

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
(Release No. 34-54386; File No. SR-Amex-2006-75)

August 30, 2006

Self-Regulatory Organizations; American Stock Exchange LLC; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change Relating to the Extension of a Pilot Program that Increases Position and Exercise Limits for Equity Options and Options on the Nasdaq-100 Tracking Stock

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 August 15, 2006, the American Stock Exchange LLC (“Amex” or “Exchange”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) the proposed rule change as described in Items I and II below, which Items have been prepared by the Amex. The Exchange has filed the proposal as a “non-controversial” rule change pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act³ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder,⁴ which renders it effective upon filing with 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

The Exchange seeks a six-month extension of its pilot program increasing the standard position and exercise limits for options on the QQQQ and equity option classes traded on the Exchange (“Pilot Program”). The text of the proposed rule change is available on the Amex’s Web site (<http://www.amex.com>), at the Amex’s principal office, 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).

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 Amex 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 Exchange is requesting to extend its current Pilot Program increasing the standard position and exercise limits for options on the QQQQ and equity option classes traded on the Exchange for a time period of six months from September 1, 2006, through and including March 1, 2007.

In March 2005, the Exchange established the Pilot Program for a six-month period.⁵ Under the Pilot Program, position and exercise limits for options on the QQQQ and equity options classes traded on the Exchange were increased to the following levels:

⁵ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 51316 (March 3, 2005), 70 FR 12251 (March 11, 2005) (notice of filing and immediate effectiveness of File No. SR-Amex-2005-029). The Pilot Program was extended twice and is due to expire on September 1, 2006. See Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 53349 (February 22, 2006), 71 FR 10571 (March 1, 2006) (notice of filing and immediate effectiveness of File No. SR-Amex-2006-07); and 52260 (August 15, 2005), 70 FR 48991 (August 22, 2005) (notice of filing and immediate effectiveness of File No. SR-Amex-2005-082). Telephone conversation between Nyieri Nazarian, Assistant General Counsel, Amex, and Theodore S. Venuti, Attorney, Division of Market Regulation, Commission, on August 16, 2006.

Current Equity Option Contract Limit⁶	Pilot Program Equity Option Contract Limit
13,500 contracts	25,000 contracts
22,500 contracts	50,000 contracts
31,500 contracts	75,000 contracts
60,000 contracts	200,000 contracts
75,000 contracts	250,000 contracts
Current QQQQ Option Contract Limit	Pilot Program QQQQ Option Contract Limit
300,000 contracts	900,000 contracts

The standard position limits were last increased on December 31, 1998.⁷ Since that time there has been a steady increase in the number of accounts that: (a) approach the position limit; (b) exceed the position limit; and (c) are granted an exemption to the standard limit. Several member firms have petitioned the options exchanges to either eliminate position limits, or in lieu of total elimination, increase the current levels and expand the available hedge exemptions. A review of available data indicates that the majority of accounts that maintain sizable positions are in those option classes subject to the 60,000 and 75,000 tier limits. There also has been an increase in the number of accounts that maintain sizable positions in the lower three tiers. In addition, overall volume in the options market has continually increased over the past five years. The Exchange believes that the increase in options volume and lack of evidence of market

⁶ Except when the Pilot Program is in effect.

⁷ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 40875 (December 31, 1998), 64 FR 1842 (January 12, 1999) (File No. SR-Amex-98-22) (approval of increase in position limits and exercise limits).

manipulation occurrences over the past twenty years justifies the proposed increases in the position and exercise limits.

The Exchange has not encountered any problems or difficulties relating to the Pilot Program since its inception. The instant proposed rule change makes no substantive change to the Pilot Program other than to extend it for six months through and including March 1, 2007.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that its proposal is consistent with Section 6(b) of the Act⁸ in general and furthers the objective of Section 6(b)(5) of the Act⁹ in particular, in that it is 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 facilitating transactions in securities, and to remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system.

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

The Exchange believes that the proposed rule change would impose no burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

C. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Comments on the Proposed Rule Change Received from Members, Participants, or Others

No written comments were solicited or received by the Exchange on this proposal.

⁸ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

⁹ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

III. Date of Effectiveness of the Proposed Rule Change and Timing for Commission Action

Because the foregoing rule change does not: (1) 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 of this filing, or such shorter time as the Commission may designate, it has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act¹⁰ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.¹¹

A proposed rule change filed under 19b-4(f)(6) normally may not become operative prior to 30 days after the date of filing.¹² However, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii)¹³ permits the Commission to designate a shorter time if such action is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. The Exchange provided the Commission with written notice of its intent to file this proposed rule change at least five business days prior to the date of filing the proposed rule change. In addition, the Exchange has requested that the Commission waive the 30-day pre-operative delay. The Commission believes that waiving the 30-day pre-operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and in the public interest because it will allow the Pilot Program to continue uninterrupted.¹⁴

At any time within 60 days of the filing of the proposed rule change, the Commission may summarily abrogate such rule change if it appears to the Commission that such action is

¹⁰ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

¹¹ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

¹² 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii).

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ For purposes only of waiving the pre-operative delay, the Commission has considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

necessary or appropriate in the public interest, for the protection of investors, or otherwise in furtherance of the Act.

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 No. SR-Amex-2006-75 on the subject line.

Paper comments:

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Nancy M. Morris, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, Station Place, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File No. SR-Amex-2006-75. 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 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 inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Reference Room. Copies of such filing will also be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the Amex.

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 No. SR-Amex-2006-75 and should be submitted on or before [insert date 21 days from publication in the Federal Register].

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.¹⁵

Nancy M. Morris
Secretary

¹⁵ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).