

traded on the NYSE. However, because the ABS Securities are similar to those repackaging transaction, except that the Trust will own more than one corporate debt obligation (in this case, also Treasury Securities or GSE Securities) and, in the single repackaging transactions, there is no need for an Interest Distribution Agreement because the timing of the payment of interest on the underlying debt obligation matches the obligation to distribute interest on the repackaged securities, there are several issues regarding the trading of this type of product that the Exchange must address.

The Commission notes that the Exchange's rules and procedures that address the special concerns attendant to the trading of hybrid securities will be applicable to the ABS Securities. In particular, by imposing the hybrid listing standards, suitability, disclosure, and compliance requirements noted above, the Commission believes the Exchange has addressed adequately the potential problems that could arise from the hybrid nature of the ABS Securities. Moreover, the Commission notes that the Exchange will distribute a circular to its membership calling attention to the specific risks associated with the ABS Securities.

The Commission notes that the ABS Securities are dependent upon the individual credit of the issuers of the Underlying Securities. To some extent this credit risk is minimized by the Exchange's listing standards in Section 107A of the Company Guide which provide that only issuers satisfying asset and equity requirements may issue securities such as the ABS Securities. In addition, the Exchange's "Other Securities" listing standards further provide that there is no minimum holder requirement if the securities are traded in thousand dollar denominations.²⁷ The Commission notes that the Exchange has represented that the ABS Securities will be listed in \$1000 denominations with its existing debt floor trading rules applying to the trading. In any event, financial information regarding the issuers of the Underlying Securities will be publicly available.²⁸

Due to the pass-through and passive nature of the ABS Securities, the Commission does not object to the Exchange's reliance on the assets and stockholder equity of the Underlying Securities rather than the Trust to meet the requirement in Section 107A of the Company Guide. The Commission notes

that the distribution and principal amount/aggregate market value requirements found in Sections 107A(b) and (c), respectively, will otherwise be met by the Trust as issuer of the ABS Securities. Thus, the ABS Securities will conform to the initial listing guidelines under Section 107A and continued listing guidelines under Sections 1001–1003 of the Company Guide, except for the assets and stockholder equity characteristics of the Trust. At the time of issuance, the Commission also notes that the ABS Securities will receive an investment grade rating from an NRSRO.

The Commission also believes that the listing and trading of the ABS Securities should not unduly impact the market for the Underlying Securities or raise manipulative concerns. As discussed more fully above, the Exchange represents that, in addition to requiring the issuers of the Underlying Securities meet the Exchange's Section 107A listing requirements (in the case of Treasury securities, the Exchange will rely on the fact that the issuer is the U.S. Government rather than the asset and stockholder tests found in Section 107A), the Underlying Securities will be required to meet or exceed the Exchange's Bond and Debenture Listing Standards pursuant to Section 104 of the Amex's Company Guide, which among other things, requires that underlying debt instrument receive at least an investment grade rating of "B" or equivalent from an NRSRO.

Furthermore, at least 75% of the basket is required to contain Underlying Securities from issuances of \$100 million or more. The Amex also represents that the basket of Underlying Securities will not be managed and will remain static over the term of the ABS securities. In addition, the Amex's surveillance procedures will serve to deter as well as detect any potential manipulation.

The Commission notes that the investors may obtain price information on the Underlying Securities through market vendors such as Bloomberg, L.P., or through websites such as www.investinbonds.com (for Underlying Corporate Bonds) and <http://publicdebt.treas.gov> and <http://www.govpx.com> (for Treasury Securities and GSE Securities, respectively).

The Commission finds good cause for approving the proposed rule change, as amended, prior to the thirtieth day after the date of publication of notice thereof in the **Federal Register**. The Amex has requested accelerated approval because this product is similar to several other equity-linked instruments currently

listed and traded on the Amex,²⁹ and other asset-backed securities currently listed and traded on the NYSE.³⁰ The Commission believes that the ABS Securities will provide investors with an additional investment choice and that accelerated approval of the proposal will allow investors to begin trading the ABS Securities promptly. Additionally, the ABS Securities will be listed pursuant to Amex's existing hybrid security listing standards as described above. Based on the above, the Commission believes that there is good cause, consistent with Sections 6(b)(5) and 19(b)(2) of the Act³¹ to approve the proposal, as amended, on an accelerated basis.

V. Conclusion

Is it therefore ordered, pursuant to Section 19(b)(2) of the Act,³² that the proposed rule change (SR-Amex-2003-25) is hereby approved on an accelerated basis.

For the Commission by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.³³

Margaret H. McFarland,

Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 03–10789 Filed 4–30–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8010–01–U

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34–47729; File No. SR-Amex-00–30]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Order Approving Proposed Rule Change and Notice of Filing and Order Accelerating Approval to Amendment No. 7 to the Proposed Rule Change by the American Stock Exchange LLC Relating to the Allocation of and Participation in Options Trades

April 24, 2003.

I. Introduction

On May 30, 2000, the American Stock Exchange LLC ("Amex" or "Exchange") submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission"), pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act")¹ and Rule 19b–4 thereunder,² a proposed rule change relating to the allocation of and participation in options trades. The proposed rule

²⁹ See *supra* note 10.

³⁰ See, e.g., *supra* note 11.

³¹ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5) and 78s(b)(2).

³² 15 U.S.C. 78o–3(b)(6) and 78s(b)(2).

³³ 17 CFR 200.30–3(a)(12).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b–4.

²⁷ See Company Guide Section 107A.

²⁸ The ABS Securities will be registered under Section 12 of the Act.