

best and conservative estimation of potential initial future revenues from data product subscriptions is \$250,000. Together with the estimated reporting fee revenues discussed above, FINRA estimates approximately \$4.2 million in annual revenue from reporting fees and \$250,000 in revenue from data product subscriptions for total annual revenue of approximately \$4.5 million. This aligns with FINRA's estimated incremental direct ongoing costs of approximately \$4.5 million per year from 2026 through 2028, and approximately \$4.4 million in incremental direct ongoing costs thereafter.

Alternatives Considered

In developing the proposed rule change, FINRA considered various alternatives and the potential costs and benefits of those alternatives. Among other things, FINRA considered a volume-based reporting fee structure where reporting fees would vary depending on loan size. However, because loan size may not be proportional to the potential revenue from reportable securities loans, a volume-based reporting fee structure may create distortions in the market. For example, the ratio of lending revenue to loan volume for short-term financing or balance sheet management is generally lower than for securities lending transactions used for accessing hard-to-borrow securities. Volume-based reporting fees also could result in a substantial concentration of reporting fees on Covered Persons with a higher share of large-volume loans. Therefore, FINRA believes that a flat fee rate per report will distribute fees in a more equitable manner across market participants.

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) of the Act⁷⁹ and paragraph (f)(2) of Rule 19b-4 thereunder.⁸⁰ 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 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-FINRA-2024-020 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-FINRA-2024-020. 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 FINRA. 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-FINRA-2024-020 and

should be submitted on or before December 18, 2024.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.⁸¹

Sherry R. Haywood,
Assistant Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2024-27742 Filed 11-26-24; 8:45 am]

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-101699; File No. SR-SAPPHIRE-2024-36]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; MIAX Sapphire, LLC; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change To Amend Exchange Rule 402, Criteria for Underlying Securities To List and Trade Options on the iShares Bitcoin Trust (the "Trust")

November 21, 2024.

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 November 18, 2024, MIAX Sapphire, LLC ("Exchange") filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") a proposed rule change as described in Items I and II 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 Exchange Rule 402, Criteria for Underlying Securities. The text of the proposed rule change is available on the Exchange's website at <https://www.miaxglobal.com/markets/us-options/miax-sapphire/rule-filings>, at the Exchange'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

⁸¹ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

⁷⁹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

⁸⁰ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(2).

statements may be examined at the places specified 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,³ to allow the Exchange to list and trade options on the iShares Bitcoin Trust (the "Trust"), designating the Trust as appropriate for options trading on the Exchange.⁴ This is a competitive filing based on a similar proposal submitted by Nasdaq ISE, LLC ("ISE") and approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission").⁵

Current Exchange Rule 402(i)(4) provides that securities deemed appropriate for options trading include shares or other securities ("Exchange Traded Fund Shares") that are traded on a national securities exchange and are defined as "NMS stock" under Rule 600 of Regulation NMS, and that meet specified criteria enumerated in the rule. Sub Section 4 of Exchange Rule 402(i) provides that such shares or other securities:

(4) are issued by the SPDR® Gold Trust or the iShares COMEX Gold Trust

³ The Exchange notes that its affiliate exchanges, MIAx Options and MIAx Pearl, submitted substantively identical proposals. The Exchange notes that all the rules of Chapter III of the MIAx Options Exchange, including Rules 307 and 309, are incorporated by reference to MIAx Pearl and MIAx Sapphire. The Exchange also notes that all of the rules of Chapter III of the MIAx Options Exchange, including Rules 307 and 309, and the rules of Chapter IV of the MIAx Options Exchange, including Rule 402, are incorporated by reference to MIAx Emerald.

⁴ On January 10, 2024, the Commission approved proposals by NYSE Arca, Inc., The Nasdaq Stock Market LLC, and Cboe BZX Exchange, Inc. to list and trade the shares of 11 bitcoin-based commodity-based trust shares and trust units, including the iShares Bitcoin Trust. See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 99306 (Jan. 10, 2024), 89 FR 3008 (Jan. 17, 2024) (order approving File Nos. SR-NYSEARCA-2021-90; SR-NYSEARCA-2023-44; SR-NYSEARCA-2023-58; SR-NASDAQ-2023-016; SR-NASDAQ-2023-019; SR-CboeBZX-2023-028; SR-CboeBZX-2023-038; SR-CboeBZX-2023-040; SR-CboeBZX-2023-042; SR-CboeBZX-2023-044; SR-CboeBZX-2023-072) ("Bitcoin ETP Order").

⁵ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 101128 (September 20, 2024), 89 FR 78942 (September 26, 2024) (SR-ISE-2024-03) (Self-Regulatory Organizations; Nasdaq ISE, LLC; Notice of Filing of Amendment Nos. 4 and 5 and Order Granting Accelerated Approval of a Proposed Rule Change, as Modified by Amendment Nos. 1, 4, and 5, to Permit the Listing and Trading of Options on the iShares Bitcoin Trust).

or the iShares Silver Trust or the ETFS Silver Trust or the ETFS Gold Trust or the ETFS Palladium Trust or the ETFS Platinum Trust or the Sprott Physical Gold Trust.

