

proposed changes to the FB Prepayment Program may increase both inter-market and intra-market competition by incenting participants to direct their orders to the Exchange, which would enhance the quality of quoting and may increase the volume of contracts traded on the Exchange. To the extent that there is an additional competitive burden on non-Exchange participants, the Exchange believes that this is appropriate because the proposal should incent market participants to direct additional order flow to the Exchange, and thus provide additional liquidity that enhances the quality of its markets and increases the volume of contracts traded here. To the extent that this purpose is achieved, all of the Exchange's market participants should benefit from the improved market liquidity. Enhanced market quality and increased transaction volume that results from the anticipated increase in order flow directed to the Exchange would benefit all market participants and improve competition on the Exchange.

Given the robust competition for volume among options markets, many of which offer the same products, implementing programs to attract order flow, such as the proposed changes to the FB Prepayment Program, are consistent with the above-mentioned goals of the Act.

The Exchange notes that it operates in a highly competitive market in which market participants can readily favor competing venues. In such an environment, the Exchange must continually review, and consider adjusting, its fees and credits to remain competitive with other exchanges. For the reasons described above, the Exchange believes that the proposed rule change reflects this competitive environment.

#### *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 foregoing rule change is effective upon filing pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) <sup>10</sup> of the Act and subparagraph (f)(2) of Rule 19b-4 <sup>11</sup> thereunder, because it establishes a due,

fee, or other charge imposed by the Exchange.

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) <sup>12</sup> 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](mailto:rule-comments@sec.gov). Please include File Number SR-NYSEAMER-2018-56 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-NYSEAMER-2018-56. 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 such 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-NYSEAMER-2018-56, and should be submitted on or before February 21, 2019.

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

**Eduardo A. Aleman,**

*Deputy Secretary.*

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#### **SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

**[Release No. 34-84974; File No. BX-2018-025]**

#### **Self-Regulatory Organizations; Nasdaq BX, Inc.; Notice of Designation of Longer Period for Commission Action on Proposed Rule Change To Make Permanent the Exchange's Retail Price Improvement Program**

December 26, 2018.

On July 9, 2018, Nasdaq BX, Inc. ("Exchange") filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission"), pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act") <sup>1</sup> and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,<sup>2</sup> a proposed rule change to make permanent the Exchange's Retail Price Improvement Program. The proposed rule change was published for comment in the **Federal Register** on July 26, 2018.<sup>3</sup> On August 31, 2018, the Commission designated a longer period within which to approve the proposed rule change, disapprove the proposed rule change, or institute proceedings to determine whether to disapprove the proposed rule change.<sup>4</sup> On October 23, 2018, the Commission instituted proceedings under Section 19(b)(2)(B) of

<sup>13</sup> 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

<sup>14</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

<sup>2</sup> 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

<sup>3</sup> See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 83681 (July 20, 2018), 83 FR 35516.

<sup>4</sup> See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 84013, 83 FR 45479 (September 7, 2018). The Commission designated October 24, 2018, as the date by which the Commission shall approve or disapprove, or institute proceedings to determine whether to disapprove, the proposed rule change.

<sup>10</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

<sup>11</sup> 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(2).

<sup>12</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(2)(B).

the Act<sup>5</sup> to determine whether to approve or disapprove the proposed rule change.<sup>6</sup> The Commission has received no comments on the proposal.

Section 19(b)(2) of the Act<sup>7</sup> provides that, after initiating proceedings, the Commission shall issue an order approving or disapproving the proposed rule change not later than 180 days after the date of publication of notice of filing of the proposed rule change. The Commission may, however, extend the period for issuing an order approving or disapproving the proposed rule change by not more than 60 days if the Commission determines that a longer period is appropriate and publishes the reasons for such determination. The proposed rule change was published for notice and comment in the **Federal Register** on July 26, 2018.<sup>8</sup> January 22, 2019 is 180 days from that date, and March 23, 2019 is 240 days from that date. The Commission finds it appropriate to designate a longer period within which to issue an order approving or disapproving the proposed rule change so that it has sufficient time to consider the proposed rule change.<sup>9</sup>

Accordingly, the Commission, pursuant to Section 19(b)(2) of the Act,<sup>10</sup> designates March 23, 2019, as the date by which the Commission shall approve or disapprove the proposed rule change (File No. SR-BX-2018-025).

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

**Eduardo A. Aleman,**  
Deputy Secretary.

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## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-84952; File No. SR-BX-2018-067]

### Self-Regulatory Organizations; Nasdaq BX, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change To Amend Chapter VI, Section 5

December 26, 2018.

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (“Act”),<sup>1</sup> and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,<sup>2</sup> notice is hereby given that on December 21, 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 and II, 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),<sup>3</sup> to extend through June 30, 2019 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. 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 this filing is to amend Chapter VI, Section 5, to extend the Penny Pilot through June 30, 2019 or the date of permanent approval, if earlier,<sup>4</sup> 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, 2018.<sup>5</sup>

The Exchange proposes to extend the time period of the Penny Pilot through June 30, 2019 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 issues that have been delisted may be replaced on the second trading day following January 1, 2019. The replacement issues will be selected based on trading activity in the previous six months.<sup>6</sup>

This filing does not propose any substantive changes to the Penny Pilot Program; all classes currently participating in the Penny Pilot will

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 83526 (June 26, 2018), 83 FR 30993 (July 2, 2018) (SR-BX-2018-027).

<sup>6</sup> The replacement issues will be announced to the Exchange’s membership via an Options Trader Alert (OTA) posted on the Exchange’s website. 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 June 1, 2018 through November 30, 2018 would be analyzed. The month immediately preceding the replacement issues’ addition to the Pilot (*i.e.*, December) would not be used for purposes of the six-month analysis.

<sup>5</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78(s)(b)(2)(B).

<sup>6</sup> See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 84472, 83 FR 54411 (October 29, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(2).

<sup>8</sup> See *supra* note 3.

<sup>9</sup> The Commission notes that on December 11, 2018, the Exchange filed a proposed rule change to extend the pilot period to June 30, 2019. See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 84847, 83 FR 66326 (December 26, 2018) (SR-BX-2018-063).

<sup>10</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(2).

<sup>11</sup> 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(31).

<sup>1</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

<sup>2</sup> 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

<sup>3</sup> References herein to Chapter and Series refer to rules of the BX Options Market (“BX Options”), unless otherwise noted.