

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
(Release No. 34-91699; File No. SR-CboeBZX-2021-031)

April 28, 2021

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Cboe BZX Exchange, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change to Extend the Pilot Programs in Connection with the Listing and Trading of P.M.-Settled Series on Certain Broad-Based Index Options

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 April 16, 2021, Cboe BZX Exchange, Inc. (the “Exchange” or “BZX Options”) 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 BZX Exchange, Inc. (the “Exchange” or “BZX Options”) proposes to extend the pilot programs in connection with the listing and trading of P.M.-settled series on certain broad-based index options. 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/equities/regulation/rule_filings/bzx/), 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

The proposed rule change extends the listing and trading of P.M.-settled series on certain broad-based index options on a pilot basis.⁵ Rule 29.11(a)(6) currently permits the listing and trading of XSP options with third-Friday-of-the-month expiration dates, whose exercise settlement value will be based on the closing index value on the expiration day (“P.M.-settled”)

⁵ The Exchange is authorized to list for trading options that overlie the Mini-SPX Index (“XSP”) and the Russell 2000 Index (“RUT”). See Rule 29.11(a). See also Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 84480 (October 24, 2018), 83 FR 54635 (October 30, 2018) (Notice of Filing of a Proposed Rule Change To Permit the Listing and Trading of P.M.-Settled Series on Certain Broad-Based Index Options on a Pilot Basis) (SR-CboeBZX-2018-066) (“Notice”); 85181 (February 22, 2019), 84 FR 6842 (February 28, 2019) (Notice of Deemed Approval of a Proposed Rule Change To Permit the Listing and Trading of P.M.-Settled Series on Certain Broad-Based Index Options on a Pilot Basis) (SR-CboeBZX-2018-066); 88052 (January 27, 2020), 85 FR 5753 (January 31, 2020) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change To Extend the Pilot Programs in Connection With the Listing and Trading of P.M.-Settled Series on Certain Broad-Based Index Options) (SR-CboeBZX-2020-004); 88788 (April 30, 2020) 85 FR 27008 (May 6, 2020) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change To Extend the Pilot Programs in Connection With the Listing and Trading of P.M.-Settled Series on Certain Broad-Based Index Options) (SR-CboeBZX-2020-038); and 90255 (October 22, 2020) 85 FR 68378 (October 28, 2020) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change To Extend the Pilot Programs in Connection With the Listing and Trading of P.M.-Settled Series on Certain Broad-Based Index Options) (SR-CboeBZX-2020-076).

on a pilot basis set to expire on May 3, 2021 (the “XSPPM Pilot Program”). Rule 29.11(j)(3) also permits the listing and trading of P.M.-settled options on broad-based indexes with weekly expirations (“Weekly”) and end-of-month expirations (“EOMs”) on a pilot basis set to expire on May 3, 2021 (the “Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program”, and together with the XSPPM Pilot Program, the “Pilot Programs”). The Exchange proposes to extend the Pilot Programs through November 1, 2021.

XSPPM Pilot Program

Rule 29.11(a)(6) permits the listing and trading, in addition to A.M.-settled XSP options, of P.M.-settled XSP options with third-Friday-of-the-month expiration dates on a pilot basis. The Exchange believes that continuing to permit the trading of XSP options on a P.M.-settled basis will continue to encourage greater trading in XSP options. Other than settlement and closing time on the last trading day (pursuant to Rule 29.10(a))⁶, contract terms for P.M.-settled XSP options are the same as the A.M.-settled XSP options. The contract uses a \$100 multiplier and the minimum trading increments, strike price intervals, and expirations are the same as the A.M.-settled XSP option series. P.M.-settled XSP options have European-style exercise. The Exchange also has flexibility to open for trading additional series in response to customer demand.

If the Exchange were to propose another extension of the XSPPM Pilot Program or should the Exchange propose to make the XSPPM Pilot Program permanent, the Exchange would submit a filing proposing such amendments to the XSPPM Pilot Program. Further, any

⁶ Rule 29.10(a) permits transactions in P.M.-settled XSP options on their last trading day to be effected on the Exchange between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Eastern time. All other transactions in index options are effected on the Exchange between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. Eastern time.

positions established under the XSPPM Pilot Program would not be impacted by the expiration of the XSPPM Pilot Program. For example, if the Exchange lists a P.M.-settled XSP option that expires after the XSPPM Pilot Program expires (and is not extended), then those positions would continue to exist. If the pilot were not extended, then the positions could continue to exist. However, any further trading in those series would be restricted to transactions where at least one side of the trade is a closing transaction.

