To the Shareholders of Flaherty & Crumrine Preferred Income Fund:

PFD's fiscal 2014 got off to a strong start, as preferred securities continued to recover from 2013's mid-year swoon. Total return on net asset value[1] was +4.7% for the first fiscal quarter.[2] Market price performance was even better: The Fund's market price discount to NAV narrowed, generating total return on market value for the fiscal quarter of +7.7%.

After a difficult stretch during the second half of 2013, the preferred securities market seemed ripe for recovery, and it didn't disappoint. One probably would not have concluded that in December, however, when long-term interest rates rose to their highest levels of the year (nearly 4% for the 30-year Treasury bond) after the Federal Reserve began to taper its securities purchases. Many holders of preferred securities—particularly $25-par issues—sold them to book tax losses before year-end. Such selling pressure hurt prices even more. Preferred securities' prices ended 2013 at or near their lows for the year.

As 2014 began, preferred securities started to turn around. Unusually cold temperatures and heavy snowfall blanketed much of the United States from December through February, dampening economic activity. Job growth sputtered, personal spending eased and housing activity slowed. The 30-year Treasury bond yield drifted back down to finish the fiscal quarter at 3.58%, 0.23% lower than where it started in December. Meanwhile, fundamental credit conditions—profits, balance sheets and loan performance, among others—continued to improve for most preferred issuers.

As fears of sharply higher interest rates faded and tax-loss selling ran its course, preferred investors returned to the market. And they had company! Some investors who typically focus on other fixed-income markets, such as corporate or high-yield bonds, also bought preferred securities, attracted by their higher yields in an otherwise low-yield environment. Those other fixed-income markets dwarf the preferred market in size, so even a small reallocation to preferreds inside a bond portfolio can translate into a lot of dollars being invested in preferreds. Demand for preferred securities picked up noticeably.

Among major issuers, financial companies, especially banks, are adapting to new rules and regulations implemented since the financial crisis. Regular readers of our letters will recall many discussions about Basel III and other regulatory pronouncements. These regulations are intended to strengthen balance sheets and improve transparency—positives for preferred investors. In almost every case in the U.S. and abroad, preferred securities are, or will be, an integral component of capital. As a result, we have seen and will continue to see a steady supply of new preferred issues. However, new issuance has been modest in size and readily absorbed by investors; and spreads on these and secondary-market issues have gradually compressed.

Although interest-rate fears have receded recently, we know many Fund investors remain concerned about the possibility of rising interest rates. Three observations. First, although preferred security prices tend to move with intermediate and long-term Treasury yields, their correlation is not perfect. Yields on preferred securities are high relative to Treasuries and corporate bonds, and they should be able to absorb some increase in Treasury yields while still generating positive total returns. We think improving credit fundamentals support that view.

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[1] Following methodology required by the SEC, total return assumes dividend reinvestment and includes income and principal change, plus the impact of the Fund's leverage and expenses.

[2] December 1, 2013—February 28, 2014.

Second, as the Fund's experience in 2013's third fiscal quarter demonstrated, prices of preferred securities can fall when interest rates increase significantly. However, preferred securities pay dividends year-in and year-out. If we have picked our credits correctly, over time, those dividends can turn modest principal losses into positive total returns. Shareholders probably will have to live through some quarter-to-quarter volatility, but we think prospective returns on preferred securities remain attractive for long-term investors.

Third, there are a number of ways we can manage interest-rate risk in a portfolio of preferred securities, even if we exclude outright interest-rate hedging (something the Fund has not done since 2008). In particular, so-called "fixed-to-floating rate" preferred securities can offer attractive yields with only intermediate duration or interest-rate risk. A typical such security starts with a coupon rate that is fixed for five or 10 years and then floats at a margin over an index (usually 3-month LIBOR). These preferred securities have *credit* risk similar to fixed-rate issues, but they can have much less *interest-rate* risk. Of course, not all fixed-to-floating rate preferred securities are the same, and none are riskless. Investors need to evaluate each issue's creditworthiness, terms and conditions carefully, something we spend a lot of time doing. As of February 28, 2014, roughly 48% of the Fund's portfolio was comprised of fixed-to-floating rate issues, and they fit well with our market outlook.

We expect economic growth to improve in the second quarter as weather effects fade. We don't think weather was the whole story behind sluggish first-quarter growth, but it was an important factor, and one that inevitably will thaw come spring. Stronger growth may push interest rates higher once again. However, for 2014 as a whole, we foresee modest economic growth, improving credit conditions and accommodative monetary policy. That should translate into gradually (if erratically) rising Treasury rates along with narrower yield spreads on preferred securities. Investors should be prepared for some volatility over coming quarters, but we think "coupon" or "coupon minus a bit" returns on preferred securities should remain attractive for long-term investors.

As always, we encourage you to visit the Fund's website, www.preferredincome.com, for current information on preferred-securities markets, the Fund and the broader economy.

Sincerely,

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March 31, 2014