

# Section 120.57

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## CHAPTER 74-310

Section 1. Chapter 120, Florida Statutes, consisting of sections 120.50, 120.51, 120.52, 120.53, 120.54, 120.55, 120.56, 120.57, 120.58, 120.59, 120.60, 120.61, 120.62, 120.63, 120.64, 120.65, 120.66, 120.68, 120.69, 120.70, and 120.71, is created to read:

Section 120.57 is created to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interest.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Rulemaking proceedings shall be governed solely by a. 120.54 unless, and to the extent that, a party timely asserts that his substantial interests will be affected in the proceedings and affirmatively demonstrates to the agency that the proceeding does not provide adequate opportunity to protect those interests. If the agency determines that rulemaking proceedings are not adequate to protect a party's interests, it shall convene a separate proceeding and proceed under the provisions of this section. The agency may request similarly situated parties to join and participate in such a proceeding. The rulemaking proceeding shall not be concluded prior to the issuance of the final order in the separate proceeding. Unless waived by consent all parties and the agency involved, subsection (1) applies to extent that the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this section, except for hearings: before agency heads other than within the department of professional and occupational regulation; before a member of an agency head other than agency heads within the department of professional and occupational regulation; before the industrial relations commission, judges of industrial claims, unemployment compensation appeals referees, public service commission or its examiners, or hearings regarding drivers licensing pursuant to chapter 322; hearings within the division of family services of the department of health and rehabilitative services; and hearings in which the division is a party. When the division is a party, an attorney assigned by administrative commission shall be the hearing officer. In cases to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures shall apply:

(a) All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for hearing after reasonable notice of not less than fourteen days, which shall include:

1. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing;
2. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held;
3. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved;

4. A short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

(b) For two years after the effective date of this act the agency or its designee may conduct the hearing if a full time hearing officer conducts the hearing or if the division advises the agency that it cannot provide a hearing officer within a reasonable time.

(c) If any hearing officer other than an agency head or a member thereof is not a full time hearing officer employed by the division, a full time hearing officer shall be appointed for the duration of the hearing. This officer shall rule upon proffers of proof and questions of evidence and dispose of procedural requests or similar matters.

(d) All hearings officers except for agency heads, members thereof or public service commission hearing examiners in rate-making proceedings shall be employees of or on contract to the division. On request of any agency the division shall assign hearing officers to conduct hearings with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. Any party may request the disqualification of any hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

(e) All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material then all parties shall be given the opportunity to cross-examine, challenge or rebut it.

(f) The record in cases governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

1. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;
2. Evidence received or considered;
3. A statement of matters officially recognized;
4. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;
5. Proposed findings and exceptions;
6. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;

7. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing, or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties;

8. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to subsection 120.66(2);

9. The official transcript.

(g) The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost.

(h) Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matter officially recognized.

(i) The hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, interpretation of administrative rules, recommended penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least ten days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

(j) The agency may adopt the recommended order as the agency's final order. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept or reduce the recommended order, but may not increase it without a review of the complete record. In the event a court reverses an agency's order, the court in its discretion may award attorney's fees and costs to the aggrieved prevailing party.

(k) If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

(l) A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the agency's final order, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

(2) **INFORMAL PROCEEDINGS.**--In cases to which subsection (1) does not apply:

(a) The agency shall, in accordance with its rules of procedure:

1. Give reasonable notice to affected persons or parties of the agency's action, whether proposed or already taken, or of its decision to refuse action, together with a summary of the factual, legal, and policy grounds therefor.

2. Give affected persons or parties, or their counsel an opportunity, to present to the agency or hearing officer written evidence in opposition to the agency's action or refusal to act, or a written statement challenging the grounds upon which the agency has chosen to justify its action or inaction at a convenient time place:

3. If the objections of the persons or parties are overruled, provide a written explanation within seven days.

(b) The record shall only consist of:

1. The notice and summary of grounds;

2. Evidence received or considered;

3. All written statements submitted by persons and parties;

4. Any decision overruling objections;

5. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to subsection 120.66(2); and

6. The official transcript.

(3) Unless precluded by law, informal disposition may be made of any proceeding by stipulation, agreed settlement, or consent order.

(4) This section shall not apply to agency investigations preliminary to agency action.

### **CHAPTER 75-191**

Section 7. Section 120.57, Florida Statutes is created to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interest.—

The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Rulemaking proceedings shall be governed solely by s. 120.54 unless, and to the extent that, a party timely asserts that his substantial interests will be affected in the proceedings and affirmatively demonstrates to the agency that the proceeding does not provide adequate opportunity to protect those interests. If the agency determines that rulemaking proceedings are not adequate to protect a party's interests, it shall convene a separate proceeding and proceed under the provisions of this section. The agency may request similarly situated parties to join and participate in such a proceeding. The rulemaking proceeding shall not be concluded prior to the issuance of the final order in the separate proceeding. Unless waived by consent all parties and the agency involved, subsection (1) applies to extent that the

proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(a) A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this ~~subsection~~ section, except for:

1. Hearings before agency heads other than within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation;

2. Hearings before a member of an agency head other than agency heads within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation,

3. Hearings before the Board of Review in unemployment compensation appeals, unemployment compensation appeals referees, and special deputies pursuant to s. 443.15, and the Public Service Commission or its examiners;

4. Hearings regarding drivers' licensing pursuant to chapter 322;

5. Hearings within the Division of Family Services of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services; and

(b) In cases to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Requests for hearings shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

~~2.1-~~ All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days, unless waived by all parties, which notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. A short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

~~(2) For 2 years after the effective date of this act, the agency or its designee may conduct the hearing if a full-time hearing officer conducts the hearing or if the division advises the agency that it cannot provide a hearing officer within a reasonable time.~~

~~(3) If any hearing officer other than an agency head or a member thereof is not a full time hearing officer employed by the division, a full time hearing officer shall be appointed for the duration of the hearing. This officer shall rule upon proffers of proof and questions of evidence and dispose of procedural requests or similar matters.~~

~~3.4. All hearing officers, except for agency heads or members thereof or **\*\*Public Service Commission** hearing examiners, shall be employees of, or on contract to, the division. Except for proceedings conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(3) or s. 120.56, all petitions or requests for hearings under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall notify the division within 10 days of receipt of petition or request, requesting the assignment of a hearing officer and, with the concurrence of the division, setting the time, date and place of the hearing. On request of any agency, the division shall assign hearing officers with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. Any party may request the disqualification of any hearing officer by filing with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.~~

~~4.5. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given the opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.~~

~~5.6. The record in cases governed by this subsection shall consist only of:~~

- ~~a. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;~~
- ~~b. Evidence received or considered;~~
- ~~c. A statement of matters officially recognized;~~
- ~~d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;~~
- ~~e. Proposed findings and exceptions;~~
- ~~f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;~~
- ~~g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing, or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties;~~
- ~~h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to subsection 120.66(2); and~~

i. The official transcript.

~~6.7.~~ The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost.

~~7.8.~~ Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matter officially recognized.

~~8.9.~~ The hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, interpretation of administrative rules, recommended penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

~~9.10.~~ The agency may adopt the recommended order as the agency's final order. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept or reduce the recommended order, but may not increase it without a review of the complete record. In the event a court reverses an agency's order, the court in its discretion may award attorney's fees and costs to the aggrieved prevailing party.

~~10.11.~~ If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

~~11.12.~~ A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the agency's final order, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

(2) INFORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--In cases to which subsection (1) does not apply:

(a) The agency shall, in accordance with its rules of procedure:

1. Give reasonable notice to affected persons or parties of the agency's action, whether proposed or already taken, or of its decision to refuse action, together with a summary of the factual, legal, and policy grounds therefor.

2. Give affected persons or parties, or their counsel an opportunity, at a convenient time and place, to present to the agency or hearing officer written or oral evidence in opposition to the agency's action or refusal to act, or a written statement challenging the grounds upon which the agency has chosen to justify its action or inaction.

3. If the objections of the persons or parties are overruled, provide a written explanation within 7 days.

(b) The record shall only consist of:

1. The notice and summary of grounds;

2. Evidence received or considered;

3. All written statements submitted by persons and parties;

4. Any decision overruling objections;

5. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to subsection 120.66(2); and

6. The official transcript.

(3) Unless precluded by law, informal disposition may be made of any proceeding by stipulation, agreed settlement, or consent order.

(4) This section shall not apply to agency investigations preliminary to agency action.

### **CHAPTER 76-131**

Section 8.

Section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interest.--

The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. ~~Rulemaking proceedings shall be governed solely by so. 120.54 unless, and to the extent that, a party timely asserts that his substantial interests will be affected in the proceedings and affirmatively demonstrates to the agency that the proceeding does not provide adequate opportunity to protect those interests. If the agency determines that rulemaking proceedings are not adequate to protect a party's interests, it shall convene a separate proceeding and proceed under the provisions of this section. The agency may request similarly situated parties to join and participate in such a proceeding. The rulemaking proceeding shall not be concluded prior to the issuance of the final order in the separate proceeding. Unless waived by consent of all parties and the agency involved, subsection (1) shall apply whenever to extent that the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, (2) applies in all other cases.~~

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(a) A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for:

1. Hearings before agency heads or a member thereof other than an agency head or a member of an agency head within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation;

~~2. Hearings before a member of an agency head other than agency heads within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation,~~

~~2.3.~~ Hearings before the Board of Review in unemployment compensation appeals, unemployment compensation appeals referees, and special deputies pursuant to s. 443.15, and the Public Service Commission or its examiners;

~~3.4.~~ Hearings regarding drivers' licensing pursuant to chapter 322;

~~4.5.~~ Hearings conducted within the ~~Division of Family Services of the~~ Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services in the execution of those social and economic programs administered by the former Division of Family Services of said department prior to the reorganization effected by chapter 75-48, Laws of Florida; ~~and~~

~~5.6.~~ Hearings in which the division is a party, in which case, ~~when the division is a party,~~ an attorney assigned by the Administration Commission shall be the hearing officer;:-

6. Hearings which involve student disciplinary suspensions or expulsions and which are conducted by educational units; and

7. Hearings of the Public Employees Relations Commission in which a determination is made of the appropriateness of the bargaining unit, as provided in s. 447.307.

