

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
(Release No. 34-56090; File No. SR-Amex-2007-73)

July 18, 2007

Self-Regulatory Organizations; American Stock Exchange LLC; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change Relating to Extension of the iShares[®] Russell 2000[®] Index Fund Option Pilot Program until January 18, 2008

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 July 11, 2007, 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 substantially prepared by Amex. The Exchange has filed the proposal pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act³ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder,⁴ which renders the proposal 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 proposes to extend the existing pilot program that increases the position and exercise limits for options on the iShares[®] Russell 2000[®] Index Fund (“IWM”) traded on the Exchange (“IWM Pilot Program”). The text of the proposed rule change is available at Amex, the Commission’s Public Reference Room, and www.amex.com.

II. Self-Regulatory Organization’s Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

In its filing with the Commission, Amex included statements concerning the purpose of

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).

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. Amex 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 proposes to extend the IWM Pilot Program and to make non-substantive changes to simplify the rule text describing the IWM Pilot Program. The IWM Pilot Program will allow position and exercise limits for options on IWM to remain at 500,000 contracts on a pilot basis, for an additional six-month period through, January 18, 2008.⁵

The Exchange established the IWM Pilot Program in January 2007.⁶ As noted in that filing, in June 2005, as a result of a 2-for-1 stock split, the position limit for IWM options was temporarily increased from 250,000 contracts (covering 25,000,000 shares) to 500,000 contracts (covering 50,000,000 shares). At the time of the split, the furthest IWM option expiration date was January 2007. Therefore, the temporary increase of the IWM position limit would have reverted to the pre-split level (as provided for in connection with the Rule 904 Pilot Program) of 250,000 contracts after expiration in January 2007, or on January 22, 2007.⁷

The Exchange continues to believe that a position limit of 250,000 contracts is too low and may be a deterrent to the successful trading of IWM options. Importantly, options on IWM

⁵ January 18, 2008 is the third Friday of the month (or expiration Friday), which is the day on which the January 2008 IWM options will expire.

⁶ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 55163 (January 24, 2007), 72 FR 4547 (January 31, 2007).

⁷ See Amex Information Circular #05-0397.

are 1/10th the size of options on the Russell 2000[®] Index (“RUT”), which have a position limit of 50,000 contracts.⁸ Traders who trade IWM options to hedge positions in RUT options are likely to find a position limit of 250,000 contracts in IWM options too restrictive and insufficient to properly hedge. For example, if a trader held 50,000 RUT options and wanted to hedge that position with IWM options, the trader would need – at a minimum – 500,000 IWM options to properly hedge the position. Therefore, the Exchange continues to believe that a position limit of 250,000 contracts is too low and may adversely affect market participants’ ability to provide liquidity in this product.

As the Exchange also described in the proposal that established the IWM Pilot Program, IWM options have grown to become one of the largest options contracts in terms of trading volume. For example, through July 9, 2007, year-to-date industry volume in IWM options has averaged over 513,344 contracts per day, for a total of 61,167,982 million contracts. In addition, through July 9, 2007, Amex volume in IWM options has averaged 25,852 contracts per day for a total of 3,231, 466 contracts.

As a result, the Exchange proposes that options on IWM continue to be subject to position and exercise limits of 500,000 contracts on a pilot basis to run through January 18, 2008.⁹ The Exchange believes that maintaining the increased position and exercise limits for

⁸ See Amex Rule 904C; see also Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 45236 (January 2, 2002), 67 FR 1378 (January 10, 2002) (increase of position and exercise limits to 300,000 for QQQ options); and 51043 (January 14, 2005), 70 FR 3402 (January 24, 2005) (accelerated approval granted to increase position and exercise limits for options on Standard and Poor’s Depositary Receipts[®] from 75,000 to 300,000).

⁹ Pursuant to Amex Rule 905, the exercise limit established for IWM options shall be equivalent to the position limit prescribed for IWM options in Commentary .07 to Amex Rule 904. The increased exercise limits would only be in effect during the pilot period, to run from June 22, 2007 through January 18, 2007.

IWM options will lead to a more liquid and more competitive market environment for IWM options that will benefit customers interested in this product.

The Exchange will require that each member or member organization that maintains a position on the same side of the market in excess of 10,000 contracts in the IWM option class, for its own account or for the account of a customer report certain information.¹⁰ This data would include, but would not be limited to, the option position, whether such position is hedged and if so, a description of the hedge and if applicable, the collateral used to carry the position. Exchange Registered Options Traders and specialists would continue to be exempt from this reporting requirement as market-maker information can be accessed through the Exchange's market surveillance systems. In addition, the general reporting requirement for customer accounts that maintain a position in excess of 200 contracts will remain at this level for IWM options.¹¹

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with and furthers the objectives of Section 6(b)(5) of the Act,¹² in that it is designed to promote just and equitable principles of trade, 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.

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.

¹⁰ See Amex Rule 906(b).

¹¹ See Amex Rule 906(a).

¹² 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

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 with respect to the proposed rule change.

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

Because the forgoing 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 after 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 Act¹³ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.¹⁴

A proposed rule change filed under 19b-4(f)(6) normally may not become operative prior to 30 days after the date of filing.¹⁵ However, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii)¹⁶ 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 requested that the Commission waive the 30-day operative delay. The Commission believes that waiving the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest because such waiver would permit position and exercise limits for options on IWM to continue at 500,000 option contracts for a six-month pilot

¹³ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

¹⁴ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

¹⁵ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii). In addition, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii) requires that a self-regulatory organization 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 as designated by the Commission. The Exchange has satisfied the five-day pre-filing notice requirement.

¹⁶ Id.

period. For this reason, the Commission designates the proposed rule change to be operative upon filing with the Commission.¹⁷

At any time within 60 days of the filing of such proposed rule change the Commission may summarily abrogate 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.

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-Amex-2007-73 on the subject line.

Paper comments:

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

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-Amex-2007-73. 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

¹⁷ 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. See 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

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, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549, on official business days between the hours of 10:00 am and 3:00 pm. Copies of the filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of 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 Number SR-Amex-2007-73 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.¹⁸

Florence E. Harmon
Deputy Secretary

¹⁸ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).