

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
(Release No. 34-98261; File No. SR-PEARL-2023-38)

August 31, 2023

Self-Regulatory Organizations; MIAX PEARL, LLC; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change to Amend Exchange Rule 402 (Criteria for Underlying Securities) to Accelerate the Listing of Options on Certain IPOs

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, 2023, MIAX PEARL, LLC (“MIAX Pearl” 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 prepared by the self-regulatory organization. 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 is filing a proposal to amend Exchange Rule 402. The text of the proposed rule change is available on the Exchange’s website at <https://www.miaxglobal.com/markets/us-options/pearl-options/rule-filings>, at MIAX Pearl’s principal office, 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 Exchange 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

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

in Item IV below. The Exchange 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 amend Exchange Rule 402, Criteria for Underlying Securities, to permit an underlying security having a market capitalization of at least \$3 billion based upon the offering price of its initial public offering, to be listed and traded starting on or after the second business day following the initial public offering day. The Exchange is proposing a listing rule change that is substantially similar in all material respects to the proposal approved for NYSE American LLC (“NYSE American”).³ Following discussions with other exchanges and a cross-section of industry participants and in coordination with the Listed Options Market Structure Working Group (“LOMSWG”) (collectively, the “Industry Working Group”), NYSE American filed a proposed rule change,⁴ which was recently approved, to modify the standard for the listing and trading of options on “covered securities” to reduce the time to market. At this time, the Exchange proposes to adopt an identical rule.

Rule 402 sets forth the guidelines to be considered in evaluating for option transactions underlying securities that are “covered securities,” as defined in Section 18(b)(1)(A) of the Securities Act of 1933 (hereinafter “covered security” or “covered securities”).⁵ Currently, the

³ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 98013 (July 27, 2023) 88 FR 50927 (August 2, 2023)(SR-NYSEAMER-2023-27)(Order Granting Approval of a Proposed Rule Change to Amend Rule 915 (Criteria for Underlying Securities) to Accelerate the Listing of Options on Certain IPOs).

⁴ Id.

⁵ Rule 402(a) requires that, for underlying securities to be eligible for option transactions, such securities must be duly registered and be an “NMS stock” as defined in Rule 600 of Regulation NMS under the Act and will be characterized by a substantial number of outstanding shares which are widely held and actively traded. See Rule 402(a)(1) and (2).

Exchange permits the listing of an option on an underlying covered security that, amongst other things, has a market price of at least \$3.00 per share for the previous three consecutive business days preceding the date on which the Exchange submits a certificate to The Options Clearing Corporation (“OCC”) to list and trade options on the underlying security (the “three-day lookback period”).⁶ Under the current rule, if an initial public offering (“IPO”) occurs on a Monday, the earliest date the Exchange could submit its listing certificate to OCC would be on Thursday, with the market price determined by the closing price over the three-day lookback period from Monday through Wednesday. The option on the IPO’d security would then be eligible for trading on the Exchange on Friday (i.e., within four business days of the IPO inclusive of the day the listing certificate is submitted to OCC).⁷

The Exchange notes that the three-day look back period helps ensure that options on underlying securities may be listed and traded in a timely manner while also allowing time for OCC to accommodate the certification request. However, there are certain large IPOs that issue high-priced securities -- well above the \$3.00 per share threshold -- that would obviate the need for the three-day lookback period. In this regard, the Industry Working Group has recently identified proposed changes to Rule 402(b)(5)(i) that would help options on covered securities that have a market capitalization of at least \$3 billion based upon the offering price of its IPO come to market earlier. The proposed change, which is intended to be harmonized across options exchanges, is designed to provide investors the opportunity to hedge their interest in IPO

⁶ See Rule 402(b)(5)(i). The Exchange is not proposing to make any changes to the guidelines for listing securities that are not a “covered security.” See Rule 402(b)(5)(ii).