In addition, the underlying securities and Exchange Rule 402i, including the commodity based trusts in Exchange Rule 402(i)(4), must meet the requirements of Exchange Rule 402(i), Sections i(5)(i)(A) or (B).

Proposal

The Exchange proposes to amend Exchange Rule 402(i)(4) to expand the list of securities that are appropriate for options trading on the Exchange.

Description of the Trust⁶

The shares are issued by the Trust, a Delaware statutory trust. The Trust operates pursuant to a trust agreement (the "Trust Agreement") between the Sponsor, BlackRock Fund Advisors (the "Trustee") as the trustee of the Trust and Wilmington Trust, National Association, as Delaware trustee. The Trust issues shares representing fractional undivided beneficial interests in its net assets. The assets of the Trust consist only of bitcoin, held by a custodian on behalf of the Trust except under limited circumstances when transferred through the Trust's prime broker temporarily (described below), and cash. Coinbase Custody Trust Company, LLC (the "Bitcoin Custodian") is the custodian for the Trust's bitcoin holdings, and maintains a custody account for the Trust ("Custody Account"); Coinbase, Inc. (the "Prime Execution Agent"), an affiliate of the Bitcoin Custodian, is the prime broker for the Trust and maintains a trading account for the Trust ("Trading Account"); and Bank of New York Mellon is the custodian for the Trust's cash holdings (the "Cash Custodian" and together with the Bitcoin Custodian, the "Custodians") and the administrator of the Trust (the "Trust Administrator"). Under the Trust Agreement, the Trustee may delegate all or a portion of its duties to any agent, and has delegated the bulk of the day to day responsibilities to the Trust Administrator and certain other

⁶ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 99306 (Jan. 10, 2024), 89 FR 3008 (Jan. 17, 2024) (order approving File Nos. SR-NYSEARCA-2021-90; SR-NYSEARCA-2023-44; SR-NYSEARCA-2023-58; SR-NASDAQ-2023-016; SR-NASDAQ-2023-019; SR-CboeBZX-2023-028; SR-CboeBZX-2023-038; SR-CboeBZX-2023-040; SR-CboeBZX-2023-042; SR-CboeBZX-2023-044; SR-CboeBZX-2023-072) (Order Granting Accelerated Approval of Proposed Rule Changes, as Modified by Amendments Thereto, To List and Trade Bitcoin-Based Commodity-Based Trust Shares and Trust Units) for a complete description of the Trust.

administrative and record-keeping functions to its affiliates and other agents. The Trust is not an investment company registered under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended.

The investment objective of the Trust is to reflect generally the performance of the price of bitcoin. The Trust seeks to reflect such performance before payment of the Trust's expenses and liabilities. The shares are intended to constitute a simple means of making an investment similar to an investment in bitcoin through the public securities market rather than by acquiring, holding and trading bitcoin directly on a peer-to-peer or other basis or via a digital asset exchange. The shares have been designed to remove the obstacles represented by the complexities and operational burdens involved in a direct investment in bitcoin, while at the same time having an intrinsic value that reflects, at any given time, the investment exposure to the bitcoin owned by the Trust at such time, less the Trust's expenses and liabilities. Although the shares are not the exact equivalent of a direct investment in bitcoin, they provide investors with an alternative method of achieving investment exposure to bitcoin through the public securities market, which may be more familiar to them.

Custody of the Trust's Bitcoin

An investment in the shares is backed by bitcoin held by the Bitcoin Custodian on behalf of the Trust. All of the Trust's bitcoin will be held in the Custody Account, other than the Trust's bitcoin which is temporarily maintained in the Trading Account under limited circumstances, *i.e.*, in connection with creation and redemption Basket⁷ activity or sales of bitcoin deducted from the Trust's holdings in payment of Trust expenses or the Sponsor's fee (or, in extraordinary circumstances, upon liquidation of the Trust). The Custody Account includes all of the Trust's bitcoin held at the Bitcoin Custodian, but does not include the Trust's bitcoin temporarily maintained at the Prime Execution Agent in the Trading Account from time to time. The Bitcoin Custodian will keep all of the private keys associated with the Trust's bitcoin held in the Custody Account in "cold storage".⁸ The hardware, software,

⁷ The Trust issues and redeems Shares only in blocks of 40,000 or integral multiples thereof. A block of 40,000 Shares is called a "Basket." These transactions take place in exchange for Bitcoin.

⁸ The term "cold storage" refers to a safeguarding method by which the private keys corresponding to the Trust's bitcoins are generated and stored in an offline manner, subject to layers of procedures

systems, and procedures of the Bitcoin Custodian may not be available or cost-effective for many investors to access directly.

