s stock regardless of its holding period for the stock.

In general, any loss upon a sale or exchange of Essex’s stock by a U.S. Holder who has held such stock for six months or less (after applying certain holding period rules) will be treated as a long-term capital loss, to the extent of distributions (actually made or deemed made in accordance with the discussion above) from Essex required to be treated by such U.S. Holder as long-term capital gain.

Dividend Reinvestment Program. Stockholders participating in Essex’s dividend reinvestment program are treated as having received the gross amount of any cash distributions which would have been paid by Essex to such stockholders had they not elected to participate in the program. These distributions will retain the character and tax effect applicable to distributions from Essex generally. Participants in the dividend reinvestment program are subject to U.S. federal income and withholding tax on the amount of the deemed distributions to the extent that such distributions represent dividends or gains, even though they receive no cash. Shares of Essex’s stock received under the program will have a holding period beginning with the day after purchase, and a tax basis equal to their cost (which is the gross amount of the distribution).

Information Reporting and Backup Withholding. Payments of dividends on Essex’s stock and proceeds received upon the sale, redemption or other disposition of Essex’s stock may be subject to Internal Revenue Service information reporting and backup withholding. Payments to certain U.S. Holders (including, among others, corporations and certain tax-exempt organizations) are generally not subject to information reporting or backup withholding. Payments to a non-corporate U.S. Holder generally will be subject to information reporting. Such payments also generally will be subject to backup withholding if such holder (i) fails to furnish its taxpayer identification number, which for an individual is ordinarily his or her social security number; (ii) furnishes an incorrect taxpayer identification number; (iii) is notified by the Internal Revenue Service that it has failed to properly report payments of interest or dividends; or (iv) fails to certify, under penalties of perjury, that it has furnished a correct taxpayer identification number and that the Internal Revenue Service has not notified the U.S. Holder that it is subject to backup withholding.

A U.S. Holder that does not provide Essex with its correct taxpayer identification number may also be subject to penalties imposed by the Internal Revenue Service. Any amount paid as backup withholding will be creditable against the U.S. Holder’s U.S. federal income tax liability, if any, and otherwise will be refundable, provided that the requisite procedures are followed.

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You should consult your tax advisor regarding your qualification for an exemption from backup withholding and information reporting and the procedures for obtaining such an exemption, if applicable.

Taxation of Tax-Exempt U.S. Holders

Based upon a published ruling by the Internal Revenue Service, a distribution by Essex to, and gain upon a disposition of Essex's stock by, a U.S. Holder that is a tax-exempt entity will not constitute "unrelated business taxable income" ("UBTI") provided that the tax-exempt entity has not financed the acquisition of its stock with "acquisition indebtedness" within the meaning of the Code and the stock is not otherwise used in an unrelated trade or business of the tax-exempt entity.

However, for tax-exempt U.S. Holders that are social clubs, voluntary employee benefit associations, supplemental unemployment benefit trusts and qualified group legal services plans exempt from U.S. federal income taxation under Sections 501(c)(7), (c)(9), (c)(17) and (c)(20) of the Code, respectively, income from an investment in Essex will constitute UBTI unless the organization properly sets aside or reserves such amounts for purposes specified in the Code. These tax-exempt U.S. Holders should consult their own tax advisers concerning these "set aside" and reserve requirements.

Notwithstanding the preceding paragraph, however, a portion of the dividends paid by Essex may be treated as UBTI to certain domestic private pension trusts if Essex is treated as a "pension-held REIT." Essex believes that it is not, and does not expect to become, a "pension-held REIT." If Essex were to become a pension-held REIT, these rules generally would only apply to certain pension trusts that held more than 10% of Essex's stock.

Taxation of Non-U.S. Holders

The following is a discussion of certain anticipated U.S. federal income tax consequences of the ownership and disposition of Essex's stock applicable to non-U.S. Holders of such stock. A "non-U.S. Holder" is any person who is not a U.S. Holder. The discussion is based on current law and is for general information only. The discussion addresses only certain and not all aspects of U.S. federal income taxation. Special rules may apply to certain non-U.S. Holders such as "controlled foreign corporations" and "passive foreign investment companies." Such entities should consult their own tax advisors to determine the U.S. federal, state, local and other tax consequences that may be relevant to them.

Distributions from the Company.

