

any decrease in the market value of equity securities granted as compensation to, or held directly or indirectly by, an employee or director.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION: For further information and to ascertain what, if any, matters have been added, deleted or postponed, please contact the Office of the Secretary at (202) 551-5400.

Dated: December 18, 2018.

Brent J. Fields,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2018-27829 Filed 12-19-18; 11:15 am]

BILLING CODE 8011-01-P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-84830; File No. SR-CboeBYX-2018-025]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Cboe BYX Exchange, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change To Extend the Pilot Period for the Exchange's Retail Price Improvement Program

December 17, 2018.

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the "Act"),¹ and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,² notice is hereby given that on December 11, 2018, Cboe BYX Exchange, Inc. (the "Exchange" or "BYX") filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission") the proposed rule change as described in Items I and II below, which Items have been prepared by the Exchange. The Exchange filed the proposal as a "non-controversial" proposed rule change pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A)(iii) of the Act³ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.⁴ 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

Cboe BYX Exchange, Inc. ("BYX" or the "Exchange") is filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission") a proposed rule change to extend the pilot period for the Exchange's Retail Price Improvement Program.

The text of the proposed rule change is also available on the Exchange's website (<http://www.cboe.com/AboutCBOE/CBOELegalRegulatory>

Home.aspx), at the Exchange's Office of the Secretary, 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 the proposed rule change is to extend the pilot period for the Exchange's Retail Price Improvement Program (the "Program"). The Program is currently set to expire on the earlier of approval of the filing to make the Program permanent or December 31, 2018.⁵ The Exchange now proposes to extend the Program until the earlier of approval of the filing to make the Program permanent or June 30, 2019.

Background

In November 2012, the Commission approved the Program on a pilot basis.⁶ The Program is designed to attract retail order flow to the Exchange, and allows such order flow to receive potential price improvement. The Program is currently limited to trades occurring at prices equal to or greater than \$1.00 per share. Under the Program, all Exchange Users⁷ are permitted to provide potential price improvement for Retail Orders⁸ in the form of non-displayed interest that is better than the national

best bid that is a Protected Quotation ("Protected NBB") or the national best offer that is a Protected Quotation ("Protected NBO", and together with the Protected NBB, the "Protected NBBO").⁹

The Program was approved by the Commission on a pilot basis running one year from the date of implementation.¹⁰ The Commission approved the Program on November 27, 2012.¹¹ The Exchange implemented the Program on January 11, 2013, and has extended the pilot period six times.¹² The pilot period for the Program is currently set to expire on the earlier of approval of the filing to make this rule permanent or December 31, 2018. This filing seeks to extend the pilot until the earlier of approval of the filing to make the Program permanent or June 30, 2019.

Proposal To Extend the Operation of the Program

The Exchange established the Program in an attempt to attract retail order flow to the Exchange by potentially providing price improvement to such order flow. The Exchange believes that the Program promotes competition for retail order flow by allowing Exchange members to submit Retail Price Improvement Orders ("RPI Orders")¹³ to interact with Retail Orders. Such competition has the ability to promote efficiency by facilitating the price discovery process and generating

⁹ The term Protected Quotation is defined in BYX Rule 1.5(t) and has the same meaning as is set forth in Regulation NMS Rule 600(b)(58). The terms Protected NBB and Protected NBO are defined in BYX Rule 1.5(s). The Protected NBB is the best-priced protected bid and the Protected NBO is the best-priced protected offer. Generally, the Protected NBB and Protected NBO and the national best bid ("NBB") and national best offer ("NBO", together with the NBB, the "NBBO") will be the same. However, a market center is not required to route to the NBB or NBO if that market center is subject to an exception under Regulation NMS Rule 611(b)(1) or if such NBB or NBO is otherwise not available for an automatic execution. In such case, the Protected NBB or Protected NBO would be the best-priced protected bid or offer to which a market center must route interest pursuant to Regulation NMS Rule 611.

