

the extended Trading Phase Date.¹⁷ The Commission emphasizes, as it did in the previous orders,¹⁸ that the *de minimis* exemption does not relieve brokers and dealers of their best execution obligations under the federal securities laws and SRO rules.

Accordingly, it is ordered, pursuant to Section 11A of the Act and Rule 608(e) thereunder,¹⁹ that participants of the ITS Plan and their members are hereby exempt from Section 8(d) of the ITS Plan during the period covered by this Order with respect to transactions in DIAs and SPYs that are executed at a price that is no more than three cents lower than the highest bid displayed in CQS and no more than three cents higher than the lowest offer displayed in CQS. This Order extends the *de minimis* exemption from February 5, 2007 through March 4, 2007.

By the Commission.

Nancy M. Morris,
Secretary.

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-55163; File No. SR-Amex-2007-11]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; American Stock Exchange LLC; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change and Amendment No. 1 Thereto Relating to the Establishment of a Pilot Program Increasing Position and Exercise Limits for Options on the iShares® Russell 2000® Index Fund

January 24, 2007.

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (“Act”)¹ and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,² notice is hereby given that on January 22, 2007, the American Stock Exchange LLC (“Amex” or “Exchange”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) the proposed rule change as described in Items I and II below, which Items have been substantially prepared by Amex. On January 22, 2007, Amex submitted Amendment No. 1 to the proposed rule change. Amex has filed the proposal pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the

Act³ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder,⁴ which renders the proposal effective upon filing with the Commission. The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rule change, as amended, from interested persons.

I. Self-Regulatory Organization’s Statement of the Terms of Substance of the Proposed Rule Change

The Exchange proposes to amend Rule 904 to exempt options on the iShares® Russell 2000® Index Fund (“IWM”) from the position and exercise limits provided for under the Rule 904 Pilot Program and to increase the standard position and exercise limits for IWM as part of a six-month pilot (“IWM Pilot Program”). The text of the proposed rule change is available at Amex, the Commission’s Public Reference Room, and www.amex.com.

II. Self-Regulatory Organization’s Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

In its filing with the Commission, Amex included statements concerning the purpose of and basis for the proposed rule change and discussed any comments it received on the proposed rule change. The text of these statements may be examined at the places specified in Item IV below. Amex has prepared summaries, set forth in Sections A, B, and C below, of the most significant aspects of such statements.

A. Self-Regulatory Organization’s Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

1. Purpose

The Exchange proposes to amend Commentary .07 to Rule 904 on a six-month pilot basis to exempt options on IWM from the Rule 904 Pilot Program. Under the Rule 904 Pilot Program, the position and exercise limits for IWM would be reduced on January 22, 2007 from 500,000 to 250,000 contracts. The Exchange now proposes to allow position and exercise limits for options on IWM to remain at 500,000 contracts on a pilot basis, from January 22, 2007 through July 22, 2007.

In June 2005, as a result of a 2-for-1 stock split, the position limit for IWM options was temporarily increased from 250,000 contracts (covering 25,000,000 shares) to 500,000 contracts (covering 50,000,000 shares). At the time of the split, the furthest IWM option expiration date was January 2007.

¹⁷ The Commission expects most trading centers to be operating consistent with the requirements of Rule 611 by the Trading Phase Date.

¹⁸ See *supra* notes 3 to 8.

¹⁹ 17 CFR 242.608(e).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

Therefore, the temporary increase of the IWM position limit will revert to the pre-split level (as provided for in connection with the Rule 904 Pilot Program) of 250,000 contracts after expiration in January 2007, or on January 22, 2007.⁵

The Exchange believes that a position limit of 250,000 contracts is too low and may be a deterrent to the successful trading of IWM options. Importantly, options on IWM are $\frac{1}{10}$ th the size of options on the Russell 2000® Index (“RUT”), which have a position limit of 50,000 contracts.⁶ Traders who trade IWM options to hedge positions in RUT options are likely to find a position limit of 250,000 contracts in IWM options too restrictive and insufficient to properly hedge. For example, if a trader held 50,000 RUT options and wanted to hedge that position with IWM options, the trader would need—at a minimum—500,000 IWM options to properly hedge the position. Therefore, the Exchange believes that a position limit of 250,000 contracts is too low and may adversely affect market participants’ ability to provide liquidity in this product.

Additionally, IWM options have grown to become one of the largest options contracts in terms of trading volume. For example, the volume in options on IWM set a new single-day record on June 8, 2006, when 760,803 contracts (120,229 calls and 640,574 puts) traded on that day. This record level volume beat the previous single-day high of 727,521 contracts on May 17, 2006. Further, over the previous six months, ending December 31, 2006, the average daily trading volume (market-wide) of IWM options has been 300,409 contracts and a total of 2,444,470 contracts have traded on the Exchange.