The Exchange believes that offering options on the Trust will benefit investors by providing them with an additional, relatively lower cost investing tool to gain exposure to spot Bitcoin as well as a hedging vehicle to meet their investment needs in connection with Bitcoin products and positions. Similar to other commodity-based trusts on which options may be listed on the Exchange (e.g., SPDR[®] Gold Trust, the iShares COMEX Gold Trust, the iShares Silver Trust, or the ETFs Gold Trust),⁹ the Trust essentially offers the same objectives and benefits to investors as do other commodity-based trusts on which options may be listed on the Exchange.

Options on the Trust will trade in the same manner as options on other ETFs on the Exchange. Exchange Rules that currently apply to the listing and trading of all options on ETFs on the Exchange, including, for example, Rules that govern listing criteria, expirations, exercise prices, minimum increments, position and exercise limits (including as proposed in the filing submitted by Exchange's affiliate, MIAX Options), margin requirements, customer accounts and trading halt procedures, will apply to the listing and trading of options on the Trust on the Exchange. Today, these rules apply to options on the various commodities-based trusts deemed appropriate for options trading on the Exchange pursuant to Exchange Rule 402(i)(4).

The Exchange's initial listing standards for ETFs on which options may be listed and traded on the Exchange will apply to the Trust. Pursuant to Exchange Rule 402(a), a security (which includes ETFs) on which options may be listed and traded on the Exchange must be duly registered (with the Commission) and be an NMS stock (as defined in Rule 600 of Regulation NMS under the Act,) and be characterized by a substantial number of outstanding shares that are widely held and actively traded. Exchange Rule 402(i) requires that, in relevant part, ETFs must either (1) meet the criteria and standards set forth in Exchange Rule 402(a) or Exchange Rule 402(b), or (2) be available for creation or redemption each business day from or through the issuer in cash or in kind at

designed to enhance security. Private keys are generated by the Bitcoin Custodian in offline computers that are not connected to the internet so that they are more resistant to being hacked.

⁹ See Exchange Rule 402(i)(4).

a price related to net asset value, and the issuer must be obligated to issue ETFs in a specified aggregate number even if some or all of the investment assets required to be deposited have not been received by the issuer, subject to the condition that the person obligated to deposit the investments has undertaken to deliver the investment assets as soon as possible and such undertaking is secured by the delivery and maintenance of collateral consisting of cash or cash equivalents satisfactory to the issuer, as provided in the respective prospectus.

Options on the Trust will also be subject to the Exchange's continued listing standards set forth in Exchange Rule 403(g), for ETFs deemed appropriate for options trading pursuant to Exchange Rule 402(i). Specifically, Exchange Rule 403(g) provides that ETFs that were initially approved for options trading pursuant to Exchange Rule 402(i) shall be deemed not to meet the requirements for continued approval, and the Exchange shall not open for trading any additional series of option contracts of the class covering that such ETFs, if the ETFs are delisted from trading pursuant to Exchange Rule 403(b)(4), are halted or suspended from trading in their primary market.

Additionally, options on ETFs may be subject to the suspension of opening transactions in any of the following circumstances: (1) in the case of options covering ETFs approved for trading under Exchange Rule 402(i)(5)(i)(A), in accordance with the terms of paragraphs (b)(1), (2), and (3) of Exchange Rule 403; (2) in the case of options covering ETFs approved for trading under Exchange Rule 402(i)(5)(i)(B), following the initial twelve-month period beginning upon the commencement of trading in the ETFs on a national securities exchange and are defined as an NMS stock, there are fewer than 50 record and/or beneficial holders of such ETFs for 30 or more consecutive trading days; (3) the value of the index or portfolio of securities, non-U.S. currency, or portfolio of commodities including commodity futures contracts, options on commodity futures contracts, swaps, forward contracts and/or options on physical commodities and/or financial instruments and money market instruments on which the ETFs are based is no longer calculated or available; or (4) such other event shall occur or condition exist that in the opinion of the Exchange makes further dealing in such options on the Exchange inadvisable.

Options on the Trust would be physically settled contracts with

American-style exercise.¹⁰ Consistent with current Exchange Rule 404, which governs the opening of options series on a specific underlying security (including ETFs), the Exchange will open at least one expiration month for options on the Trust¹¹ and may also list series of options on the Trust for trading on a weekly,¹² monthly,¹³ or quarterly¹⁴ basis. The Exchange may also list long-term equity option series ("LEAPS") that expire from 12 to 39 months from the time they are listed.¹⁵

Pursuant to Exchange Rule 404, Interpretation and Policy .06, which governs strike prices of series of options on ETFs, the interval between strike prices of series of options on ETFs approved for options trading pursuant to Exchange Rule 402(i) shall be fixed at a price per share which is reasonably close to the price per share at which the underlying security is traded in the primary market at or about the same time such series of options is first open for trading on the Exchange, or at such intervals as may have been established on another options exchange prior to the initiation of trading on the Exchange. With respect to the Short Term Options Series or Weekly Program, during the month prior to expiration of an option

¹⁰ See Exchange Rule 401, which provides that the rights and obligations of holders and writers are set forth in the Rules of the Options Clearing Corporation ("OCC"); see also OCC Rules, Chapters VIII (which governs exercise and assignment) and Chapter IX (which governs the discharge of delivery and payment obligations arising out of the exercise of physically settled stock option contracts).

