

495—31.5 (17A) Public participation.

31.5(1) *Written comments.* For at least 20 days after publication of a Notice of Intended Action, persons may submit arguments, data, and views, in writing, on the subject matter of the published notice. Such written submissions should identify each proposed rule to which they relate and should be submitted to the person and address designated in the Notice of Intended Action.

31.5(2) *Oral proceedings.* The agency may, at any time, schedule an oral proceeding on a Notice of Intended Action. The agency shall schedule an oral proceeding if, within 20 days after the published Notice of Intended Action, a written request for an opportunity to make oral presentations is submitted to the agency by the administrative rules review committee, a governmental subdivision, an agency, an association having not less than 25 members, or at least 25 persons. That request must also contain the following additional information:

a. A request by one or more individual persons must be signed by each of them and include the address and telephone number of each of them.

b. A request by an association must be signed by an officer or designee of the association and must contain a statement that the association has at least 25 members and the address and telephone number of the person signing that request.

c. A request by an agency or governmental subdivision must be signed by an official having authority to act on behalf of the entity and must contain the address and telephone number of the person signing that request.

31.5(3) *Conduct of oral proceedings.*

a. Applicability. This subrule applies only to those oral rule-making proceedings in which an opportunity to make oral presentations is authorized or required by Iowa Code section 17A.4(1) “b,” or this chapter.

b. Scheduling and notice. An oral proceeding on a Notice of Intended Action may be held at IPERS, 7401 Register Drive, Des Moines, Iowa, and shall not be held earlier than 20 days after notice of its location and time is published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin. That notice shall also identify the applicable Notice of Intended Action by ARC number and citation to the Iowa Administrative Bulletin.

c. Presiding officer. The agency, through an employee of the agency, who is familiar with the substance of the rules proposed in the Notice of Intended Action, shall preside at the oral proceeding. The presiding officer shall record the oral proceeding and archive the recorded record at IPERS.

d. Conduct of proceeding. At an oral proceeding on a Notice of Intended Action, persons may make oral statements and make documentary and physical submissions, which may include data, views, comments or arguments concerning the subject matter of the rules proposed in the Notice of Intended Action. Persons wishing to make oral presentations at such a proceeding are encouraged to notify the agency at least one business day prior to the proceeding and indicate the general subject of their presentations. At the proceeding, those who participate shall indicate their names and addresses, identify any persons or organizations they may represent, and provide any other information relating to their participation deemed appropriate by the presiding officer. Oral proceedings shall be open to the public and shall be recorded by electronic means.

(1) At the beginning of an oral proceeding, the presiding officer shall give a brief synopsis of the subject matter of the rules proposed in the Notice of Intended Action, a statement of the statutory authority for each proposed rule, and the reasons for the agency’s decision to propose each rule. The presiding officer may place time limitations on individual oral presentations when necessary to ensure the orderly and expeditious conduct of an oral proceeding. To encourage joint oral presentations and to avoid repetition, additional time may be provided for persons whose presentations represent the views of other individuals as well as their own views.

(2) Persons making oral presentations are encouraged to avoid restating matters which have already been submitted in writing.

(3) To facilitate the exchange of information the presiding officer may, where time permits, open the floor to questions or general discussion.

(4) The presiding officer shall have the authority to take any reasonable action necessary for the orderly conduct of a meeting.

(5) Physical and documentary submissions presented by participants in an oral proceeding shall be submitted to the presiding officer. Such submissions become the property of the agency.

(6) An oral proceeding may be continued by the presiding officer to a later time without notice other than by announcement at the hearing.

(7) Participants in an oral proceeding shall not be required to take an oath or to submit to cross-examination. However, the presiding officer in an oral proceeding may question participants and permit the questioning of participants by other participants about any matter relating to that rule-making proceeding, including any prior written submissions made by those participants in that proceeding; but no participant shall be required to answer any question.

(8) The presiding officer in an oral proceeding may permit rebuttal statements and request the filing of written statements subsequent to the adjournment of the oral presentations.

31.5(4) *Additional information.* In addition to receiving written comments and oral presentations according to the provisions of this rule, the agency may obtain information concerning its proposed rules through any other lawful means deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

31.5(5) *Accessibility.* The agency shall schedule oral proceedings in rooms accessible to and functional for persons with physical disabilities. Persons who have special requirements should contact the person designated in the Notice of Intended Action at the telephone number or address provided in the Notice of Intended Action in advance of the proceeding to arrange access or other needed services.