

inspection and copying at the principal office of the Exchange. 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-BatsBYX-2016-36, and should be submitted on or before December 27, 2016.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.¹³

Eduardo A. Aleman,
Assistant Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2016-29159 Filed 12-5-16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8011-01-P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-79433; File No. SR-Nasdaq-2016-160]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change To Amend Chapter VI, Section 5 To Extend the Penny Pilot Program

November 30, 2016.

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 November 16, 2016, The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC (“Nasdaq” or “Exchange”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC” or “Commission”) the proposed rule change as described in Items I, II, and III below, which Items have been prepared by the Exchange. 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

The Exchange proposes to amend Chapter VI, Section 5 (Minimum Increments),³ of the rules of the NASDAQ Options Market (“NOM”) to extend through June 30, 2017 or the date of permanent approval, if earlier, the Penny Pilot Program in options classes in certain issues (“Penny Pilot” or “Pilot”), and to change the date when

delisted classes may be replaced in the Penny Pilot.⁴

The text of the proposed rule change is set forth below. Proposed new language is *italicized*; deleted text is in brackets.

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NASDAQ Stock Market Rules

Options Rules

* * * * *

Chapter VI Trading Systems

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Sec. 5 Minimum Increments

(a) The Board may establish minimum quoting increments for options contracts traded on NOM. Such minimum increments established by the Board will be designated as a stated policy, practice, or interpretation with respect to the administration of this Section within the meaning of Section 19 of the Exchange Act and will be filed with the SEC as a rule change for effectiveness upon filing. Until such time as the Board makes a change in the increments, the following principles shall apply:

(1)—(2) No Change.

(3) For a pilot period scheduled to expire on [December 31, 2016]*June 30, 2017* or the date of permanent approval, if earlier, if the options series is trading pursuant to the Penny Pilot program one (1) cent if the options series is trading at less than \$3.00, five (5) cents if the options series is trading at \$3.00 or higher, unless for QQQQs, SPY and IWM where the minimum quoting increment will be one cent for all series regardless of price. A list of such options shall be communicated to membership via an Options Trader Alert (“OTA”) posted on the Exchange’s Web site.

The Exchange may replace any pilot issues that have been delisted with the next most actively traded multiply listed options classes that are not yet included in the pilot, based on trading activity in the previous six months. The replacement issues may be added to the pilot on the second trading day following [July 1, 2016]*January 1, 2017*.

(4) No Change.

(b) No Change.

* * * * *

The text of the proposed rule change is available on the Exchange’s Web site at <http://nasdaq.cchwallstreet.com>, at the principal office of the Exchange, 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, the Exchange 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. The Exchange 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 purpose of this filing is to amend Chapter VI, Section 5, to extend the Penny Pilot through June 30, 2017 or the date of permanent approval, if earlier,⁵ and to change the date when delisted classes may be replaced in the Penny Pilot. The Exchange believes that extending the Penny Pilot will allow for further analysis of the Penny Pilot and a determination of how the program should be structured in the future.

Under the Penny Pilot, the minimum price variation for all participating options classes, except for the Nasdaq-100 Index Tracking Stock (“QQQQ”), the SPDR S&P 500 Exchange Traded Fund (“SPY”) and the iShares Russell 2000 Index Fund (“IWM”), is \$0.01 for all quotations in options series that are quoted at less than \$3 per contract and \$0.05 for all quotations in options series that are quoted at \$3 per contract or greater. QQQQ, SPY and IWM are quoted in \$0.01 increments for all options series. The Penny Pilot is currently scheduled to expire on December 31, 2016.

The Exchange proposes to extend the time period of the Penny Pilot through June 30, 2017 or the date of permanent approval, if earlier, and to provide a revised date for adding replacement issues to the Penny Pilot. The Exchange proposes that any Penny Pilot Program

⁵ The options exchanges in the U.S. that have pilot programs similar to the Penny Pilot (together “pilot programs”) are currently working on a proposal for permanent approval of the respective pilot programs.

⁴ The Penny Pilot was established in March 2008 and was last extended in 2016. See Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 57579 (March 28, 2008), 73 FR 18587 (April 4, 2008)(SR-NASDAQ-2008-026); 75283 (June 24, 2015), 80 FR 37347 (June 30, 2015)(SR-NASDAQ-2015-063) (notice of filing and immediate effectiveness establishing Penny Pilot); and 78037 (June 10, 2016), 81 FR 39299 (June 16, 2016) (SR-NASDAQ-2016-052) (notice of filing and immediate effectiveness extending the Penny Pilot through December 31, 2016).

¹³ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ References herein to Chapter and Series refer to rules of the NASDAQ Options Market (“NOM”), unless otherwise noted.

issues that have been delisted may be replaced on the second trading day following January 1, 2017. The replacement issues will be selected based on trading activity in the previous six months.⁶

This filing does not propose any substantive changes to the Penny Pilot Program; all classes currently participating in the Penny Pilot will remain the same and all minimum increments will remain unchanged. The Exchange believes the benefits to public customers and other market participants who will be able to express their true prices to buy and sell options have been demonstrated to outweigh the potential increase in quote traffic.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that its proposal is consistent with Section 6(b) of the Act,⁷ in general, and furthers the objectives of Section 6(b)(5) of the Act,⁸ 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, and 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.

In particular, the proposed rule change, which extends the Penny Pilot for an additional six months through June 30, 2017 or the date of permanent approval, if earlier, and changes the date for replacing Penny Pilot issues that were delisted to the second trading day following January 1, 2017, will enable public customers and other market participants to express their true prices to buy and sell options for the benefit of all market participants. This is consistent with the Act.

B. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Competition

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on competition not

necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. To the contrary, this proposal is pro-competitive because it allows Penny Pilot issues to continue trading on the Exchange.