1. Ordinary Dividends. The portion of dividends received by non-U.S. Holders payable out of Essex's current and accumulated earnings and profits which are not attributable to capital gains and which are not effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business of the non-U.S. Holder will be subject to U.S. withholding tax at the rate of 30% (unless reduced by an applicable income tax treaty). In general, non-U.S. Holders will not be considered engaged in a U.S. trade or business solely as a result of their ownership of Essex's stock. In cases where the dividend income from a non-U.S. Holder's investment in Essex's stock is effectively connected with the non-U.S. Holder's conduct of a U.S. trade or business (or, if an income tax treaty applies, is attributable to a U.S. permanent establishment of the non-U.S. Holder), the non-U.S. Holder generally will be subject to U.S. tax at graduated rates, in the same manner as U.S. Holders are taxed with respect to such dividends (a corporate non-U.S. Holder may also be subject to a "branch profits tax" at a rate of 30% or lower under an applicable treaty).

Essex expects to withhold U.S. income tax at the rate of 30% on the gross amount of any distributions of ordinary income made to a non-U.S. Holder unless (1) a lower treaty rate applies and proper certification is provided on Internal Revenue Service Form W-8BEN or (2) the non-U.S. Holder files an Internal Revenue Service Form W-8ECI with Essex claiming that the distribution is effectively connected with the non-U.S. Holder's conduct of a U.S. trade or

business (or, if an income tax treaty applies, is attributable to a U.S. permanent establishment of the non-U.S. Holder). However, the non-U.S. Holder may seek a refund of such amounts from the Internal Revenue Service if it is subsequently determined that such distribution was, in fact, in excess of Essex's current and accumulated earnings and profits.

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2. Non-Dividend Distributions. Unless Essex's stock constitutes a USRPI (as defined below), distributions by Essex which are not paid out of Essex's current and accumulated earnings and profits will not be subject to U.S. income or withholding tax. If it cannot be determined at the time a distribution is made whether or not such distribution will be in excess of current and accumulated earnings and profits, the distribution will be subject to withholding at the rate applicable to dividends. However, the non-U.S. Holder may seek a refund of such amounts from the Internal Revenue Service if it is subsequently determined that such distribution was, in fact, in excess of Essex's current and accumulated earnings and profits. If Essex's stock constitutes a USRPI, a distribution in excess of current and accumulated earnings and profits will be subject to 10% withholding tax and may be subject to additional taxation under FIRPTA (as defined below). However, the 10% withholding tax will not apply to distributions already subject to the 30% dividend withholding.

3. Capital Gain Dividends. Under the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act of 1980 ("FIRPTA"), a distribution made by Essex to a non-U.S. Holder, to the extent attributable to gains ("USRPI Capital Gains") from dispositions of United States real property interests ("USRPIs"), will be considered effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business of the non-U.S. Holder and therefore will be subject to U.S. income tax at the rates applicable to U.S. Holders, without regard to whether such distribution is designated as a capital gain dividend. (The properties owned by the Operating Partnership generally are USRPIs.) Distributions subject to FIRPTA may also be subject to the branch profits tax in the hands of a corporate non-U.S. Holder that is not entitled to treaty exemption. Notwithstanding the preceding, distributions received on Essex's stock, to the extent attributable to USRPI Capital Gains, will not be treated as gain recognized by the non-U.S. Holder from the sale or exchange of a USRPI if (1) Essex's stock continues to be regularly traded on an established securities market located in the United States and (2) the selling non-U.S. Holder did not own more than 5% of such class of stock at any time during the one-year period ending on the date of the distribution. The distribution will instead be treated as an ordinary dividend to the non-U.S. Holder, and the tax consequences to the non-U.S. Holder will be as described above under "— Ordinary Dividends."

Distributions attributable to Essex's capital gains which are not USRPI Capital Gains generally will not be subject to income taxation, unless (1) investment in the stock is effectively connected with the non-U.S. Holder's U.S. trade or business (or, if an income tax treaty applies, is attributable to a U.S. permanent establishment of the non-U.S. Holder), in which case the non-U.S. Holder will be subject to the same treatment as U.S. Holders with respect to such gain (except that a corporate non-U.S. Holder may also be subject to the branch profits tax) or (2) the non-U.S. Holder is a non-resident alien individual who is present in the United States for 183 days or more during the taxable year and certain other conditions are present, in which case the nonresident alien individual will be subject to a 30% tax on the individual's capital gains.