¹¹ See Exchange Rule 404(b). The monthly expirations are subject to certain listing criteria for underlying securities described within Exchange Rule 404 and its Interpretations and Policies. Monthly listings expire the third Friday of the month. The term "expiration date" (unless separately defined elsewhere in the OCC By-Laws), when used in respect of an option contract (subject to certain exceptions), means the third Friday of the expiration month of such option contract, or if such Friday is a day on which the exchange on which such option is listed is not open for business, the preceding day on which such exchange is open for business. See OCC By-Laws Article I, Section 1. Pursuant to Exchange Rule 404(c), additional series of options of the same class may be opened for trading on the Exchange when the Exchange deems it necessary to maintain an orderly market, to meet customer demand or when the market price of the underlying stock moves more than five strike prices from the initial exercise price or prices. Pursuant to Exchange Rule 404(e), new series of options on an individual stock may be added until the beginning of the month in which the options contract will expire. Due to unusual market conditions, the Exchange, in its discretion, may add a new series of options on an individual stock until the close of trading on the business day prior to expiration.

¹² See Exchange Rule 404, Interpretations and Policies .02.

¹³ See Exchange Rule 404, Interpretations and Policies .13.

¹⁴ See Exchange Rule 404, Interpretations and Policies .03.

¹⁵ See Exchange Rule 406(a).

class that is selected for the Short Term Option Series Program, the strike price intervals for the related non-Short Term Option (“Related non-Short Term Option”) shall be the same as the strike price intervals for the Short Term Option.¹⁶ Specifically, the Exchange may open for trading Short Term Option Series at strike price intervals of (i) \$0.50 or greater where the strike price is less than \$100, and \$1 or greater where the strike price is between \$100 and \$150 for all option classes that participate in the Short Term Options Series Program; (ii) \$0.50 for option classes that trade in one dollar increments and are in the Short Term Option Series Program; or (iii) \$2.50 or greater where the strike price is above \$150.¹⁷ Additionally, the Exchange may list series of options pursuant to the \$1 Strike Price Interval Program,¹⁸ the \$0.50 Strike Program,¹⁹ and the \$2.50 Strike Price Program.²⁰ Pursuant to Exchange Rule 510, where the price of a series of options for the Trust is less than \$3.00, the minimum increment will be \$0.05, and where the price is \$3.00 or higher, the minimum increment will be \$0.10²¹ consistent with the minimum increments for options on other ETFs listed on the Exchange. Any and all new series of Trust options that the Exchange lists will be consistent and comply with the expirations, strike prices, and minimum increments set forth in Rules 404 and 510, as applicable.

Position and exercise limits for options on ETFs, including options on the Trust, are determined pursuant to the Exchange’s affiliate MIAX Options Rules 307 and 309, respectively. Position and exercise limits for ETF options vary according to the number of outstanding shares and the trading volumes of the underlying ETF over the past six months, where the largest in capitalization and the most frequently traded ETFs have an option position and exercise limit of 250,000 contracts (with adjustments for splits, re-capitalizations, etc.) on the same side of the market; and smaller capitalization ETFs have position and exercise limits of 200,000, 75,000, 50,000 or 25,000 contracts (with adjustments for splits, re-capitalizations, etc.) on the same side of the market. The Exchange further notes that the Exchange’s affiliate MIAX

Options Rule 1502, which governs margin requirements applicable to trading on the Exchange, including options on ETFs, will also apply to the trading of the Trust options.

Notwithstanding the position limits in the Exchange’s affiliate MIAX Options Rule 307(d) and exercise limits in the Exchange’s affiliate MIAX Options Rule 309, the Exchange proposes the position and exercise limits for the options on the Trust to be 25,000 contracts on the same side pursuant to proposed Supplementary Material .01 to the Exchange’s affiliate MIAX Options Rule 307 and proposed Supplementary Material .01 to the Exchange’s affiliate MIAX Options Rule 309.

The Exchange represents that the same surveillance procedures applicable to all other options on other ETFs currently listed and traded on the Exchange will apply to options on the Trust. Also the Exchange represents that it has the necessary systems capacity to support the new option series. The Exchange believes that its existing surveillance and reporting safeguards are designed to deter and detect possible manipulative behavior which might potentially arise from listing and trading options on ETFs, including the proposed Trust options.

