

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
(Release No. 34-72522; File No. SR-FINRA-2014-029)

July 2, 2014

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)

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 23, 2014, 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 and II 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 17, 2015 the implementation of FINRA Rule 4240 (Margin Requirements for Credit Default Swaps). 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.

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

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 July 11, 2013, FINRA filed a proposed rule change for immediate effectiveness extending the implementation of FINRA Rule 4240 to July 17, 2014.⁶

As explained in the Approval Order, FINRA Rule 4240, coterminous with certain

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. 69993 (July 16, 2013), 78 FR 43945 (July 22, 2013) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2013-030).

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, President Obama signed into law the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (the “Dodd-Frank Act”),⁸ Title VII of which established a comprehensive new regulatory framework for swaps and security-based swaps,⁹ including certain CDS. The new legislation was intended, among other 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.

Pursuant to Title VII of the Dodd-Frank Act, the CFTC and the Commission are engaged in ongoing rulemaking with respect to swaps and security-based swaps.¹⁰ The Commission has, among other things, proposed rules with respect to capital, margin and segregation requirements for security-based swap dealers and major security-based swap participants and capital

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

⁸ Pub. L. No. 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”).

¹⁰ See, e.g., Securities Exchange Act Release No. 67177 (June 11, 2012), 77 FR 35625 (June 14, 2012) (Statement of General Policy on the Sequencing of the Compliance Dates for Final Rules Applicable to Security-Based Swaps).

requirements for broker-dealers.¹¹ FINRA believes it is appropriate to extend the Interim Pilot Program for a limited period, to July 17, 2015, in light of the continuing development of the CDS business within the framework of the Dodd-Frank Act and pending the final implementation of new CFTC and SEC rules pursuant to Title VII of that legislation. FINRA is considering proposing additional amendments to the Interim Pilot Program.

FINRA has filed the proposed rule change for immediate effectiveness and has requested that the SEC waive the requirement that the proposed rule change not become operative for 30 days after the date of the filing, such that FINRA can implement the proposed rule change immediately. The proposed rule change will expire on July 17, 2015.

2. Statutory Basis

FINRA believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with the provisions of Section 15A(b)(6) of the Act,¹² 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 within the framework of the Dodd-Frank Act and pending the final implementation of new CFTC and SEC rules pursuant to Title VII of that legislation,

¹¹ See 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).

¹² 15 U.S.C. 78o-3(b)(6).

extending the implementation of the margin requirements as set forth by FINRA Rule 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 17, 2015, in light of the continuing development of the CDS business within the framework of the Dodd-Frank Act and pending the final implementation of new CFTC and SEC rules pursuant to Title VII of that legislation, 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 Act¹³ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.¹⁴

¹³ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

¹⁴ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

FINRA has requested that the Commission waive the five-day pre-filing notice requirement specified in Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii) under the Act.¹⁵

FINRA also has requested that the Commission waive the 30-day operative delay, so that the proposed rule change may become operative immediately upon filing. The Commission believes that waiving the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest.¹⁶ This will allow the Interim Pilot Program to continue without interruption and extend the benefits of a pilot program that the Commission approved and previously extended. For these reasons, the Commission designates the proposed rule change to be operative upon filing.

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.

¹⁵ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii). Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii) requires a self-regulatory organization to submit to 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 a designated by the Commission. The Commission has waived the five-day pre-filing period in this case.

¹⁶ For the purposes only of waiving the 30-day operative delay, the Commission has considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

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-FINRA-2014-029 on the subject line.

Paper Comments:

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

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-FINRA-2014-029. 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 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; 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-FINRA-2014-029 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

Jill M. Peterson
Assistant Secretary

¹⁷ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).