As part of the XSPPM Pilot Program, the Exchange submits a pilot report to the Commission at least two months prior to the expiration date of the pilot. This annual report contains an analysis of volume, open interest, and trading patterns. In proposing to extend the XSPPM Pilot Program, the Exchange will continue to abide by the reporting requirements described in the Notice.⁷ Additionally, the Exchange will provide the Commission with any additional data or analyses the Commission requests because it deems such data or analyses necessary to determine whether the XSPPM Pilot Program is consistent with the Exchange Act. The Exchange makes its annual data and analyses previously submitted to the Commission under the Pilot Program public on its website and will continue to make public any data and analyses it submits to the Commission under the Pilot Program in the future. The Exchange also notes that its affiliated options exchange, Cboe Exchange, Inc. (“Cboe Options”) currently has pilots that permit P.M.-settled third Friday-of-the-month XSP options.⁸

Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program

Rule 29.11(j)(1) permits the listing and trading, on a pilot basis, of P.M.-settled options on broad-based indexes with nonstandard expiration dates and is currently set to expire on May

⁷ See supra note 5.

⁸ See Cboe Options Rule 4.13.13.

3, 2021. The Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program permits both Weeklys and EOMs as discussed below. Contract terms for the Weekly and EOM expirations are similar to those of the A.M.-settled broad-based index options, except that the Weekly and EOM expirations are P.M.-settled.

In particular, Rule 29.11(j)(1) permits the Exchange to open for trading Weeklys on any broad-based index eligible for standard options trading to expire on any Monday, Wednesday, or Friday (other than the third Friday-of-the-month or days that coincide with an EOM). Weeklys are subject to all provisions of Rule 29.11 and are treated the same as options on the same underlying index that expire on the third Friday of the expiration month. However, under the Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program, Weeklys are P.M.-settled, and new Weekly series may be added up to and including on the expiration date for an expiring Weekly.

Rule 29.11(a)(2) permits the Exchange to open for trading EOMs on any broad-based index eligible for standard options trading to expire on the last trading day of the month. EOMs are subject to all provisions of Rule 29.11 and treated the same as options on the same underlying index that expire on the third Friday of the expiration month. However, under the Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program, EOMs are P.M.-settled, and new series of EOMs may be added up to and including on the expiration date for an expiring EOM.

As stated above, this proposed rule change extends the Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program for broad-based index options on a pilot basis, for a period of six months. If the Exchange were to propose an additional extension of the Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program or should the Exchange propose to make it permanent, the Exchange would submit additional filings proposing such amendments. Further, any positions established under the Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program would not be impacted by the expiration of the pilot. For example, if

the Exchange lists a Weekly or EOM that expires after the Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program expires (and is not extended), then those positions would continue to exist. However, any further trading in those series would be restricted to transactions where at least one side of the trade is a closing transaction.

As part of the Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program, the Exchange submits a pilot report to the Commission at least two months prior to the expiration date of the pilot. This annual report contains an analysis of volume, open interest, and trading patterns. In proposing to extend the Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program, the Exchange will continue to abide by the reporting requirements described in the Notice.⁹ Additionally, the Exchange will provide the Commission with any additional data or analyses the Commission requests because it deems such data or analyses necessary to determine whether the Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program is consistent with the Exchange Act. The Exchange is in the process of making public on its website data and analyses previously submitted to the Commission under the Pilot Program, and will make public any data and analyses it submits to the Commission under the Pilot Program in the future. The Exchange notes that other exchanges, including its affiliated exchange, Cboe Options, currently have pilots that have weekly and end-of-month expirations.¹⁰

Additional Information

The Exchange believes there is sufficient investor interest and demand in the XSPPM and Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Programs to warrant their extension. The Exchange believes that the Programs have provided investors with additional means of managing their risk exposures and carrying out their investment objectives. The proposed extensions will continue to offer

⁹ See supra note 5.