Today, the Exchange has an adequate surveillance program in place for options. The Exchange intends to apply those same program procedures to options on the Trust that it applies to the Exchange’s other options products.²² The Exchange’s staff will have access to the surveillance programs conducted by its affiliate exchanges, MIAX Options and MIAX Pearl with respect to trading in the shares of the underlying Trust when conducting surveillances for market abuse or manipulation in the options on the Trust. Additionally, the Exchange is a member of the Intermarket Surveillance Group (“ISG”) under the Intermarket Surveillance Group Agreement. ISG members work together to coordinate surveillance and investigative information sharing in the stock, options, and futures markets. In addition to obtaining surveillance data from MIAX Options and MIAX Sapphire, the Exchange will be able to obtain information regarding trading in the shares of the underlying Trust from Nasdaq, LLC and other markets through ISG. In addition, the Exchange has a Regulatory Services Agreement with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority

(“FINRA”). Pursuant to a multi-party 17d–2 joint plan, all options exchanges allocate regulatory responsibilities to FINRA to conduct certain options-related market surveillance that are common to rules of all options exchanges.²³

The underlying shares of spot bitcoin ETPs, including the Trust, are also subject to safeguards related to addressing market abuse and manipulation. As the Commission stated in Bitcoin ETP Order:

Each Exchange has a comprehensive surveillance-sharing agreement with the CME via their common membership in the Intermarket Surveillance Group. This facilitates the sharing of information that is available to the CME through its surveillance of its markets, including its surveillance of the CME bitcoin futures market.²⁴

The Exchange states that, given the consistently high correlation between the CME bitcoin futures market and the spot bitcoin market, as confirmed by the Commission through robust correlation analysis, the Commission was able to conclude that such surveillance sharing agreements could reasonably be “expected to assist in surveilling for fraudulent and manipulative acts and practices in the specific context of the [Bitcoin ETPs].”²⁵

In light of surveillance measures related to both options and futures as well as the underlying Trust,²⁶ the Exchange believes that existing surveillance procedures are designed to deter and detect possible manipulative behavior which might potentially arise from listing and trading the proposed options on the Trust. Further, the Exchange represents that it will implement any new surveillance

²³ Section 19(g)(1) of the Act, among other things, requires every SRO registered as a national securities exchange or national securities association to comply with the Act, the rules and regulations thereunder, and the SRO’s own rules, and, absent reasonable justification or excuse, enforce compliance by its members and persons associated with its members. See 15 U.S.C. 78q(d)(1) and 17 CFR 240.17d–2. Section 17(d)(1) of the Act allows the Commission to relieve an SRO of certain responsibilities with respect to members of the SRO who are also members of another SRO (“common members”). Specifically, Section 17(d)(1) allows the Commission to relieve an SRO of its responsibilities to: (i) receive regulatory reports from such members; (ii) examine such members for compliance with the Act and the rules and regulations thereunder, and the rules of the SRO; or (iii) carry out other specified regulatory responsibilities with respect to such members.

²⁴ See *supra* note 4.

²⁵ See Bitcoin ETP Order, 89 FR at 3010–11.

²⁶ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 99295 (January 8, 2024), 89 FR 2321, 2334–35 (January 12, 2024) (SR–NASDAQ–2023–016) (Notice of Filing of Amendment No. 1 to a Proposed Rule Change To List and Trade Shares of the iShares Bitcoin Trust Under Nasdaq Rule 5711(d)).

¹⁶ See Exchange Rule 404, Interpretations and Policies .02(e).

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ See Exchange Rule 404, Interpretation and Policy .01.

¹⁹ See Exchange Rule 404, Interpretation and Policy .04.

²⁰ See Exchange Rule 404(f).

²¹ See Exchange Rule 510.

²² The surveillance program includes real-time patterns for price and volume movements and post-trade surveillance patterns (e.g., spoofing, marking the close, ping, phishing).

procedures it deems necessary to effectively monitor the trading of options on the Trust.

The Exchange has also analyzed its capacity and represents that it believes the Exchange and Options Price Reporting Authority or "OPRA" have the necessary systems capacity to handle the additional traffic associated with the listing of new series that may result from the introduction of options on the Trust up to the number of expirations currently permissible under the Rules. Because the proposal is limited to one class, the Exchange believes any additional traffic that may be generated from the introduction of the Trust options will be manageable. Finally, the Exchange proposes a technical amendment to Exchange Rule 402(i)(4) to amend the name "ETFS Gold Trust" to "Aberdeen Standard Physical Gold Trust." In 2018 ETFS Gold Trust was renamed.²⁷ At this time, the Exchange proposes to amend the name of the ETF to reflect its current name.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes the proposed rule change is consistent with the Act and the rules and regulations thereunder applicable to the Exchange and, in particular, the requirements of Section 6(b) of the Act.²⁸ Specifically, the Exchange believes the proposed rule change is consistent with the Section 6(b)(5)²⁹ requirements that the rules of an exchange be designed to prevent fraudulent and manipulative acts and practices, to promote just and equitable principles of trade, to foster cooperation and coordination with persons engaged in regulating, clearing, settling, processing information with respect to, and facilitating transactions in securities, to remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system, and, in general, to protect investors and the public interest. Additionally, the Exchange believes the proposed rule change is consistent with the Section 6(b)(5)³⁰ requirement that the rules of an exchange not be designed to permit unfair discrimination between customers, issuers, brokers, or dealers.

