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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-90334; File No. SR-NYSEArca-2020-97]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; NYSE Arca, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change Amending the NYSE Arca Equities Fees and Charges to Adopt an Alternative Method to Qualify for the Tier 2 Pricing Tier

November 4, 2020.

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1)¹ of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (“Act”),² and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,³ notice is hereby given that on November 2, 2020, NYSE Arca, Inc. (“NYSE Arca” or “Exchange”) 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 the Exchange. 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 amend the NYSE Arca Equities Fees and Charges (“Fee Schedule”) to adopt an alternative method to qualify for the Tier 2 pricing tier. The Exchange proposes to implement the fee change effective November 2, 2020. The proposed rule change is available on the Exchange’s website at www.nyse.com, at the principal office of the Exchange, 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, the self-regulatory organization 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 those statements may be examined at the places

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 15 U.S.C. 78a.

³ 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

specified in Item IV below. The Exchange has prepared summaries, set forth in sections A, B, and C below, of the most significant parts 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 amend the Fee Schedule to adopt an alternative method to qualify for the Tier 2 pricing tier.

The proposed change responds to the current competitive environment where order flow providers have a choice of where to direct liquidity-providing orders by offering further incentives for ETP Holders⁴ to send additional liquidity to the Exchange.

The Exchange proposes to implement the fee change effective November 2, 2020.

Background

The Exchange operates in a highly competitive market. The Commission has repeatedly expressed its preference for competition over regulatory intervention in determining prices, products, and services in the securities markets. In Regulation NMS, the Commission highlighted the importance of market forces in determining prices and SRO revenues and, also, recognized that current regulation of the market system “has been remarkably successful in promoting market competition in its broader forms that are most important to investors and listed companies.”⁵

While Regulation NMS has enhanced competition, it has also fostered a “fragmented” market structure where trading in a single stock can occur across multiple trading centers. When multiple trading centers compete for order flow in the same stock, the Commission has

⁴ All references to ETP Holders in connection with this proposed fee change include Market Makers.

⁵ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 51808 (June 9, 2005), 70 FR 37496, 37499 (June 29, 2005) (File No. S7-10-04) (Final Rule) (“Regulation NMS”).

recognized that “such competition can lead to the fragmentation of order flow in that stock.”⁶ Indeed, equity trading is currently dispersed across 16 exchanges,⁷ numerous alternative trading systems,⁸ and broker-dealer internalizers and wholesalers, all competing for order flow. Based on publicly-available information, no single exchange currently has more than 18% market share.⁹ Therefore, no exchange possesses significant pricing power in the execution of equity order flow. More specifically, the Exchange currently has less than 10% market share of executed volume of equities trading.¹⁰

The Exchange believes that the ever-shifting market share among the exchanges from month to month demonstrates that market participants can move order flow, or discontinue or reduce use of certain categories of products. While it is not possible to know a firm’s reason for shifting order flow, the Exchange believes that one such reason is because of fee changes at any of the registered exchanges or non-exchange venues to which a firm routes order flow. With respect to non-marketable order flow that would provide liquidity on an Exchange against which market makers can quote, ETP Holders can choose from any one of the 16 currently operating registered exchanges to route such order flow. Accordingly, competitive forces constrain exchange transaction fees that relate to orders that would provide liquidity on an exchange.

In response to the competitive environment described above, the Exchange has established incentives for ETP Holders who submit orders that provide liquidity on the

⁶ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 61358, 75 FR 3594, 3597 (January 21, 2010) (File No. S7-02-10) (Concept Release on Equity Market Structure).

⁷ See Cboe Global Markets, U.S. Equities Market Volume Summary, available at https://markets.cboe.com/us/equities/market_share. See generally <https://www.sec.gov/fast-answers/divisionsmarketregmrexchangeshtml.html>.

⁸ See FINRA ATS Transparency Data, available at <https://otctransparency.finra.org/otctransparency/AtsIssueData>. A list of alternative trading systems registered with the Commission is available at <https://www.sec.gov/foia/docs/atlist.htm>.

⁹ See Cboe Global Markets, U.S. Equities Market Volume Summary, available at http://markets.cboe.com/us/equities/market_share/.

¹⁰ See *id.*

Exchange. The proposed fee change is designed to attract additional order flow to the Exchange by offering an alternative method to qualify for the Tape 2 fees and credits to incentivize ETP Holders to direct their liquidity-providing orders in Tapes A, B and C securities.

