

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34–80179; File No. SR–FINRA–2017–005]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change To Amend FINRA Rule 6191 To Modify the Date of Appendix B Web Site Data Publication Pursuant to the Regulation NMS Plan To Implement a Tick Size Pilot Program

March 8, 2017.

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 February 23, 2017, Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. (“FINRA”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC” or “Commission”) the proposed rule change as described in Items I and II, which Items have been prepared by FINRA. FINRA has designated the proposed rule change as constituting a “non-controversial” rule change under paragraph (f)(6) of Rule 19b–4 under the Act,³ which renders the proposal effective upon receipt of this filing by the Commission. The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rule change from interested persons.

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

FINRA is proposing to amend Rule 6191 to modify the date of Appendix B Web site data publication pursuant to the Regulation NMS Plan to Implement a Tick Size Pilot Program (“Plan”).

The text of the proposed rule change is available on FINRA’s Web site at <http://www.finra.org>, at the principal office of FINRA and at the Commission’s Public Reference Room.

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

In its filing with the Commission, FINRA 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. FINRA 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

Rule 6191(b) (Compliance with Data Collection Requirements)⁴ implements the data collection and Web site publication requirements of the Plan.⁵ Rule 6191.12 provides, among other things, that the requirement that FINRA make certain data publicly available on the FINRA Web site pursuant to Appendix B and C to the Plan shall commence at the beginning of the Pilot Period,⁶ and that FINRA shall make data for the Pre-Pilot Period publicly available on the FINRA Web site pursuant to Appendix B and C to the Plan by February 28, 2017.⁷

FINRA is proposing amendments to Rule 6191.12 to delay the date by which Pre-Pilot and Pilot Appendix B data is to be made publicly available on FINRA’s Web site from February 28, 2017, until April 28, 2017.⁸ Appendix C

⁴ See FINRA Rule 6191. See also Securities Exchange Act Release No. 76484 (November 19, 2015), 80 FR 73858 (November 25, 2015) (Notice of Filing of File No. SR–FINRA–2015–048); and Securities Exchange Act Release No. 77164 (February 17, 2016), 81 FR 9043 (February 23, 2016) (Notice of Filing of Partial Amendment No. 1 and Order Granting Accelerated Approval of File No. SR–FINRA–2015–048).

⁵ The Participants filed the Plan to comply with an order issued by the Commission on June 24, 2014. See Letter from Brendon J. Weiss, Vice President, Intercontinental Exchange, Inc., to Secretary, Commission, dated August 25, 2014 (“SRO Tick Size Plan Proposal”). See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 72460 (June 24, 2014), 79 FR 36840 (June 30, 2014); see also Securities Exchange Act Release No. 74892 (May 6, 2015), 80 FR 27513 (May 13, 2015).

⁶ Unless otherwise defined herein, capitalized terms have the meaning ascribed to them in Rule 6191.

⁷ On November 30, 2016, the SEC granted exemptive relief to the Participants to, among other things, delay the publication of Web site data pursuant to Appendices B and C to the Plan until February 28, 2017, and to delay the ongoing Web site publication by ninety days such that data would be published within 120 calendar days following the end of the month. See Letter from David S. Shillman, Associate Director, Division of Trading and Markets, Commission, to Marcia E. Asquith, Senior Vice President and Corporate Secretary, FINRA, dated November 30, 2016; see also Securities Exchange Act Release No. 79424 (November 29, 2016), 81 FR 87603 (December 5, 2016) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR–FINRA–2016–042).

⁸ In addition, FINRA is proposing an amendment to Rule 6191(a)(6)(B) to clarify that no member, irrespective of whether that member operates a trading center, may execute orders in any Pilot Security in Test Group Three in price increments other than \$0.05, unless an exception applies. This proposed amendment makes the rule consistent with the Plan and conforms subparagraph (a)(6)(B) with subparagraph (a)(5)(B).

data for the Pre-Pilot Period through the month of January 2017 will be published on the FINRA Web site on February 28, 2017, and, thereafter, on the original 30-day schedule. Thus, FINRA is proposing an amendment to Rule 6191(b)(4)(B) to provide that Appendix C data will be published on the FINRA Web site within 30 calendar days, rather than 120 calendar days, following month end at no charge and that FINRA shall not identify the Market Makers that generated the data or the individual securities.

In the SRO Tick Size Plan Proposal, the Participants stated that the public data will be made available for free “on a disaggregated basis by trading center” on the Web sites of the Participants and the Designated Examining Authorities.⁹ However, market participants have expressed confidentiality concerns regarding this approach for over-the-counter (“OTC”) data.¹⁰ Thus, FINRA is filing the instant proposed rule change to provide additional time to assess a means of addressing the confidentiality concerns raised in connection with the publication of Appendix B data related to OTC activity in furtherance of the objectives of the Plan.¹¹ Pursuant to this amendment, Appendix B data publication will be delayed until April 28, 2017. FINRA anticipates filing an additional proposed rule change in the near future to address the data confidentiality issues raised regarding Appendix B data publication.