In particular, the Exchange believes that the proposal to list and trade options on the Trust will remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market

and a national market system and, in general, protect investors because offering options on the Trust will provide investors with a greater opportunity to realize the benefits of utilizing options on an ETF based on spot bitcoin, including cost efficiencies and increased hedging strategies. The Exchange believes that offering options on a competitively priced ETF based on spot bitcoin will benefit investors by providing them with an additional, relatively lower-cost risk management tool, allowing them to manage, more easily, their positions and associated risks in their portfolios in connection with exposure to spot bitcoin. Today, the Exchange lists options on other commodity ETFs structured as a trust, which essentially offer the same objectives and benefits to investors, and for which the Exchange has not identified any issues with the continued listing and trading of options on those ETFs.

The Exchange also believes the proposal to permit options on the Trust will remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system, because options on the Trust will comply with current Exchange Rules. Options on the Trust must satisfy the initial listing standards and continued listing standards currently in the Exchange Rules, applicable to options on all ETFs, including options on other commodity ETFs already deemed appropriate for options trading on the Exchange pursuant to Exchange Rule 402(i)(4). Further, Exchange Rules that currently govern the listing and trading of options on ETFs, including permissible expirations, strike prices, minimum increments, position and exercise limits (including as proposed in the filing submitted by Exchange's affiliate, MIA X Options), and margin requirements, will govern the listing and trading of options on the Trust. The proposed position and exercise limits for options on the Trust is 25,000 contracts. These position and exercise limits are the lowest position and exercise limits available in the options industry, are extremely conservative and more than appropriate given the Trust's market capitalization, average daily volume, and high number of outstanding shares. The proposed position limit, and exercise limit, is consistent with the Act as it addresses concerns related to manipulation and protection of investors because the position limit (and exercise limit) is extremely conservative and more than appropriate given the Trust is actively traded.

The Exchange represents that it has the necessary systems capacity to support options on the Trust. The Exchange believes that its existing surveillance and reporting safeguards are designed to deter and detect possible manipulative behavior which might arise from listing and trading options on ETFs, including the Trust options. Today, the Exchange has an adequate surveillance program in place for options. The Exchange intends to apply those same program procedures to options on the Trust that it applies to the Exchange's other options products.³¹ The Exchange's staff will have access to the surveillance programs conducted by its affiliate exchanges, MIA X Options and MIA X Sapphire with respect to the underlying Trust when conducting surveillances for market abuse or manipulation in the options on the Trust. The Exchange will review activity in the underlying Trust when conducting surveillances for market abuse or manipulation in the options on the Trust. Additionally, the Exchange is a member of the ISG under the Intermarket Surveillance Group Agreement. ISG members work together to coordinate surveillance and investigative information sharing in the stock, options, and futures markets. In addition to obtaining surveillance data from MIA X Options and MIA X Sapphire, the Exchange will be able to obtain information from ISE and other markets through ISG. In addition, the Exchange has a Regulatory Services Agreement with FINRA. Pursuant to a multi-party 17d-2 joint plan, all options exchanges allocate regulatory responsibilities to FINRA to conduct certain options-related market surveillance that are common to rules of all options exchanges.³²

The underlying shares of spot bitcoin ETPs, including the Trust, are also

³¹ The surveillance program includes real-time patterns for price and volume movements and post-trade surveillance patterns (e.g., spoofing, marking the close, ping, phishing).

³² Section 19(g)(1) of the Act, among other things, requires every SRO registered as a national securities exchange or national securities association to comply with the Act, the rules and regulations thereunder, and the SRO's own rules, and, absent reasonable justification or excuse, enforce compliance by its members and persons associated with its members. See 15 U.S.C. 78q(d)(1) and 17 CFR 240.17d-2. Section 17(d)(1) of the Act allows the Commission to relieve an SRO of certain responsibilities with respect to members of the SRO who are also members of another SRO ("common members"). Specifically, Section 17(d)(1) allows the Commission to relieve an SRO of its responsibilities to: (i) receive regulatory reports from such members; (ii) examine such members for compliance with the Act and the rules and regulations thereunder, and the rules of the SRO; or (iii) carry out other specified regulatory responsibilities with respect to such members.

²⁷ Effective October 1, 2018 ETFS Gold Trust was renamed Aberdeen Standard Gold ETF Trust. <https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1450923/000138713118005292/ex10-2.htm>.

