

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
(Release No. 34-76121; File No. SR-FINRA-2015-037)

October 9, 2015

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change to Extend the TRACE Pilot Program in FINRA Rule 6730(e)(4)

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 September 28, 2015, 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 the pilot program in FINRA Rule 6730(e)(4) to October 27, 2017. The pilot program exempts from TRACE reporting transactions in TRACE-Eligible Securities that are executed on a facility of the New York Stock Exchange (“NYSE”), subject to specified conditions.

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

Below is the text of the proposed rule change. Proposed new language is in italics;
proposed deletions are in brackets.

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6700. TRADE REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE ENGINE (TRACE)

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6730. Transaction Reporting

(a) through (d) No Change.

(e) Reporting Requirements for Certain Transactions and Transfers of Securities

The following shall not be reported:

(1) through (3) No Change.

(4) Provided that a data sharing agreement between FINRA and NYSE related to transactions covered by this Rule remains in effect, for a pilot program expiring on [October 23, 2015] October 27, 2017, transactions in TRACE-Eligible Securities that are executed on a facility of NYSE in accordance with NYSE Rules 1400, 1401 and 86 and reported to NYSE in accordance with NYSE's applicable trade reporting rules and disseminated publicly by NYSE.

(5) through (6) No Change.

(f) No Change.

••• **Supplementary Material:** -----

.01 through .02 No Change.

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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

FINRA Rule 6730(e)(4) exempts members from reporting to the Trade Reporting and Compliance Engine (“TRACE”) transactions in TRACE-Eligible Securities⁴ that are executed on a facility of NYSE in accordance with specified NYSE rules and that are reported to NYSE and disseminated publicly, provided that a data sharing agreement between FINRA and NYSE related to transactions covered by FINRA Rule 6730 remains in effect. This exemption operates as a pilot program and is currently scheduled to expire on October 23, 2015.⁵

⁴ Rule 6710(a) provides that a “TRACE-Eligible Security” is a debt security that is United States dollar-denominated and issued by a U.S. or foreign private issuer, and, if a “restricted security” as defined in Securities Act Rule 144(a)(3), sold pursuant to Securities Act Rule 144A; or is a debt security that is U.S. dollar-denominated and issued or guaranteed by an Agency as defined in paragraph (k) or a Government-Sponsored

FINRA is proposing to extend the pilot program for two years until October 27, 2017. Thus, members would continue to be exempted from reporting to TRACE transactions in TRACE-Eligible Securities that are executed on an NYSE facility in accordance with NYSE Rules 1400, 1401 and 86, where such transactions are reported to NYSE in accordance with NYSE's applicable trade reporting rules, and disseminated publicly by NYSE.⁶

FINRA is proposing to extend the pilot to provide additional time to analyze the impact of the exemption and to avoid duplicative reporting requirements for members with regard to transactions in these securities, which otherwise would be subject to trade reporting to both FINRA and NYSE. However, FINRA supports a regulatory construct that, in the future,

Enterprise as defined in paragraph (n). TRACE-Eligible Security” does not include a debt security that is: issued by a foreign sovereign, a U.S. Treasury Security as defined in paragraph (p), or a Money Market Instrument as defined in paragraph (o).

⁵ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 54768 (November 16, 2006), 71 FR 67673 (November 22, 2006) (Order Approving File No. SR-NASD-2006-110) (pilot program in FINRA Rule 6730(e)(4), subject to the execution of a data sharing agreement addressing relevant transactions, became effective on January 9, 2007); Securities Exchange Act Release No. 59216 (January 8, 2009), 74 FR 2147 (January 14, 2009) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2008-065) (pilot program extended to January 7, 2011); Securities Exchange Act Release No. 63673 (January 7, 2011), 76 FR 2739 (January 14, 2011) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2011-002) (pilot program extended to July 8, 2011); Securities Exchange Act Release No. 64665 (June 14, 2011), 76 FR 35933 (June 20, 2011) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2011-025) (pilot program extended to January 27, 2012); Securities Exchange Act Release No. 66018 (December 21, 2011), 76 FR 81549 (December 28, 2011) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2011-072) (pilot program extended to October 26, 2012); Securities Exchange Act Release No. 68076 (October 22, 2012), 77 FR 65431 (October 26, 2012) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2012-047) (pilot program extended to October 25, 2013); and Securities Exchange Act Release No. 70288 (August 29, 2013), 78 FR 54694 (September 5, 2013) (Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of File No. SR-FINRA-2013-038) (pilot program extended to October 23, 2015).

⁶ The success of the pilot program remains dependent on FINRA's ability to continue to effectively conduct surveillance for TRACE-Eligible Securities. The exemption, therefore, continues to be conditional on a data sharing agreement being in effect between FINRA and NYSE related to transactions covered by FINRA Rule 6730.

consolidates all last sale transaction information to provide better price transparency and a more efficient means to engage in market surveillance of TRACE-Eligible Securities transactions.

The proposed extension would allow the pilot program to continue to operate without interruption while FINRA and NYSE continue to assess the effect of the exemption and issues regarding the consolidation of market data, market surveillance and price transparency.

FINRA has filed the proposed rule change for immediate effectiveness. The implementation date will be October 23, 2015.

2. Statutory Basis

FINRA believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with the provisions of Section 15A(b)(6) of the Act,⁷ 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 extension of the pilot protects investors and the public because it continues to ensure that transactions are required to be reported and publicly disseminated; therefore, transparency will be maintained for these transactions. The continued condition that a data sharing agreement remain in effect between NYSE and FINRA for transactions covered by the FINRA Rule 6730(e)(4) exemption allows FINRA to continue to conduct surveillance in TRACE-Eligible Securities. In addition, extending the exemption permits members that are subject to both FINRA's and NYSE's trade reporting requirements to avoid a duplicative regulatory structure and the increased costs that may be incurred as a result of such duplicative requirements.

⁷ 15 U.S.C. 78o-3(b)(6).

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 the extension of the exemptive provision does not result in any burden on competition since it allows members that are subject to both FINRA's and NYSE's trade reporting requirements to avoid a duplicative regulatory structure and the increased costs that may be incurred as a result of such duplicative requirements.

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 after the date of the filing, or such shorter time as the Commission may designate, it has become effective pursuant to 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act⁸ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6)⁹ thereunder.

FINRA has asked the Commission to waive the 30-day operative delay so that the pilot may continue to operate without interruption. The Commission believes that waiving the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. This action will continue to allow the benefits of the pilot—preventing duplicative reporting of transactions

⁸ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

⁹ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6). As required under Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii), FINRA provided the Commission with written notice of its intent to file the proposed rule change, along with a brief description and the 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.

in TRACE-Eligible Securities that occur on NYSE—to continue without interruption.

Therefore, the Commission hereby designates the proposed rule change as operative upon filing.¹⁰

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 e-mail to rule-comments@sec.gov. Please include File Number SR-FINRA-2015-037 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.

¹⁰ For purposes only of waiving the 30-day operative delay, the Commission has considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. See 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-FINRA-2015-037. 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 such filing will also 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-2015-037 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.¹¹

Robert W. Errett
Deputy Secretary

¹¹ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).