Please direct your written comment to Pamela Dyson, Director/Chief Information Officer, Securities and Exchange Commission, c/o Remi Pavlik-Simon, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549 or send an email to: PRA_Mailbox@sec.gov.

Dated: September 1, 2016.

Robert W. Errett,
Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2016–21520 Filed 9–7–16; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 8011–01–P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Proposed Collection; Comment Request

Upon Written Request, Copies Available From: Securities and Exchange Commission, Office of FOIA Services, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549–2736.

Extension: Rule 602; SEC File No. 270–404; OMB Control No. 3235–0461.


Rule 602 of Regulation NMS, Dissemination of Quotations in NMS securities, contains two related collections. The first collection of information is found in Rule 602(a). This third-party disclosure requirement obligates each national securities exchange and national securities association to make available to quotation vendors for dissemination to the public the best bid, best offer, and aggregate quote size for each “subject security,” as defined under the Rule. The second collection of information is found in Rule 602(b). This disclosure requirement obligates any exchange member and over-the-counter (“OTC”) market maker that is a “responsible broker or dealer,” as defined under the Rule, to communicate to an exchange or association its best bids, best offers, and quotation sizes for subject securities.

It is anticipated that twenty respondents, consisting of nineteen national securities exchanges and one national securities association, will collectively respond approximately 2,184,303,485,488 times per year pursuant to Rule 602(a) at 18.22 microseconds per response, resulting in a total annual burden of approximately 11,640 hours. It is anticipated that no respondents will have a reporting burden pursuant to Rule 602(b).

Thus, the aggregate third-party disclosure burden under Rule 602 is 11,640 hours annually which is comprised of 11,640 hours relating to Rule 602(a) and 0 hours relating to Rule 602(b).

Written comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collections of information are necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Commission’s estimate of the burden of the proposed collections of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of collections of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Consideration will be given to comments and suggestions submitted in writing within 60 days of this publication.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to, a collection of information under the PRA unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Please direct your written comments to: Pamela C. Dyson, Director/Chief Information Officer, Securities and Exchange Commission, c/o Remi Pavlik-Simon, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549, or by sending an email to: PRA_Mailbox@sec.gov.

Dated: September 2, 2016.

Brent J. Fields,
Secretary.

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION


Self-Regulatory Organizations; Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc.; Order Granting Approval of Proposed Rule Change To Create an Academic Corporate Bond TRACE Data Product

September 2, 2016.

I. Introduction

On June 28, 2016, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. (“FINRA”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”), pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (“Act”) and Rule 19b–4 thereunder, a proposed rule change to amend FINRA Rule 7730 to create a new data product consisting of data on historic transactions in corporate bonds reported to the Trade Reporting and Compliance Engine (“TRACE”) that would be available to institutions of higher learning (the “Academic Corporate Bond TRACE Data product”). The proposed rule change was published for comment in the Federal Register on July 7, 2016. The Commission received three comments in response to the proposal. On August 9, 2016, FINRA extended to September 2, 2016, the time period within which the Commission shall approve the proposed rule change, disapprove the proposed rule change, or institute proceedings to determine whether the proposed rule change

4 See letters to Brent J. Fields, Secretary, Commission, from Sean Davy, Managing Director, Capital Markets Division and Leslie M. Norwood, Managing Director and Associate General Counsel, Municipal Securities Division, SIFMA, dated July 27, 2016 (“SIFMA Letter”); Mike Nicholas, Chief Executive Officer, BDA, dated July 28, 2016 (“BDA Letter”); and Kumar Venkataraman, Ph.D., James M. Collins Chair in Finance, Edwin L. Cox School of Business, Southern Methodist University, dated August 9, 2016 (“Venkataraman Letter”).
should be disapproved.\textsuperscript{5} FINRA responded to the comments on August 23, 2016.\textsuperscript{6} This order grants approval of the proposed rule change.

II. Description of the Proposed Rule Change

FINRA has proposed to make available to institutions of higher learning a new Academic Corporate Bond TRACE Data product that would contain transaction-level data on historic transactions in corporate bonds and would include masked counterparty information. Currently, FINRA makes publicly available real-time data in TRACE-eligible securities and a Historic TRACE Data product that provides transaction-level data, on an 18-month delayed basis, without any counterparty information.\textsuperscript{7}

In the Notice, FINRA stated that academic researchers cannot use the existing Historic TRACE Data product to track the behavior of an individual dealer or group of dealers due to the lack of any counterparty information.\textsuperscript{8} FINRA stated that this proposal responds to requests from academics for FINRA to make available an enhanced data product that includes counterparty identification.\textsuperscript{9} FINRA has represented that establishing a new TRACE data product with masked counterparty identifiers could allow academic researchers to track activity in a variety of ways, including by individual dealer or by groups of dealers, and could facilitate the ability of academic researchers to study the impact of various events on measures such as intermediation costs, dealer participation, and liquidity.\textsuperscript{10}