(b) In cases to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Requests for hearings shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days, however, the 14 day notice requirement may be unless waived with the consent of by all parties,; In hearings involving student disciplinary suspensions or expulsions conducted by educational units, the 14 day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The which notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. A short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for proceedings conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, all petitions or requests for hearings under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall notify the division within 10 days of receipt of petition or request, requesting the assignment of a hearing officer and, with the concurrence of the division, setting the time, date and place of the hearing. On request of any agency, the division shall assign hearing officers with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. Any party may request the disqualification of any hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given the opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. The record in cases governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

a. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;

b. Evidence received or considered;

c. A statement of matters officially recognized;

d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;

e. Proposed findings and exceptions;

f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;

g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing, or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1) if such communications are public records;

h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to subsection 120.66(2); and

i. The official transcript.

6. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost.

7. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matter officially recognized.

8. The hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, interpretation of administrative rules, recommended penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

9. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the agency's final order. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept or reduce the recommended order, but may not increase it without a review of the complete record. In the event a court reverses an agency's order, the court in its discretion may award attorney's fees and costs to the aggrieved prevailing party.

10. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

11. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the agency's final order, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

(2) **INFORMAL PROCEEDINGS.**--In cases to which subsection (1) does not apply:

(a) The agency shall, in accordance with its rules of procedure:

1. Give reasonable notice to affected persons or parties of the agency's action, whether proposed or already taken, or of its decision to refuse action, together with a summary of the factual, legal, and policy grounds therefor.

2. Give affected persons or parties, or their counsel an opportunity, at a convenient time and place, to present to the agency or hearing officer written or oral evidence in opposition to the agency's action or refusal to act, or a written statement challenging the grounds upon which the agency has chosen to justify its action or inaction.

3. If the objections of the persons or parties are overruled, provide a written explanation within 7 days.

(b) The record shall only consist of:

1. The notice and summary of grounds;
2. Evidence received or considered;
3. All written statements submitted by persons and parties;
4. Any decision overruling objections;

5. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to subsection 120.66(2); and

6. The official transcript.

(3) Unless precluded by law, informal disposition may be made of any proceeding by stipulation, agreed settlement, or consent order.

(4) This section shall not apply to agency investigations preliminary to agency action.

## **CHAPTER 77-174**

### Section 1

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In cases to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures shall apply:

3. Except for proceedings conducted as prescribed in subsection 120.54(4)(~~3~~) or s. 120.56, all petitions or requests for hearings under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall notify the division within 10 days of receipt of the petition or request, requesting the assignment of a hearing officer and, with the concurrence of the division, ~~set~~ ~~setting~~ the time, date, and place of the hearing. On request of any agency, the division shall assign hearing officers with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. Any party may request the disqualification of any hearing

officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing stating the grounds with particularity.

### **CHAPTER 77-290**

Section 14. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, 1976 Supplement, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(a) A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for:

1. Hearings before agency heads or a member thereof other than an agency head or a member of an agency head within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation;
2. Hearings before the Board of Review in unemployment compensation appeals, ~~judges of industrial claims~~, unemployment compensation appeals referees, and special deputies pursuant to s. 443.15, and the Public Service Commission or its examiners;
3. Hearings regarding drivers' licensing pursuant to chapter 322;
4. Hearings conducted within the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services in the execution of those social and economic programs administered by the former Division of Family Services of said department prior to the reorganization effected by chapter 75-48, Laws of Florida;
5. Hearings in which the division is a party, in which case an attorney assigned by the Administration Commission shall be the hearing officer;
6. Hearings which involve student disciplinary suspensions or expulsions and which are conducted by educational units; and
7. Hearings of the Public Employees Relations Commission in which a determination is made of the appropriateness of the bargaining unit, as provided in s. 447.307.

## CHAPTER 77-453

Section 5. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, 1976 Supplement, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interest.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In cases to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Requests for hearings shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14 day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In hearings involving student disciplinary suspensions or expulsions conducted by educational units, the 14 day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. A short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for proceedings conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, all petitions or requests for hearings under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall notify the division within 10 days of receipt of petition or request, requesting the assignment of a hearing officer and, with the concurrence of the division, [set] the time, date and place of the hearing. On request of any agency, the division shall assign hearing officers with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. Any party may request the disqualification of any hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given the opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. The record in cases governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

a. All notice, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;

b. Evidence received or considered;

c. A statement of matters officially recognized;

d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;

e. Proposed findings and exceptions;

f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;

g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1) if such communications are public record.

h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communications pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and

i. The official transcript.

6. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost.

7. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matter officially recognized.

8. The hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, interpretation of administrative rules, recommended penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

9. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the agency's final order. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept or reduce the recommended order, but may not increase it without a review of the complete record. In the event a court ~~reverses, in reversing~~ an agency's order, ~~finds that such agency action was done in bad faith or maliciously,~~ the court in its discretion may award attorney's fees and costs to the aggrieved prevailing party.

10. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

11. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the agency's final order, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

## **CHAPTER 78-95**

Section 11. Section 120.57(1)(a), 215.19(3)(c), 290.10(5), 290.15, 440.38(2) and (3), 440.56(4), 443.07(4)(b) 2. and 3. and (c) – (e) and (5)(b), 443.08(3)(i) 1. and 3., 443.12(2)(a) and (8), 443.15(2)(a) 3., 446.041(2)(b), 446.081(3), and 450.061(2), Florida Statutes, relating to the Department of Commerce, are amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interest. – The provisions of this section shall apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency. Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) shall apply whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) shall apply in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(a) A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for:

1. Hearings before agency heads or a member thereof other than an agency head or a member of an agency head within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation.

2. Hearings before the [Board of Review] in unemployment compensation appeals, unemployment compensation appeals referees, special deputies pursuant to s. 443.15, and the Public Service Commission or its examiners;

3. Hearings regarding drivers' licensing pursuant to chapter 322;
4. Hearings conducted within the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services in the execution of those social and economic programs administered by the former Division of Family Services of said department prior to the reorganization effected by chapter 75-48, Laws of Florida;
5. Hearings in which the division is a party, in which case an attorney assigned by the Administration Commission shall be the hearing officer;
6. Hearings which involve student disciplinary suspensions or expulsions and which are conducted by educational units; and
7. Hearings of the Public Employees Relations Commission in which a determination is made of the appropriateness of the bargaining unit, as provided in s. 447-307.
8. Hearings held by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to chapter 601.

#### **CHAPTER 78-425**

Section 6. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In cases to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Requests for hearings shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In preliminary hearings for the revocation of parole no less than 7 days notice shall be given. In parole revocation hearings pursuant to ss. 949.10-949.11, reasonable notice of not less than 5 days shall be given. In hearings involving student disciplinary suspensions or expulsions conducted by educational units, the 14 day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. A short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for proceedings conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, all petitions or requests for hearings under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall notify the division within 10 days of receipt of the petition or request, requesting the assignment of a hearing officer and, with the concurrence of the division, set the time, date, and place of the hearing. On request of any agency, the division shall assign hearing officers with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. Any party may request the disqualification of any hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given the opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. The record in cases governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

a. All notice, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;

b. Evidence received or considered;

c. A statement of matters officially recognized;

d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;

e. Proposed findings and exceptions;

f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;

g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1) if such communications are public record.

h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communications pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and

i. The official transcript.

6. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost.

7. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matter officially recognized.

8. Except as provided in s. 120.57(1)(b)12., the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, interpretation of administrative rules, recommended penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

9. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the agency's final order. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept or reduce the recommended order, but may not increase it without a review of the complete record. In the event a court reverses an agency's order, the court in its discretion may award attorney's fees and costs to the aggrieved prevailing party.

10. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

11. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the agency's final order, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

12. In applications for a license or mergers pursuant to Title XXXVI or Title XXXVIII, Florida Statutes, which are referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

## CHAPTER 79-7

Section 8. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes (1978 Supplement), is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(a) A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for:

1. Hearings before agency heads or a member thereof other than an agency head or a member of an agency head within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation;
2. Hearings before the Unemployment Appeals Commission ~~Board of Review~~ in unemployment compensation appeals, unemployment compensation appeals referees, and special deputies pursuant to s. 443.15, and the Public Service-Commission or its examiners;
3. Hearings regarding drivers' licensing pursuant to chapter 322;
4. Hearings conducted within the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services in the execution of those social and economic programs administered by the former Division of Family Services of said department prior to the reorganization effected by chapter 75-48, Laws of Florida;
5. Hearings in which the division is a party, in which case an attorney assigned by the Administration Commission shall be the hearing officer;
6. Hearings which involve student disciplinary suspensions or expulsions and which are conducted by educational units; ~~and~~
7. Hearings of the Public Employees Relations Commission in which a determination is made of the appropriateness of the bargaining unit, as provided in s. 447.307; ~~and~~;
8. Hearings held by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to chapter 601.

Note.--In addition to conforming the name of the Board of Review to its new name, the amendments to this subsection include a grammatical change.

## **CHAPTER 80-95**

### Section 7:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

#### (1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(a) A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for:

1. Hearings before agency heads or a member thereof other than an agency head or a member of an agency head within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation;
2. Hearings before the Unemployment Appeals Commission in unemployment compensation appeals, unemployment compensation appeals referees, and special deputies pursuant to s. ~~443.141~~ 443.15, and the Public Service-Commission or its examiners;
3. Hearings regarding drivers' licensing pursuant to chapter 322;
4. Hearings conducted within the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services in the execution of those social and economic programs administered by the former Division of Family Services of said department prior to the reorganization effected by chapter 75-48, Laws of Florida;
5. Hearings in which the division is a party, in which case an attorney assigned by the Administration Commission shall be the hearing officer;
6. Hearings which involve student disciplinary suspensions or expulsions and which are conducted by educational units;
7. Hearings of the Public Employees Relations Commission in which a determination is made of the appropriateness of the bargaining unit, as provided in s. 447.307; and
8. Hearings held by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to chapter 601.

