

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.²¹⁷

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-47623; File No. SR-NASD-2003-65]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change by the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. To Extend the Pilot Period for the Regulatory Fee and the Trading Activity Fee

April 3, 2003.

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 March 31, 2003, 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 the NASD. The NASD filed the proposal pursuant to section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act,³ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder,⁴ which renders the proposal effective upon filing with the Commission.⁵ 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 NASD proposes to extend the pilot period for the Trading Activity Fee ("TAF") through April 15, 2003. The TAF (as originally proposed in SR-NASD-2002-98) is in effect, and is set to expire on April 1, 2003.⁶ The NASD is requesting the Commission approve SR-NASD-2002-148, granting

permanent approval of the TAF, before the expiration of the TAF pilot on April 15, 2003.⁷ If the Commission does not approve SR-NASD-2002-148 before the expiration of the TAF pilot on April 15, 2003, the trading fee component of the member regulatory pricing structure will revert to Section 8 of Schedule A to the NASD By-Laws, as amended.

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 NASD included statements concerning the purpose of and basis for its proposal and discussed any comments it received regarding the proposal. The text of these statements may be examined at the places specified in Item IV below. The 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

1. Purpose

On July 24, 2002, the NASD filed SR-NASD-2002-98, which proposed a new member regulatory pricing structure, including the TAF, to replace the existing trading fee contained in section 8 of Schedule A to the NASD By-Laws.⁸ SR-NASD-2002-98 is currently in effect. Assessments under the TAF were effective as of October 1, 2002, payable January 15, 2003.⁹ On October 18, 2002, the NASD established a sunset provision whereby the TAF established by SR-NASD-2002-98 would cease to exist after December 31, 2002.¹⁰ Upon expiration of SR-NASD-2002-98, the member regulatory pricing structure was

to revert to Section 8 of Schedule A to the NASD By-Laws, as amended.

On December 24, 2002, the NASD extended the TAF pilot through March 1, 2003. On February 28, 2002, the NASD again extended the TAF pilot through April 1, 2003. With the instant proposed rule change, the NASD is extending the TAF pilot through April 15, 2003, to allow the Commission additional time to review issues presented by the proposal to make the TAF permanent (SR-NASD-2002-148). The NASD requests that the Commission approve SR-NASD-2002-148 before the expiration of the TAF pilot on April 15, 2003.

2. Statutory Basis

The NASD believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with the Act, including section 15A(b)(5),¹¹ which requires, among other things, that the NASD's rules provide for the equitable allocation of reasonable dues, fees, and other charges among members and issuers and other persons using any facility or system that the NASD operates or controls.

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

The 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, as amended.

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

Written comments on this proposed rule change were neither solicited nor received. Written comments, however, have been solicited by publication in the **Federal Register** of SR-NASD-2002-98, SR-NASD-2002-147, SR-NASD-2002-148, SR-NASD-2002-182, and SR-NASD-2003-26.

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 from the date on which it was filed, or such shorter time as the Commission may designate, it has become effective pursuant to section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act¹² and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.¹³

¹¹ 15 U.S.C. 78o-3(b)(5).

¹² 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

¹³ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

²¹⁷ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

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).

⁵ The Commission waived the five-day pre-filing notice requirement. See Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii). 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii). The NASD also asked the Commission to waive the 30-day operative delay.

⁶ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 46416 (August 23, 2002), 67 FR 55901 (August 30, 2002) (SR-NASD-2002-98). See also Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 47112 (December 31, 2002), 68 FR 824 (January 7, 2003) (SR-NASD-2002-182) and 47436 (March 4, 2003), 68 FR 11422 (March 10, 2003) (SR-NASD-2003-26).

⁷ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 46817 (November 12, 2002), 67 FR 69785 (November 19, 2002) (SR-NASD-2002-148).

⁸ Securities Exchange Act Release No. 46416 (August 23, 2002), 67 FR 55901 (August 30, 2002) (SR-NASD-2002-98). See also Securities Exchange Act Release No. 46417 (August 23, 2002), 67 FR 55893 (August 30, 2002) (SR-NASD-2002-99). The NASD also published three *Notices to Members* describing the proposed changes and addressing interpretive questions posed by NASD members. See *Notices to Members* 02-41 (July 2002), 02-63 (September 2002), and 02-75 (November 2002).

⁹ Member firms were required to pay the TAF in accordance with the pilot program (for the first quarter starting October 1, 2002) by no later than January 15, 2003, and thereafter, on a monthly basis.

¹⁰ At the same time, the NASD filed a new proposed rule change (SR-NASD-2002-148), substantially similar to SR-NASD-2002-98, but filed under section 19(b)(1) of the Act, to allow for additional comment.