⁷ See proposed Rule 402(b)(5)(i). The Exchange proposes a non-substantive change to number the existing and proposed criteria for covered securities as (A) and (B) of paragraph (5)(i). See proposed Rule 402(b)(5)(i).

investments in a shorter amount of time than what is currently permitted.⁸ The Exchange believes that options serve a valuable tool to the trading community and help markets function efficiently by mitigating risk. To that end, the Exchange believes that the absence of options in the early days after an IPO may heighten volatility in the trading of IPO'd securities.

Accordingly, the Exchange proposes to modify Rule 402 to waive the three-day lookback period for covered securities that have a market capitalization of at least \$3 billion based upon the offering price of the IPO of such securities and to allow options on such securities to be listed and traded starting on or after the second business day following the initial public offering day (i.e., not inclusive of the day of the IPO).⁹ NYSE American has stated that it has reviewed trading data for IPO'd securities dating back to 2017 and is unaware of any such security that achieved a market capitalization of \$3 billion based upon the offering price of its IPO that would not have also qualified for listing options based on the three-day lookback requirement. Specifically, NYSE American has determined that 202 of the 1,179 IPOs that took place between January 1, 2017, and October 21, 2022, met the \$3 billion market capitalization/IPO offering price threshold. Options on all 202 of those IPO shares subsequently satisfied the three-day lookback requirement for listing and trading, i.e., none of these large IPOs closed below the \$3.00/share threshold during its first three days of its trading. As such, the Exchange believes the

⁸ While the Exchange acknowledges that market participants may utilize options for speculative purposes (in addition to as a hedging tool), the Exchange believes (as set forth below) that its existing surveillance technologies and procedures adequately address potential violations of exchange rules and federal securities laws applicable to trading on the Exchange.

⁹ The Exchange acknowledges that the Options Listing Procedures Plan ("OLPP") requires that the listing certificate be provided to OCC no earlier than 12:01 a.m. and no later than 11:00 a.m. (Chicago time) on the trading day prior to the day on which trading is to begin. See the OLPP, at p. 3., available here: https://ncuoccblobdev.blob.core.windows.net/media/theocc/media/clearing-services/services/options_listing_procedures_plan.pdf. The OLPP is a national market system plan that, among other things, sets forth procedures governing the listing of new options series.

proposed capitalization threshold of \$3 billion based upon the offering price of its IPO is appropriate.

Under the proposed rule, if an IPO for a company with a market capitalization of \$3 billion based upon the offering price of its IPO occurs on a Monday, the Exchange could submit its listing certificate to OCC (to list and trade options on the IPO'd security) as soon as all the other requirements for listing are satisfied. If, on Tuesday, all requirements are deemed satisfied, the IPO'd security could then be eligible for trading on the Exchange on Wednesday (i.e., starting on or after the second business day following the IPO day). Thus, the proposal could potentially accelerate the listing of options on IPO'd securities by two days.

The Exchange believes the proposed change would allow options on IPO'd securities to come to market sooner without sacrificing investor protection. The Exchange represents that trading in IPO'd securities -- like all other securities traded on the Exchange -- is subject to surveillances administered by the Exchange and to cross-market surveillances administered by FINRA on behalf of the Exchange. Those surveillances are designed to detect violations of Exchange rules and applicable federal securities laws.¹⁰ The Exchange represents that those surveillances are adequate to reasonably monitor Exchange trading of IPO'd securities in all trading sessions and to reasonably deter and detect violations of Exchange rules and federal securities laws applicable to trading on the Exchange.¹¹ As such, the Exchange believes that its existing surveillance technologies and procedures, coupled with NYSE American's findings

¹⁰ FINRA conducts cross-market surveillances on behalf of the Exchange pursuant to a regulatory services agreement. The Exchange is responsible for FINRA's performance under this regulatory services agreement.

¹¹ See supra note 8.

related to the IPOs reviewed as described herein, adequately address potential concerns regarding possible manipulation or price stability.