## **CHAPTER 80-289**

Section 4. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(a) A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for:

1. Hearings before agency heads or a member thereof other than an agency head or a member of an agency head within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation;
2. Hearings before the Unemployment Appeals Commission in unemployment compensation appeals, unemployment compensation appeals referees, and special deputies pursuant to s. 443.15, ~~and the Public Service Commission or its examiners;~~
3. Hearings regarding drivers' licensing pursuant to chapter 322;
4. Hearings conducted within the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services in the execution of those social and economic programs administered by the former Division of Family Services of said department prior to the reorganization effected by chapter 75-48, Laws of Florida;
5. Hearings in which the division is a party, in which case an attorney assigned by the Administration Commission shall be the hearing officer;
6. Hearings which involve student disciplinary suspensions or expulsions and which are conducted by educational units;
7. Hearings of the Public Employees Relations Commission in which a determination is made of the appropriateness of the bargaining unit, as provided in s. 447.307; and
8. Hearings held by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to chapter 601.

**CHAPTER 81-259**

Section 57. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes (1980 Supplement), is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interest.--

The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever

the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(a) A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for:

1. Hearings before agency heads or a member thereof other than an agency head or a member of an agency head within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation;
2. Hearings before the Unemployment Appeals Commission in unemployment compensation appeals, unemployment compensation appeals referees, and special deputies pursuant to s. 443.141;
3. Hearings regarding drivers' licensing pursuant to chapter 322;
4. Hearings conducted within the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services in the execution of those social and economic programs administered by the former Division of Family Services of said department prior to the reorganization effected by chapter 75-48, Laws of Florida;
5. Hearings in which the division is a party, in which case an attorney assigned by the Administration Commission shall be the hearing officer;
6. Hearings which involve student disciplinary suspensions or expulsions and which are conducted by educational units;
7. Hearings of the Public Employees Relations Commission in which a determination is made of the appropriateness of the bargaining unit, as provided in s. 447.307; and
8. Hearings held by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to chapter 601.

Note.--Amended to conform the name of the department of s. 2, ch. 79-36, Laws of Florida, which changed the name of the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation to Department of Professional Regulation.

### **CHAPTER 83-78**

Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Unless

waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In cases to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Requests for hearing shall be granted or denied within 14 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In preliminary hearings for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. In parole revocation hearings pursuant to ss. 949.10 and 949.11, reasonable notice of not less than 5 days shall be given. In hearings involving student disciplinary suspensions or expulsion conducted by educational units, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. Except for hearing before unemployment compensation appeals referees, a short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for proceedings conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, all petitions or requests for hearings under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall notify the division within 10 days of receipt of the petition or request, requesting the assignment of a hearing officer and, with the concurrence of the division, set the time, date, and place of the hearing. On request of any agency, the division shall assign hearing officers with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. Any party may request the disqualification of any hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given the opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes

to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. The record in cases governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

a. All notice, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;

b. Evidence received or considered;

c. A statement of matters officially recognized;

d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;

e. Proposed findings and exceptions;

f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;

g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public record.

h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communications pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and

i. The official transcript.

6. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost. In those proceedings before a hearing officer initiated by consumptive use permit applicants pursuant to subparagraph 13., the applicant shall bear the cost of accurately and completely preserving all testimony and providing full or partial transcript to the water management district. At the request of any other party, full or partial transcripts shall be provided at no more than cost.

7. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on the matters officially recognized.

8. Except as provided in subparagraph 12., the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, interpretation of administrative rules, recommended penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

9. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the agency's final order. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept or reduce the recommended order, but may not increase it without a review of the complete record. In the event a court reverses an agency's order, the court in its discretion may award attorney's fees and costs to the aggrieved prevailing party.

10. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

11. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the agency's final order, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

12. In applications for a license or mergers pursuant to title XXXVIII which are referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

13. In any application for a consumptive use permit pursuant to part II of chapter 373, the water management district on its own motion may, or, at the request of the applicant for the permit, shall, refer the matter to the division for the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing under this section.

### **CHAPTER 83-216**

Section 9. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In cases to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Requests for hearing shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In preliminary hearings for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. ~~In parole revocation hearings pursuant to ss. 949.10 and 949.11, reasonable notice of not less than 5 days shall be given.~~ In hearings involving student disciplinary suspensions or expulsion conducted by educational units, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

- a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.
- b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.
- c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.
- d. A short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for proceedings conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, all petitions or requests for hearings under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall notify the division within 10 days of receipt of the petition or request, requesting the assignment of a hearing officer and, with the concurrence of the division, set the time, date, and place of the hearing. On request of any agency, the division shall assign hearing officers with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. Any party may request the disqualification of any hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given the opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. The record in cases governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

- a. All notice, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;
- b. Evidence received or considered;
- c. A statement of matters officially recognized;

- d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;
  - e. Proposed findings and exceptions;
  - f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;
  - g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public record.
  - h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communications pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and
  - i. The official transcript.
6. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost.
7. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on the matters officially recognized.
8. Except as provided in subparagraph 12., the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, interpretation of administrative rules, recommended penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.
9. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the agency's final order. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept or reduce the recommended order, but may not increase it without a review of the complete record. In the event a court reverses an agency's order, the court in its discretion may award attorney's fees and costs to the aggrieved prevailing party.
10. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

11. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the agency's final order, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

12. In applications for a license or mergers pursuant to title XXXVIII which are referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

Note.--Amended to remove an obsolete provision; ss. 949.10 and 949.11 were repealed by s. 18, ch. 82-171, Laws of Florida.

### **CHAPTER 84-173**

Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency. Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In cases to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures apply:

1. A request for a hearing shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In a preliminary hearing for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. In a hearing involving a student disciplinary suspension or expulsion conducted by an educational unit, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. Except for any hearing before an unemployment compensation appeals referee, a short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time

notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for any proceeding conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, a petition or request for a hearing under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall so notify the division within 10 days of receipt of the petition or request, ~~requesting the assignment of a hearing officer and, with the concurrence of the division, set the time, date, and place of the hearing.~~ On request of any agency, the division shall assign a hearing officer with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. The referring agency shall take no further action with respect to the formal proceeding, except as a party litigant, as long as the division has jurisdiction over the formal proceeding. Any party may request the disqualification of the ~~any~~ hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the divisions prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. The record in a case governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

a. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;

b. Evidence received or considered;

c. A statement of matters officially recognized;

d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;

e. Proposed findings and exceptions;

f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;

g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public record.

h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and

i. The official transcript.

6. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost. In any proceeding before a hearing officer initiated by a consumptive use permit applicant pursuant to subparagraph 13., the applicant shall bear the cost of accurately and completely preserving all testimony and providing full or partial transcripts to the water management district. At the request of any other party, full or partial transcripts shall be provided at no more than cost.

7. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on the matters officially recognized.

8. Except as provided in subparagraph 12., the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

9. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order, but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept ~~or reduce~~ the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without a review of the complete record, and without stating with particularity its reasons therefor in the order, by citing to the record in justifying the action. When there is an appeal. In the event a court reverses the order of an agency, the court in its discretion may award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the aggrieved prevailing party if the court finds that the appeal was frivolous, meritless, an abuse of the appellate process or that the agency action which precipitated the appeal was a gross abuse of the agency's discretion.

10. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

11. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the final order of the agency, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

12. In any application for a license or merger pursuant to title XXXVIII which is referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact

and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

13. In any application for a consumptive use permit pursuant to part II of chapter 373, the water management district on its own motion may, or, at the request of the applicant for the permit, shall, refer the matter to the division for the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing under this section.

### **CHAPTER 84-203**

Section 4. Section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency, unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(a) A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for:

1. Hearings before agency heads or a member thereof other than an agency head or a member of an agency head within the Department of Professional Regulation;

2. Hearings before the Unemployment Appeals Commission in unemployment compensation appeals, unemployment compensation appeals referees, and special deputies pursuant to s. 443.141;

3. Hearings regarding drivers' licensing pursuant to chapter 322;

4. Hearings conducted within the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services in the execution of those social and economic programs administered by the former Division of Family Services of said department prior to the reorganization effected by chapter 75-48, Laws of Florida;

5. Hearings in which the division is a party, in which case an attorney assigned by the Administration Commission shall be the hearing officer;

6. Hearings which involve students disciplinary suspensions or expulsions and which are conducted by educational units;

7. Hearings of Public Employees Relations Commission in which a determination is made of the appropriateness of the bargaining unit, as provided in s. 447.307; and

8. Hearings held by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to chapter 601.

(b) In any case to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures apply:

1. A request for a hearing shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In a preliminary hearing for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. In a hearing involving a student disciplinary suspension or expulsion conducted by an educational unit, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. Except for any hearing before an unemployment compensation appeals referee, a short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for any proceeding conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, a petition or request for a hearing under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall so notify the division within 10 days of receipt of the petition or request. When the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission receives a notice of appeal pursuant to s. 380.07, the commission shall notify the division within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal if the commission elects to request the assignment of a hearing officer. On the request of any agency, the division shall assign a hearing officer with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. The referring agency shall take no further action with respect to the formal proceeding, except as a party litigant, as long as the division has jurisdiction over the formal proceeding. Any party may request the disqualification of the hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the divisions prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes

to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. The record in a case governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

a. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;

b. Evidence received or considered;

c. A statement of matters officially recognized;

d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;

e. Proposed findings and exceptions;

f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;

g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public records;

h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and

i. The official transcript.

6. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost. In any proceeding before a hearing officer initiated by a consumptive use permit applicant pursuant to subparagraph 13., the applicant shall bear the cost of accurately and completely preserving all testimony and providing full or partial transcripts to the water management district. At the request of any other party, full or partial transcripts shall be provided at no more than cost.

7. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on the matters officially recognized.

8. Except as provided in subparagraph 12., the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

9. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of

administrative rules in the recommended order, but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without a review of the complete record. When there is an appeal in the event a court reverses the order of an agency, the court in its discretion may award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the aggrieved prevailing party if the court finds that the appeal was frivolous, meritless, an abuse of the appellate process or that the agency action which precipitated the appeal was a gross abuse of the agency's discretion.

10. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

11. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the final order of the agency, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

12. In any application for a license or merger pursuant to title XXXVIII which is referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

13. In any application for a license or merger pursuant to title XXXVIII which is referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

14. In any application for a consumptive use permit pursuant to part II of chapter 373, the water management district on its own motion may, or, at the request of the applicant for the permit, shall, refer the matter to the division for the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing under this section.

