

491—4.22(17A) Presiding officer. Contested case hearings may be heard directly by the commission. The commission, or the administrator, shall decide whether it will hear the appeal or whether the appeal will be heard by an administrative law judge who shall serve as the presiding officer. When the appeal is heard by an administrative law judge, the administrative law judge is authorized to issue a proposed decision.

4.22(1) Any party who wishes to request that the presiding officer assigned to render a proposed decision be an administrative law judge employed by the department of inspections and appeals must file a written request within 20 days after service of a notice of hearing which identifies or describes the presiding officer as the commission chair, members of the commission or commission employees.

4.22(2) The administrator may deny the request only upon a finding that one or more of the following apply:

a. Neither the administrator nor any officer of the commission under whose authority the contested case is to take place is a named party to the proceeding or a real party in interest to that proceeding.

b. There is a compelling need to expedite issuance of a final decision in order to protect the public health, safety, or welfare.

c. The case involves significant policy issues of first impression that are inextricably intertwined with the factual issues presented.

d. The demeanor of the witnesses is likely to be dispositive in resolving the disputed factual issues.

e. Funds are unavailable to pay the costs of an administrative law judge and an interagency appeal.

f. The request was not timely filed.

g. The request is not consistent with a specified statute.

4.22(3) The administrator shall issue a written ruling specifying the grounds for the decision within 20 days after a request for an administrative law judge is filed.

4.22(4) An administrative law judge assigned to act as presiding officer in a contested case shall have a Juris Doctor degree unless waived by the agency.

4.22(5) Except as provided otherwise by rules 491—4.41(17A) and 491—4.42(17A), all rulings by an administrative law judge acting as presiding officer are subject to appeal to the commission. A party must seek any available intra-agency appeal in order to exhaust adequate administrative remedies.

4.22(6) Unless otherwise provided by law, the commission, when reviewing a proposed decision upon intra-agency appeal, shall have the powers of and shall comply with the provisions of this chapter which apply to presiding officers.

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