¹⁰ See Cboe Options Rule 4.13(e); and Phlx Rule 1101A(b)(5).

investors the benefit of added transparency, price discovery, and stability, as well as the continued expanded trading opportunities in connection with different expiration times. The Exchange proposes the extension of the Pilot Programs in order to continue to give the Commission more time to consider the impact of the Pilot Programs. To this point, the Exchange believes that the Pilot Programs have been well-received by its Members and the investing public, and the Exchange would like to continue to provide investors with the ability to trade P.M.-settled XSP options and contracts with nonstandard expirations. All terms regarding the trading of the Pilot Products shall continue to operate as described in the XSPPM and Nonstandard Expirations Notice.¹¹ The Exchange merely proposes herein to extend the terms of the Pilot Programs to November 1, 2021.

Furthermore, the Exchange has not experienced any adverse market effects with respect to the Programs. The Exchange will continue to monitor for any such disruptions or the development of any factors that would cause such disruptions. The Exchange represents it continues to have an adequate surveillance program in place for index options and that the proposed extension will not have an adverse impact on capacity.

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.¹² Specifically, the Exchange believes the proposed rule change is consistent with the Section 6(b)(5)¹³ requirements

¹¹ See supra note 5.

¹² 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

¹³ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

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.

In particular, the Exchange believes that the proposed extension of the Pilot Programs will continue to provide greater opportunities for investors. The Exchange believes that the Pilot Programs have been successful to date. The proposed rule change allows for an extension of the Program for the benefit of market participants. The Exchange believes that there is demand for the expirations offered under the Program and believes that P.M.-settled XSP, Weekly Expirations and EOMs will continue to provide the investing public and other market participants with the opportunities to trade desirable products and to better manage their risk exposure. The proposed extension will also provide the Commission further opportunity to observe such trading of the Pilot Products. Further, the Exchange has not encountered any problems with the Programs; it has not experienced any adverse effects or meaningful regulatory or capacity concerns from the operation of the Pilot Programs. Also, the Exchange believes that such trading pursuant to the XSPPM Pilot Program has not, and will not, adversely impact fair and orderly markets on Expiration Fridays for the underlying stocks comprising the S&P 500 index.

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. Specifically, the Exchange believes that, by extending the expiration of the Pilot Programs, the

proposed rule change will allow for further analysis of the Program and a determination of how the Program shall be structured in the future. In doing so, the proposed rule change will also serve to promote regulatory clarity and consistency, thereby reducing burdens on the marketplace and facilitating investor protection.

Specifically, the Exchange does not believe the continuation of the Pilot Program will impose any unnecessary or inappropriate burden on intramarket competition because it will continue to apply equally to all BZX Options market participants, and the Pilot Products will continue to be available to all BZX Options market participants. The Exchange believes there is sufficient investor interest and demand in the Pilot Programs to warrant its extension. The Exchange believes that, for the period that the Pilot Programs has been in operation, it has provided investors with desirable products with which to trade. Furthermore, as stated above, the Exchange maintains that it has not experienced any adverse market effects or regulatory concerns with respect to the Pilot Programs. The Exchange further does not believe that the proposed extension of the Pilot Programs will impose any burden on intermarket competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act because it only applies to trading on BZX Options. To the extent that the continued trading of the Pilot Products may make BZX Options a more attractive marketplace to market participants at other exchanges, such market participants may elect to become BZX Options market participants.

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; (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 Act¹⁴ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.¹⁵

A proposed rule change filed under Rule 19b-4(f)(6)¹⁶ normally does not become operative prior to 30 days after the date of the filing. However, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii)¹⁷ permits the Commission to 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 immediately upon filing. The Exchange states that waiver of the 30-day operative delay will allow it to extend the Pilot Programs prior to their expiration on May 3, 2021, and maintain the status quo, thereby reducing market disruption. 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 Pilot Programs to continue uninterrupted, thereby avoiding investor confusion that could result from a temporary interruption in the Pilot Programs. Accordingly, the Commission hereby waives the 30-day operative delay and designates the proposed rule change as operative upon filing.¹⁸

¹⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

¹⁵ 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. The Exchange has satisfied this requirement.

¹⁶ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

¹⁷ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii).

¹⁸ 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).

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-CboeBZX-2021-031 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-CboeBZX-2021-031. 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-CboeBZX-2021-031 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.¹⁹

J. Matthew DeLesDernier
Assistant Secretary

¹⁹ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).