(2) INFORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--In any case to which subsection (1) does not apply:

(a) The agency shall, in accordance with its rules of procedures:

1. Give reasonable notice to affected persons or parties of the action of the agency, whether proposed or already taken, or of its decision to refuse action, together with a summary of the factual, legal, and policy grounds therefor.

2. Give affected persons or parties or their counsel an opportunity, at a convenient time and place, to present to the agency or hearing officer written or oral evidence in opposition to the

action of the agency or of its refusal to act, or a written statement challenging the grounds upon which the agency has chosen to justify its action or inaction.

3. If the objections of the persons or parties are overruled, provide a written explanation within 7 days.

(b) The record shall only consist of:

1. The notice and summary of grounds;
2. Evidence received or considered;
3. All written statements submitted by persons and parties;
4. Any decision overruling objections;
5. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and
6. The official transcript.

(3) Unless precluded by law, informal disposition may be made of any proceeding by stipulation, agreed settlement, or consent order.

(4) This section does not apply to agency investigations preliminary to agency action.

(5) This section does not apply to any proceeding in which the substantial interests of a student are determined by a state university system. The Board of Regents shall establish a committee, at least half of whom shall be appointed by the Council of Student Body Presidents, which shall establish by January 1, 1985, rules and guidelines insuring fairness and due process in judicial proceedings involving students in the state university system. This section shall not become effective until January 1, 1985.

### **CHAPTER 86-108**

Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency, unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In any case to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures apply:

1. A request for a hearing shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In a preliminary hearing for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. In a hearing involving a student disciplinary suspension or expulsion conducted by an educational unit, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. Except for any hearing before an unemployment compensation appeals referee, a short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for any proceeding conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, a petition or request for a hearing under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall so notify the division within 10 days of receipt of the petition or request. When the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission receives a notice of appeal pursuant to s. 380.07, the commission shall notify the division within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal if the commission elects to request the assignment of a hearing officer. On the request of any agency, the division shall assign a hearing officer with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. The referring agency shall take no further action with respect to the formal proceeding, except as a party litigant, as long as the division has jurisdiction over the formal proceeding. Any party may request the disqualification of the hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the divisions prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. All pleadings, motions, or other papers filed in the proceeding must be signed by a party, the party's attorney, or the party's qualified representative. The signature of a party, a party's attorney, or a party's qualified representative constitutes a certificate that he has read the pleading, motion, or other paper and that, to the best of his knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, it is not interposed for any improper purposes, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or for frivolous purpose or needless increase in the cost of litigation. If a pleading, motion, or other paper is signed in violation of these requirements, the hearing officer, upon motion or his own initiative, shall impose upon the person who signed it, a represented party, or both, an appropriate sanction, which may include an order to pay the other party or parties the amount of reasonable expenses incurred because of the filing of the pleading, motion, or other paper, including a reasonable attorney's fee.

Section 2. Subsection (6) is added to section 120.57, Florida Statutes, to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.—

(6) In cases where a conceptual review permit has been issued by a water management district, petitions challenging the issuance of a construction or operating permit implementing the conceptual review permit, upon a motion of a party, shall be subject to expedited review. Within fifteen (15) days of filing a motion for expedited review by the district or the applicant, the hearing officer shall, by order, establish a schedule for the proceedings, including discovery, which provides for a final hearing within sixty (60) days of the issuance of the order. Proposed recommended orders must be submitted to the hearing officer, if at all, within ten (10) days of the filing of the hearing transcript. Recommended orders shall be submitted to the district within thirty (30) days of the last day for the filing of the proposed recommended order. The district shall issue its final order within forty-five (45) days of the receipt of the recommended order. If the district grants the construction or operating permit, the permittee may proceed unless judicial review of final agency action is sought pursuant to s. 120.68 and a stay is applied for and issued.

#### **CHAPTER 87-6**

Section 44. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, 1986 Supplement, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency, unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In any case to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures apply:

1. A request for a hearing shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.
2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In a preliminary hearing for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. In a hearing involving a student disciplinary suspension or expulsion conducted by an educational unit, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:
  - a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.
  - b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.
  - c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.
  - d. Except for any hearing before an unemployment compensation appeals referee, a short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.
3. Except for any proceeding conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4), ~~s. 120.56~~, or 120.575(1)(b), a petition or request for a hearing under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall so notify the division within 10 days of receipt of the petition or request. When the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission receives a notice of appeal pursuant to s. 380.07, the commission shall notify the division within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal if the commission elects to request the assignment of a hearing officer. On the request of any agency, the division shall assign a hearing officer with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. The referring agency shall take no further action with respect to the formal proceeding, except as a party litigant, as long as the division has jurisdiction over the formal proceeding. Any party may request the disqualification of the hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.
4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.
5. All pleadings, motions, or other papers filed in the proceeding must be signed by a party, the party's attorney, or the party's qualified representative. The signature of a party, a

party's attorney, or a party's qualified representative constitutes a certificate that he has read the pleading, motion, or other paper and that, to the best of his knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, it is not interposed for any improper purposes, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or for frivolous purpose or needless increase in the cost of litigation. If a pleading, motion, or other paper is signed in violation of these requirements, the hearing officer, upon motion or his own initiative, shall impose upon the person who signed it, a represented part, or both, an appropriate sanction, which may include an order to pay the other party or parties the amount of reasonable expenses incurred because of the filing of the pleading, motion, or other paper, including a reasonable attorney's fee.

6. The record in a case governed by this subsection shall consist only of:
  - a. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;
  - b. Evidence received or considered;
  - c. A statement of matters officially recognized;
  - d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;
  - e. Proposed findings and exceptions;
  - f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;
  - g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public records;
  - h. All matters placed in the record after ex parte communication pursuant to s. 120.66(2);  
and
  - i. The official transcript.

7. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost. In any proceeding before a hearing officer initiated by a consumptive use permit applicant pursuant to subparagraph 13., the applicant shall bear the cost of accurately and completely preserving all testimony and providing full or partial transcripts to the water management district. At the request of any other party, full or partial transcripts shall be provided at no more than cost.

8. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matters officially recognized.

9. Except as provided in subparagraph 12., the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

10. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order, but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without a review of the complete record and without stating with particularity its reasons therefor in the order, by citing to the record in justifying the action. When there is an appeal, the court in its discretion may award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the prevailing party if the court finds that the appeal was frivolous, meritless, or an abuse of the appellate process or that the agency action which precipitated the appeal was a gross abuse of the agency's discretion.

11. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

12. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the final order of the agency, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

13. In any application for a license or merger pursuant to title XXXVIII which is referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

14. In any application for a consumptive use permit pursuant to part II of chapter 373, the water management district on its own motion may, or, at the request of the applicant for the permit, shall, refer the matter to the division for the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing under this section.

#### **CHAPTER 87-54**

Section 1 of chapter 86-108, Laws of Florida, is reenacted and amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency, unless

such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In any case to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures apply:

1. A request for a hearing shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In a preliminary hearing for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. In a hearing involving a student disciplinary suspension or expulsion conducted by an educational unit, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. Except for any hearing before an unemployment compensation appeals referee, a short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for any proceeding conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, a petition or request for a hearing under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall so notify the division within 10 days of receipt of the petition or request. When the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission receives a notice of appeal pursuant to s. 380.07, the commission shall notify the division within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal if the commission elects to request the assignment of a hearing officer. On the request of any agency, the division shall assign a hearing officer with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. The referring agency shall take no further action with respect to the formal proceeding, except as a party litigant, as long as the division has jurisdiction over the formal proceeding. Any party may request the disqualification of the hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit

proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. All pleadings, motions, or other papers filed in the proceeding must be signed by a party, the party's attorney, or the party's qualified representative. The signature of a party, a party's attorney, or a party's qualified representative constitutes a certificate that he has read the pleading, motion, or other paper and that, to the best of his knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, it is not interposed for any improper purposes, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or for frivolous purpose or needless increase in the cost of litigation. If a pleading, motion, or other paper is signed in violation of these requirements, the hearing officer, upon motion or his own initiative, shall impose upon the person who signed it, a represented part, or both, an appropriate sanction, which may include an order to pay the other party or parties the amount of reasonable expenses incurred because of the filing of the pleading, motion, or other paper, including a reasonable attorney's fee.

~~6.5-~~ The record in a case governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

- a. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;
- b. Evidence received or considered;
- c. A statement of matters officially recognized;
- d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;
- e. Proposed findings and exceptions;
- f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;
- g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public records;
- h. All matters placed in the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and
- i. The official transcript.

~~7.6-~~ The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost. In any proceeding before a hearing officer initiated by a consumptive use permit applicant pursuant to subparagraph ~~14.13.~~, the applicant shall bear the cost of accurately and

completely preserving all testimony and providing full or partial transcripts to the water management district. At the request of any other party, full or partial transcripts shall be provided at no more than cost.

~~8.7.~~ Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matters officially recognized.

~~9.8.~~ Except as provided in subparagraph ~~13. 12.~~, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

~~10.9.~~ The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order, but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without a review of the complete record and without stating with particularity its reasons therefor in the order, by citing to the record in justifying the action. When there is an appeal, the court in its discretion may award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the prevailing party if the court finds that the appeal was frivolous, meritless, or an abuse of the appellate process or that the agency action which precipitated the appeal was a gross abuse of the agency's discretion.

~~11.10.~~ If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

~~12.11.~~ A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the final order of the agency, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

~~13.12.~~ In any application for a license or merger pursuant to title XXXVIII which is referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

~~14.13.~~ In any application for a consumptive use permit pursuant to part II of chapter 373, the water management district on its own motion may, or, at the request of the applicant for the permit, shall, refer the matter to the division for the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing under this section.

Section 2. Section 2 of chapter 86-108, Laws of Florida, is reenacted and amended to read:

Section 2. Subsection (6) is added to section 120.57, Florida Statutes, to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency, unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(6) In cases where a conceptual review permit has been issued by a water management district, petitions challenging the issuance of a construction or operating permit implementing the conceptual review permit, upon a motion of a party, shall be subject to expedited review. Within fifteen (15) days of filing a motion for expedited review by the district or the applicant, the hearing officer shall, by order, establish a schedule for the proceedings, including discovery, which provides for a final hearing within sixty (60) days of the issuance of the order. Proposed recommended orders must be submitted to the hearing officer, if at all, within ten (10) days of the filing of the hearing transcript. Recommended orders shall be submitted to the district within thirty (30) days of the last day for the filing of the proposed recommended order. The district shall issue its final order within forty-five (45) days of the receipt of the recommended order. If the district grants the construction or operating permit, the permittee may proceed unless judicial review of final agency action is sought pursuant to s. 120.68 and a stay is applied for and issued.

