

Federal Home Loan Bank Advances and Commercial Bank Portfolio Composition

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First published: 23 May 2012

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1538-4616.2012.00505.x>

Citations: 12

The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, or their respective staffs. We thank Brent Ambrose, Robert DeYoung, Deborah Lucas, Joseph McKenzie, Joe Peek, Larry Wall, two anonymous referees, and various seminar participants for helpful comments on previous drafts. We also thank Melissa Hamilton for her outstanding research assistance.

Abstract

Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) advances are a source of government-sponsored liquidity intended to encourage housing finance, although “community financial institutions” may use such funds more generally. Because money is fungible, it is an empirical question as to how advances are actually employed. Using panel-vector autoregression techniques, we estimate dynamic responses of U.S. commercial bank portfolios to: FHLB advance shocks, bank lending shocks, and macroeconomic shocks. We find that FHLB advances: (i) are used as a general source of liquidity by U.S. commercial banks of all sizes and (ii) dampen the sensitivity of mortgage lending to macroeconomic shocks at small banks.

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