in an interfund lending facility where each Fund could lend money directly to and borrow money directly from other Funds to cover unanticipated cash shortfalls, such as unanticipated redemptions or sales fails. The Funds will not borrow under the facility for leverage purposes and the loans’ duration will be no more than 7 days.

2. Applicants anticipate that the proposed facility would provide a borrowing Fund with a source of liquidity at a rate lower than the bank borrowing rate at times when the cash position of the Fund is insufficient to meet temporary cash requirements. In addition, Funds making short-term cash loans directly to other Funds would earn interest at a rate higher than they otherwise could obtain from investing their cash in repurchase agreements or certain other short-term money market instruments. Thus, Applicants assert that the facility would benefit both borrowing and lending Funds.

3. Applicants agree that any order granting the requested relief will be subject to the terms and conditions stated in the application. Among others, the Adviser, through a designated committee, would administer the facility as a disinterested fiduciary as part of its duties under the investment management agreements with each Fund and would receive no additional fee as compensation for its services in connection with the administration of the facility. The facility would be subject to oversight and certain approvals by a Fund’s Board, including, among others, approval of the interest rate formula and of the method for allocating loans across Funds, as well as review of the process in place to evaluate the liquidity implications for the Funds. A Fund’s aggregate outstanding interfund loans will not exceed 15% of its net assets at the time of the loan, and the Fund’s loans to any one Fund will not exceed 5% of the lending Fund’s net assets. Applicants assert that the facility does not raise the concerns underlying section 12(d)(1) of the Act given that the Funds are part of the same group of investment companies and there will be no duplicative costs or fees to the Funds. Applicants also assert that the proposed transactions do not raise the concerns underlying sections 17(a)(1), 17(a)(3), 17(d) and 21(b) of the Act as the Funds would not engage in lending transactions that unfairly benefit insiders or are detrimental to the Funds. Applicants state that the facility will offer both reduced borrowing costs and enhanced returns on loaned funds to all participating Funds and each Fund would have an equal opportunity to borrow and lend on equal terms based on an interest rate formula that is objective and verifiable. With respect to the relief from section 17(a)(2) of the Act, Applicants note that any collateral pledged to secure an interfund loan would be subject to the same conditions imposed by any other lender to a Fund that imposes conditions on the quality of or access to collateral for a borrowing (if the lender is another Fund) or the same or better conditions (in any other circumstance).

5. Applicants also believe that the limited relief from section 18(f)(1) of the Act that is necessary to implement the facility (because the lending Funds are not banks) is appropriate in light of the conditions and safeguards described in the application and because the open-end Funds would remain subject to the requirement of section 18(f)(1) that all borrowings of the open-end Funds, including combined interfund loans and bank borrowings, have at least 300% asset coverage.

6. Section 6(c) of the Act permits the Commission to exempt any persons or transactions from any provision of the Act if such exemption is necessary or appropriate in the public interest and consistent with the protection of investors and the purposes fairly intended by the policy and provisions of the Act. Section 12(d)(1)(f)(I) of the Act provides that the Commission may exempt any person, security, or transaction, or any class or classes of persons, securities, or transactions, from any provision of section 12(d)(1) if the exemption is consistent with the public interest and the protection of investors. Section 17(b) of the Act authorizes the Commission to grant an order permitting a transaction otherwise prohibited by section 17(a) if it finds that (a) the terms of the proposed transaction, including the compensation to be paid or received, are fair and reasonable and do not involve overreaching on the part of any person concerned; (b) the proposed transaction is consistent with the policies of each registered investment company involved; and (c) the proposed transaction is consistent with the general purposes of the Act. Rule 17d–1(b) under the Act provides that in passing upon an application filed under the rule, the Commission will consider whether the participation of the registered investment company in a joint enterprise, joint arrangement or profit sharing plan on the basis proposed is consistent with the provisions, policies and purposes of the Act and the extent to which such participation is on a basis different from or less advantageous than that of the other participants.
COVID–19, including severe limitations on companies’ ability to operate their businesses and periods of volatility in the U.S. and global equity markets. The Exchange implemented the Waiver because it believed that it was likely that many listed companies would have urgent liquidity needs during this crisis period due to lost revenues and maturing debt obligations. In those circumstances, the Exchange believed that listed companies would need to access additional capital that might not be available in the public equity or credit markets.