#### **CHAPTER 87-385**

Section 5. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, 1986 Supplement, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency, unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In any case to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures apply:

1. A request for a hearing shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.
2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In a preliminary hearing for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. In a hearing involving a student disciplinary suspension or expulsion conducted by an

educational unit, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

- a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.
- b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.
- c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.
- d. Except for any hearing before an unemployment compensation appeals referee, a short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for any proceeding conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, a petition or request for a hearing under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall so notify the division within 15 ~~10~~ days of receipt of the petition or request. When the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission receives a notice of appeal pursuant to s. 380.07, the commission shall notify the division within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal if the commission elects to request the assignment of a hearing officer. On the request of any agency, the division shall assign a hearing officer with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. The referring agency shall take no further action with respect to the formal proceeding, except as a party litigant, as long as the division has jurisdiction over the formal proceeding. Any party may request the disqualification of the hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. All pleadings, motions, or other papers filed in the proceeding must be signed by a party, the party's attorney, or the party's qualified representative. The signature of a party, a party's attorney, or a party's qualified representative constitutes a certificate that he has read the pleading, motion, or other paper and that, to the best of his knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, it is not interposed for any improper purposes, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or for frivolous purpose or needless increase in the cost of litigation. If a pleading, motion, or other paper is signed in violation of these requirements, the hearing officer, upon motion or his own initiative, shall impose upon the person who signed it, a

represented party, or both, an appropriate sanction, which may include an order to pay the other party or parties the amount of reasonable expenses incurred because of the filing of the pleading, motion, or other paper, including a reasonable attorney's fee.

6. The record in a case governed by this subsection shall consist only of:
  - a. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;
  - b. Evidence received or considered;
  - c. A statement of matters officially recognized;
  - d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;
  - e. Proposed findings and exceptions;
  - f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;
  - g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public records;
  - h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and
  - i. The official transcript.
7. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost. In any proceeding before a hearing officer initiated by a consumptive use permit applicant pursuant to subparagraph 13., the applicant shall bear the cost of accurately and completely preserving all testimony and providing full or partial transcripts to the water management district. At the request of any other party, full or partial transcripts shall be provided at no more than cost.
8. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matters officially recognized.
9. Except as provided in subparagraph 12., the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusion of law, applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

10. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order, but may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without a review of the complete record and without stating with particularity its reasons therefor in the order, by citing to the record in justifying the action. When there is an appeal, the court in its discretion may award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the prevailing party if the court finds that the appeal was frivolous, meritless, or an abuse of the appellate process or that the agency action which precipitated the appeal was a gross abuse of the agency's discretion.

11. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

12. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the final order of the agency, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

13. In any application for a license or merger pursuant to title XXXVIII which is referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

14. In any application for a consumptive use permit pursuant to part II of chapter 373, the water management district on its own motion may, or, at the request of the applicant for the permit, shall, refer the matter to the division for the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing under this section.

### **CHAPTER 90-283**

Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interest.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interest of a party are determined by an agency, unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(a) A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for:

1. Hearings before agency heads or a member thereof other than an agency head or a member of an agency head within the Department of Professional Regulation;
2. Hearings before the Unemployment Appeals Commission in unemployment compensation appeals, unemployment compensation appeals referees, and special deputies pursuant to s. 443.141;
3. Hearings regarding drivers' licensing pursuant to chapter 322;
4. Hearings conducted within the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services in the execution of those social and economic programs administered by the former Division of Family Services of said department prior to the reorganization effected by chapter 75-48, Laws of Florida;
5. Hearings in which the division is a party, in which case an attorney assigned by the Administration Commission shall be the hearing officer;
6. Hearings which involve student disciplinary suspensions or expulsions and which are conducted by educational units;
7. Hearings of the Public Employee Relations Commission in which a determination is made of the appropriateness of the bargaining unit, as provided in s. 447.307; ~~and~~
8. Hearings held by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to chapter 601; ~~and~~;
9. Hearings held by the Division of Florida Highway Patrol of the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to deny, suspend, or remove a wrecker operator from participating in the wrecker rotation system established by s. 321.051. Such hearings shall be held by a hearing officer appointed by the director of the Division of Florida Highway Patrol.

#### **CHAPTER 91-30**

Section 4. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, 1990 Supplement, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency, unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In any case to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures apply:

1. A request for a hearing shall be granted or denied within 16 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In a preliminary hearing for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. In a hearing involving a student disciplinary suspension or expulsion conducted by an educational unit, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. Except for any hearing before an unemployment compensation appeals referee, a short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for any proceeding conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4), s. 120.56, or s. 120.575(1)(b), a petition or request for a hearing under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall so notify the division within 15 days of receipt of the petition or request. When the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission receives a notice of appeal pursuant to s. 380.07, the commission shall notify the division within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal if the commission elects to request the assignment of a hearing officer. On the request of any agency, the division shall assign a hearing officer with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. The referring agency shall take no further action with respect to the formal proceeding, except as a party litigant, as long as the division has jurisdiction over the formal proceeding. Any party may request the disqualification of the hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes

to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. All pleadings, motions, or other papers filed in the proceeding must be signed by a party, the party's attorney, or the party's qualified representative. The signature of a party, a party's attorney, or a party's qualified representative constitutes a certificate that he has read the pleading, motion, or other paper and that, to the best of his knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, it is not interposed for any improper purposes, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or for frivolous purpose or needless increase in the cost of litigation. If a pleading, motion, or other paper is signed in violation of these requirements, the hearing officer, upon motion or his own initiative, shall impose upon the person who signed it, a represented party, or both, an appropriate sanction, which may include an order to pay the other party or parties the amount of reasonable expenses incurred because of the filing of the pleading, motion, or other paper, including a reasonable attorney's fee.

6. The record in a case governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

a. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;

b. Evidence received or considered;

c. A statement of matters officially recognized;

d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;

e. Proposed findings and exceptions;

f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;

g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public records;

h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and

i. The official transcript.

7. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost. In any proceeding before a hearing officer initiated by a consumptive use permit applicant pursuant to subparagraph 14., the applicant shall bear the cost of accurately and completely preserving all testimony and providing full or partial transcripts to the water management district. At the request of any other party, full or partial transcripts shall be provided at no more than cost.

8. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matters officially recognized.

9. Except as provided in subparagraph 13., the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusions of law, interpretation of administrative rules, and recommended penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

10. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order. The agency, but, may not reject or modify the finding of fact, including findings of fact that form the basis for an agency statement, unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without a review of the complete record and without stating with particularity its reasons therefor in the order, by citing to the record in justifying the action. When there is an appeal, the court in its discretion may award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the prevailing party if the court finds that the appeal was frivolous, meritless, or an abuse of the appellate process or that the agency action which precipitated the appeal was a gross abuse of the agency's discretion.

11. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

12. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the final order of the agency, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

13. In any application for a license or merger pursuant to title XXXVIII which is referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

14. In any application for a consumptive use permit pursuant to part II of chapter 373, the water management district on its own motion may, or, at the request of the applicant for the permit, shall, refer the matter to the division for the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing under this section.

15. Each agency statement defined as a rule under s. 120.52 and not adopted by the rulemaking procedure provided by s. 120.54 which is relied upon by an agency to determine the substantial interests of a party shall be subject to de nove review by a hearing officer. A statement shall not enlarge, modify, or contravene the specific provision of law implemented or otherwise exceed delegated legislative authority. The statement applied as a result of a proceeding pursuant to this subsection shall be demonstrated to be within the scope of delegated legislative authority. Recommended and final orders pursuant to this subsection shall provide an explanation of the statement that includes the evidentiary basis which supports the statement applied and a general discussion of the justification for the statement applied.

### **CHAPTER 91-191**

Section 1. Sections 10, 11, and 12 of House Bill 1879, enacted in the 1991 regular session, are amended to read:

Section 10. On or before March ~~January~~ 1, 1992, each agency shall submit to the Department of State for approval a plan for publishing or otherwise making agency orders available to the public, for sequentially numbering agency orders, for coordinating and establishing procedures for the compilation of subject-matter indexes and lists of agency orders, and for publishing such indexes and lists or providing alternative means of making such indexes and lists available to the public.

Section 11. This act applies to actions instituted on or after March ~~January~~ 1, 1992.

Section 12. This act shall take effect March ~~January~~ 1, 1992, except that this section and section 10 shall take effect upon this act becoming a law.

### **CHAPTER 92-315**

Section 22. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, as amended by chapter 91-30, Laws of Florida, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency, unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In any case to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures apply:

1. A request for a hearing shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In a preliminary hearing for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. In a hearing involving a student disciplinary suspension or expulsion conducted by an educational unit, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

- a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.
- b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.
- c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. Except for any hearing before an unemployment compensation appeals referee, a short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for any proceeding conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4); or s. 120.56, ~~or s. 120.575(1)(b)~~, a petition or request for a hearing under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall so notify the division within 15 days of receipt of the petition or request. When the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission receives a notice of appeal pursuant to s. 380.07, the commission shall notify the division within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal if the commission elects to request the assignment of a hearing officer. On the request of any agency, the division shall assign a hearing officer with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. The referring agency shall take no further action with respect to the formal proceeding, except as a party litigant, as long as the division has jurisdiction over the formal proceeding. Any party may request the disqualification of the hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. All pleadings, motions, or other papers filed in the proceeding must be signed by a party, the party's attorney, or the party's qualified representative. The signature of a party, party's attorney, or a party's qualified representative constitutes a certificate that he has read the pleading, motion, or other paper and that, to the best of his knowledge, information, and belief

formed after reasonable inquiry, it is not interposed for any improper purposes, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or for frivolous purpose or needless increase in the cost of litigation. If a pleading, motion, or other paper is signed in violation of these requirements, the hearing officer, upon motion or his own initiative, shall impose upon the person who signed it, a represented party, or both, an appropriate sanction, which may include an order to pay the other party or parties the amount of reasonable expenses incurred because of the filing of the pleading, motion, or other paper, including a reasonable attorney's fee.