Proposed Rule Change

Currently, ETP Holders qualify for Tier 2 fees and credits by providing liquidity an average daily share volume per month of 0.30% or more, but less than 0.70% of US consolidated average daily volume (“US CADV”).¹¹

The Exchange proposes to permit ETP Holders to alternatively qualify for Tier 2 fees and credits if they (a) provide liquidity an average daily share volume per month of 0.25% or more, but less than 0.70% of the US CADV, (b) execute removing volume in Tape B Securities equal to at least 0.40% of US Tape B CADV, and (c) are affiliated with an OTP Holder or OTP Firm that provides an ADV of electronic posted Customer and Professional Customer executions in all issues on NYSE Arca Options (excluding mini options) of at least 0.25% of total Customer equity and ETF option ADV as reported by The Options Clearing Corporation (“OCC”). The Exchange is not proposing any change to the level of fees and credits applicable under Tier 2.

The purpose of this proposed rule change is to incentivize ETP Holders to increase the liquidity-providing orders they send to the Exchange, which would support the quality of price discovery on the Exchange and provide additional liquidity for incoming orders. The Exchange believes that the proposal would create an added incentive for ETP Holders to bring additional order flow to a public market while also providing an alternative method for ETP Holders to qualify for Tier 2 fees and credits. The Exchange further believes that providing fees and credits to ETP Holders that are affiliated with an OTP Holder or OTP Firm could lead to increased

¹¹ US CADV means the United States Consolidated Average Daily Volume for transactions reported to the Consolidated Tape, excluding odd lots through January 31, 2014 (except for purposes of Lead Market Maker pricing), and excludes volume on days when the market closes early and on the date of the annual reconstitution of the Russell Investments Indexes. Transactions that are not reported to the Consolidated Tape are not included in US CADV. See Fee Schedule, footnote 3.

trading on the Exchange's equities and options markets.¹² As noted above, the Exchange operates in a competitive environment, particularly as it relates to attracting non-marketable orders, which add liquidity to the Exchange. Because the proposed alternative method requires that an ETP Holder, in addition to providing liquidity at a level below the current requirement under Tier 2, also remove liquidity in Tape B securities coupled with the required minimum of options volume, the Exchange believes that the proposed change would provide an incentive for a greater number of ETP Holders to send additional liquidity to the Exchange in order to qualify for the Tier 2 fees and credits.

The Exchange believes that, by providing for an additional method of qualifying for Tier 2, this proposed change will provide a greater incentive to attract additional liquidity from additional ETP Holders so as to qualify for the Tier 2 fees and credits. The Exchange does not know how much order flow ETP Holders choose to route to other exchanges or to off-exchange venues. The Exchange anticipates, based on their current trading profile, that a small number of ETP Holders could qualify for Tier 2 under the proposed alternative method if they so choose. However, without having a view of ETP Holders' activity on other exchanges and off-exchange venues, the Exchange has no way of knowing whether this proposed rule change would result in any ETP Holder directing orders to the Exchange in order to qualify for Tier 2 under the proposed alternative method.

The proposed changes are not otherwise intended to address any other issues, and the Exchange is not aware of any significant problems that market participants would have in complying with the proposed changes.

¹² There are currently 53 firms that are both ETP Holders and OTP Holders.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with Section 6(b) of the Act,¹³ in general, and furthers the objectives of Sections 6(b)(4) and (5) of the Act,¹⁴ in particular, because it provides for the equitable allocation of reasonable dues, fees, and other charges among its members, issuers and other persons using its facilities and does not unfairly discriminate between customers, issuers, brokers or dealers.

The Proposed Fee Change is Reasonable

As discussed above, the Exchange operates in a highly fragmented and competitive market. The Commission has repeatedly expressed its preference for competition over regulatory intervention in determining prices, products, and services in the securities markets. Specifically, in Regulation NMS, the Commission highlighted the importance of market forces in determining prices and SRO revenues and, also, recognized that current regulation of the market system “has been remarkably successful in promoting market competition in its broader forms that are most important to investors and listed companies.”¹⁵

The Exchange believes that the ever-shifting market share among the exchanges from month to month demonstrates that market participants can shift order flow, or discontinue to reduce use of certain categories of products, in response to fee changes. With respect to non-marketable orders that provide liquidity on an Exchange, ETP Holders can choose from any one of the 16 currently operating registered exchanges to route such order flow. Accordingly, competitive forces reasonably constrain exchange transaction fees that relate to orders that would provide displayed liquidity on an exchange. Stated otherwise, changes to exchange transaction fees can have a direct effect on the ability of an exchange to compete for order flow.

