Regulatory Analysis

Notice of Intended Action to be published: 571—Chapter 116
"Help Us Stop Hunger Program Administration"

Iowa Code section(s) or chapter(s) authorizing rulemaking: 483A
State or federal law(s) implemented by the rulemaking: Iowa Code chapter 483A

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

September 23, 2025	6200 Park Avenue, Second Floor
12 noon to 1 p.m.	Des Moines, Iowa

Free language assistance: If you need assistance in a language other than English, contact the Department of Natural Resources (Department) at chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov or civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov or by telephone at 515.250.6886 at least seven days before the event.

Asistencia lingüística gratuita: Si necesita ayuda en un idioma que no sea inglés, comuníquese con el Departamento de Recursos Naturales (Departamento) al chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov o civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov o por teléfono a 515.250.6886 al menos siete días antes del evento.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this Regulatory Analysis, which must be received by the Department no later than 4:30 p.m. on the date of the public hearing. Comments should be directed to:

Chris Ensminger
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
6200 Park Avenue, Suite 200
Des Moines, Iowa 50321
Phone: 515.250.6886
Email: chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov

Free language access: If you speak a non-English language, the Department offers language assistance services free of charge. Contact the Department at chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov.

Asistencia lingüística gratuita: Si habla un idioma que no sea el inglés, los servicios de asistencia lingüística están disponibles de forma gratuita. Comuníquese con el Departamento al chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov.

Purpose and Summary

Proposed Chapter 116 establishes the procedures for the administration of the Help Us Stop Hunger (HUSH) program. The HUSH program is established under the Iowa Code to encourage hunters, especially during periods of excessive deer populations, to harvest more deer than needed for personal consumption and to donate those deer to a program to feed Iowans in need.

Analysis of Impact

1. **Persons affected by the proposed rulemaking:**

- **Classes of persons that will bear the costs of the proposed rulemaking:**

Deer hunters bear the costs of the HUSH program through the $1 fee added to each deer hunting license purchased. The $1 fee is authorized in the Iowa Code.

- **Classes of persons that will benefit from the proposed rulemaking:**

Citizens of Iowa and Iowans in need will benefit.

2. **Impact of the proposed rulemaking, economic or otherwise, including the nature and amount of all the different kinds of costs that would be incurred:**

- **Quantitative description of impact:**

Costs associated with implementation of the HUSH program are covered by a $1 fee added to each deer hunting license purchased. Venison is distributed through food pantries to Iowans in need of low-cost protein.

- **Qualitative description of impact:**

The HUSH program is a public benefit paid for by deer hunters.

3. **Costs to the State:**

- **Implementation and enforcement costs borne by the agency or any other agency:**

The Department devotes a small amount of staff time overseeing the contracts with meat processors and the venison distributor.

- **Anticipated effect on State revenues:**

This proposed chapter does not have any effect on State revenues.

4. **Comparison of the costs and benefits of the proposed rulemaking to the costs and benefits of inaction:**

The costs of the proposed chapter are very low (and paid by hunters), while the benefits to hungry Iowans can be significant. Inaction would end the opportunity for Iowans in need to receive low/no cost venison on a broad scale.

5. **Determination whether less costly methods or less intrusive methods exist for achieving the purpose of the proposed rulemaking:**

The Department does not believe the objectives could be accomplished for lower costs ($1) per deer.

6. **Alternative methods considered by the agency:**

- **Description of any alternative methods that were seriously considered by the agency:**

There were no alternative methods that were seriously considered by the Department.

- **Reasons why alternative methods were rejected in favor of the proposed rulemaking:**

Not applicable.

Small Business Impact

If the rulemaking will have a substantial impact on small business, include a discussion of whether it would be feasible and practicable to do any of the following to reduce the impact of the rulemaking on small business:

- Establish less stringent compliance or reporting requirements in the rulemaking for small business.
- Establish less stringent schedules or deadlines in the rulemaking for compliance or reporting requirements for small business.
- Consolidate or simplify the rulemaking's compliance or reporting requirements for small business.
- Establish performance standards to replace design or operational standards in the rulemaking for small business.
- Exempt small business from any or all requirements of the rulemaking.

If legal and feasible, how does the rulemaking use a method discussed above to reduce the substantial impact on small business?

This proposed chapter would have a positive impact on small business. These rules allow open contracts for meat processors across the State. The required products produced (packaged ground

venison) do not provide particularly lucrative revenues but do allow small businesses to recoup costs while providing a community benefit.

Text of Proposed Rulemaking

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.