²⁸ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

²⁹ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

³⁰ *Id.*

subject to safeguards related to addressing market abuse and manipulation. As the Commission stated in Bitcoin ETP Order:

Each Exchange has a comprehensive surveillance-sharing agreement with the CME via their common membership in the Intermarket Surveillance Group. This facilitates the sharing of information that is available to the CME through its surveillance of its markets, including its surveillance of the CME bitcoin futures market.³³

The Exchange states that, given the consistently high correlation between the CME bitcoin futures market and the spot bitcoin market, as confirmed by the Commission through robust correlation analysis, the Commission was able to conclude that such surveillance sharing agreements could reasonably be “expected to assist in surveilling for fraudulent and manipulative acts and practices in the specific context of the [Bitcoin ETPs].”³⁴

In light of surveillance measures related to both options and futures as well as the underlying Trust,³⁵ the Exchange believes that existing surveillance procedures are designed to deter and detect possible manipulative behavior which might potentially arise from listing and trading the proposed options on the Trust. Further, the Exchange represents that it will implement any new surveillance procedures it deems necessary to effectively monitor the trading of options on the Trust.

Finally, the Commission has previously approved the listing and trading of options on other commodity ETFs structured as a trust, such as SPDR[®] Gold Trust,³⁶ the iShares COMEX Gold Trust³⁷ the iShares Silver

Trust,³⁸ the ETFs Gold Trust,³⁹ and the ETFs Silver Trust.⁴⁰

Further, the Exchange’s proposal to amend the name “ETFs Gold Trust” to “Aberdeen Standard Physical Gold Trust” in Exchange Rule 402(i)(4) is consistent with the Act and the protection of investors as this amendment reflects the current name of this product.

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

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. In this regard and as indicated above, the Exchange notes that the rule change is being proposed as a competitive response to filings submitted by ISE.⁴¹

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on intramarket competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act as options on the Trust will be subject to initial listing standards and continued listing standards the same as other options on ETFs listed on the Exchange. Further, options on the Trust will be subject to Exchange Rules that currently govern the listing and trading of options on ETFs, including permissible expirations, strike prices, minimum increments, position and exercise limits (including as proposed in the filing submitted by Exchange’s affiliate, MIAAX Options), and margin requirements. Options on the Trust will be equally available to all market participants who wish to trade such options. Also, and as stated above, the Exchange already lists options on other commodity ETFs structured as a trust.

The Exchange does not believe that the proposal to list to list and trade options on the Trust will impose any burden on intermarket competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. To the extent that permitting options on the Trust to trade on the Exchange may make the Exchange a more attractive marketplace to market participants, such market participants are free to elect to become market participants on the

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 61483 (February 3, 2010), 75 FR 6753 (February 10, 2010) (SR–CBOE–2010–007; SR–ISE–2009–106; SR–NYSEAmex–2009–86; and SR–NYSEArca–2009–110) (Order Granting Approval of Proposed Rule Changes and Notice of Filing and Order Granting Accelerated Approval of a Proposed Rule Change Relating to Listing and Trading Options on the ETFs Gold Trust and the ETFs Silver Trust).

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ See *supra* note 5.

Exchange. Additionally, other options exchanges are free to amend their listing rules, as applicable, to permit them to list and trade options on the Trust. The Exchange believes that the proposed rule change may relieve any burden on, or otherwise promote, competition as it is designed to increase competition for order flow on the Exchange in a manner that is beneficial to investors by providing them with a lower-cost option to hedge their investment portfolios. The Exchange notes that it operates in a highly competitive market in which market participants can readily direct order flow to competing venues that offer similar products. Ultimately, the Exchange believes that offering options on the Trust for trading on the Exchange will promote competition by providing investors with an additional, relatively low-cost means to hedge their portfolios and meet their investment needs in connection with spot bitcoin prices and bitcoin related products and positions.

Finally, the Exchange’s proposal to amend the name “ETFs Gold Trust” to “Aberdeen Standard Physical Gold Trust” in Exchange Rule 402(i)(4) does not impose an undue burden on competition as this amendment reflects the current name of this product.

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 Exchange has filed the proposed rule change pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A)(iii) of the Act⁴² and Rule 19b–4(f)(6) thereunder.⁴³ 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)(iii) of the Act⁴⁴ and subparagraph (f)(6) of Rule 19b–4 thereunder.⁴⁵

⁴² 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(iii).

⁴³ 17 CFR 240.19b–4(f)(6).

⁴⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(iii).

⁴⁵ 17 CFR 240.19b–4(f)(6). In addition, Rule 19b–4(f)(6)(iii) requires a self-regulatory organization 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

³³ See *supra* note 4.

³⁴ See Bitcoin ETP Order, 89 FR at 3010–11.

³⁵ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 99295 (January 8, 2024), 89 FR 2321, 2334–35 (January 12, 2024) (SR–NASDAQ–2023–016) (Notice of Filing of Amendment No. 1 to a Proposed Rule Change To List and Trade Shares of the iShares Bitcoin Trust Under Nasdaq Rule 5711(d)).

