

17A.19 Judicial review.

Except as expressly provided otherwise by another statute referring to [this chapter](#) by name, the judicial review provisions of [this chapter](#) shall be the exclusive means by which a person or party who is aggrieved or adversely affected by agency action may seek judicial review of such agency action. However, nothing in [this chapter](#) shall abridge or deny to any person or party who is aggrieved or adversely affected by any agency action the right to seek relief from such action in the courts.

1. A person or party who has exhausted all adequate administrative remedies and who is aggrieved or adversely affected by any final agency action is entitled to judicial review thereof under [this chapter](#). When agency action is pursuant to rate regulatory powers over public utilities or common carriers and the aggrievement or adverse effect is to the rates or charges of a public utility or common carrier, the agency action shall not be final until all agency remedies have been exhausted and a decision prescribing rates which satisfy the requirements of those provisions of the Code has been rendered. A preliminary, procedural, or intermediate agency action is immediately reviewable if all adequate administrative remedies have been exhausted and review of the final agency action would not provide an adequate remedy. If a declaratory order has not been rendered within sixty days after the filing of a petition therefor under [section 17A.9](#), or by such later time as agreed by the parties, or if the agency declines to issue such a declaratory order after receipt of a petition therefor, any administrative remedy available under [section 17A.9](#) shall be deemed inadequate or exhausted.

2. Proceedings for judicial review shall be instituted by filing a petition either in Polk county district court or in the district court for the county in which the petitioner resides or has its principal place of business. When a proceeding for judicial review has been commenced, a court may, in the interest of justice, transfer the proceeding to another county where the venue is proper. Within ten days after the filing of a petition for judicial review the petitioner shall serve by the means provided in the Iowa rules of civil procedure for the personal service of an original notice, or shall mail copies of the petition to all parties named in the petition and, if the petition involves review of agency action in a contested case, all parties of record in that case before the agency. Such personal service or mailing shall be jurisdictional. The delivery by personal service or mailing referred to in [this subsection](#) may be made upon the party's attorney of record in the proceeding before the agency. A mailing shall be addressed to the parties or their attorney of record at their last known mailing address. Proof of mailing shall be by affidavit. Any party of record in a contested case before an agency wishing to intervene and participate in the review proceeding must file an appearance within forty-five days from the time the petition is filed.

3. If a party files an application under [section 17A.16, subsection 2](#), for rehearing with the agency, the petition for judicial review must be filed within thirty days after that application has been denied or deemed denied. If a party does not file an application under [section 17A.16, subsection 2](#), for rehearing, the petition must be filed within thirty days after the issuance of the agency's final decision in that contested case. If an application for rehearing is granted, the petition for review must be filed within thirty days after the issuance of the agency's final decision on rehearing. In cases involving a petition for judicial review of agency action other than the decision in a contested case, the petition may be filed at any time petitioner is aggrieved or adversely affected by that action.

4. The petition for review shall name the agency as respondent, except as provided in [sections 10A.324 and 20.34](#). All petitions for review shall contain a concise statement of:

- a. The nature of the agency action which is the subject of the petition.
- b. The particular agency action appealed from.
- c. The facts on which venue is based.
- d. The grounds on which relief is sought.
- e. The relief sought.

5. a. The filing of the petition for review does not itself stay execution or enforcement of any agency action. Unless precluded by law, the agency may grant a stay on appropriate terms or other temporary remedies during the pendency of judicial review.

b. A party may file an interlocutory motion in the reviewing court, during the pendency of judicial review, seeking review of the agency's action on an application for stay or other temporary remedies.

c. If the agency refuses to grant an application for stay or other temporary remedies, or application to the agency for a stay or other temporary remedies is an inadequate remedy, the court may grant relief but only after a consideration and balancing of all of the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the applicant is likely to prevail when the court finally disposes of the matter.

(2) The extent to which the applicant will suffer irreparable injury if relief is not granted.

(3) The extent to which the grant of relief to the applicant will substantially harm other parties to the proceedings.

(4) The extent to which the public interest relied on by the agency is sufficient to justify the agency's action in the circumstances.

d. If the court determines that relief should be granted from the agency's action on an application for stay or other temporary remedies, the court may remand the matter to the agency with directions to deny a stay, to grant a stay on appropriate terms, or to grant other temporary remedies, or the court may issue an order denying a stay, granting a stay on appropriate terms, or granting other temporary remedies.

6. Within thirty days after filing of the petition, or within further time allowed by the court, the agency shall transmit to the reviewing court the original or a certified copy of the entire record of any contested case which may be the subject of the petition. By stipulation of all parties to the review proceedings, the record of such a case may be shortened. A party unreasonably refusing to stipulate to limit the record may be taxed by the court for the additional costs. The court may require or permit subsequent corrections or additions to the record.

7. In proceedings for judicial review of agency action a court may hear and consider such evidence as it deems appropriate. In proceedings for judicial review of agency action in a contested case, however, a court shall not itself hear any further evidence with respect to those issues of fact whose determination was entrusted by the Constitution or a statute to the agency in that contested case proceeding. Before the date set for hearing a petition for judicial review of agency action in a contested case, application may be made to the court for leave to present evidence in addition to that found in the record of the case. If it is shown to the satisfaction of the court that the additional evidence is material and that there were good reasons for failure to present it in the contested case proceeding before the agency, the court may order that the additional evidence be taken before the agency upon conditions determined by the court. The agency may modify its findings and decision in the case by reason of the additional evidence and shall file that evidence and any modifications, new findings, or decisions with the reviewing court and mail copies of the new findings or decisions to all parties.