Since the implementation of the Waiver a number of listed companies have completed capital raising transactions that would not have been possible without the flexibility provided by the Waiver. While equity indices have recovered from the decline initially associated with the COVID–19 crisis, ongoing economic disruption and uncertainty associated with the pandemic have caused many listed companies to continue to face circumstances in which their businesses and revenues are severely curtailed. Such companies continue to experience difficulty in accessing liquidity from the public markets. In addition, there is continued uncertainty as to the course the COVID–19 pandemic may take in the coming months and the possibility of further disruption related to COVID–19 exists. Consequently, the Exchange believes it is appropriate to extend the application of the Waiver for an additional period through and including December 31, 2020, to provide more flexibility to listed companies that need to access capital in the current unusual economic conditions.

Section 312.03 of the Manual, which requires listed companies to acquire shareholder approval prior to certain kinds of equity issuances, imposes significant limitations on the ability of a listed company to engage in the sort of large private placement transactions described above. The most important limitations are as follows:

• **Issuance to a Related Party.** Subject to an exception for early stage companies set forth therein, Section 312.03(b) of the Manual requires shareholders approval of any issuance to a director, officer or substantial security holder of the company (each a “Related Party” or to an affiliate of a Related Party if the number of shares of common stock to be issued, or if the number of shares of common stock into which the securities may be convertible or exercisable, exceeds either 1% of the number of shares of common stock or 1% of the voting power outstanding before the issuance. A limited exception permits cash sales to Related Parties and their affiliates that meet a market price test set forth in the rule (the “Minimum Price”) and that relate to no more than 5% of the company’s outstanding common stock. However, this exception may only be used if the Related Party in question has Related Party status solely because it is a substantial security holder of the company.

• **Transactions of 20% of More.** Section 312.03(c) of the Manual requires shareholder approval of any transaction relating to 20% or more of the company’s outstanding common stock or 20% of the voting power outstanding before such issuance other than a public offering for cash. Section 312.03(c) includes an exception for transactions involving a cash sale of the company’s securities that comply with the Minimum Price requirement and also meet the following definition of a “bona fide private financing,” as set forth in Section 312.04(g):

Bona fide private financing” refers to a sale in which either:

○ a registered broker-dealer purchases the securities from the issuer with a view to the private sale of such securities to one or more purchasers; or

○ the issuer sells the securities to multiple purchasers, and no one such purchaser, or group of related purchasers, acquires, or has the right to acquire, upon exercise or conversion of the securities, more than five percent of the shares of the issuer’s common stock

**Note:**

- Under Section 312.03 of the Manual, a “Related Party” includes “(1) a director, officer or substantial security holder of the company (each a “Related Party”); (2) a subsidiary, affiliate or other closely-related person of a Related Party; or (3) any company or entity in which a Related Party has a substantial direct or indirect interest.”

- Section 312.04(i) defines the “Minimum Price” as follows: “Minimum Price” means a price that is the lower of: (i) the Official Closing Price immediately preceding the signing of the binding agreement; or (ii) the average Official Closing Price for the five trading days immediately preceding the signing of the binding agreement.

- Section 312.04(j) defines “Official Closing Price” as follows: “Official Closing Price” of the issuer’s common stock means the official closing price on the Exchange as reported to the Consolidated Tape immediately preceding the signing of the binding agreement to issue the securities. For example, if the transaction is signed after the close of the regular session at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Tuesday, then Tuesday’s official closing price is used. If the transaction is signed at any time between the close of the regular session on Monday and the close if the regular session on Tuesday, then Monday’s official closing price is used.

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7 For purposes of Section 312.03(b), Section 312.04(e) provides that: “An interest consisting of less than either five percent of the number of shares of common stock or five percent of the voting power outstanding of a company or entity shall not be considered a substantial interest or cause the holder of such an interest to be regarded as a substantial security holder.”
or more than five percent of the issuer’s voting power before the sale.”

The Exchange expects that it will continue to be the case that certain companies during the course of the ongoing unusual economic conditions will urgently need to obtain new capital by selling equity securities in private placements.