¹⁰ See RPI Approval Order, *supra* note 6 at 71652.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² See Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 71249 (January 7, 2014), 79 FR 2229 (January 13, 2014) (SR-BYX-2014-001); 74111 (January 22, 2015), 80 FR 4598 (January 28, 2015) (SR-BYX-2015-05); 76965 (January 22, 2016), 81 FR 4682 (January 27, 2016) (SR-BYX-2016-01); 78180 (June 28, 2016), 81 FR 43306 (July 1, 2016) (SR-BatsBYX-2016-15); 81368 (August 10, 2017), 82 FR 38960 (August 16, 2017) (SR-BatsBYX-2017-18); 83758 (August 1, 2018), 83 FR 38757 (August 7, 2018) (SR-CboeBYX-2018-015).

¹³ A "Retail Price Improvement Order" is defined in Rule 11.24(a)(3) as an order that consists of non-displayed interest on the Exchange that is priced better than the Protected NBB or Protected NBO by at least \$0.001 and that is identified as such. See Rule 11.24(a)(3).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(iii).

⁴ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

⁵ The Exchange has filed to make the pilot program permanent. See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 83831 (August 13, 2018), 83 FR 41128 (August 17, 2018) (SR-CboeBYX-2018-014).

⁶ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 68303 (November 27, 2012), 77 FR 71652 (December 3, 2012) ("RPI Approval Order") (SR-BYX-2012-019).

⁷ A "User" is defined in BYX Rule 1.5(cc) as any member or sponsored participant of the Exchange who is authorized to obtain access to the System.

⁸ A "Retail Order" is defined in Rule 11.24(a)(2) as an agency order that originates from a natural person and is submitted to the Exchange by a RMO, provided that no change is made to the terms of the order with respect to price or side of market and the order does not originate from a trading algorithm or any computerized methodology. See Rule 11.24(a)(2).

additional investor interest in trading securities, thereby promoting capital formation. The Exchange believes that extending the pilot is appropriate because it will allow the Exchange and the Commission additional time to gather and analyze data regarding the Program that the Exchange has committed to provide.¹⁴ As such, the Exchange believes that it is appropriate to extend the current operation of the Program.¹⁵ Through this filing, the Exchange seeks to extend the current pilot period of the Program until the earlier of approval of the filing to make the Program permanent or June 30, 2019.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that its proposal is consistent with the requirements of the Act and the rules and regulations thereunder that are applicable to a national securities exchange, and, in particular, with the requirements of Section 6(b) of the Act.¹⁶ In particular, the Exchange believes the proposed change furthers the objectives of Section 6(b)(5) of the Act,¹⁷ 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. The Exchange believes that extending the pilot period for the Program is consistent with these principles because the Program is reasonably designed to attract retail order flow to the exchange environment, while helping to ensure that retail investors benefit from the better price that liquidity providers are willing to give their orders. Additionally, as previously stated, the competition promoted by the Program may facilitate the price discovery process and potentially generate additional investor interest in trading securities. The extension of the pilot period will allow the Commission and the Exchange to continue to monitor the Program for its potential effects on public price

discovery, and on the broader market structure.

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. The proposed rule change extends an established pilot program, thus allowing the Program to enhance competition for retail order flow and contribute to the public price discovery process.

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

The Exchange has not solicited, and does not intend to solicit, comments on this proposed rule change. The Exchange has not received any written comments from Members or other interested parties.

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

Because the foregoing proposed rule change does not: (A) Significantly affect the protection of investors or the public interest; (B) impose any significant burden on competition; and (C) by its terms, 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 Act¹⁸ and paragraph (f)(6) of Rule 19b-4 thereunder,¹⁹ the Exchange has designated this rule filing as non-controversial.

A proposed rule change filed under Rule 19b-4(f)(6) normally does not become operative prior to 30 days after the date of the filing.²⁰ 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 proposed rule change may become operative upon filing. The Exchange states that waiver of the operative delay is consistent with

the protection of investors and the public interest and will allow the Exchange to extend the Program, which will ensure that the Program continues while the Exchange and Commission continue to analyze data regarding the Program.

The Commission believes that waiving the 30-day operative delay for the instant filing is consistent with the protection of investors. Accordingly, the Commission designates the proposed rule change as operative upon filing with the Commission.²²

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: (1) Necessary or appropriate in the public interest; (2) for the protection of investors; or (3) 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-CboeBYX-2018-025 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-CboeBYX-2018-025. 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

²² 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).

¹⁴ See RPI Approval Order, *supra* note 6 at 71655.

