

**NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION[571]**

**Adopted and Filed**

**Rulemaking related to Help Us Stop Hunger program administration**

The Natural Resource Commission (Commission) hereby rescinds Chapter 116, “Help Us Stop Hunger Program Administration,” Iowa Administrative Code, and adopts a new Chapter 116 with the same title.

*Legal Authority for Rulemaking*

This rulemaking is adopted under the authority provided in Iowa Code sections 481A.38 and 483A.1.

*State or Federal Law Implemented*

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code section 483A.8(1) and 483A.8(3).

*Purpose and Summary*

Chapter 116 establishes the procedures for the administration of the Help Us Stop Hunger (HUSH) program. The HUSH program is established in the Iowa Code to encourage hunters, especially during periods of excessive deer populations, to harvest more deer than needed for personal consumption so as to donate those deer to a program to feed Iowans in need. This chapter has been reviewed and edited consistent with Executive Order 10.

*Public Comment and Changes to Rulemaking*

Notice of Intended Action for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on January 7, 2026, as **ARC 9967C**. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- January 28, 2026
- February 2, 2026

No one attended the public hearings. No public comments were received. No changes from the Notice have been made.

*Adoption of Rulemaking*

This rulemaking was adopted by the Commission on April 9, 2026.

*Fiscal Impact*

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

*Jobs Impact*

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

*Waivers*

This rulemaking is subject to the waiver provisions of 571—Chapter 11. Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Commission for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any.

*Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee*

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting.

The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

*Effective Date*

This rulemaking will become effective on June 17, 2026.

The following rulemaking action is adopted:

ITEM 1. Rescind 571—Chapter 116 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 116  
HELP US STOP HUNGER PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

**571—116.1(483A) Purpose.** This chapter establishes the procedures for the administration of HUSH.

**571—116.2(483A) Definitions.**

*“Deer”* means any wild deer legally taken in Iowa and deer confiscated as legal evidence if the confiscated carcass is considered by a conservation officer to be in good condition for donation.

*“Department”* means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 483A.1A.

*“Distributor”* means the Food Bank of Iowa or other venison distribution service provider as shall be designated by future contract with the department.

*“Field-dressed”* means that the deer has been properly bled and cleaned of its internal organs.

*“Food Bank of Iowa”* means the private, nonprofit charitable organization incorporated under that name, whose mission is to alleviate hunger and reduce food waste in Iowa.

*“HUSH”* means the help us stop hunger program.

*“Meat processor”* means any business that is licensed by the department of agriculture and land stewardship's bureau of meat and poultry inspection, the USDA, or a neighboring state's department that is similar to Iowa's, to process meat for retail customers.

**571—116.3(483A) Restrictions.** Deer is the only species of wildlife that shall be covered by the HUSH program. The entire deer carcass must be donated, but the hunter may keep the antlers, head and cape.

**571—116.4(483A) HUSH council.** There is hereby created a HUSH council. Members shall serve without compensation.

**116.4(1) Membership.** The HUSH council shall include the following voting members:

- a. The HUSH coordinator, who shall serve as the chairperson;
- b. An additional department representative designated by the department's wildlife bureau chief;
- c. A representative of the Food Bank of Iowa appointed by its executive director.

**116.4(2) Duties.**

a. To set a fair market price, the council shall consider prices for similar services paid by retail customers in Iowa and nearby states and shall recommend to the department an annual per-deer processing payment to be made to meat processors.

b. The council shall recommend to the department an annual per-deer administrative payment to be made to the Food Bank of Iowa. The Food Bank of Iowa shall provide information to assist in this determination but shall not participate in any vote of the council regarding the recommendation of the annual per-deer administrative payment to the Food Bank of Iowa.

c. The council shall make recommendations to the department to resolve conflicts or disputes in the operation of the HUSH program as brought to it by any person or entity.

d. The council shall adopt standards for participating lockers to meet in terms of their record of violations of rules of the bureau of meat and poultry inspection and the department of natural resources.

e. The council shall advise the department in the administration of HUSH.

**116.4(3) Administration.** The HUSH coordinator shall convene the council as needed to conduct business. A majority vote shall be required for action or decision by the council. The chief of the department's wildlife bureau shall have the right to overrule the council for cause and shall provide the

council with justification for the reasons. A quorum to conduct business shall consist of three council members, one of whom shall be the HUSH coordinator.

**571—116.5(483A) Duties of the department.** During periods of excessive deer populations, the department shall promote the harvest of deer by hunters and the donation of deer at meat processors participating in HUSH. During periods of nonexcessive deer populations, HUSH may continue with less emphasis on promotion to hunters. The department shall enlist as many meat processors as available to participate in HUSH and shall enter into uniform agreements with them. The department shall contract with the Food Bank of Iowa and pay a per-deer rate for administrative services provided.

**571—116.6(483A) Partnerships with other organizations.** The department, at its own discretion, may enter into agreements with other organizations for the purpose of expanding the deer donation program. The department may include the offer of matching grants to pay for deer processing to organizations that acquire funding from sources other than the state of Iowa.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 483A.

[Filed 4/17/26, effective 6/17/26]

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For replacement pages for IAC, see IAC Supplement 5/13/26.