

## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-78315; File No. SR-C2-2016-012]

### Self-Regulatory Organizations; C2 Options Exchange, Incorporated; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change Related to the Automated Improvement Mechanism

July 13, 2016.

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the "Act"),<sup>1</sup> and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,<sup>2</sup> notice is hereby given that on July 13, 2016, C2 Options Exchange, Incorporated (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 Act<sup>3</sup> and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.<sup>4</sup> 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 seeks to extend the pilot related to the Automated Improvement Mechanism. The text of the proposed rule change is provided below.

(additions are *italicized*; deletions are [bracketed])

\* \* \* \* \*

#### C2 Options Exchange, Incorporated Rules

\* \* \* \* \*

Rule 6.51. Automated Improvement Mechanism ("AIM")

Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 6.50, a Participant that represents agency orders may electronically execute an order it represents as agent ("Agency Order") against principal interest or against a solicited order provided it submits the Agency Order for execution into the AIM auction ("Auction") pursuant to this Rule.

(a)-(b) No change.

. . . Interpretations and Policies: .01-.02 No change.

.03 Initially, and for at least a Pilot Period expiring on [July 18, 2016]

January 18, 2017, there will be no minimum size requirement for orders to be eligible for the Auction. During this Pilot Period, the Exchange will submit certain data, periodically as required by the Commission, to provide supporting evidence that, among other things, there is meaningful competition for all size orders and that there is an active and liquid market functioning on the Exchange outside of the Auction mechanism. Any raw data which is submitted to the Commission will be provided on a confidential basis.

.04-.09 No change.

\* \* \* \* \*

The text of the proposed rule change is also available on the Exchange's Web site (<http://www.cboe.com/AboutCBOE/CBOELegalRegulatoryHome.aspx>), at the Exchange's Office of the Secretary, 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 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

In December 2009, the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission") approved adoption of C2's rules, including the AIM auction process.<sup>5</sup> AIM exposes certain orders electronically to an auction process to provide these orders with the opportunity to receive an execution at an improved price. The AIM auction is available only for orders that a Trading Permit Holder represents as agent ("Agency Order") and for which a second order of the same size as the Agency Order (and on the opposite side of the market) is also submitted (effectively stopping the Agency Order at a given price).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 61152 (December 10, 2009), 74 FR 66699 (December 16, 2009) (SR-C2-2011-015).

<sup>6</sup> The Exchange first activated AIM on October 17, 2011 for P.M.-settled options on the S&P 500 Index

The Commission approved on a pilot basis the component of AIM that there is no minimum size requirement for orders to be eligible for the auction. In connection with the pilot programs, the Exchange has submitted to the Commission reports providing AIM auction and order execution data. Five one-year extensions to the pilot program have previously become effective.<sup>7</sup>

The proposed rule change merely extends the duration of the pilot program until January 18, 2017. Extending the pilot for an additional six months will allow the Commission more time to consider the potential impact of the pilot program on AIM order executions.

###### 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.<sup>8</sup> Specifically, the Exchange believes the proposed rule change is consistent with the Section 6(b)(5)<sup>9</sup> 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 is consistent with the Section 6(b)(5)<sup>10</sup> requirement that the rules of an exchange not be designed to permit unfair discrimination between customers, issuers, brokers, or dealers.

In particular, the proposed rule change protects investors and the public interest by allowing for an extension of the AIM pilot program, and thus allowing additional time for the

(SPXpm), which are no longer listed on the Exchange. Currently, AIM is not activated for any classes on C2.

<sup>7</sup> See Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 63238 (November 3, 2010), 75 FR 68844 (November 9, 2010) (SR-C2-2010-008); 64929 (July 20, 2011), 76 FR 44635 (July 26, 2011) (SR-C2-2011-015); 67303 (June 28, 2012), 77 FR 39777 (July 5, 2012) (SR-C2-2012-021); 69868 (June 27, 2013), 78 FR 40235 (July 3, 2013) (SR-C2-2013-023); 72569 (July 9, 2014), 79 FR 41337 (July 15, 2014) (SR-C2-2014-014); and 75473 (July 16, 2015), 80 FR 43503 (July 22, 2015) (SR-C2-2015-020).

<sup>8</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

<sup>9</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>1</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

<sup>2</sup> 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

<sup>3</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(iii).

<sup>4</sup> 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

Commission to evaluate the AIM pilot program. The AIM pilot program will continue to allow smaller orders to receive the opportunity for price improvement pursuant to the AIM auction. Any additional data provided would help the Commission determine if there is evidence of meaningful competition for all size orders, significant price improvement for orders going through the AIM and an active and liquid market functioning on the Exchange outside of the AIM Auction.

#### *B. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Burden on Competition*

C2 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 Exchange does not believe the proposed rule change imposes any burden on intramarket competition because it applies to all Trading Permit Holders. All Trading Permit Holders that submit orders into an AIM auction are still subject to the same requirements. In addition, the Exchange does not believe the proposed rule change will impose any burden on intermarket competition, as it merely extends the duration of an existing pilot program, which is available to all market participants through Trading Permit Holders. AIM will continue to function in the same manner as it currently functions for an extended period of time.

#### *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 Act<sup>11</sup> and subparagraph (f)(6) of Rule 19b-4 thereunder.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

<sup>12</sup> 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6). In addition, Rule 19b-4(f)(6) requires the Exchange to give the Commission written notice of the Exchange's 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

A proposed rule change filed under Rule 19b-4(f)(6)<sup>13</sup> normally does not become operative for 30 days after the date of filing. However, pursuant to Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii),<sup>14</sup> the Commission may designate a shorter time if such action is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. The Exchange requested that the Commission waive the 30-day operative delay. The Exchange noted that waiver of the 30-day operative delay will allow the Exchange to extend the pilot program prior to its expiration on July 18, 2016. In addition, the Exchange believes that waiver of the operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest because it will allow for the least amount of market disruption, as the pilot program will continue as it currently does maintaining the status quo.

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 program to continue uninterrupted, thereby avoiding any potential investor confusion that could result from a temporary interruption in the pilot program. Therefore, the Commission designates the proposed rule change to be operative on July 18, 2016.<sup>15</sup>

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:

of the proposed rule change, or such shorter time as designated by the Commission. The Exchange has satisfied this requirement.

<sup>13</sup> 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

<sup>14</sup> 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii).

<sup>15</sup> For purposes only of waiving the operative delay, the Commission has considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. See 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

#### *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](mailto:rule-comments@sec.gov). Please include File Number SR-C2-2016-012 on the subject line.

#### *Paper Comments*

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Brent J. Fields, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-C2-2016-012. 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 Web site (<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 Web site 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; the Commission does not edit personal identifying information from submissions. You should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to File Number SR-C2-2016-012, and should be submitted on or before August 9, 2016.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.<sup>16</sup>

**Jill M. Peterson,**

*Assistant Secretary.*

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<sup>16</sup> 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).