

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Release No. 34-87342; File No. SR-C2-2019-022

October 18, 2019

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Cboe C2 Exchange, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change to Extend the Pilot Period Related to the Market-wide Circuit Breaker in Rule 6.32.01.

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 October 16, 2019, Cboe C2 Exchange, Inc. (the “Exchange” or “C2”) 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 C2 Exchange, Inc. (the “Exchange” or “C2”) proposes to extend the pilot period related to the market-wide circuit breaker in Rule 6.32.01. The text of the proposed rule change is provided in Exhibit 5.

The text of the proposed rule change is also available on the Exchange’s website (http://markets.cboe.com/us/options/regulation/rule_filings/ctwo/), at the Exchange’s Office of the Secretary, and at the Commission’s Public Reference Room.

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).

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

Exchange Rule 6.32.01 describes the methodology for determining when to halt trading in all stock options due to extraordinary market volatility, i.e., market-wide circuit breakers (“MWCB”). The MWCB mechanism was approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “Commission”) to operate on a pilot basis, the term of which was to coincide with the pilot period for the Plan to Address Extraordinary Market Volatility Pursuant to Rule 608 of Regulation NMS (the “LULD Plan”),⁵ including any extensions to the pilot period for the LULD Plan. Though the LULD Plan was primarily designed for equity markets, the Exchange believed it would, indirectly, potentially impact the options markets as well. Thus, the Exchange has previously adopted and amended Rule 6.32.01 (as well as other options pilot rules) to ensure the option markets were not harmed as a result of the Plan’s implementation and implemented such rule on a pilot basis that has coincided with the pilot period for the Plan.⁶ The Commission recently

⁵ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 67091 (May 31, 2012), 77 FR 33498 (June 6, 2012). The LULD Plan provides a mechanism to address extraordinary market volatility in individual securities.

⁶ See Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 68769 (January 30, 2013), 78 FR 8213 (February 5, 2013) (SR-C2-2013-006) (amending Rule 6.32.03, which was later

approved an amendment to the LULD Plan for it to operate on a permanent, rather than pilot, basis.⁷ In light of the proposal to make the LULD Plan permanent, the Exchange amended Rule 6.32.01 to untie the pilot's effectiveness from that of the LULD Plan and to extend the pilot's effectiveness to the close of business on October 18, 2019.⁸

The Exchange now proposes to amend Rule 6.32.01 to extend the pilot to the close of business on October 18, 2020. This filing does not propose any substantive or additional changes to Rule 6.32.01. The Exchange will use the extension period to develop with the other SROs rules and procedures that would allow for the periodic testing of the performance of the MWCB mechanism, with industry member participation in such testing. The extension will also permit the exchanges to consider enhancements to the MWCB processes such as modifications to the Level 3 process.

The market-wide circuit breaker under Rule 6.32.01 provides an important, automatic mechanism that is invoked to promote stability and investor confidence during a period of significant stress when securities markets experience extreme broad-based declines. As stated above, because all U.S. equity exchanges and FINRA adopted uniform rules on a pilot basis relating to market-wide circuit breakers in 2012 ("MWCB Rules"), which are designed to slow the effects of extreme price movement through coordinated trading halts across securities markets when severe price declines reach levels that may exhaust market liquidity, the

renumbered to Rule 6.32.01, to delay the operative date of the pilot to coincide with the initial date of operations of the Plan); and 85624 (April 11, 2019), 84 FR 16130 (April 17, 2019) (SR-C2-2019-008) (proposal to extend the pilot for certain options pilots, including Rule 6.32.01).

⁷ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 85623 (April 11, 2019), 84 FR 16086 (April 17, 2019) (Order Approving Amendment No. 18).

⁸ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 85624 (April 11, 2019), 84 FR 16130 (April 17, 2019) (SR-C2-2019-008) (proposal to extend the pilot for certain options pilots, including Rule 6.32.01).

Exchange, too, adopted a MWCBC mechanism on a pilot basis pursuant to Rule 6.32.01[sic] Market-wide circuit breakers provide for trading halts in all equities and options markets during a severe market decline as measured by a single-day decline in the S&P 500 Index.