FINRA has filed the proposed rule change for immediate effectiveness. The operative date of the proposed rule change will be the date of filing.

2. Statutory Basis

FINRA believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with the provisions of Section 15A(b)(6) of the Act,¹² which requires, among other things, that FINRA rules must be designed to prevent fraudulent and manipulative acts and practices, to promote just and equitable principles of trade, and, in general, to protect investors and the public interest, and Section 15A(b)(9) of

⁹ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 73511 (November 3, 2014), 79 FR 66423 (November 7, 2014) (Notice of Filing of Proposed National Market System Plan to Implement a Tick Size Pilot Program on a One-Year Pilot Basis, File No. 4–657) (“Tick Size Plan Proposal”).

¹⁰ See letters from Adam C. Cooper, Senior Managing Director and Chief Legal Officer, Citadell Securities, to Brent J. Fields, Secretary, Commission, dated December 21, 2016 (“Citadell letter”); and William Hebert, Managing Director, Financial Information Forum, to Robert W. Errett, Deputy Secretary, Commission, dated December 21, 2016 (“FIF letter”).

¹¹ FINRA also is submitting an exemptive request to the SEC in connection with the instant filing.

¹² 15 U.S.C. 78o–3(b)(6).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b–4.

³ 17 CFR 240.19b–4(f)(6).

the Act,¹³ which requires that FINRA rules not impose any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate.

The Plan is designed to allow the Commission, market participants, and the public to study and assess the impact of increment conventions on the liquidity and trading of the common stock of small-capitalization companies. FINRA believes that this proposal is consistent with the Act because it is in furtherance of the objectives of Section VII(A) of the Plan in that it is designed to provide FINRA with additional time to assess a means of addressing the confidentiality concerns raised in connection with the publication of Appendix B data, to comply with the Plan's requirements that the data made publicly available will not identify the trading center that generated the data.

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

FINRA does not believe that the proposed rule change will result in any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. FINRA notes that the proposed rule change implements the provisions of the Plan.

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

Written comments were neither solicited nor received.

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

Because the foregoing proposed rule change does not: (i) significantly affect the protection of investors or the public interest; (ii) impose any significant burden on competition; and (iii) become operative for 30 days from the date on which it was filed, or such shorter time as the Commission may designate, it has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act¹⁴ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.¹⁵

A proposed rule change filed under Rule 19(b)-4(f)(6) normally does not become operative prior to 30 days after the date of the filing. However, pursuant to Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii), the Commission may designate a shorter time if such action is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. FINRA has filed the proposed rule change for immediate effectiveness and has requested that the Commission

waive the requirement that the proposed rule change not become operative for 30 days after the date of the filing so that it may become operative on February 28, 2017.

FINRA notes that the proposed rule change is intended to address confidentiality concerns raised in connection with the publication of OTC Appendix B data by permitting FINRA to delay Web site publication of Appendix B data from February 28, 2017 to April 28, 2017.¹⁶ FINRA notes that the delay would provide it with additional time to assess and file a proposed rule change to address the confidentiality concerns.

The Commission believes that waiving the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest because it will allow FINRA to delay publication of Appendix B data until April 28, 2017. As noted above, commenters continue to raise concerns about the publication of OTC Appendix B data. The Commission notes that FINRA has filed a proposed rule change that is intended to mitigate confidentiality concerns raised by commenters regarding the publication of Appendix B data.¹⁷ Delaying publication of Appendix B data will provide the Commission and the public with time to consider this proposed rule change. Therefore, the Commission hereby waives the 30-day operative delay and designates the proposed rule change to be operative on February 28, 2017.¹⁸

At any time within 60 days of the filing of the proposed rule change, the Commission summarily may temporarily suspend 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. If the Commission takes such action, the Commission shall institute proceedings to determine whether the proposed rule should be approved or disapproved.

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 email to rule-comments@sec.gov. Please include File Number SR-FINRA-2017-005 on the subject line.

Paper Comments

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Robert W. Errett, Deputy Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-FINRA-2017-005. This file number should be included on the subject line if email 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 Web site viewing and printing in the Commission's Public Reference Room, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549, on official business days between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Copies of such filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of FINRA. 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-FINRA-2017-005 and should be submitted on or before April 4, 2017.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.¹⁹

Eduardo A. Aleman,
Assistant Secretary.

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¹⁶ See *supra* note 10.

¹⁷ See SR-FINRA-2017-006.

¹⁸ For purposes only of waiving the operative delay for this proposal, the Commission has considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. See 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

¹⁹ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

¹³ 15 U.S.C. 78o-3(b)(9).

¹⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

¹⁵ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).