

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
(Release No. 34-54455; File No. SR-NASD-2006-102)

September 15, 2006

Self-Regulatory Organizations; National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change to Allow for the Digital Recording of Arbitration Hearings

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 23, 2006, the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. (“NASD”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) the proposed rule change as described in Items I, II, and III below, which Items have been prepared by NASD. NASD has designated this proposal as concerned solely with the administration of a self-regulatory organization pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A)(iii) of the Act³ and Rule 19b-4(f)(3) thereunder,⁴ which renders the proposed rule change 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

NASD is proposing to amend Rule 10326 of the NASD Code of Arbitration Procedure (“Code”) to allow for the digital or other recording of arbitration hearings.

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(iii).

⁴ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(3).

Below is the text of the proposed rule change.⁵ Proposed new language is underlined.

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10326. Record of Proceedings

(a) A verbatim record by stenographic reporter or a tape, digital, or other recording of all arbitration hearings shall be kept. If a party or parties to a dispute elect to have the record transcribed, the cost of such transcription shall be borne by the party or parties making the request unless the arbitrators direct otherwise. The arbitrators may also direct that the record be transcribed. If the record is transcribed at the request of any party, a copy shall be provided to the arbitrators.

(b) 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, NASD 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. NASD 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

⁵ The rules proposed in this filing will be renumbered as appropriate following Commission approval of the pending revisions to the NASD Code of Arbitration Procedure for Customer Disputes; see Securities Exchange Act Release No. 51856 (June 15, 2005), 70 FR 36442 (June 23, 2005) (SR-NASD-2003-158); and the NASD Code of Arbitration Procedure for Industry Disputes; see Securities Exchange Act Release No. 51857 (June 15, 2005), 70 FR 36430 (June 23, 2005) (SR-NASD-2004-011).

1. Purpose

The purpose of the proposed rule change is to amend Rule 10326 of the Code to allow for the digital or other recording of arbitration hearings.

Rule 10326 of the Code currently requires arbitration hearings to be recorded either by a stenographic reporter or through the use of a tape recorder. Since its inception in 1968, NASD Dispute Resolution has used tape recorders to fulfill this obligation.

In response to constituent suggestions that NASD consider upgrading its recording technology, NASD intends to formally evaluate the digital recording of its arbitration hearings.⁶ The evaluation will help to ascertain how well arbitrators adapt to using digital recording equipment, the quality of the recordings, the appropriate file storage format(s), and the best means for disseminating and storing audio files.

Since Rule 10326 currently does not allow for the use of digital recording equipment, NASD is proposing to revise the rule to expand the permissible methods of recording arbitration hearings to allow for the use of “digital or other” recording devices. This change will allow NASD to use digital recording technology, or another recording method, should such technology prove to be superior to the tape recording system that is currently in use.

2. Statutory Basis

NASD 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 NASD’s rules be designed to

⁶ Digital recording is the recording and storing of audio data through use of one of several computer file formats, such as MP3, AVI, WAV, etc., rather than using tape. These files can be stored electronically, and sent via email.

⁷ 15 U.S.C. 78o-3(b)(6).

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. NASD believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with the provision of the Act noted above because it will provide additional options for the recording of arbitration hearings, which may be better than the current alternatives available under the Code.

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

NASD 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.

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

The foregoing rule change has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A)(iii) of the Act⁸ and subparagraph (f)(3) of Rule 19b-4 thereunder⁹ as it is concerned solely with the administration of a self-regulatory organization.

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 necessary or appropriate in the public interest, for the protection of investors, or otherwise in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.¹⁰

⁸ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(a)(iii).

⁹ 17 C.F.R. 240.19b-4(f)(3).

¹⁰ See Section 19(b)(3)(C) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(C).

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-NASD-2006-102 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-NASD-2006-102. 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 also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of NASD. 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-NASD-2006-102 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.¹¹

Nancy M. Morris
Secretary

¹¹ 17 C.F.R. 200.30-3(a)(12).