Moreover, the Exchange believes that the proposed rule change will allow for further analysis of the Pilot and a determination of how the Pilot should be structured in the future; and will serve to promote regulatory clarity and consistency, thereby reducing burdens on the marketplace and facilitating investor protection.

The Pilot is an industry-wide initiative supported by all other option exchanges. The Exchange believes that extending the Pilot will allow for continued competition between market participants on the Exchange trading similar products as their counterparts on other exchanges, while at the same time allowing the Exchange to continue to compete for order flow with other exchanges in option issues trading as part of the Pilot.

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

No written comments were either solicited or 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)(iii) of the Act⁹ and subparagraph (f)(6) of Rule 19b-4 thereunder.¹⁰

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: (i) necessary or appropriate in the public interest; (ii) for the protection of investors; or (iii) 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-Nasdaq 2016-160 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-Nasdaq-2016-160. 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 10:00 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; 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-Nasdaq-2016-160 and should be submitted on or before December 27, 2016.

⁶ The replacement issues will be announced to the Exchange's membership via an Options Trader Alert (OTA) posted on the Exchange's Web site. Penny Pilot replacement issues will be selected based on trading activity in the previous six months, as is the case today. The replacement issues would be identified based on The Options Clearing Corporation's trading volume data. For example, for the January replacement, trading volume from May 30, 2016 through November 30, 2016 would be analyzed. The month immediately preceding the replacement issues' addition to the Pilot Program (*i.e.*, December) would not be used for purposes of the six-month analysis.

⁷ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

⁸ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

⁹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(iii).

¹⁰ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6). In addition, Rule 19b-4(f)(6) requires a self-regulatory organization to give the Commission written notice of its intent to file 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 Exchange has satisfied this requirement.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.¹¹

Eduardo A. Aleman,
Assistant Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2016-29162 Filed 12-5-16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8011-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 9810]

Secretary of State's Determination Under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998

Summary: The Secretary of State's designation of "countries of particular concern" for religious freedom violations. Pursuant to Section 408(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-292), as amended (the Act), notice is hereby given that, on October 31, 2016, the Secretary of State, under authority delegated by the President, has designated each of the following as a "country of particular concern" (CPC) under section 402(b) of the Act, for having engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom: Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The Secretary simultaneously designated the following Presidential Actions for these CPCs:

For Burma, the existing ongoing restrictions referenced in 22 CFR 126.1, pursuant to section 402(c)(5) of the Act;

For China, the existing ongoing restriction on exports to China of crime control and detection instruments and equipment, under the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 1990 and 1991 (Pub. L. 101-246), pursuant to section 402(c)(5) of the Act;

For Eritrea, the existing ongoing restrictions referenced in 22 CFR 126.1, pursuant to section 402(c)(5) of the Act;

For Iran, the existing ongoing travel restrictions in section 221(c) of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (TRA) for individuals identified under section 221(a)(1)(C) of the TRA in connection with the commission of serious human rights abuses, pursuant to section 402(c)(5) of the Act;

For the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the existing ongoing restrictions to which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is subject, pursuant to sections 402 and 409 of the Trade Act of 1974 (the Jackson-Vanik Amendment), pursuant to section 402(c)(5) of the Act;

For Saudi Arabia, a waiver as required in the "important national interest of the United States," pursuant to section 407 of the Act;

For Sudan, the restriction in the annual Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act on making certain appropriated funds available for assistance to the Government of Sudan, currently set forth in section 7042(j) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2015 (Div. K, Pub. L. 114-113), and any provision of law that is the same or substantially the same as this provision, pursuant to section 402(c)(5) of the Act;

For Tajikistan, a waiver as required in the "important national interest of the United States," pursuant to section 407 of the Act;

For Turkmenistan, a waiver as required in the "important national interest of the United States," pursuant to section 407 of the Act;

For Uzbekistan, a waiver as required in the "important national interest of the United States," pursuant to section 407 of the Act.

For Further Information Contact: Benjamin W. Medina, Office of International Religious Freedom, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, (Phone: (202) 647 3865 or Email: MedinaBW@state.gov).

Dated: November 30, 2016.

Daniel L. Nadel,

Director, Office of International Religious Freedom, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 2016-29171 Filed 12-5-16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-18-P

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[Docket No. AB 1240X]

Southwest Pennsylvania Railroad Company—Abandonment Exemption—in Fayette County, Pa.

Southwest Pennsylvania Railroad Company (SWP) has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR part 1152 subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon .3 miles of rail line between milepost 7 in Uniontown to the end of the line in South Union Township (SUT), in Fayette County, Pa. (the Line). The Line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Code 15401.

SWP states it plans to abandon the Line and convert the property to trail use.¹ The proposed transaction may not be consummated until January 5, 2017.

¹ SWP states it has agreed to lease the line to SUT pursuant to the National Trails System Act, 16

SWP has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the Line for at least two years; (2) there is no overhead traffic on the Line; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the Line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the Line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the two-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7(c) and 1105.8(c) (environmental and historic report), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line Railroad—Abandonment Portion Goshen Branch Between Firth & Ammon, in Bingham & Bonneville Counties, Idaho*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will become effective on January 5, 2017, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,² formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),³ and interim trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by December 16, 2016. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by December 27, 2016, with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to SWP's representative: Richard R. Wilson, P.C.,

U.S.C. 1247(d), upon the Board imposing a decision and notice of interim trail use or abandonment.

² The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Serv. Rail Lines*, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

³ Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which is currently set at \$1,700. See *Regulations Governing Fees for Servs. Performed in Connection with Licensing & Related Servs.—2016 Update*, EP 542 (Sub-No. 24) (STB served Aug. 2, 2016).

¹¹ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).