In many cases, such transactions may involve sales to existing investors in the company or their affiliates that would exceed the applicable 1% and 5% limits of Section 312.03(b). Given the ongoing economic disruption associated with the COVID–19 pandemic, the Exchange proposes to continue its partial waiver of the application of Section 312.03(b) for the period as of the date of this filing through and including December 31, 2020, with the Waiver specifically limited to transactions that involve the sale of the company’s securities for cash at a price that meets the Minimum Price requirement as set forth in Section 312.04. In addition, to qualify for the Waiver, a transaction must be reviewed and approved by the company’s audit committee or a comparable committee comprised solely of independent directors.

This Waiver will continue to not be applicable to any transaction involving the stock or assets of another company where any director, officer or substantial security holder of the company has a 5% or greater interest (or such persons collectively have a 10% or greater interest), directly or indirectly, in the company or assets to be acquired or in the consideration to be paid in the transaction or series of related transactions and the present or potential voting power of 5% or more (i.e., a transaction which would require shareholder approval under NASDAQ Marketplace Rule 5635(d) with respect to private placements relating to 20% or more of a company’s common stock or voting power outstanding before such transaction).

The Exchange notes that these temporary emergency waivers would simply continue to provide NYSE listed companies with the flexibility on a temporary emergency basis to consummate transactions without shareholder approval that would not require shareholder approval under the rules of the NASDAQ Stock Market, as the specific limitations the Exchange is proposing to waive do not exist in the applicable NASDAQ rules.

2. Statutory Basis

The proposed rule change is consistent with Section 6(b) of the Act, in general, and furthers the objectives of Section 6(b)(5) of the Act, in particular, in that it is designed to prevent fraudulent and manipulative acts and practices, to promote just and equitable principles of trade, to foster cooperation and coordination with persons engaged in facilitating transactions in securities, to remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system, and, in general, to protect the public interest and the interests of investors, and because it is not designed to permit unfair discrimination between customers, issuers, brokers, or dealers.

As a result of the economic disruption related to the ongoing spread of the COVID–19 pandemic, the Exchange expects that it will continue to be the case that certain companies during the course of the ongoing unusual economic conditions will urgently need to obtain new capital by selling equity securities in private placements.

312.03(b) 10 without complying with the numerical limitations of that rule, as long as the sale is in a cash transaction that meets the Minimum Price requirement and also meets the other requirements noted above. As provided by Section 312.03(a), any transaction benefitting from the proposed waiver will still be subject to shareholder approval if required under any other applicable rule, including the equity compensation requirements of Section 303A.08 and the change of control requirements of Section 312.03(d).

Existing large investors are often the only willing providers of much-needed capital to companies undergoing difficulties and the Exchange believes that it is appropriate to increase companies’ flexibility to access this source of capital for an additional limited period. The Exchange notes that, as a result of the extension of the Waiver, the Exchange’s application of Section 312.03(b) will be consistent with the application of NASDAQ Marketplace Rule 5635(a) 11 to sales of a listed company’s securities to related parties during the Waiver period.

Many private placement transactions under the current market conditions may also exceed the 20% threshold established by Section 312.03(c). Therefore, given the ongoing economic disruption associated with the COVID–19 pandemic, the Exchange also proposes to continue for the period through and including December 31, 2020, for purposes of the bona fide financing exception to the 20% requirement, its waiver of the 5% limitation for any sale to an individual investor in a bona fide private financing pursuant to Section 312.03(c) and to permit companies to undertake a bona fide private financing during that period in which there is only a single purchaser. As provided by Section 312.03(a), any transaction benefitting from the Waiver will still be subject to shareholder approval if required under any other applicable rule, including the equity compensation requirements of Section 303A.08 and the change of control requirements of Section 312.03(d).

Any transaction benefitting from the Waiver must be reviewed and approved by the company’s audit committee or a comparable committee comprised solely of independent directors. The Exchange notes that, as a result of the proposed extension of the Waiver, the Exchange’s application of Section 312.03(c) will continue to be consistent during the Waiver period with the application of NASDAQ Marketplace Rule 5635(d) with respect to private placements relating to 20% or more of a company’s common stock or voting power outstanding before such transaction.

