

OCC Signals Shift on Crypto and Debanking Under Acting Comptroller Hood

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On March 18, Acting Comptroller of the Currency Rodney Hood reiterated the OCC's commitment to ensuring fair access to banking services, including for cryptocurrency firms. Speaking at a retail banking industry conference, Hood stated that the OCC would not tolerate so-called "debanking" without individualized risk assessments. He emphasized that banks must evaluate businesses—including those in the crypto sector—based on objective criteria rather than categorical exclusions.

Hood's remarks signaled several key potential policy shifts:

- **Leveling the playing field for crypto activities.** Banks engaging with digital asset companies should be evaluated under the same supervisory frameworks as traditional financial services.
- **Firm Risk Management Expectations.** While easing entry for crypto-related banking services, banks must still meet core regulatory requirements, including capital, cybersecurity, and BSA/AML compliance.
- **No Mandates on Account Closures.** Hood reaffirmed that the OCC does not direct banks to open or close specific accounts and that such decisions should reflect each customer's unique risk profile.
- **Fintech Expansion & Regulatory Innovation.** The OCC plans to launch a fintech regulatory sandbox and recently granted a new fintech bank charter—the first in five years—as part of broader efforts to encourage responsible fintech innovation.

Putting It Into Practice: The OCC recently clarified that banks are authorized to provide crypto custody services, hold stablecoin reserves for issuers, and participate in blockchain networks to process and validate payments, including stablecoin transactions. These developments, along with Hood's comments, reflect a broader policy shift under the second Trump Administration favoring cryptocurrency adoption and challenging alleged politically motivated banking restrictions (previously discussed [here](#) and [here](#)). In addition, Hood's comments on de-banking follow efforts by states such as Florida and Tennessee to tack perceived "de-banking" of consumers with conservative ideologies

(previously discussed [here](#) and [here](#)).

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