³⁶ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 57897 (May 30, 2008), 73 FR 32061 (June 5, 2008) (SR–Amex–2008–15; SR–CBOE–2005–11; SR–ISE–2008–12; SR–NYSEArca–2008–52; and SRPhlx–2008–17) (Order Granting Approval of a Proposed Rule Change, as Modified, and Notice of Filing and Order Granting Accelerated Approval of Proposed Rule Changes, as Modified, Relating to Listing and Trading Options on the SPDR Gold Trust).

³⁷ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 59055 (December 4, 2008), 73 FR 75148 (December 10, 2008) (SR–Amex–2008–68; SR–BSE–2008–51; SR–CBOE–2008–72; SR–ISE–2008–58; SRNYSEArca–2008–66; and SR–Phlx–2008–58) (Notice of Filing and Order Granting Accelerated Approval of Proposed Rule Changes Relating to the Listing and Trading Options on Shares of the iShares COMEX Gold Trust and the iShares Silver Trust).

A proposed rule change filed under Rule 19b-4(f)(6)⁴⁶ under the Act does not normally become operative prior to 30 days after the date of the filing. However, pursuant to Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii),⁴⁷ the Commission may designate a shorter time if such action is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. The Exchange has requested that the Commission waive the 30-day operative delay so that the proposal may become operative immediately upon filing. The Commission previously approved the listing of options on iShares Bitcoin Trust.⁴⁸ The Exchange has provided information regarding the underlying iShares Bitcoin Trust, including, among other things, information regarding trading volume, the number of beneficial holders, and the market capitalization of the iShares Bitcoin Trust. The proposal also establishes position and exercise limits for options on the iShares Bitcoin Trust and provides information regarding the surveillance procedures that will apply to iShares Bitcoin Trust options. The Commission believes that waiver of the operative delay could benefit investors by providing an additional venue for trading iShares Bitcoin Trust options. Therefore, the Commission believes that waiver of the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. Accordingly, the Commission hereby waives the 30-day operative delay and designates the proposed rule change as operative upon filing.⁴⁹

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 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.

as designated by the Commission. The Exchange has satisfied this requirement.

⁴⁶ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

⁴⁷ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii).

⁴⁸ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 101128 (September 20, 2024), 89 FR 78942 (September 26, 2024) (SR-ISE-2024-03) (Self-Regulatory Organizations; Nasdaq ISE, LLC; Notice of Filing of Amendment Nos. 4 and 5 and Order Granting Accelerated Approval of a Proposed Rule Change, as Modified by Amendment Nos. 1, 4, and 5, to Permit the Listing and Trading of Options on the iShares Bitcoin Trust).

⁴⁹ 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).

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-SAPPHIRE-2024-36 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-SAPPHIRE-2024-36. 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-SAPPHIRE-2024-36 and should be submitted on or before December 18, 2024.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.⁵⁰

Sherry R. Haywood,

Assistant Secretary.

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-101695; File No. SR-FICC-2024-007]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Fixed Income Clearing Corporation; Order Approving Proposed Rule Change, as Modified by Partial Amendment No. 1, To Modify the GSD Rules (i) Regarding the Separate Calculation, Collection and Holding of Margin for Proprietary Transactions and That for Indirect Participant Transactions, and (ii) To Address the Conditions of Note H to Rule 15c3-3a

November 21, 2024.

On March 14, 2024, Fixed Income Clearing Corporation ("FICC") filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") the proposed rule change SR-FICC-2024-007 pursuant to Section 19(b) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Exchange Act")¹ and Rule 19b-4² thereunder to modify FICC's Government Securities Division ("GSD") Rulebook ("GSD Rules") to calculate, collect, and hold margin for transactions that a direct GSD participant enters into for its own benefit ("proprietary transactions") separately from margin a direct participant submits to FICC on behalf of indirect participants and to address conditions of Note H to Rule 15c3-3a under the Exchange Act (the "Proposed Rule Change").³ The Proposed Rule Change was published for public comment in the **Federal Register** on March 28, 2024.⁴

⁵⁰ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12), (59).

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 99149 (Dec. 13, 2023), 89 FR 2714 (Jan. 16, 2024) (S7-23-22) ("Adopting Release," and the rules adopted therein as "Treasury Clearing Rules"). See also 17 CFR 240.15c3-3a.

⁴ Securities Exchange Act Release No. 99844 (March 22, 2024), 89 FR 21603 (Mar. 28, 2024) (File No. SR-FICC-2024-007) ("Notice of Filing"). FICC also filed a related Advance Notice with the Commission pursuant to Section 806(e)(1) of Title VIII of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, entitled the Payment, Clearing, and Settlement Supervision Act of 2010 and Rule 19b-4(n)(1)(i) under the Exchange Act. 12 U.S.C. 5465(e)(1), 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1) and 17 CFR 240.19b-4, respectively. The Advance Notice was

Continued