6. The record in a case governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

a. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;

b. Evidence received or considered;

c. A statement of matters officially recognized;

d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;

e. Proposed findings and exceptions;

f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;

g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public records;

h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and

i. The official transcript.

7. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost. In any proceeding before a hearing officer initiated by a consumptive use permit applicant pursuant to subparagraph 14., the applicant shall bear the cost of accurately and completely preserving all testimony and providing full or partial transcripts to the water management district. At the request of any other party, full or partial transcripts shall be provided at no more than cost.

8. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matters officially recognized.

9. Except as provided in subparagraph 13., the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of his findings of fact, conclusions of law, interpretation of administrative rules, and recommended penalty, if applicable, and any

other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

10. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order. The agency may not reject or modify the finding of fact, including findings of fact that form the basis for an agency statement, unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without stating with particularity its reasons therefor in the order, by citing to the record in justifying the action. When there is an appeal, the court in its discretion may award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the prevailing party if the court finds that the appeal was frivolous, meritless, or an abuse of the appellate process or that the agency action which precipitated the appeal was a gross abuse of the agency's discretion.

11. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

12. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the final order of the agency, provided he has completed all his duties as hearing officer.

13. In any application for a license or merger pursuant to title XXXVIII which is referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

14. In any application for a consumptive use permit pursuant to part II of chapter 373, the water management district on its own motion may, or, at the request of the applicant for the permit, shall, refer the matter to the division for the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing under this section.

15. Each agency statement defined as a rule under s. 120.52 and not adopted by the rulemaking procedure provided by s. 120.54 which is relied upon by an agency to determine the substantial interests of a party shall be subject to de novo review by a hearing officer. A statement shall not enlarge, modify, or contravene the specific provision of law implemented or otherwise exceed delegated legislative authority. The statement applied as a result of a proceeding pursuant to this subsection shall be demonstrated to be within the scope of delegated legislative authority. Recommended and final orders pursuant to this subsection shall provide an explanation of the statement that includes the evidentiary basis which supports the statement applied and a general discussion of the justification for the statement applied.

## **CHAPTER 94-218**

Section 7. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests - The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency, unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

### (1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.—

(a) A hearing officer assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for:

1. Hearings before agency heads or a member thereof ~~except other than an agency head or a member of an agency head within~~ the secretary of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation for matters relating to the regulation of professions, as defined in chapter 455, or a board or member of a board within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation for matters relating to the regulation of professions, as defined in chapter 455;

## **CHAPTER 95-147**

Section 1420. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes (1994 Supplement), is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.-The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency, unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

### (1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.-

(b) In any case to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures apply:

1. A request for a hearing shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In a preliminary hearing for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. In a hearing involving a student disciplinary suspension or expulsion conducted by an educational unit, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

- a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.
- b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.
- c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. Except for any hearing before an unemployment compensation appeals referee, a short; and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all Parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for any proceeding conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, a petition or request for a hearing under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall so notify the division within 15 days of receipt of the petition or request. When the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission receives a notice of appeal pursuant to s. 380.07, the commission shall notify the division within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal if the commission elects to request the assignment of a hearing officer. On the request of any agency, the division shall assign a hearing officer with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. The referring agency shall take no further action with respect to the formal proceeding, except as a party litigant, as long as the division has jurisdiction over the formal proceeding. Any party may request the disqualification of the hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. All pleadings, motions, or other papers filed in the proceeding must be signed by a party, the party's attorney, or the party's qualified representative. The signature of a party, a party's attorney, or a party's qualified representative constitutes a certificate that he or she has read the pleading, motion, or other paper and that, to the best of his or her knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, it is not interposed for any improper purposes, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or for frivolous purpose or needless increase in the cost of litigation. If a pleading, motion, or other paper is signed in violation of these requirements, the hearing officer, upon motion or the officer's ~~his~~ own initiative, shall impose upon the person who signed it, a represented party, or both, an appropriate sanction, which may include an order to pay the other party or parties the amount of reasonable expenses incurred because of the filing of the pleading, motion, or other paper, including a reasonable attorney's fee.

6. The record in a case governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

a. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;

b. Evidence received or considered

c. A statement of matters officially recognized;

d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;

e. Proposed findings and exceptions;

f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;

g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public records;

h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and

i. The official transcript.

7. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost. In any proceeding before a hearing officer initiated by a consumptive use permit applicant pursuant to subparagraph 14., the applicant shall bear the cost of accurately and completely preserving all testimony and providing full or partial transcripts to the water management district. At the request of any other party, full or partial transcripts shall be provided at no more than cost.

8. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matters officially recognized.

9. Except as provided in subparagraph 13, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of the officer's ~~his~~ findings of fact, conclusions of law, interpretation of administrative rules, and recommended penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

10. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order. The agency may not reject or modify the findings of fact, including findings of fact that form the basis for an agency statement, unless the agency

first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without a review of the complete record and without stating with particularity its reasons therefor in the order, by citing to the record in justifying the action. When there is an appeal, the court in its discretion may award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the prevailing party if the court finds that the appeal was frivolous, meritless, or an abuse of the appellate process or that the agency action which precipitated the appeal was a gross abuse of the agency's discretion.

11. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

12. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the final order of the agency, provided he or she has completed all ~~his~~ duties as hearing officer.

13. In any application for a license or merger pursuant to title XXXVIII which is referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

14. In any application for a consumptive use permit pursuant to part II of chapter 373, the water management district on its own motion may, or, at the request of the applicant for the permit, shall, refer the matter to the division for the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing under this section.

15. Each agency statement defined as a rule under s. 120.52 and not adopted by the rulemaking procedure provided by s. 120.54 which is relied upon by an agency to determine the substantial interests of a party shall be subject to de novo review by a hearing officer. A statement shall not enlarge, modify, or contravene the specific provision of law implemented or otherwise exceed delegated legislative authority. The statement applied as a result of a proceeding pursuant to this subsection shall be demonstrated to be within the scope of delegated legislative authority. Recommended and final orders pursuant to this subsection shall provide an explanation of the statement that includes the evidentiary basis which supports the statement applied and a general discussion of the justification for the statement applied.

#### **CHAPTER 95-328**

Section 1 Subsection (5) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, 1994 Supplement, is amended to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests.--The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency,

unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(5)(a) This section does not apply to any proceeding in which the substantial interests of a student are determined by the State University System. The Board of Regents shall establish a committee, at least half of whom shall be appointed by the Council of Student Body Presidents, which shall establish by January 1, 1985, rules and guidelines ensuring fairness and due process in judicial proceedings involving students in the State University System. This section shall not become effective until January 1, 1985.

(b) A hearing on an objection to proposed action of the Florida Public Service Commission may only address the issues in dispute. Issues in the proposed action which are not in dispute are deemed stipulated.

## **CHAPTER 96-159**

Section 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to consider the impact of any agency rulemaking required by proposed legislation and to determine whether the proposed legislation provides adequate and appropriate standards and guidelines to direct the agency's implementation of the proposed legislation.

Section 19. Section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

(Substantial rewording of section. See s. 120.57, F.S., for present text.)

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases

(1) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.--

(a) Except as provided in ss. 120.80 and 120.81, an administrative law judge assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for hearings before agency heads or a member thereof. If the administrative law judge assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another administrative law judge who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new administrative law judge finds necessary.

(b) All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to the presiding officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel or other qualified representative. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut the material.

(c) Hearsay evidence may be used for the purpose of supplementing or explaining other evidence, but it shall not be sufficient in itself to support a finding unless it would be admissible over objection in civil actions.

(d) Notwithstanding s. 120.569(2)(e), similar fact evidence of other violations, wrongs, or acts is admissible when relevant to prove a material fact in issue, such as proof of motive, opportunity, intent, preparation, plan, knowledge, identity, or absence of mistake or accident, but it is inadmissible when the evidence is relevant solely to prove bad character or propensity. When the state in an administrative proceeding intends to offer evidence of other acts or offenses under this paragraph, the state shall furnish to the party whose substantial interests are being determined and whose other acts or offenses will be the subject of such evidence, no fewer than 10 days before commencement of the proceeding, a written statement of the acts or offenses it intends to offer, describing them and the evidence the state intends to offer with particularity. Notice is not required for evidence of acts or offenses which is used for impeachment or on rebuttal.

(e)1. Any agency action that determines the substantial interests of a party and that is based on an unadopted rule is subject to de novo review by an administrative law judge.

2. The agency action shall not be presumed valid or invalid. The agency must demonstrate that the unadopted rule:

a. Is within the powers, functions, and duties delegated by the Legislature or, if the agency is operating pursuant to authority derived from the State Constitution, is within that authority;

b. Does not enlarge, modify, or contravene the specific provisions of law implemented;

c. Is not vague, establishes adequate standards for agency decisions, or does not vest unbridled discretion in the agency;

d. Is not arbitrary or capricious;

e. Is not being applied to the substantially affected party without due notice;

f. Is supported by competent and substantial evidence; and

g. Does not impose excessive regulatory costs on the regulated person, county, or city.

3. The recommended and final orders in any proceeding shall be governed by the provisions of paragraphs (i) and (j), except that the administrative law judge's determination regarding the unadopted rule shall not be rejected by the agency unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that such determination is clearly erroneous or does not comply with essential requirements of law. In any proceeding for review under s. 120.68, if the court finds that the agency's rejection of the determination regarding the unadopted rule does not comport with the provisions of this subparagraph, the

agency action shall be set aside and the court shall award to the prevailing party the reasonable costs and a reasonable attorney's fee for the initial proceeding and the proceeding for review.

(f) The record in a case governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

1. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings.
2. Evidence admitted.
3. Those matters officially recognized.
4. Proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon.
5. Proposed findings and exceptions.
6. Any decision, opinion, order, or report by the presiding officer.

7. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the presiding officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public records.

8. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication.

9. The official transcript.

(g) The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost.

(h) Findings of fact shall be based upon a preponderance of the evidence, except in penal or licensure disciplinary proceedings or except as otherwise provided by statute, and shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matters officially recognized.