¹⁵ Concurrently with this filing, the Exchange has submitted a request for an extension of the exemption under Regulation NMS Rule 612 previously granted by the Commission that permits it to accept and rank the RPI orders in sub-penny increments. See Letter from Anders Franzon, SVP, Deputy General Counsel, Cboe BYX Exchange, Inc. to Brent J. Fields, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission dated December 11, 2018.

¹⁶ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

¹⁷ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

¹⁸ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

¹⁹ 17 CFR 240.19b-4. As required under Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii), the Exchange has given 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. 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

²⁰ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

²¹ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii).

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-CboeBYX-2018-025 and should be submitted on or before January 11, 2019.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.²³

Eduardo A. Aleman,
Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2018-27618 Filed 12-20-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8011-01-P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-84833; File No. SR-BX-2018-062]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Nasdaq BX, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change To Amend the Exchange's Transaction Fees at Equity 7, Section 118

December 17, 2018.

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 December 3, 2018, Nasdaq BX, Inc. ("BX" 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.

²³ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

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

The Exchange proposes to amend the Exchange's transaction fees at Equity 7, Section 118 to adopt a new credit for entering an order that accesses liquidity in the Nasdaq BX Equities System.

The text of the proposed rule change is available on the Exchange's website at <http://nasdaqbx.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 the proposed rule change is to amend the Exchange's transaction fees at Equity 7, Section 118 to adopt a new credit for entering an order that accesses liquidity in the Nasdaq BX Equities System. Specifically, the Exchange is proposing to provide a credit of \$0.0018 per share executed for orders that access liquidity in Tape A securities (excluding orders with Midpoint pegging and excluding orders that receive price improvement and execute against an order with a Non-displayed price). To qualify for the proposed credit, a member must access liquidity equal to or exceeding 0.30% of total Consolidated Volume³ during a month. The proposed new credit, and its associated qualification criteria, is similar to existing credits provided for

³ The term "Consolidated Volume" shall mean the total consolidated volume reported to all consolidated transaction reporting plans by all exchanges and trade reporting facilities during a month in equity securities, excluding executed orders with a size of less than one round lot. For purposes of calculating Consolidated Volume and the extent of a member's trading activity the date of the annual reconstitution of the Russell Investments Indexes shall be excluded from both total Consolidated Volume and the member's trading activity. See Equity 7, Section 118.

Orders that access liquidity, which require a certain level of total Consolidated Volume accessed during a month to qualify.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that its proposal is consistent with Section 6(b) of the Act,⁴ in general, and furthers the objectives of Sections 6(b)(4) and 6(b)(5) of the Act,⁵ in particular, in that it provides for the equitable allocation of reasonable dues, fees and other charges among members and issuers and other persons using any facility, and is not designed to permit unfair discrimination between customers, issuers, brokers, or dealers.

The Commission and the courts have repeatedly expressed their preference for competition over regulatory intervention in determining prices, products, and services in the securities markets. In Regulation NMS, while adopting a series of steps to improve the current market model, the Commission highlighted the importance of market forces in determining prices and SRO revenues and, also, recognized that current regulation of the market system "has been remarkably successful in promoting market competition in its broader forms that are most important to investors and listed companies."⁶

Likewise, in *NetCoalition v. Securities and Exchange Commission*⁷ ("NetCoalition") the D.C. Circuit upheld the Commission's use of a market-based approach in evaluating the fairness of market data fees against a challenge claiming that Congress mandated a cost-based approach.⁸ As the court emphasized, the Commission "intended in Regulation NMS that 'market forces, rather than regulatory requirements' play a role in determining the market data . . . to be made available to investors and at what cost."⁹

Further, "[n]o one disputes that competition for order flow is 'fierce.' . . . As the SEC explained, '[i]n the U.S. national market system, buyers and sellers of securities, and the broker-dealers that act as their order-routing agents, have a wide range of choices of where to route orders for execution'; [and] 'no exchange can afford to take its market share percentages for granted' because 'no exchange possesses a monopoly, regulatory or otherwise, in

⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

⁵ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(4) and (5).

⁶ Securities Exchange Act Release No. 51808 (June 9, 2005), 70 FR 37496, 37499 (June 29, 2005) ("Regulation NMS Adopting Release").

⁷ *NetCoalition v. SEC*, 615 F.3d 525 (D.C. Cir. 2010).

⁸ See *NetCoalition*, at 534-535.

⁹ *Id.* at 537.