8. Except to the extent that [this chapter](#) provides otherwise, in suits for judicial review of agency action all of the following apply:

a. The burden of demonstrating the required prejudice and the invalidity of agency action is on the party asserting invalidity.

b. The validity of agency action must be determined in accordance with the standards of review provided in [this section](#), as applied to the agency action at the time that action was taken.

9. The court shall make a separate and distinct ruling on each material issue on which the court's decision is based.

10. The court may affirm the agency action or remand to the agency for further proceedings. The court shall reverse, modify, or grant other appropriate relief from agency action, equitable or legal and including declaratory relief, if it determines that substantial rights of the person seeking judicial relief have been prejudiced because the agency action is any of the following:

a. Unconstitutional on its face or as applied or is based upon a provision of law that is unconstitutional on its face or as applied.

b. Beyond the authority delegated to the agency by any provision of law or in violation of any provision of law.

c. Based upon an erroneous interpretation of a provision of law whose interpretation has not clearly been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

d. Based upon a procedure or decision-making process prohibited by law or was taken without following the prescribed procedure or decision-making process.

e. The product of decision making undertaken by persons who were improperly constituted as a decision-making body, were motivated by an improper purpose, or were subject to disqualification.

f. Based upon a determination of fact clearly vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency that is not supported by substantial evidence in the record before the court when that record is viewed as a whole. For purposes of this paragraph, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) “*Substantial evidence*” means the quantity and quality of evidence that would be deemed sufficient by a neutral, detached, and reasonable person, to establish the fact at issue when the consequences resulting from the establishment of that fact are understood to be serious and of great importance.

(2) “*Record before the court*” means the agency record for judicial review, as defined by [this chapter](#), supplemented by any additional evidence received by the court under the provisions of [this chapter](#).

(3) “*When that record is viewed as a whole*” means that the adequacy of the evidence in the record before the court to support a particular finding of fact must be judged in light of all the relevant evidence in the record cited by any party that detracts from that finding as well as all of the relevant evidence in the record cited by any party that supports it, including any determinations of veracity by the presiding officer who personally observed the demeanor of the witnesses and the agency’s explanation of why the relevant evidence in the record supports its material findings of fact.

g. Action other than a rule that is inconsistent with a rule of the agency.

h. Action other than a rule that is inconsistent with the agency’s prior practice or precedents, unless the agency has justified that inconsistency by stating credible reasons sufficient to indicate a fair and rational basis for the inconsistency.

i. The product of reasoning that is so illogical as to render it wholly irrational.

j. The product of a decision-making process in which the agency did not consider a relevant and important matter relating to the propriety or desirability of the action in question that a rational decision maker in similar circumstances would have considered prior to taking that action.

k. Not required by law and its negative impact on the private rights affected is so grossly disproportionate to the benefits accruing to the public interest from that action that it must necessarily be deemed to lack any foundation in rational agency policy.

l. Based upon an irrational, illogical, or wholly unjustifiable interpretation of a provision of law whose interpretation has clearly been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

m. Based upon an irrational, illogical, or wholly unjustifiable application of law to fact that has clearly been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

n. Otherwise unreasonable, arbitrary, capricious, or an abuse of discretion.

11. In making the determinations required by [subsection 10](#), paragraphs “a” through “n”, the court shall do all of the following:

a. Shall not give any deference to the view of the agency with respect to whether particular matters have been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

b. Should not give any deference to the view of the agency with respect to particular matters that have not been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

c. Shall give appropriate deference to the view of the agency with respect to particular matters that have been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

12. A defendant in a suit for civil enforcement of agency action may defend on any of the grounds specified in [subsection 10](#), paragraphs “a” through “n”, if that defendant, at the time the enforcement suit was filed, would have been entitled to rely upon any of those grounds

as a basis for invalidating the agency action in a suit for judicial review of that action brought at the time the enforcement suit was filed. If a suit for civil enforcement of agency action in a contested case is filed within the time period in which the defendant could have filed a petition for judicial review of that agency action, and the agency subsequently dismisses its suit for civil enforcement of that agency action against the defendant, the defendant may, within thirty days of that dismissal, file a petition for judicial review of the original agency action at issue if the defendant relied upon any of the grounds for judicial review in [subsection 10](#), paragraphs “a” through “n”, in a responsive pleading to the enforcement action, or if the time to file a responsive pleading had not yet expired at the time the enforcement action was dismissed.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.19; 81 Acts, ch 24, §1, 2]

[98 Acts, ch 1202, §22 – 24, 46](#); [2017 Acts, ch 54, §12](#); [2025 Acts, ch 92, §2](#)

Referred to in §10A.322, 10A.330, 10A.601, 15.106E, 16.5E, 21.6, 22.8, 22.10, 23.5, 23.10, 80A.17, 90A.11, 92.22, 99A.6, 103.29, 103.31, 103.39, 105.27, 135.69, 139A.22, 152C.4, 156.16, 157.13, 169.15, 185.34, 214A.11, 216.17, 231.78, 252.27, 261B.3, 272C.3, 272C.6, 321.52, 321.560, 331.190, 368.22, 441.37B, 455I.9, 476.6, 514G.110, 514J.110, 522B.11, 522C.13, 522D.7, 522F.20, 533A.16, 535B.13, 535D.13, 542.14, 542B.27, 543D.21, 543E.18, 544A.15

Subsection 4, unnumbered paragraph 1 amended