

trade in that the availability of cash settlement as a contract term would give market participants an alternative to trading similar products in the OTC market. By trading a product in an exchange-traded environment (that is currently being used in the OTC market), the Exchange would be able to compete more effectively with the OTC market. The Exchange believes the proposed rule change is designed to prevent fraudulent and manipulative acts and practices in that it would lead to the migration of options currently trading in the OTC market to trading to the Exchange. Also, any migration to the Exchange from the OTC market would result in increased market transparency. Additionally, the Exchange believes the proposed rule change is designed to remove impediments to and to perfect the mechanism for a free and open market and a national market system, and, in general, to protect investors and the public interest in that it should create greater trading and hedging opportunities and flexibility. The proposed rule change should also result in enhanced efficiency in initiating and closing out positions and heightened contra-party creditworthiness due to the role of OCC as issuer and guarantor of cash-settled FLEX ETF Options. Further, the proposed rule change would result in increased competition by permitting the Exchange to offer products that are currently used in the OTC market.

Finally, the Exchange represents that it has an adequate surveillance program in place to detect manipulative trading in cash-settled FLEX ETF Options. Regarding the proposed cash settlement, the Exchange would use the same surveillance procedures currently utilized for the Exchange's other FLEX Options. For surveillance purposes, the Exchange would have access to information regarding trading activity in the pertinent underlying securities. The Exchange believes that limiting cash settlement to FLEX ETF Options would minimize the possibility of manipulation due to the robust liquidity in both the ETF and options markets.

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 proposal is designed to increase competition for order flow on the Exchange in a manner that is beneficial to investors because it is designed to provide investors seeking to effect cash-settled FLEX ETF Option orders with the opportunity for different

methods of settling option contracts at expiration.

The Exchange notes that it operates in a highly competitive market in which market participants can readily direct order flow to competing venues who offer similar functionality. The Exchange believes the proposed rule change encourages competition amongst market participants to provide tailored cash-settled FLEX ETF Option contracts.

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. Solicitation of Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments concerning the foregoing, including whether the proposed rule change, as modified by Amendment No. 2, 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-NYSEAMER-2018-39 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-2018-39. 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-2018-39, and should be submitted on or before May 8, 2019.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.²²

Eduardo A. Aleman,
Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2019-07614 Filed 4-16-19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8011-01-P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-85612; File No. SR-FINRA-2019-011]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Financial Industry Regulatory Authority Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change To Extend the Current Pilot Program Related to FINRA Rule 11892 (Clearly Erroneous Transactions in Exchange-Listed Securities)

April 11, 2019.

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 April 9, 2019, 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 below, 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.

²² 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

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

FINRA is proposing to extend the current pilot program related to FINRA Rule 11892 (Clearly Erroneous Transactions in Exchange-Listed Securities) to the close of business on October 18, 2019.

The text of the proposed rule change is available on FINRA's website 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

FINRA proposes to amend FINRA Rule 11892 (Clearly Erroneous Transactions in Exchange-Listed Securities) to extend the current pilot program to the close of business on October 18, 2019. This change is being proposed in connection with proposed amendments to the Plan to Address Extraordinary Market Volatility (the "Limit Up-Limit Down Plan" or the "Plan") that would allow the Plan to continue to operate on a permanent basis.⁴

On September 10, 2010, the Commission approved, on a pilot basis, changes to FINRA Rule 11892 that, among other things: (i) Provided for uniform treatment of clearly erroneous execution reviews in multi-stock events involving twenty or more securities; and (ii) reduced the ability of FINRA to deviate from the objective standards set forth in the rule.⁵ In 2013, FINRA adopted a provision designed to

address the operation of the Plan.⁶ Finally, in 2014, FINRA adopted two additional provisions providing that: (i) A series of transactions in a particular security on one or more trading days may be viewed as one event if all such transactions were effected based on the same fundamentally incorrect or grossly misinterpreted issuance information resulting in a severe valuation error for all such transactions; and (ii) in the event of any disruption or malfunction in the operation of the electronic communications and trading facilities of an [sic] self-regulatory organization or responsible single plan processor in connection with the transmittal or receipt of a regulatory trading halt, suspension or pause, a FINRA officer, acting on his or her own motion, shall declare as null and void any transaction in a security that occurs after the primary listing market for such security declares a trading halt, suspension or pause with respect to such security and before such trading halt, suspension or pause with respect to such security has officially ended according to the primary listing market.⁷ These changes are currently scheduled to operate for a pilot period that coincides with the pilot period for the Limit Up-Limit Down Plan,⁸ including any extensions to the pilot period for the Plan.⁹

The Commission recently published the proposed Eighteenth Amendment to the Plan to allow the Plan to operate on a permanent, rather than pilot, basis. FINRA proposes to amend FINRA Rule 11892 to untie the pilot program's effectiveness from that of the Plan and to extend the pilot's effectiveness to the close of business on October 18, 2019—*i.e.*, six months after the expiration of the current pilot period for the Plan. If the pilot period is not either extended or approved as permanent, [sic] version of this Rule prior to SR-FINRA-2010-032 shall be in effect, and the amendments set forth in SR-FINRA-2014-021 and the provisions of Supplementary Material .03 of this Rule shall be null and void.¹⁰ In such an

event, the remaining text of FINRA Rule 11892 would continue to apply to all transactions in Exchange-Listed securities. FINRA understands that the national securities exchanges also will file similar proposals to extend their respective clearly erroneous execution pilot programs, the substance of which are identical to FINRA Rule 11892.