(i) The presiding officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of findings of fact, conclusions of law, and recommended disposition or penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law to be contained in the final order. All proceedings conducted pursuant to this subsection shall be de novo. The agency shall allow each party 15 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

(j) The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules over which it has substantive jurisdiction. Rejection or modification of conclusions of law may not form the basis for rejection or modification of findings of fact. The agency may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the entire record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were

not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without a review of the complete record and without stating with particularity its reasons therefor in the order, by citing to the record in justifying the action.

(k) If a recommended order is submitted to an agency, the agency shall provide a copy of its final order to the division within 15 days after the order is filed with the agency clerk.

(l) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, when statutes or rules impose conflicting time requirements for the issuance of expedited hearings or recommended orders, the director of the division shall have the authority to set the proceedings for the orderly operation of this chapter.

(2) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS NOT INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.--In any case to which subsection (1) does not apply:

(a) The agency shall:

1. Give reasonable notice to affected persons of the action of the agency, whether proposed or already taken, or of its decision to refuse action, together with a summary of the factual, legal, and policy grounds therefor.

2. Give parties or their counsel an opportunity, at a convenient time and place, to present to the agency or hearing officer written or oral evidence in opposition to the action of the agency or to its refusal to act, or a written statement challenging the grounds upon which the agency has chosen to justify its action or inaction.

3. If the objections of the parties are overruled, provide a written explanation within 7 days.

(b) The record shall only consist of:

1. The notice and summary of grounds.

2. Evidence received.

3. All written statements submitted.

4. Any decision overruling objections.

5. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication.

6. The official transcript.

(3) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO PROTESTS TO CONTRACT BIDDING OR AWARD.--An agency which enters into a contract pursuant to the provisions of

ss. 282.303-282.313, chapter 255, chapter 287, or chapters 334-349 shall adopt rules specifying procedures for the resolution of protests arising from the contract bidding process. Such rules shall at least provide that:

(a) The agency shall provide notice of its decision or intended decision concerning a bid solicitation or a contract award as follows:

1. For a bid solicitation, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given by United States mail or by hand delivery.

2. For any decision of the Division of Purchasing of the Department of Management Services concerning a request by an agency for approval of an exceptional purchase under part I of chapter 287 and the rules of the Division of Purchasing, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given by posting such notice in the office of the Division of Purchasing.

3. For any other agency decision, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given either by posting the bid tabulation at the location where the bids were opened or by certified United States mail or other express delivery service, return receipt requested. The notice required by this paragraph shall contain the following statement: "Failure to file a protest within the time prescribed in s. 120.57(3), Florida Statutes, shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under chapter 120, Florida Statutes."

(b) Any person who is adversely affected by the agency decision or intended decision shall file with the agency a notice of protest in writing within 72 hours after the posting of the bid tabulation or after receipt of the notice of the agency decision or intended decision and shall file a formal written protest within 10 days after filing the notice of protest. With respect to a protest of the specifications contained in an invitation to bid or in a request for proposals, the notice of protest shall be filed in writing within 72 hours after the receipt of notice of the project plans and specifications or intended project plans and specifications in an invitation to bid or request for proposals, and the formal written protest shall be filed within 10 days after the date the notice of protest is filed. Failure to file a notice of protest or failure to file a formal written protest shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under this chapter. The formal written protest shall state with particularity the facts and law upon which the protest is based.

(c) Upon receipt of the formal written protest which has been timely filed, the agency shall stop the bid solicitation process or the contract award process until the subject of the protest is resolved by final agency action, unless the agency head sets forth in writing particular facts and circumstances which require the continuance of the bid solicitation process or the contract award process without delay in order to avoid an immediate and serious danger to the public health, safety, or welfare.

(d) 1. The agency shall provide an opportunity to resolve the protest by mutual agreement between the parties within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, after receipt of a formal written protest.

2. If the subject of a protest is not resolved by mutual agreement within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, after receipt of the formal written protest, and if there is no disputed issue of material fact, an informal proceeding shall be conducted pursuant to subsection (2) and applicable agency rules before a person whose qualifications have been prescribed by rules of the agency.

3. If the subject of a protest is not resolved by mutual agreement within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, after receipt of the formal written protest, and if there is a disputed issue of material fact, the agency shall refer the protest to the division for proceedings under subsection (1).

(e) Upon receipt of a formal written protest referred pursuant to this subsection, the director of the division shall expedite the hearing and assign an administrative law judge who shall commence a hearing within 30 days after the receipt of the formal written protest by the division and enter a recommended order within 30 days after the hearing or within 30 days after receipt of the hearing transcript by the administrative law judge, whichever is later. Each party shall be allowed 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order. A final order shall be entered by the agency within 30 days of the entry of a recommended order. The provisions of this paragraph may be waived upon stipulation by all parties.

(f) In a competitive-procurement protest, no submissions made after the bid or proposal opening amending or supplementing the bid or proposal shall be considered. Unless otherwise provided by statute, the burden of proof shall rest with the party protesting the proposed agency action. In a competitive-procurement protest, other than a rejection of all bids, the administrative law judge shall conduct a de novo proceeding to determine whether the agency's proposed action is contrary to the agency's governing statutes, the agency's rules or policies, or the bid or proposal specifications. The standard of proof for such proceedings shall be whether the proposed agency action was clearly erroneous, contrary to competition, arbitrary, or capricious. In any bid-protest proceeding contesting an intended agency action to reject all bids, the standard of review by an administrative law judge shall be whether the agency's intended action is illegal, arbitrary, dishonest, or fraudulent.

(4) INFORMAL DISPOSITION.--Unless precluded by law, informal disposition may be made of any proceeding by stipulation, agreed settlement, or consent order.

(5) APPLICABILITY.--This section does not apply to agency investigations preliminary to agency action.

### **CHAPTER 96-423**

Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1), paragraph (b) of subsection (2), and subsection (6) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (7) is added to said section, to read:

120.57 Decisions which affect substantial interests

The provisions of this section apply in all proceedings in which the substantial interests of a party are determined by an agency, unless such proceedings are exempt pursuant to subsection (5). Unless waived by all parties, subsection (1) applies whenever the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact. Unless otherwise agreed, subsection (2) applies in all other cases.

(1) FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--

(b) In any case to which this subsection is applicable, the following procedures apply:

1. A request for a hearing shall be granted or denied within 15 days of receipt.

2. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice of not less than 14 days; however, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived with the consent of all parties. In a preliminary hearing for the revocation of parole, no less than 7 days' notice shall be given. In a hearing involving a student disciplinary suspension or expulsion conducted by an educational unit, the 14-day notice requirement may be waived by the agency head or the hearing officer without the consent of the parties. The notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. Except for any hearing before an unemployment compensation appeals referee, a short and plain statement of the matters asserted by the agency and by all parties of record at the time notice is given. If the agency or any party is unable to state the matters in sufficient detail at the time initial notice is given, the notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter, upon timely written application, a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished not less than 3 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

3. Except for any proceeding conducted as prescribed in s. 120.54(4) or s. 120.56, a petition or request for a hearing under this section shall be filed with the agency. If the agency elects to request a hearing officer from the division, it shall so notify the division within 15 days of receipt of the petition or request. When the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission receives a notice of appeal pursuant to s. 380.07, the commission shall notify the division within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal if the commission elects to request the assignment of a hearing officer. On the request of any agency, the division shall assign a hearing officer with due regard to the expertise required for the particular matter. The referring agency shall take no further action with respect to the formal proceeding, except as a party litigant, as long as the division has jurisdiction over the formal proceeding. Any party may request the disqualification of the hearing officer by filing an affidavit with the division prior to the taking of evidence at a hearing, stating the grounds with particularity.

4. All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed

findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to any order or hearing officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut it.

5. All pleadings, motions, or other papers filed in the proceeding must be signed by a party, the party's attorney, or the party's qualified representative. The signature of a party, a party's attorney, or a party's qualified representative constitutes a certificate that he or she has read the pleading, motion, or other paper and that, to the best of his or her knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, it is not interposed for any improper purposes, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or for frivolous purpose or needless increase in the cost of litigation. If a pleading, motion, or other paper is signed in violation of these requirements, the hearing officer, upon motion or the officer's own initiative, shall impose upon the person who signed it, a represented party, or both, an appropriate sanction, which may include an order to pay the other party or parties the amount of reasonable expenses incurred because of the filing of the pleading, motion, or other paper, including a reasonable attorney's fee.

6. The record in a case governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

a. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;

b. Evidence received or considered;

c. A statement of matters officially recognized;

d. Questions and proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon;

e. Proposed findings and exceptions;

f. Any decision, opinion, proposed or recommended order, or report by the officer presiding at the hearing;

g. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the hearing officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s. 120.66(1), if such communications are public records;

h. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to s. 120.66(2); and

i. The official transcript or original videotape, depending on the method of preservation.

7. The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript or videotape, available at no more than actual cost. In any proceeding before a hearing officer initiated by a consumptive use permit applicant pursuant to subparagraph 14., the applicant shall bear the cost of accurately and completely preserving all testimony and providing full or partial transcripts or videotapes to the

water management district. At the request of any other party, full or partial transcripts or videotapes shall be provided at no more than cost.

8. Findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matters officially recognized.

9. Except as provided in subparagraph 13., the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of the officer's findings of fact, conclusions of law, interpretation of administrative rules, and recommended penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law or agency rule to be contained in the final order. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

10. The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules in the recommended order. The agency may not reject or modify the findings of fact, including findings of fact that form the basis for an agency statement, unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without a review of the complete record and without stating with particularity its reasons therefor in the order, by citing to the record in justifying the action. When there is an appeal, the court in its discretion may award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the prevailing party if the court finds that the appeal was frivolous, meritless, or an abuse of the appellate process or that the agency action which precipitated the appeal was a gross abuse of the agency's discretion.

11. If the hearing officer assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another hearing officer who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new hearing officer finds necessary.

12. A hearing officer who is a member of an agency head may participate in the formulation of the final order of the agency, provided he or she has completed all duties as hearing officer.

13. In any application for a license or merger pursuant to title XXXVIII which is referred by the agency to the division for hearing pursuant to this section, the hearing officer shall complete and submit to the agency and to all parties a written report consisting of findings of fact and rulings on evidentiary matters. The agency shall allow each party at least 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the report.

14. In any application for a consumptive use permit pursuant to part II of chapter 373, the water management district on its own motion may, or, at the request of the applicant for the permit, shall, refer the matter to the division for the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing under this section.