The Exchange notes that these temporary emergency waivers would simply continue to provide NYSE listed companies with the flexibility on a temporary emergency basis to consummate transactions without shareholder approval that would not require shareholder approval under the rules of the NASDAQ Stock Market, as the specific limitations the Exchange is proposing to waive do not exist in the applicable NASDAQ rules.

10 See supra note 6.
11 If a company is raising capital through a transaction, or series of transaction, via the waiver, they cannot use such capital to fund an acquisition.

See supra note 8.
COVID–19 virus, certain listed companies may experience urgent liquidity needs that they are unable to meet by raising funds in the public equity or credit markets. The proposed rule change is designed to provide temporary relief from certain of the NYSE’s shareholder approval requirements in relation to stock issuances to provide companies with additional flexibility to raise funds by selling equity in private placement transactions during the current unusual economic conditions provided such transactions meet certain conditions, such as the Minimum Price as defined in Section 312.04(i). The proposed waivers are consistent with the protection of investors because any transaction benefiting from the waivers will not, in the Exchange’s view, be dilutive to the company’s existing shareholders as it will be subject to a minimum market price requirement and because the audit committee or a comparable committee comprised solely of independent directors will review and approve any transaction benefiting from a waiver that involves a Related Party or affiliates of a Related Party. In addition, as provided by Section 312.03(a), any transaction benefiting from the proposed waiver will still be subject to shareholder approval if required under any other applicable rule, including the equity compensation requirements of Section 303A.08 and the change of control requirements of Section 312.03(d). All companies listed on the Exchange would be eligible to take advantage of the proposed temporary waivers.

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

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change would impose any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. The proposed rule change is not designed to address any competitive issues but rather is designed to provide temporary relief from certain of the NYSE’s shareholder approval requirements in relation to stock issuances to provide companies with additional flexibility to raise funds by selling equity in private placement transactions during the current unusual economic conditions. In addition, the proposed waivers will simply temporarily conform the treatment of transactions benefitting from the waivers to their treatment under the comparable NASDAQ rules.

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

The Exchange has filed the proposed rule change pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A)(iii) of the Act and Rule 19b–4(f)(6) thereunder.21 Because the 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 prior to 30 days from the date on which it was filed, or such shorter time as the Commission may designate, if consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest, the proposed rule change has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act and Rule 19b–4(f)(6)(iii) thereunder.21

A proposed rule change filed under Rule 19b–4(f)(6)22 normally does not become operative prior to 30 days after the date of the filing. However, pursuant to Rule 19b–4(f)(6)(iii),21 the Commission may designate a shorter time if such action is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. The Exchange has asked the Commission to waive the 30-day operative delay so that the proposal may become operative immediately upon filing.

The Exchange believes that the Waiver of the operative delay would be consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest because, in the Exchange’s view, the economic disruption caused by the global spread of the COVID–19 virus may give rise to companies experiencing urgent liquidity needs which they may need to meet by undertaking transactions that would benefit from the proposed relief. In support of its request to waive the 30-day operative delay, the Exchange stated, among other things, its belief that the proposed Waiver does not give rise to any novel investor protection concerns, as the proposed rule change conforms the NYSE’s shareholder approval requirements temporarily to those of NASDAQ and would not permit any transactions without shareholder approval that are not permitted on another exchange. In addition, the Exchange stated that all transactions utilizing the Waiver would have to satisfy the Minimum Price requirement contained in the rule and be reviewed and approved by the issuer’s audit committee or comparable committee of the board comprised entirely of independent directors if any transactions benefitting from the Waiver involve a Related Party or affiliates of a Related Party, as described above.22

Furthermore, the Exchange has stated that, as provided by Section 312.04(a) of the Manual, any transaction benefitting from the proposed Waiver will still be subject to shareholder approval if required under any other applicable rule, including the equity compensation requirements of Section 303A.08 of the Manual and the change of control requirements of Section 312.03(d) of the Manual. The Exchange also noted that the proposed Waiver is temporary in nature and will only be applied through and including December 31, 2020.