As a result, the Exchange proposes that options on IWM be subject to position and exercise limits of 500,000 contracts on a pilot basis to run from January 22, 2007 through July 22, 2007.⁷ The Exchange believes that increasing position and exercise limits for IWM options will lead to a more liquid and

⁵ See Amex Information Circular #05-0397.

⁶ See Amex Rule 904C; see also Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 45236 (January 2, 2002), 67 FR 1378 (January 10, 2002) (SR-Amex-2001-42) (increase of position and exercise limits to 300,000 for QQQ options); and 51043 (January 14, 2005), 70 FR 3402 (January 24, 2005) (SR-Amex-2005-06) (increase of position and exercise limits for options on Standard and Poor’s Depository Receipts® from 75,000 to 300,000).

⁷ Pursuant to Rule 905, the exercise limit established for IWM options shall be equivalent to the position limit prescribed for IWM options in Commentary .07 to Rule 904. The increased exercise limits would only be in effect during the pilot period, to run from January 22, 2007 through July 22, 2007. See Amendment No. 1 to the proposed rule change.

³ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

⁴ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

more competitive market environment for IWM options that will benefit customers interested in this product.

The Exchange would require that each member or member organization that maintains a position on the same side of the market in excess of 10,000 contracts in the IWM option class, for its own account or for the account of a customer report certain information.⁸ This data would include, but would not be limited to, the option position, whether such position is hedged and if so, a description of the hedge, and if applicable, the collateral used to carry the position. Exchange Registered Options Traders and specialists would continue to be exempt from this reporting requirement as market-maker information can be accessed through the Exchange's market surveillance systems. In addition, the general reporting requirement for customer accounts that maintain a position in excess of 200 contracts will remain at this level for IWM options.⁹

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with and furthers the objectives of Section 6(b)(5) of the Act,¹⁰ in that it is designed to promote just and equitable principles of trade, to remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system, and, in general, to protect investors and the public interest.

B. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Burden on Competition

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

C. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Comments on the Proposed Rule Change Received From Members, Participants or Others

No written comments were solicited or received with respect to the proposed rule change.

III. Date of Effectiveness of the Proposed Rule Change and Timing for Commission Action

Because the forgoing rule change does not: (1) Significantly affect the protection of investors or the public interest; (2) impose any significant burden on competition; and (3) become operative for 30 days after the date of this filing, or such shorter time as the

Commission may designate, it has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act¹¹ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.¹²

A proposed rule change filed under 19b-4(f)(6) normally may not become operative prior to 30 days after the date of filing.¹³ However, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii)¹⁴ permits the Commission to designate a shorter time if such action is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. The Exchange has requested that the Commission waive the 30-day operative delay. The Commission believes that waiving the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest because such waiver would permit position and exercise limits for options on IWM to remain at 500,000 option contracts for a six-month pilot period. For this reason, the Commission designates the proposed rule change to be effective and operative upon filing with the Commission.¹⁵

At any time within 60 days of the filing of such proposed rule change the Commission may summarily abrogate such rule change if it appears to the Commission that such action is necessary or appropriate in the public interest, for the protection of investors or otherwise in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

IV. Solicitation of Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments concerning the foregoing, including whether the proposed rule change is consistent with the Act. Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

Electronic Comments

- Use the Commission's Internet comment form (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>); or
- Send an e-mail to rule-comments@sec.gov. Please include File Number SR-Amex-2007-11 on the subject line.

¹¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

¹² 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

¹³ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii). In addition, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii) requires that a self-regulatory organization submit to the Commission written notice of its intent to file the proposed rule change, along with a brief description and text of the proposed rule change, at least five business days prior to the date of filing of the proposed rule change, or such shorter time as designated by the Commission. The Commission has decided to waive the five-day pre-filing notice requirement.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ For the purposes only of waiving the 30-day operative delay, the Commission has considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. See 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

Paper Comments

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Nancy M. Morris, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street, NE., Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-Amex-2007-11. This file number should be included on the subject line if e-mail is used. To help the Commission process and review your comments more efficiently, please use only one method. The Commission will post all comments on the Commission's Internet Web site (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>). Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Reference Room. Copies of the filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of Amex. All comments received will be posted without change; the Commission does not edit personal identifying information from submissions. You should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to File Number SR-Amex-2007-11 and should be submitted on or before February 21, 2007.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.¹⁶

Florence E. Harmon,

Deputy Secretary.

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⁸ See Amex Rule 906(b).

⁹ See Amex Rule 906(a).

¹⁰ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

¹⁶ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).