The proposal would amend FINRA Rule 7730 to create a new Academic Corporate Bond TRACE Data product consisting of historic transaction-level data on all transactions in corporate bonds reported to TRACE, including Rule 144A transactions in corporate bonds but not including transactions that are List or Fixed Offering Price Transactions\textsuperscript{11} or Takedown Transactions.\textsuperscript{12} FINRA noted that the existing Historic TRACE Data product also does not include List or Fixed Offering Price Transactions or Takedown Transactions. Under the proposal, a transaction included in the Academic Corporate Bond TRACE Data product would be aged at least 36 months before being incorporated into the dataset. Each such transaction would not include any MPIDs, but would instead include a masked dealer identifier.\textsuperscript{13}

The Academic Corporate Bond TRACE Data product would be available only to institutions of higher education.\textsuperscript{14} Any institution of higher education subscribing to the product would be required to agree: (1) Not to attempt to reverse-engineer the identity of any market participant; (2) not to redistribute the data; (3) to disclose each intended use of the data (including a description of each study being performed and the names of each individual who will have access to the data for the study); (4) to ensure that any data presented in work product be sufficiently aggregated to prevent reverse engineering of any dealer or transaction; and (5) to return or destroy the data if the agreement is terminated.\textsuperscript{15}

FINRA stated that it would announce the effective date of the proposed rule change in a Regulatory Notice to be published no later than 90 days following Commission approval, and that the effective date would be no later than 270 days following publication of that Regulatory Notice.\textsuperscript{16} In addition, FINRA stated that it plans to file a separate proposed rule change to address market data fees for the Academic Corporate Bond TRACE Data product before the effective date of this proposal.\textsuperscript{17}

III. Summary of Comments and FINRA’s Response

The Commission received three comments on the proposed rule change\textsuperscript{18} and a response letter from FINRA.\textsuperscript{19} Two commenters generally supported the proposal. One of these commenters, an academic researcher, stated that, “[i]t is very likely that, as a consequence of this proposal, private and non-educational entities will end up possessing full trade history including dealer names for every trade released.”\textsuperscript{20}

The two industry commenters offered differing views on aspects of the proposal that FINRA designed to reduce the risk of reverse engineering specific dealer identities. The second commenter thought that limiting the

5 See letter to Katherine England, Assistant Director, Division of Trading and Markets, Commission, from Racquel L. Russell, Associate General Counsel, Regulatory Policy and Oversight, FINRA, dated August 9, 2016.
6 See letter to Brent J. Fields, Secretary, Commission, from Racquel L. Russell, Associate General Counsel, Regulatory Policy and Oversight, FINRA, dated August 23, 2016 (“FINRA Response Letter”).
8 See id.
9 See Notice, 81 FR at 44359.
10 See id.
11 FINRA Rule 6710(g) defines “List or Fixed Offering Price Transaction” as a primary market sale transaction sold on the first day of trading of a security, excluding a Securitized Product other than an Asset-Backed Security: (i) By a sole underwriter, syndicate manager, syndicate member, or selling group member at the published or stated list or fixed offering price; or (ii) in the case of a primary market sale transaction effected pursuant to Securities Act Rule 144A, by an initial purchaser, syndicate manager, syndicate member, or selling group member at the published or stated fixed offering price.
12 FINRA Rule 6710(r) defines “Takedown Transaction” as a primary market sale transaction sold on the first day of trading of a security, excluding a Securitized Product other than an Asset-Backed Security: (i) By a sole underwriter or syndicate manager to a syndicate or selling group member at a discount from the published or stated list or fixed offering price; or (ii) in the case of a primary market sale transaction effected pursuant to Securities Act Rule 144A, by an initial purchaser or syndicate manager to a syndicate or selling group member at a discount from the published or stated fixed offering price.
13 See proposed FINRA Rule 7730(g)(5).
14 See proposed FINRA Rule 7730(e).
15 See Notice, 81 FR at 44359–60.
16 See id. at 44359, n.7.
17 See supra note 4.
18 See supra note 6.
19 Venkataraman Letter at 2.
20 Id. at 3.
21 See SIFMA Letter at 2.
22 Id. at 3.
23 See BDA Letter at 1.
24 Id. at 2.
The third commenter stated that, although the proposed user agreements are designed to prevent redistribution of the data, federal and state Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) laws could defeat such intent if the transaction data is held by a public university and classified as a public record. This commenter also raised concerns about data security, suggesting that the data could be subject to hacking or data theft during transmission or when held by an institution of higher education.

In its response to these comments, FINRA stated that it “continues to believe that the instant proposal strikes the appropriate balance between addressing risks regarding potential reverse engineering with facilitating the ability of academic researchers to study the market for corporate bonds.” FINRA explained that it made significant changes to an earlier iteration of the proposal, including limiting the scope of the proposed data product to corporate bonds. In FINRA’s view, transaction data on corporate bonds does not present a high risk of accurate reverse engineering because generally these bonds are traded by a greater number of dealers. FINRA also noted that it raised the minimum age of included transactions from 24 months to 36 months. FINRA expressed its belief that the “totality of the measures” included in this proposal adequately address the commenters’ concerns. FINRA also stated that the user agreements will include provisions geared towards data security and designed to limit the risk of public disclosure due to federal or state FOIA requests. FINRA noted that it will utilize its existing processes to oversee user agreements. FINRA further explained that it will monitor use of the Academic Corporate Bond TRACE Data product and may consider amending or limiting the scope of the proposed data product if it finds that academics are reverse engineering the data.