Essex generally will be required to withhold and remit to the Internal Revenue Service 35% of any distributions to non-U.S. Holders that are designated as capital gain dividends, or, if greater, 35% of a distribution that could have been designated as a capital gain dividend. Distributions can be designated as capital gains to the extent of Essex's net capital gain for the taxable year of the distribution. The amount withheld is creditable against the non-U.S. Holder's U.S. federal income tax liability. This withholding will not apply to any amounts paid to a holder of not more than 5% of Essex's stock while such stock is regularly traded on an established securities market. Instead, those amounts will be treated as described above under "— Ordinary Dividends."

Disposition of Stock. Unless Essex's stock constitutes a USRPI, a sale of such stock by a non-U.S. Holder generally will not be subject to U.S. taxation unless (1) the investment in the stock is effectively connected with the non-U.S. Holder's U.S. trade or business (or, if an income tax treaty applies, is attributable to a U.S. permanent establishment of the non-U.S. Holder) or (2) the non-U.S. Holder is a non-resident alien individual who is present in the United States for 183 days or more during the taxable year and certain other conditions are present.

The stock will not constitute a USRPI if Essex is a “domestically controlled REIT.” A domestically controlled REIT is a REIT in which, at all times during a specified testing period, less than 50% in value of its shares is held directly or indirectly by non-U.S. Holders. Essex believes that it is, and expects to continue to be, a domestically controlled REIT, and therefore that the sale of Essex’s stock will not be subject to taxation under FIRPTA. Because Essex’s stock will be publicly traded, however, no assurance can be given that Essex will continue to be a domestically controlled REIT.

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Even if Essex does not constitute a domestically controlled REIT, a non-U.S. Holder's sale of its stock generally will not be subject to tax under FIRPTA as a sale of a USRPI provided that (1) the stock continues to be regularly traded on an established securities market located in the United States and (2) the selling non-U.S. Holder did not own more than 5% of such class of stock at any time during the one year period ending on the date of the distribution.

If gain on the sale of Essex's stock were subject to taxation under FIRPTA, the non-U.S. Holder would be subject to the same treatment as a U.S. Holder with respect to such gain (subject to applicable alternative minimum tax and a special alternative minimum tax in the case of nonresident alien individuals). In addition, the purchaser of the stock could be required to withhold 10% of the purchase price and remit such amount to the Internal Revenue Service. This 10% is creditable against the U.S. federal income tax liability of the non-U.S. Holder under FIRPTA in connection with its sale of Essex's stock.

Information Reporting and Backup Withholding. Backup withholding will apply to dividend payments made to a non-U.S. Holder of Essex's stock unless the holder has certified that it is not a U.S. holder and the payer has no actual knowledge that the owner is not a non-U.S. Holder. Information reporting generally will apply with respect to dividend payments even if certification is provided.

Payment of the proceeds from a disposition of Essex's stock by a non-U.S. Holder made to or through the U.S. office of a broker is generally subject to information reporting and backup withholding unless the holder or beneficial owner certifies that it is not a U.S. Holder or otherwise establishes an exemption. Generally, Internal Revenue Service information reporting and backup withholding will not apply to a payment of disposition proceeds if the payment is made outside the United States through a foreign office of a foreign broker-dealer. If the proceeds from a disposition of Essex's stock are paid to or through a foreign office of a U.S. broker-dealer or a non-U.S. office of a foreign broker-dealer that is (1) a "controlled foreign corporation" for U.S. federal income tax purposes, (2) a person 50% or more of whose gross income from all sources for a specified three-year period was effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business, (3) a foreign partnership with one or more partners who are U.S. persons and who in the aggregate hold more than 50% of the income or capital interest in the partnership, or (4) a foreign partnership engaged in the conduct of a trade or business in the United States, then backup withholding and information reporting generally will apply unless the non-U.S. Holder satisfies certification requirements regarding its status as a non-U.S. Holder and the broker-dealer has no actual knowledge that the owner is not a non-U.S. Holder.

A non-U.S. Holder should consult its tax advisor regarding application of withholding and backup withholding in its particular circumstance and the availability of and procedure for obtaining an exemption from withholding and backup withholding under current U.S. Treasury regulations.