Pursuant to Rule 6.32.01, a market-wide trading halt will be triggered if the S&P 500 Index declines in price by specified percentages from the prior day's closing price of that index. Currently, the triggers are set at three circuit breaker thresholds: 7% (Level 1), 13% (Level 2), and 20% (Level 3). A market decline that triggers a Level 1 or Level 2 halt after 9:30 a.m. ET and before 3:25 p.m. ET would halt market-wide trading for 15 minutes, while a similar market decline at or after 3:25 p.m. ET would not halt market-wide trading. A market decline that triggers a Level 3 halt, at any time during the trading day, would halt market-wide trading until the primary listing market opens the next trading day.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes the proposed rule change is consistent with the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the "Act") and the rules and regulations thereunder applicable to the Exchange and, in particular, the requirements of Section 6(b) of the Act.⁹ Specifically, the Exchange believes the proposed rule change is consistent with the Section 6(b)(5)¹⁰ requirements that the rules of an exchange be 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 regulating, clearing, settling, processing information with respect to, and 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. Additionally, the Exchange believes the proposed rule change

⁹ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

¹⁰ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

is consistent with the Section 6(b)(5)¹¹ requirement that the rules of an exchange not be designed to permit unfair discrimination between customers, issuers, brokers, or dealers.

The MWCB mechanism under Rule 6.32.01 is an important, automatic mechanism that is invoked to promote stability and investor confidence during a period of significant stress when securities markets experience extreme broad-based declines. Extending the MWCB pilot for an additional year would ensure the continued, uninterrupted operation of a consistent mechanism to halt trading across the U.S. markets while the Exchange, with the other SROs, consider and develop rules and procedures that would allow for the periodic testing of the performance of the MWCB mechanism, which would include industry member participation in such testing. The extension will also permit the exchanges to consider enhancements to the MWCB processes such as modifications to the Level 3 process.

The Exchange also believes that the proposed rule change promotes just and equitable principles of trade in that it promotes transparency and uniformity across markets concerning when and how to halt trading in all stocks as a result of extraordinary market volatility. Based on the foregoing, the Exchange believes the benefits to market participants from the MWCB under Rule 6.32.01 should continue on a pilot basis because the MWCB will promote fair and orderly markets, and protect investors and the public interest.

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 because the proposal would ensure the continued, uninterrupted operation of a consistent mechanism to halt trading across the U.S. markets while the Exchange, in conjunction with the other SROs,

¹¹ Id.

consider and develop rules and procedures that would allow for the periodic testing of the performance of the MWCB mechanism. In addition, as noted above, the extension will permit the exchanges to consider enhancements to the MWCB processes such as modifications to the Level 3 process. Further, the Exchange understands that FINRA and other national securities exchanges will file proposals to extend their rules regarding the market-wide circuit breaker pilot. 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

The Exchange neither solicited nor received comments on the proposed rule change.

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; (2) impose any significant burden on competition; and (3) 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)¹³ thereunder.

A proposed rule change filed under Rule 19b-4(f)(6)¹⁴ normally does not become operative for 30 days after the date of filing. However, pursuant to Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii),¹⁵ the

¹² 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

¹³ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6). In addition, Rule 19b-4(f)(6) requires a self-regulatory organization to give the Commission written notice of its intent to file 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. The Commission has waived the pre-filing requirement.

¹⁴ Id.

¹⁵ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii).

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 proposal may become operative upon filing. Extending the pilot for an additional year will allow the uninterrupted operation of the existing pilot to halt trading across the U.S. markets. Therefore, the Commission believes that waiving the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. The Commission hereby designates the proposed rule change to be 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 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 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 e-mail to rule-comments@sec.gov. Please include File Number SR-C2-2019-022 on the subject line.

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).

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-C2-2019-022. This file number should be included on the subject line if e-mail 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 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-C2-2019-022 and should be submitted on or before [insert date 21 days from publication in the Federal Register].

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

Eduardo A. Aleman
Deputy Secretary

¹⁷ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).