¹³ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

¹⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(4) and (5).

¹⁵ See Regulation NMS, 70 FR at 37499.

Given this competitive environment, the proposal represents a reasonable attempt to attract additional order flow to the Exchange. In particular, the Exchange believes the proposed amendment to Tier 2 is reasonable because it provides ETP Holders affiliated with an OTP Holder or OTP Firm with an additional way to qualify for the Tier 2 fees and credits through equity and options orders. The Exchange believes that the proposed alternative to qualify for the pricing tier utilizing a lower equity adding volume requirement coupled with a minimum equity removing volume requirement and a minimum options volume requirement is reasonable because the proposal provides firms with greater flexibility to reach volume tiers across asset classes, thereby creating an added incentive for ETP Holders to bring additional order flow to a public exchange, thereby encouraging greater participation and liquidity.

The Exchange notes that volume-based incentives and discounts have been widely adopted by exchanges, including the Exchange, and are reasonable, equitable and not unfairly discriminatory because they are available to all ETP Holders on an equal basis. They also provide additional benefits or discounts that are reasonably related to the value of the Exchange's market quality and associated higher levels of market activity, such as higher levels of liquidity provision and/or growth patterns. Additionally, as noted above, the Exchange operates in a highly competitive market. The Exchange is one of many venues and off-exchange venues to which market participants may direct their order flow, and it represents a small percentage of the overall market. Competing exchanges offer similar tiered pricing structures to that of the Exchange, including schedules of rebates and fees that apply based on members achieving certain volume thresholds. Moreover, the Exchange believes the proposed amendment to Tier 2 is a reasonable means to encourage ETP Holders to increase their liquidity on the Exchange and their participation on NYSE Arca Options. The Exchange believes amending the current pricing tier by adopting an alternative requirement may encourage those ETP Holders who could not previously achieve the pricing tier to increase their order flow on both the Exchange and on NYSE Arca Options. Increased liquidity benefits all investors by deepening the Exchange's

liquidity pool, offering additional flexibility for all investors to enjoy cost savings, supporting the quality of price discovery, promoting market transparency and improving investor protection.

The Proposed Fee Change is an Equitable Allocation of Fees and Credits

The Exchange believes the proposed rule change to adopt an alternative way to qualify for the Tier 2 fees and credits equitably allocates its fees and credits among market participants because it is reasonably related to the value of the Exchange's market quality associated with higher equities and options volume. Additionally, a number of ETP Holders have a reasonable opportunity to satisfy the tier's criteria.¹⁶

The Exchange does not know how much order flow ETP Holders choose to route to other exchanges or to off-exchange venues. The proposed alternative method to qualify for the Tier 2 fees and credits would be available to all ETP Holders that are affiliated with OTP Holders or OTP Firms. There are currently 3 ETP Holders that qualify for the Tier 2 fees and credits. And as noted above, there are 53 firms that are both ETP Holders and OTP Holders and a number of such firms could qualify for Tier 2 pricing tier under the proposed alternative method. However, without having a view of an ETP Holder's activity on other markets and off-exchange venues, the Exchange has no way of knowing whether this proposed rule change would result in any ETP Holder affiliated with an OTP Holder or OTP Firm to increase participation in the Exchange's equities and options markets to qualify for the Tier 2 fees and credits. The Exchange cannot predict with certainty how many ETP Holders would avail themselves of this opportunity. The Exchange believes the proposed amended tier could provide an incentive for other ETP Holders to submit additional liquidity on the Exchange and on NYSE Arca Options to qualify for the Tier 2 fees and credits. To the extent an ETP Holder participates on the Exchange but not on NYSE Arca Options, the Exchange believes that the proposal is still reasonable, equitable and not unfairly discriminatory with respect to such ETP Holder based on the overall benefit to the

¹⁶ See supra note 12.

Exchange resulting from the success of NYSE Arca Options. In particular, such success would allow the Exchange to continue to provide and potentially expand its existing incentive programs to the benefit of all participants on the Exchange, whether they participate on NYSE Arca Options or not.

The proposal neither targets nor will it have a disparate impact on any particular category of market participant. Rather, should an ETP Holder not meet the proposed criteria, the ETP Holder can still qualify for the same credit by meeting the current criteria which does not require it to have any affiliation with an OTP Holder or OTP Firm and conduct options trading on NYSE Arca Options.