State and Local Taxes

Essex and its stockholders may be subject to state or local taxation in various jurisdictions, including those in which Essex or they transact business or reside. The state and local tax treatment of Essex and its stockholders may not conform to the U.S. federal income tax consequences discussed above. Consequently, prospective stockholders should consult their own tax advisers regarding the effect of state and local tax laws on an investment in Essex's stock."

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

Upon written instructions from us, Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will use its commercially reasonable efforts consistent with its sales and trading practices, to solicit offers to purchase the shares of common stock under the terms and subject to the conditions set forth in the sales agreement. Cantor Fitzgerald & Co.'s solicitation will continue until we instruct Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. to suspend the solicitations and offers. We will instruct Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. as to the amount of shares of common stock to be sold by Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. We may instruct Cantor Fitzgerald &

Co. not to sell shares of common stock if the sales cannot be effected at or above the price designated by us in any instruction. We or Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. may suspend the offering of shares of common stock upon proper notice and subject to other conditions.

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Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will provide written confirmation to us no later than the opening of the trading day on the New York Stock Exchange following the trading day in which shares of common stock are sold under the sales agreement. Each confirmation will include the number of shares sold on the preceding day, the net proceeds to us and the compensation payable by us to Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. in connection with the sales.

We will pay Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. commissions for its services in acting as agent in the sale of shares of common stock. Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will be entitled to compensation of up to 2% of the gross sales price per share of any common stock sold under the sales agreement. We estimate that the total expenses for the offering, excluding compensation payable to Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. under the terms of the sales agreement, will be approximately \$50,000.

Settlement for sales of shares of common stock will occur on the third trading day following the date on which any sales are made, or on some other date that is agreed upon by us and Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. in connection with a particular transaction, in return for payment of the net proceeds to us. There is no arrangement for funds to be received in an escrow, trust or similar arrangement.

In connection with the sale of the shares of common stock on our behalf, Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. may, and will with respect to sales effected in an “at the market offering”, be deemed to be an “underwriter” within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933, and the compensation of Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. may be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts. We have agreed to provide indemnification and contribution to Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act. We have also agreed to reimburse Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. for other specified expenses.

The offering of our shares of common stock pursuant to the sales agreement will terminate upon the earlier of (1) the sale of all shares of common stock subject to the agreement or (2) termination of the sales agreement. The sales agreement may be terminated by either us or Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. in either of our sole discretion at any time by giving notice to the other party.

LEGAL MATTERS

Certain legal matters in connection with this offering will be passed upon for us by Baker & McKenzie LLP, San Francisco, California. Certain legal matters in connection with this offering will be passed upon for Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. by DLA Piper LLP (US).

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements as of December 31, 2008 and 2007 and for each of the three years in the period ended December 31, 2008 and the related financial statement schedule as of December 31, 2008 incorporated in this prospectus supplement by reference from the Essex Property Trust, Inc.’s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008, and the effectiveness of the Company’s internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2008, have been audited by KPMG LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in their reports, which are incorporated herein by reference. Such financial statements and financial statement schedule have been so incorporated in reliance upon the reports of such firm given upon their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to “incorporate by reference” into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus the information we file with the SEC, which means that we can disclose important business, financial and other

information to you by referring you to other documents separately filed with the SEC. All information incorporated by reference is part of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. Any statement contained in a document which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is automatically updated and superseded if information contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, or information we later file with the SEC, modifies or replaces that information.

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We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and any future filings we make with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, unless specifically stated otherwise, prior to completion of the offering of shares of common stock described in this prospectus supplement.

- our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008;
- our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2009;
- our definitive proxy statement, dated March 31, 2009, in connection with our annual meeting of stockholders held on May 5, 2009;
- the Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on February 27, 2009 and April 8, 2009; and
- the description of Essex's common stock contained in a Registration Statement on Form 8-A filed with the SEC on May 27, 1994, as amended on September 19, 2003 and July 31, 2006.

In addition, all documents filed by us under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act (excluding any information that is deemed to have been "furnished" and not "filed" with the SEC) after the date of this prospectus supplement and prior to the termination of the offering of the common shares covered by this prospectus supplement, are incorporated by reference herein.

To obtain a free copy of any of the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement (other than exhibits, unless they are specifically incorporated by reference in the documents) please contact us at:

Essex Property Trust, Inc.
Attention: Investor Relations
925 East Meadow Drive
Palo Alto, CA 94303
Phone: (650) 494-3700

Our SEC filings also are available on our Internet website at www.essexpropertytrust.com. The information on our website is not, and you must not consider the information to be, a part of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus.