FINRA does not propose any additional changes to FINRA Rule 11892. FINRA believes the benefits to market participants from the more objective clearly erroneous executions rule should continue on a limited six-month pilot basis after the Commission approves the Plan to operate on a permanent basis. Assuming the Plan is approved by the Commission to operate on a permanent, rather than pilot, basis FINRA intends to assess whether additional changes also should be made to the operation of the clearly erroneous execution rules. Extending the effectiveness of FINRA Rule 11892 for an additional six months should provide FINRA and the national securities exchanges additional time to consider further amendments to the clearly erroneous execution rules in light of the proposed Eighteenth Amendment to the Plan.

FINRA has filed the proposed rule change for immediate effectiveness and has requested that the SEC waive the requirement that the proposed rule change not become operative for 30 days after the date of the filing, so FINRA can implement the proposed rule change immediately.

2. Statutory Basis

FINRA believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with the provisions of Section 15A(b)(6) of the Act,¹¹ 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. FINRA believes that the proposed rule change promotes just and equitable principles of trade in that it promotes transparency and uniformity across markets concerning the review of transactions as clearly erroneous. FINRA believes that extending the clearly erroneous execution pilot under FINRA Rule 11892 for an additional six months would help assure that the determination of whether a clearly erroneous trade has occurred will be based on clear and objective criteria, and that the resolution of the incident will occur promptly through a transparent process. The proposed rule

⁴ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 84843 (December 18, 2018), 83 FR 66464 (December 26, 2018) (File No. 4-631) ("Eighteenth Amendment").

⁵ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 62885 (September 10, 2010), 75 FR 56641 (September 16, 2010) (Order Approving File No. SR-FINRA-2010-032).

⁶ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 68808 (February 1, 2013), 78 FR 9083 (February 7, 2013) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2013-012).

⁷ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 72434 (June 19, 2014), 79 FR 36110 (June 25, 2014) (Order Approving File No. SR-FINRA-2014-021).

⁸ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 67091 (May 31, 2012), 77 FR 33498 (June 6, 2012) (the "Limit Up-Limit Down Release").

⁹ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 71781 (March 24, 2014), 79 FR 17615 (March 28, 2014) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2014-013).

¹⁰ See *supra* notes 5-7. The version of this Rule prior to SR-FINRA-2010-032 generally provided greater discretion to FINRA with respect to breaking erroneous trades.

¹¹ 15 U.S.C. 78o-3(b)(6).

change also would help assure consistent results in handling erroneous trades across the U.S. equities markets, thus furthering fair and orderly markets, the protection of investors and the public interest. Based on the foregoing, FINRA believes the amended clearly erroneous executions rule should continue to be in effect on a pilot basis while FINRA and the national securities exchanges consider and develop a permanent proposal for clearly erroneous execution reviews.

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. The proposal would ensure the continued, uninterrupted operation of harmonized clearly erroneous execution rules across the U.S. equities markets while FINRA and the national securities exchanges consider further amendments to these rules in light of the proposed Eighteenth Amendment to the Plan. FINRA understands that the national securities exchanges will also file similar proposals to extend their respective clearly erroneous execution pilot programs. Thus, the proposed rule change will help to ensure consistency across market centers without implicating any competitive issues.

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)(iii) of the Act¹² and subparagraph (f)(6) of Rule 19b-4 thereunder.¹³

¹² 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(iii).

¹³ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6). In addition, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii) requires a self-regulatory organization to give 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. FINRA has satisfied this requirement.

A proposed rule change filed under Rule 19b-4(f)(6)¹⁴ normally does not become operative prior to 30 days after the date of the filing. However, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii)¹⁵ permits the Commission to designate a shorter time if such action is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. FINRA has asked the Commission to waive the 30-day operative delay so that the proposed rule change may become effective and operative immediately upon filing. The Commission believes that waiving the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest, as it will allow the current clearly erroneous execution pilot program to continue uninterrupted, without any changes, while FINRA and the other national securities exchanges consider and develop a permanent proposal for clearly erroneous execution reviews. For this reason, the Commission hereby waives the 30-day operative delay and designates the proposed rule change as operative upon filing.¹⁶

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-FINRA-2019-011 on the subject line.

Paper Comments

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Secretary, Securities and Exchange

¹⁴ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

¹⁵ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii).

¹⁶ For purposes only of waiving the 30-day operative delay, the Commission has also considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. See 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

Commission, 100 F Street NE, Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-FINRA-2019-011. 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 FINRA. 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-FINRA-2019-011 and should be submitted on or before May 8, 2019.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.¹⁷

Eduardo A. Aleman,

Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2019-07625 Filed 4-16-19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8011-01-P

¹⁷ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).