The Commission notes that the proposed rule change would provide a temporary waiver of certain shareholder approval requirements under certain conditions in light of current economic conditions due to COVID–19. As noted by NYSE, the Waiver is consistent with Nasdaq’s shareholder approval rules and would not permit any transactions without shareholder approval that is not permitted on another exchange.23 In addition, all transactions utilizing the Waiver would have to satisfy the Minimum Price requirement which is a market related price, as defined above.24 Further, all transactions subject to the Waiver that involve Related Parties or affiliates of Related Parties would have to be approved by the listed company’s

22 The Commission notes that, as described in the purpose section above, all transactions utilizing the Waiver for purposes of Section 312.03(b) would be subject to review and approval by an audit committee or comparable body of independent directors. As to transactions utilizing the temporary Waiver under Section 312.03(c) all transactions involving Related Parties or other persons subject to Section 312.03(b), as described above, must be reviewed and approved by the company’s audit committee or a comparable committee comprised solely of independent directors.
23 In addition, as noted above, if a company is raising capital through a transaction, or series of transactions, via the Waiver, they cannot use such capital to fund an acquisition.
24 See supra note 8.
audit committee or comparable committee of the board comprised entirely of independent directors. In addition, the Commission notes that the Waiver of the shareholder approval provisions only applies to the specific provisions in Sections 312.03(b) and (d) of the Manual discussed above and any transaction utilizing the Waiver would still be subject to all other shareholder approval requirements including, for example, the equity compensation requirements of Section 303A.08 and the change of control requirements of Section 312.03(d). The Commission also notes that the proposal is a temporary measure designed to allow companies to raise necessary capital at market related prices without shareholder approval under the limited conditions discussed above in response to current, unusual economic conditions. For these reasons, the Commission believes that waiver of the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protections of investors and the public interest. According, the Commission hereby waives the 30-day operative delay and designates the proposal operative upon filing.25

At any time within 60 days of the filing of such 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 under Section 19(b)(2)(B)26 of the Act to determine whether the proposed rule change 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–NYSE–2020–79 on the subject line.

Paper Comments

• Send paper comments in triplicate to Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street NE, Washington, DC 20549–1090. All submissions should refer to File Number SR–NYSE–2020–79. 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 website (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 website 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 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Copies of the filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the Exchange. All comments received will be posted without change. Persons submitting comments are cautioned that we do not redact or edit personal identifying information from comment submissions. You should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to File Number SR–NYSE–2020–79 and should be submitted on or before October 23, 2020.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.27

J. Matthew DeLesDernier,
Assistant Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2020–21767 Filed 10–1–20; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8011–01–P

SEcurities AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meetings

TIME AND DATE: 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 7, 2020.

PLACE: The meeting will be held via remote means and/or at the Commission’s headquarters, 100 F Street NE, Washington, DC 20549.

STATUS: This meeting will be closed to the public.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Commissioners, Counsel to the Commissioners, the Secretary to the Commission, and recording secretaries will attend the closed meeting. Certain staff members who have an interest in the matters also may be present.

In the event that the time, date, or location of this meeting changes, an announcement of the change, along with the new time, date, and/or place of the meeting will be posted on the Commission’s website at https://www.sec.gov.

The General Counsel of the Commission, or his designee, has certified that, in his opinion, one or more of the exemptions set forth in 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(3), (5), (6), (7), (8), 9(B) and (10) and 17 CFR 200.402(a)(3), (a)(5), (a)(6), (a)(7), (a)(8), (a)(9)(ii) and (a)(10), permit consideration of the scheduled matters at the closed meeting.

The subject matter of the closed meeting will consist of the following topic:

Institution and settlement of injunctive actions

Institution and settlement of administrative proceedings

Resolution of litigation claims and

Other matters relating to enforcement proceedings

At times, changes in Commission priorities require alterations in the scheduling of meeting agenda items that may consist of adjudicatory, examination, litigation, or regulatory matters.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:
For further information; please contact Vanessa A. Countryman from the Office of the Secretary at (202) 551–5400.


Vanessa A. Countryman,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2020–21956 Filed 9–30–20; 11:15 am]

BILLING CODE 8011–01–P

25 For purposed 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).