Implementation Date

The Exchange will announce the effective date of the proposed change by Notice distributed to all Members.¹² The Exchange will coordinate the effective date to coincide with the implementation of the proposed change on the other options exchanges.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that the proposed rule changes are consistent with Section 6(b) of the Act¹³ in general, and furthers the objectives of Section 6(b)(1) of the Act¹⁴ in particular, in that they are designed to enforce compliance by the Exchange's Equity Members¹⁵ and persons associated with its Equity Members, with the provisions of the rules of MIAX Pearl Equities. In particular, the Exchange believes that the proposed rule changes will provide greater clarity to Equity Members and the public regarding the Exchange's Rules by providing consistency within the Exchange's Rulebook. The proposed changes will ensure the hierarchical heading scheme aligns throughout the Exchange's Rulebook. The proposed changes will also make it easier for Equity Members to interpret the Exchange's Rulebook.

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

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule changes will impose any burden on competition not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. Specifically,

¹² The term "Member" means an individual or organization approved to exercise the trading rights associated with a Trading Permit. Members are deemed "members" under the Exchange Act. See Exchange Rule 100.

¹³ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

¹⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(1).

¹⁵ The term "Equity Member" is a Member authorized by the Exchange to transact business on MIAX Pearl Equities. See Exchange Rule 1901.

the Exchange believes the proposed changes will not impose any burden on intra-market competition as there is no functional change to the Exchange's System¹⁶ and because the rules of the Exchange apply to all MIAX Pearl Equities participants equally. The proposed rule change will have no impact on competition as it is not designed to address any competitive issue but rather is designed to remedy minor non-substantive issues and provide added clarity to the rule text of Exchange Rules 2614, 2617, and 2626. In addition, the Exchange does not believe the proposal will impose any burden on inter-market competition as the proposal does not address any competitive issues and is intended to protect investors by providing further transparency regarding the Exchange's functionality.

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

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 after the date of the filing, or such shorter time as the Commission may designate if consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest,

¹⁶ The term "System" means the automated trading system used by the Exchange for the trading of securities. See Exchange Rule 100.

it has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act¹⁷ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6)¹⁸ thereunder.

A proposed rule change filed under Rule 19b-4(f)(6)¹⁹ normally does not become operative prior to 30 days after the date of the filing. However, pursuant to Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii),²⁰ the Commission may designate a shorter time if such action is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. The Exchange has asked the Commission to waive the 30-day operative delay so that the proposal may become operative immediately upon filing. The Exchange states that a waiver of the operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest because it will ensure fair competition among the exchanges by allowing the Exchange to allow options on IPO'd securities to come to market sooner (i.e., at least two business days post-IPO not inclusive of the day of the IPO) without sacrificing investor protection. The Commission believes that waiver of the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest because the proposed rule change does not raise any new or novel issues. Accordingly, the Commission hereby waives the 30-day operative delay and designates the proposed rule change as operative upon filing.²¹

At any time within 60 days of the filing of the 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

¹⁷ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(iii).

¹⁸ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6). In addition, Rule 19b-4(f)(6) requires the Exchange to give 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 this requirement.

¹⁹ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

²⁰ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii).

²¹ For purposes only of waiving the 30-day operative delay, the Commission has also considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. See 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

otherwise in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. If the Commission takes such action, the Commission shall institute proceedings to determine whether the proposed rule 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 (<https://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>); or
- Send an email to rule-comments@sec.gov. Please include file number SR-PEARL-2023-38 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-PEARL-2023-38. This file number should be included on the subject line if email 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 (<https://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 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 a.m. and 3 p.m. Copies of the filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the Exchange. Do not include personal identifiable information in submissions; you should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. We may redact in part or withhold entirely from publication submitted material that is obscene or subject to copyright protection. All submissions should refer to file number SR-PEARL-2023-38 and should be submitted on or before [INSERT DATE 21 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*].

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.²²

Sherry R. Haywood,

Assistant Secretary.

²² 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).