

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-83474; File No. SR-FINRA-2018-025]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change To Extend the Implementation of FINRA Rule 4240 (Margin Requirements for Credit Default Swaps)

June 20, 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 June 11, 2018, the 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, II, and III 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.

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

FINRA is proposing to extend to July 18, 2019 the implementation of FINRA Rule 4240. FINRA Rule 4240 implements an interim pilot program with respect to margin requirements for certain transactions in credit default swaps that are security-based swaps.

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

On May 22, 2009, the Commission approved FINRA Rule 4240,⁴ which implements an interim pilot program (the “Interim Pilot Program”) with respect to margin requirements for certain transactions in credit default swaps (“CDS”).⁵ On June 14, 2017, FINRA filed a proposed rule change for immediate effectiveness extending the implementation of FINRA Rule 4240 to July 18, 2018.⁶

As explained in the Approval Order, FINRA Rule 4240, coterminous with certain Commission actions, was intended to address concerns arising from systemic risk posed by CDS, including, among other things, risks to the financial system arising from the lack of a central clearing counterparty to clear and settle CDS.⁷ On July 21, 2010, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (the “Dodd-Frank Act”) was signed into law.⁸ Title VII of the Dodd-Frank Act established a comprehensive new regulatory framework for swaps and security-based swaps,⁹ including certain CDS. The legislation was intended, among other

⁴ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 59955 (May 22, 2009), 74 FR 25586 (May 28, 2009) (Order Approving File No. SR-FINRA-2009-012) (“Approval Order”).

⁵ In March 2012, the SEC approved amendments to FINRA Rule 4240 that, among other things, limit at this time the rule’s application to credit default swaps that are security-based swaps. See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 66527 (March 7, 2012), 77 FR 14850 (March 13, 2012) (Order Approving File No. SR-FINRA-2012-015).

⁶ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 81035 (June 27, 2017), 82 FR 30914 (July 3, 2017) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2017-019).

⁷ See Approval Order, 74 FR at 25588–89.

⁸ See Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, Public Law 111–203, 124 Stat. 1376 (2010).

⁹ The terms “swap” and “security-based swap” are defined in Sections 721 and 761 of the Dodd-Frank Act. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission (“CFTC”) and the Commission jointly have approved rules to further define these terms. See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 67453 (July 18, 2012), 77 FR 48208 (August 13, 2012) (Joint Final Rule; Interpretations; Request for Comment on an Interpretation: Further Definition of “Swap,” “Security-Based Swap,” and “Security-Based Swap Agreement”); Mixed Swaps; Security-Based Swap Agreement Recordkeeping). See also Securities Exchange Act Release No. 66868 (April 27, 2012), 77 FR 30596 (May 23, 2012) (Joint Final Rule; Joint Interim Final Rule; Interpretations: Further Definition of “Swap Dealer,” “Security-Based Swap Dealer,” “Major Swap Participant,” “Major Security-Based Swap Participant,” and “Eligible Contract Participant”).

things, to enhance the authority of regulators to implement new rules designed to reduce risk, increase transparency, and promote market integrity with respect to such products.

The Commission and the CFTC have proposed or adopted rules with respect to swaps and security-based swaps pursuant to Title VII of the Dodd-Frank Act.¹⁰ FINRA believes it is appropriate to extend the Interim Pilot Program for a limited period, to July 18, 2019, in light of the continuing development of the CDS business and ongoing regulatory developments. FINRA is considering proposing additional amendments to the Interim Pilot Program.

FINRA has filed the proposed rule change for immediate effectiveness. FINRA is proposing that the implementation date of the proposed rule change will be July 18, 2018. The proposed rule change will expire on July 18, 2019.

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 is consistent with the Act because, in light of the continuing development of the CDS business and ongoing regulatory developments, extending the implementation of the margin requirements as set forth by FINRA Rule

¹⁰ See, e.g., Securities Exchange Act Release No. 79833 (January 18, 2017), 82 FR 8467 (January 25, 2017) (Order Extending Certain Temporary Exemptions Under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 in Connection With the Revision of the Definition of “Security” To Encompass Security-Based Swaps and Request for Comment); Securities Exchange Act Release No. 67177 (June 11, 2012), 77 FR 35625 (June 14, 2012) (Notice of Statement of General Policy with Request for Public Comment: Statement of General Policy on the Sequencing of the Compliance Dates for Final Rules Applicable to Security-Based Swaps Adopted Pursuant to the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act); Securities Exchange Act Release No. 68071 (October 18, 2012), 77 FR 70214 (November 23, 2012) (Proposed Rule: Capital, Margin, and Segregation Requirements for Security-Based Swap Dealers and Major Security-Based Swap Participants and Capital Requirements for Broker-Dealers). See also Securities Exchange Act Release No. 71958 (April 17, 2014), 79 FR 25194 (May 2, 2014) (Proposed Rule: Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements for Security-Based Swap Dealers, Major Security-Based Swap Participants, and Broker-Dealers; Capital Rule for Certain Security-Based Swap Dealers).

¹¹ 15 U.S.C. 78o-3(b)(6).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

4240 will help to stabilize the financial markets.

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. FINRA believes that extending the implementation of FINRA Rule 4240 for a limited period, to July 18, 2019, in light of the continuing development of the CDS business and ongoing regulatory developments, helps to promote stability in the financial markets and regulatory certainty for members.

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

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 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 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-2018-025 on the subject line.

Paper Comments

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Eduardo Aleman, Assistant Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street NE, Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-FINRA-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 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 a.m. and 3 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-2018-025 and should be submitted on or before July 17, 2018.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.¹⁴

Eduardo A. Aleman,
Assistant Secretary.

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

Upon Written Request, Copies Available From: Securities and Exchange Commission, Office of FOIA Services, Washington, DC 20549-2736

Extension:

Rule 15g-3, SEC File No. 270-346, OMB Control No. 3235-0392

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ("PRA") (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget ("OMB") a request for approval of extension of the existing collection of information provided for in Rule 15g-3—Broker or dealer disclosure of quotations and other information relating to the penny stock market (17 CFR 240.15g-3) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78a *et seq.*).

Rule 15g-3 requires that brokers and dealers disclose to customers current quotation prices or similar market information in connection with transactions in penny stocks. The purpose of the rule is to increase the level of disclosure to investors concerning penny stocks generally and specific penny stock transactions.

The Commission estimates that approximately 195 broker-dealers will spend an average of 87 hours annually to comply with this rule. Thus, the total compliance burden is approximately 16,965 burden-hours per year.

Rule 15g-3 contains record retention requirements. Compliance with the rule is mandatory. The required records are available only to the examination staff of the Commission and the self regulatory organizations of which the broker-dealer is a member.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information under the PRA unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

The public may view background documentation for this information collection at the following website: www.reginfo.gov. Comments should be directed to: (i) Desk Officer for the Securities and Exchange Commission, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Room 10102, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503 or by sending an email to: Shagufta.Ahmed@omb.eop.gov; and (ii) Pamela Dyson, Director/Chief Information Officer, Securities and Exchange

¹² 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

¹³ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

¹⁴ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).