AVAILABLE INFORMATION

We are subject to the information requirements of the Exchange Act. Accordingly, we file current, quarterly and annual reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy these reports, proxy statements and other information at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the operation of the SEC's Public Reference Room. Our SEC filings also are available to the public at the Internet website maintained by the SEC at www.sec.gov and from commercial document retrieval services.

We also make available free of charge through our website our annual report on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K, and amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, our definitive proxy statements and Section 16 reports on Forms 3, 4 and 5, as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file such reports or amendments with, or furnish them to, the SEC. Our Internet website address is www.essexpropertytrust.com. The information located on, or hyperlinked or otherwise connected to, our website is not, and shall not be deemed to be, a part of this prospectus or incorporated into any other

filings that we make with the SEC. You may also inspect the information that we file with the NYSE, at the offices of the NYSE located at 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005.

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We have filed with the SEC a registration statement on Form S-3 (Registration File No. 333-141726) covering the shares of common stock offered by this prospectus statement. You should be aware that this prospectus supplement does not contain all of the information contained or incorporated by reference in that registration statement and its exhibits and schedules. You may inspect and obtain the registration statement, including exhibits, schedules, reports and other information that we have filed with the SEC, as described in the preceding paragraph. Statements contained in this prospectus supplement concerning the contents of any document we refer you to are not necessarily complete and in each instance we refer you to the applicable document filed with the SEC for more complete information.

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PROSPECTUS

ESSEX PROPERTY TRUST, INC.

COMMON STOCK
PREFERRED STOCK
DEPOSITARY SHARES
WARRANTS AND OTHER RIGHTS
STOCK PURCHASE CONTRACTS
UNITS
GUARANTEES OF DEBT SECURITIES

and

ESSEX PORTFOLIO, L.P.

DEBT SECURITIES

Essex Property Trust, Inc., a Maryland corporation (“Essex” or the “Company”), may from time to time offer: (i) common stock; (ii) preferred stock; (iii) preferred stock represented by depositary shares; (iv) warrants and other rights to purchase common stock; (v) stock purchase contracts; and (vi) units representing an interest in two or more other securities; and

Essex Portfolio L.P., a California partnership (the “Operating Partnership”), may from time to time offer in one or more series debt securities, which may be either senior debt securities (“Senior Securities”) or subordinated debt securities (“Subordinated Securities” and, together with the Senior Securities, the “Debt Securities”), guaranteed by Essex through unconditional guarantees (the “Guarantees”) of the Debt Securities. The Debt Securities may be non-convertible or convertible into or exercisable or exchangeable for securities of the Company or the Operating Partnership.

The securities listed above (collectively, the “Offered Securities”) may be offered, separately or together, in separate series, in amounts, at prices and on terms to be set forth in one or more prospectus supplements to this prospectus (each a “Prospectus Supplement”); provided that Essex will unconditionally guarantee the payment of principal and a premium, if any, and interest on the debt securities, to the extent and on the terms described herein and in any accompanying Prospectus Supplement to this prospectus. Under this Registration Statement, Essex can issue equity securities and debt guarantees, but not debt securities, and the Operating Partnership can issue only debt securities.

This prospectus describes some of the general terms that may apply to these securities. The specific terms of any securities to be offered will be described in a Prospectus Supplement. The specific terms may include limitations on direct or beneficial ownership and restrictions on transfer, in each case as may be appropriate to preserve our status as a real estate investment trust (“REIT”) for federal income tax purposes.

The applicable Prospectus Supplement also will contain information, where applicable, about material United States federal income tax considerations relating to, and any listing on a securities exchange of, the Offered Securities covered by such Prospectus Supplement.

The Offered Securities may be offered directly, through agents designated from time to time by Essex, or to or through underwriters or dealers. If any agents or underwriters are involved in the sale of any of the Offered Securities, their names, and any applicable purchase price, fee, commission or discount arrangement between or among them, will be set forth, or will be calculable from the information set forth, in the applicable Prospectus Supplement. See “Plan of Distribution.” No Offered Securities may be sold without delivery of the applicable Prospectus Supplement

describing the method and terms of the offering of such series of Offered Securities.

Essex's common stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "ESS."

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You should consider the risks discussed in “Risk Factors” beginning on page 6 of the prospectus before you invest in our securities.