Finally, although one commenter suggested expanding the user group for Academic Corporate Bond TRACE Data to other non-profit organizations engaged in research activities, FINRA responded that “in light of the sensitivities” surrounding making transaction-level data available, even with masked dealer identifiers, “FINRA believes it is appropriate to restrict the availability of Academic Corporate Bond TRACE Data to institutions of higher education at this time.”

IV. Discussion and Commission Findings

After careful review, the Commission finds that the proposed rule change is consistent with the requirements of the Act and the rules and regulations thereunder applicable to a national securities association. In particular, the Commission finds that the proposed rule change is consistent with Section 15A(b)(6) of the Act, which requires, among other things, that FINRA’s rules 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.

The Commission believes that establishing the Academic Corporate Bond TRACE Data product in the manner described in the proposal is reasonable and consistent with the Act. The Commission does not believe that the commenters have raised any issue that would preclude approval of the proposal at this time. The proposal appears reasonably designed to minimize the possibility that the product might reveal the identities or trading strategies of particular market participants. FINRA has limited the scope of the data product to include only transactions in corporate bonds, will mask counterparty identities, is requiring transaction data to be aged 36 months prior to inclusion, and will require subscribers to execute a user agreement imposing restrictions on use of the data. The required user agreements appear reasonably designed to limit information leakage while providing institutions of higher education a potentially important new tool to analyze concerns about bond market liquidity.

IV. Conclusion

It is therefore ordered, pursuant to Section 19(b)(2) of the Act, that the proposed rule change (SR–FINRA–2016–024) be, and hereby is, approved.
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION


Self-Regulatory Organizations; Bats BZX Exchange, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change To Delay the Implementation of Amendments to the Options Regulatory Fee

September 1, 2016.

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 August 22, 2016, Bats BZX Exchange, Inc. (the “Exchange” or “BZX”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") the proposed rule change as described in Items I, II and III below, which Items have been prepared by the Exchange. The Exchange has designated the proposed rule change as one establishing or changing a member due, fee, or other charge imposed by the Exchange under section 19(b)(3)(A)(ii) of the Act3 and Rule 19b–4(f)(2) thereunder,4 which renders the proposed rule change effective pursuant to section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act,5 and paragraph (f) of Rule 19b–4 thereunder.6

The text of the proposed rule change and the reasons therefor are set forth in Items I, II, and III below. 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 filed a proposal to delay implementation of recently enacted amendments to the fee schedule applicable to Members7 and non-Member Participants8 of the Exchange pursuant to BZX Rules 15.1(a) and (c) regarding its Options Regulatory Fee ("ORF").

The text of the proposed rule change is available at the Exchange’s Web site at www.batstrading.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 those 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 parts of such statements.

A. Self-Regulatory Organization’s Statement of the Purpose of, and the Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

1. Purpose

The Exchange recently submitted a proposed rule change to modify the fee schedule applicable to the Exchange’s options platform ("BZX Options") to decrease ORF from $0.0010 per contract side to $0.0008 per contract.9 The Exchange also proposed to expand the application of the per-contract ORF to each Member and non-Member for all options transactions cleared by OCC in the "customer" range, regardless of the exchange on which the transaction occurs. In order to provide market participants additional time to assess the impact of these changes to ORF on their transactions and order execution scenarios, the Exchange is delaying the implementation date of the fee until February 1, 2017.10

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that the proposed rule change 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 of the Act.11 The Exchange also believes that its proposal furthers the objectives of section 6(b)(5) of the Act in that it is designed 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 investors and the public interest.12

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 not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. The ORF is not intended to have any impact on competition. Rather, it is designed to enable the Exchange to recover a material portion of the Exchange’s cost related to its regulatory activities. Therefore, the Exchange does not believe delaying the implementation of ORF till February 1, 2017 will have any impact on competition.

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

The foregoing rule change has become effective pursuant to section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act and paragraph (l) of Rule 19b–4 thereunder. At any time within 60 days of the filing of the proposed rule change, the Commission summarily may temporarily suspend such rule change if

5 A Member is defined as “any registered broker or dealer that has been admitted to membership in the Exchange.” See Exchange Rule 1.5(a).
8 The Exchange notes that its fee schedule states that it may only increase or decrease the ORF semi-annually, and any such fee change will be effective on the first business day of February or August. See the Exchange’s fee schedule available at http://batstrading.com/support/fee_schedule/bzx/ (dated August 1, 2016), the Exchange initially filed the proposed fee change on August 11, 2016 (SR–BatsBZX–2016–49). On August 19, 2016, the Exchange withdrew SR–BatsBZX–2016–49 and submitted SR–BatsBZX–2016–51. On August 22, 2016, the Exchange withdrew SR–BatsBZX–2016–51 and submitted this filing.