The Proposed Fee Change is not Unfairly Discriminatory

The Exchange believes that the proposal is not unfairly discriminatory. In the prevailing competitive environment, ETP Holders are free to disfavor the Exchange's pricing if they believe that alternatives offer them better value.

The Exchange believes it is not unfairly discriminatory to provide an alternative way to qualify for per share fees and credits, as each would be provided on an equal basis to all ETP Holders that are affiliated with an OTP Holder or OTP Firm that meet the proposed alternative requirement of Tier 2. Further, the Exchange believes the proposed alternative requirement would incentivize ETP Holders that are affiliated with an OTP Holder or OTP Firm to send their options orders to the Exchange to qualify for the pricing tier. The Exchange also believes that the proposed change is not unfairly discriminatory because it is reasonably related to the value to the Exchange's market quality associated with higher volume.

The proposal to amend the volume requirement to qualify for the Tier 2 fees and credits neither targets nor will it have a disparate impact on any particular category of market participant. The proposal does not permit unfair discrimination because the amended threshold would be applied to all similarly situated ETP Holders, who would all be eligible for the same

fees and credits on an equal basis. Accordingly, no ETP Holder already operating on the Exchange would be disadvantaged by this allocation of fees.

Finally, the submission of orders to the Exchange is optional for ETP Holders in that they could choose whether to submit orders to the Exchange and, if they do, the extent of its activity in this regard. The Exchange believes that it is subject to significant competitive forces, as described below in the Exchange's statement regarding the burden on competition.

For the foregoing reasons, the Exchange believes that the proposal is consistent with the Act.

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

In accordance with Section 6(b)(8) of the Act,¹⁷ the Exchange believes that the proposed rule change would not impose any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. Instead, as discussed above, the Exchange believes that the proposed changes would encourage the submission of additional liquidity to a public exchange, thereby promoting market depth, price discovery and transparency and enhancing order execution opportunities for ETP Holders. As a result, the Exchange believes that the proposed change furthers the Commission's goal in adopting Regulation NMS of fostering integrated competition among orders, which promotes "more efficient pricing of individual stocks for all types of orders, large and small."¹⁸

Intramarket Competition. The proposed change is designed to attract additional equities and options order flow to the Exchange. The Exchange believes that the proposed amendment to the volume requirement under Tier 2 would continue to incentivize market participants to direct providing displayed order flow to the Exchange and greater participation on NYSE Arca Options. Greater liquidity benefits all market participants on the Exchange by providing more trading opportunities and encourages ETP Holders to send orders to the Exchange, thereby

¹⁷ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(8).

¹⁸ See Regulation NMS, 70 FR at 37498-99.

contributing to robust levels of liquidity, which benefits all market participants. The proposed volume requirement would be applicable to all similarly-situated market participants, and, as such, the proposed change would not impose a disparate burden on competition among market participants on the Exchange. As such, the Exchange believes the proposed amendments to its Fee Schedule would not impose any burden on intramarket competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

Intermarket Competition. The Exchange operates in a highly competitive market in which market participants can readily choose to send their orders to other exchange and off-exchange venues if they deem fee levels at those other venues to be more favorable. As noted above, the Exchange's market share of intraday trading (i.e., excluding auctions) is currently less than 10%. In such an environment, the Exchange must continually adjust its fees and rebates to remain competitive with other exchanges and with off-exchange venues. Because competitors are free to modify their own fees and credits in response, and because market participants may readily adjust their order routing practices, the Exchange does not believe its proposed fee change can impose any burden on intermarket competition.

The Exchange believes that the proposed change could promote competition between the Exchange and other execution venues, including those that currently offer similar order types and comparable transaction pricing, by encouraging additional orders to be sent to the Exchange for execution.

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

The foregoing rule change is effective upon filing pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A)¹⁹ of

¹⁹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

the Act and subparagraph (f)(2) of Rule 19b-4²⁰ thereunder, because it establishes a due, fee, or other charge imposed by the Exchange.

At any time within 60 days of the filing of such 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 under Section 19(b)(2)(B)²¹ of the Act to determine whether the proposed rule change 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-NYSEArca-2020-97 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.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-NYSEArca-2020-97. 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

²⁰ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(2).

²¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(2)(B).

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 the filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the Exchange. All comments received will be posted without change. Persons submitting comments are cautioned that we do not redact or edit personal identifying information from comment submissions. You should submit only information that

you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to File Number SR-NYSEArca-2020-97, 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.²²

J. Matthew DeLesDernier
Assistant Secretary

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²² 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).