NEITHER THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION NOR ANY STATE SECURITIES COMMISSION HAS APPROVED OF THESE SECURITIES OR DETERMINED THAT THIS PROSPECTUS IS TRUTHFUL OR COMPLETE. ANY REPRESENTATION TO THE CONTRARY IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE.

The date of this prospectus is March 30, 2007

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Neither Essex Property Trust, Inc. nor Essex Portfolio, L.P. have authorized any person to give any information or to make any representation not contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus. You must not rely upon any information or representation not contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus as if we had authorized it. This prospectus is not an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any securities other than the registered securities to which it relates and this prospectus is not an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy securities in any jurisdiction where, or to any person to whom, it is unlawful to make such offer or solicitation. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus is correct on any date after the date of this prospectus, even though this prospectus is delivered or shares are sold pursuant to this prospectus on a later date.

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WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and special reports, proxy statements and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “SEC”). You may read and copy any document we file with the SEC at the SEC’s public reference room at Room 1024, Judiciary Plaza, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference room. The SEC also maintains a web site that contains reports, proxy and information statements, and other information regarding registrants that file electronically with the SEC (<http://www.sec.gov>). You can inspect reports and other information we file at the offices of the New York Stock Exchange, Inc., 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005.

We have filed a Registration Statement of which this prospectus is a part and related exhibits with the SEC under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “Securities Act”). The Registration Statement contains additional information about us. You may inspect the Registration Statement and exhibits without charge at the office of the SEC at 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549, and you may obtain copies from the SEC at prescribed rates.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

- The SEC allows us to “incorporate by reference” the information we file with the SEC, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is an important part of this prospectus. Any statement contained in a document which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus is automatically updated and superseded if information contained in this prospectus, or information that we later file with the SEC, modifies or replaces this information. We incorporate by reference the following documents we filed with the SEC:
 - The Operating Partnership’s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2006;
 - Essex’s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2006;
 - Essex’s Current Report on Form 8-K filed on February 7, 2007;
- The description of Essex’s common stock contained in a Registration Statement on Form 8-A filed with the SEC on May 27, 1994, as amended on September 19, 2003;
- The Rights Agreement dated as of November 11, 1998, between Essex Property Trust, Inc. and BankBoston, N.A., as Rights Agent, including all exhibits thereto, attached as Exhibit 1 to the Company’s Form 8-A, filed November 12, 1998; and the amendments to the Rights Agreement dated December 13, 2000 and February 28, 2002 included as exhibits 4.2 and 4.3 to the Annual Report on Form 10-K of Essex Property Trust, Inc. and for the year ended December 31, 2005; and
- All documents filed by us with the SEC pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the “Exchange Act”) (other than current reports furnished under Item 9 of Form 8-K) after the date of this prospectus and prior to the termination of the offering.

To receive a free copy of any of the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus (other than exhibits, unless they are specifically incorporated by reference in the documents), call or write Essex Property Trust, Inc., 925 East Meadow Drive, Palo Alto, California 94303, Attention: Secretary (650) 494-3700.

Unless we indicate otherwise or unless the context requires otherwise, all references in this prospectus to “Essex” mean Essex Property Trust, Inc. and all references to the “Operating Partnership” mean Essex Portfolio, L.P. Unless we

indicate otherwise or unless the context requires otherwise, all references in this prospectus to “we,” “us,” or “our” mean Essex and its subsidiaries, including the Operating Partnership and its subsidiaries. When we refer to Essex’s “Charter,” we mean Essex’s articles of incorporation, as amended and supplemented from time to time.

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FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus contains or incorporates by reference forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act, and Section 21E of the Exchange Act, and are subject to the “safe harbor” provisions created by these statutes. All statements, other than statements of historical facts, that address activities, events or developments that we intend, expect, project, believe or anticipate will or may occur in the future are forward-looking statements. Such statements are characterized by terminology such as “anticipates,” “believes,” “expects,” “future,” “intends,” “assumes,” “projects,” “plans” and similar expressions or the negative of those terms or other comparable terminology. These forward-looking statements, which include statements about our expectations, objectives, anticipations, intentions and strategies regarding the future, expected operation results, revenues and earnings, reflect only management’s current expectations and are not guarantees of future performance and are subject to risks and uncertainties, including those risks described under the heading “Risk Factors” in this prospectus, or in the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus, that could cause actual results to differ materially from the results contemplated by the forward-looking statements. Some of these forward-looking statements include statements regarding our expectations as to:

- The timing of completion of current development and redevelopment projects and the stabilization dates of such projects;
 - The total projected costs and rental rates of development and redevelopment projects;
- The adequacy of future cash flows to meet operating requirements and to provide for dividend payments in accordance with real estate investment trust (“REIT”) requirements;
 - The amount of capital expenditures and non-revenue generating capital expenditures;
 - Future acquisitions and anticipated development projects in 2007 and thereafter;
 - The anticipated performance of second Essex Apartment Value Fund (“Fund II”);
 - The anticipated performance of existing properties; and
- The anticipated results from various geographic regions and our investment focus in such regions.

All forward-looking statements included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus are made as of the date hereof, based on information available to us as of the date hereof, and we assume no obligation to update any forward-looking statement or statements. It is important to note that such forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties and that our actual results could differ materially from those in such forward-looking statements. The foregoing factors, as well as those under the heading “Risk Factors” in this prospectus and in the section entitled “Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations” in our most recent Annual Reports on Form 10-K and Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q that we file with the SEC from time to time, among others, in some cases have affected, and in the future could affect, our actual operating results and could cause our actual consolidated operating results to differ materially from those expressed in any forward-looking statement made by us. You are cautioned not to place undue reliance on forward-looking statements contained in this prospectus.

ESSEX AND THE OPERATING PARTNERSHIP

Essex Property Trust, Inc. (“Essex” or the “Company”) is a self-administered and self-managed equity real estate investment trust (“REIT”) engaged in the ownership, acquisition, development and management of apartment communities. As of December 31, 2006, the Company operated and had ownership interests in 130 apartment communities (totaling 27,553 units), two recreational vehicle parks (comprising 338 spaces), three office buildings (aggregating to approximately 166,340 square feet), and one manufactured housing community (containing 157 sites) (collectively, the “Properties”). The Properties are located in Southern California (Los Angeles, Ventura, Orange, Riverside and San Diego counties), Northern California (the San Francisco Bay Area), Seattle, Washington and other regions (Portland, Oregon metropolitan area, Houston, Texas).

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Essex was incorporated in the state of Maryland in March 1994. On June 13, 1994, Essex commenced operations with the completion of an initial public offering (“the Offering”) in which Essex issued 6,275,000 shares of common stock at \$19.50 per share.

Essex Portfolio, L.P. (the “Operating Partnership”) was formed in March 1994 and commenced operations on June 13, 1994, when Essex, the general partner of the Operating Partnership, completed its Offering.

Essex conducts substantially all of its activities through the Operating Partnership. Essex currently owns an approximate 90.4% general partnership interest and members of Essex’s Board of Directors, senior management and certain outside investors own limited partnership interests of approximately 9.6% in the Operating Partnership. As the sole general partner of the Operating Partnership, Essex has control over the management of the Operating Partnership and over each of the properties.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable Prospectus Supplement, we intend to use the net proceeds of any sale of Offered Securities for general corporate purposes and to invest in the Operating Partnership. Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable Prospectus Supplement, the Operating Partnership intends to use any net proceeds to fund the acquisition and development of apartment communities and to repay indebtedness. Net proceeds from the sale of the Offered Securities initially may be temporarily invested in short-term securities.

RISK FACTORS

Our business, operating results, cash flows and financial conditions are subject to various risks and uncertainties, including, without limitation, those set forth below, any one of which could cause our actual results to vary materially from recent results or from our anticipated future results.

We depend on our key personnel

Our success depends on our ability to attract and retain executive officers, senior officers and company managers. There is substantial competition for qualified personnel in the real estate industry and the loss of several of our key personnel could have an adverse effect on us.

Debt financing

At December 31, 2006, we had approximately \$1.41 billion of indebtedness (including \$186.3 million of variable rate indebtedness, of which \$182.8 million is subject to interest rate protection agreements). We are subject to the risks normally associated with debt financing, including the following:

- cash flow may not be sufficient to meet required payments of principal and interest;
- inability to refinance maturing indebtedness on encumbered properties;
- the terms of any refinancing may not be as favorable as the terms of existing indebtedness;
- inability to comply with debt covenants could cause an acceleration of the maturity date; and