15. Each agency statement defined as a rule under s. 120.52 and not adopted by the rulemaking procedure provided by s. 120.54 which is relied upon by an agency to determine the substantial interests of a party shall be subject to de novo review by a hearing officer. A statement shall not enlarge, modify, or contravene the specific provision of law implemented or otherwise exceed delegated legislative authority. The statement applied as a result of a proceeding pursuant to this subsection shall be demonstrated to be within the scope of delegated legislative authority. Recommended and final orders pursuant to this subsection shall provide an explanation of the statement that includes the evidentiary basis which supports the statement applied and a general discussion of the justification for the statement applied.

(2) INFORMAL PROCEEDINGS.--In any case to which subsection (1) does not apply:

(a) The agency shall, in accordance with its rules of procedure:

1. Give reasonable notice to affected persons or parties of the action of the agency, whether proposed or already taken, or of its decision to refuse action, together with a summary of the factual, legal, and policy grounds therefor.

2. Give affected persons or parties or their counsel an opportunity, at a convenient time and place, to present to the agency or hearing officer written or oral evidence in opposition to the action of the agency or of its refusal to act, or a written statement challenging the grounds upon which the agency has chosen to justify its action or inaction.

3. If the objections of the persons or parties are overruled, provide a written explanation within 7 days.

(b) The record shall only consist of:

1. The notice and summary of grounds;

2. Evidence received or considered;

3. All written statements submitted by persons and parties;

4. Any decision overruling objections;

5. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication pursuant to s. 120.66(2);  
and

6. The official transcript or original videotape, depending on the method of preservation.

(6) In cases where a conceptual review permit has been issued by a water management district, petitions challenging the issuance of a construction or operating permit implementing the conceptual review permit, upon a motion of a party, shall be subject to expedited review. Within 15 days of filing a motion for expedited review by the district or the applicant, the hearing officer shall, by order, establish a schedule for the proceedings, including discovery, which provides for

a final hearing within 60 days of the issuance of the order. Proposed recommended orders must be submitted to the hearing officer, if at all, within 10 days of the filing of the hearing transcript or hearing videotape. Recommended orders shall be submitted to the district within 30 days of the last day for the filing of the proposed recommended order. The district shall issue its final order within 45 days of the receipt of the recommended order. If the district grants the construction or operating permit, the permittee may proceed unless judicial review of final agency action is sought pursuant to s. 120.68 and a stay is applied for and issued.

(7) An agency may preserve all testimony in a proceeding conducted by an administrative law judge assigned by the division by use of a court reporter or a video camera pursuant to rules adopted by the division. An agency may preserve all testimony in a proceeding conducted by the agency by use of a court reporter or a video camera. The agency must assure that the video system will reliably preserve the testimony. If the testimony in a proceeding is to be preserved by use of a video camera, the agency shall provide reasonable notice of the use of the video camera to any other party to the proceeding. A party may record the proceeding stenographically at its own expense. A party requesting a copy of the proceeding from an agency shall receive either a transcript or a videotape, depending on the method of preservation. The Administration Commission shall adopt model/rules for the use of video cameras to preserve testimony in proceedings not conducted by an administrative law judge.

## **CHAPTER 97-176**

### **Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1066**

Section 8. Section 120.57, Florida Statutes, 1996 Supplement, as amended by section 19 of chapter 96-159, Laws of Florida, and section 1 of chapter 96-423, Laws of Florida, is amended to read:

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases.—

(1) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.—

(a) Except as provided in ss. 120.80 and 120.81, an administrative law judge assigned by the division shall conduct all hearings under this subsection, except for hearings before agency heads or a member thereof. If the administrative law judge assigned to a hearing becomes unavailable, the division shall assign another administrative law judge who shall use any existing record and receive any additional evidence or argument, if any, which the new administrative law judge finds necessary.

(b) All parties shall have an opportunity to respond, to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, to conduct cross-examination and submit rebuttal evidence, to submit proposed findings of facts and orders, to file exceptions to the presiding officer's recommended order, and to be represented by counsel or other qualified representative. When appropriate, the general public may be given an opportunity to present oral or written communications. If the agency

proposes to consider such material, then all parties shall be given an opportunity to cross-examine or challenge or rebut the material.

(c) Hearsay evidence may be used for the purpose of supplementing or explaining other evidence, but it shall not be sufficient in itself to support a finding unless it would be admissible over objection in civil actions.

(d) Notwithstanding s. 120.569(2)(e), similar fact evidence of other violations, wrongs, or acts is admissible when relevant to prove a material fact in issue, such as proof of motive, opportunity, intent, preparation, plan, knowledge, identity, or absence of mistake or accident, but it is inadmissible when the evidence is relevant solely to prove bad character or propensity. When the state in an administrative proceeding intends to offer evidence of other Administration Commission acts or offenses under this paragraph, the state shall furnish to the party whose substantial interests are being determined and whose other acts or offenses will be the subject of such evidence, no fewer than 10 days before commencement of the proceeding, a written statement of the acts or offenses it intends to offer, describing them and the evidence the state intends to offer with particularity. Notice is not required for evidence of acts or offenses which is used for impeachment or on rebuttal.

(e)1. Any agency action that determines the substantial interests of a party and that is based on an unadopted rule is subject to de novo review by an administrative law judge.

2. The agency action shall not be presumed valid or invalid. The agency must demonstrate that the unadopted rule:

a. Is within the powers, functions, and duties delegated by the Legislature or, if the agency is operating pursuant to authority derived from the State Constitution, is within that authority;

b. Does not enlarge, modify, or contravene the specific provisions of law implemented;

c. Is not vague, establishes adequate standards for agency decisions, or does not vest unbridled discretion in the agency;

d. Is not arbitrary or capricious;

e. Is not being applied to the substantially affected party without due notice;

f. Is supported by competent and substantial evidence; and

g. Does not impose excessive regulatory costs on the regulated person, county, or city.

3. The recommended and final orders in any proceeding shall be governed by the provisions of paragraphs (i) and (j), except that the administrative law judge's determination regarding the unadopted rule shall not be rejected by the agency unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that such determination is clearly erroneous or does not comply with essential requirements of law. In any proceeding for

review under s. 120.68, if the court finds that the agency's rejection of the determination regarding the unadopted rule does not comport with the provisions of this subparagraph, the agency action shall be set aside and the court shall award to the prevailing party the reasonable costs and a reasonable attorney's fee for the initial proceeding and the proceeding for review.

(f) The record in a case governed by this subsection shall consist only of:

1. All notices, pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings.

2. Evidence admitted.

3. Those matters officially recognized.

4. Proffers of proof and objections and rulings thereon.

5. Proposed findings and exceptions.

6. Any decision, opinion, order, or report by the presiding officer.

7. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the presiding officer during the hearing or prior to its disposition, after notice of the submission to all parties, except communications by advisory staff as permitted under s.120.66(1), if such communications are public records.

8. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication.

9. The official transcript.

(g) The agency shall accurately and completely preserve all testimony in the proceeding, and, on the request of any party, it shall make a full or partial transcript available at no more than actual cost.

(h) Findings of fact shall be based upon a preponderance of the evidence, except in penal or licensure disciplinary proceedings or except as otherwise provided by statute, and shall be based exclusively on the evidence of record and on matters officially recognized.

(i) The presiding officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of findings of fact, conclusions of law, and recommended disposition or penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law to be contained in the final order. All proceedings conducted pursuant to this subsection shall be de novo. The agency shall allow each party 15 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order.

(j) The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law and interpretation of administrative rules over which it has substantive jurisdiction. Rejection or modification of conclusions of law may not form the basis for rejection or modification of findings of fact. The

agency may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the entire record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without a review of the complete record and without stating with particularity its reasons therefore in the order, by citing to the record in justifying the action.

(k) If a recommended order is submitted to an agency, the agency shall provide a copy of its final order to the division within 15 days after the order is filed with the agency clerk.

(l) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, when statutes or rules impose conflicting time requirements for the ~~scheduling~~ issuance of expedited hearings or issuance of recommended or final orders, the director of the division shall have the authority to set the proceedings for the orderly operation of this chapter.

(2) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS NOT INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.—In any case to which subsection (1) does not apply:

(a) The agency shall:

1. Give reasonable notice to affected persons of the action of the agency, whether proposed or already taken, or of its decision to refuse action, together with a summary of the factual, legal, and policy grounds therefor.

2. Give parties or their counsel the option ~~an opportunity~~, at a convenient time and place, to present to the agency or hearing officer written or oral evidence in opposition to the action of the agency or to its refusal to act, or a written statement challenging the grounds upon which the agency has chosen to justify its action or inaction.

3. If the objections of the parties are overruled, provide a written explanation within 7 days.

(b) The record shall only consist of:

1. The notice and summary of grounds.

2. Evidence received.

3. All written statements submitted.

4. Any decision overruling objections.

5. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication.

6. The official transcript.

7. Any decision, opinion, order, or report by the presiding officer.

(3) **ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO PROTESTS TO CONTRACT BIDDING OR AWARD.**—Agencies subject to this chapter shall utilize the uniform rules of procedure, which provide ~~An agency which enters into a contract pursuant to the provisions of ss. 282.303-282.313, chapter 255, chapter 287, or chapters 334-349 shall adopt rules specifying~~ procedures for the resolution of protests arising from the contract bidding process. Such rules shall at least provide that:

(a) The agency shall provide notice of its decision or intended decision concerning a bid solicitation or a contract award as follows:

1. For a bid solicitation, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given by United States mail or by hand delivery.

2. For any decision of the Division of Purchasing of the Department of Management Services concerning a request by an agency for approval of an exceptional purchase under part I of chapter 287 and the rules of the Division of Purchasing, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given by posting such notice in the office of the Division of Purchasing.

3. For any other agency decision, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given either by posting the bid tabulation at the location where the bids were opened or by certified United States mail or other express delivery service, return receipt requested. The notice required by this paragraph shall contain the following statement:

“Failure to file a protest within the time prescribed in s. 120.57(3), Florida Statutes, shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under chapter 120, Florida Statutes.”

(b) Any person who is adversely affected by the agency decision or intended decision shall file with the agency a notice of protest in writing within 72 hours after the posting of the bid tabulation or after receipt of the notice of the agency decision or intended decision and shall file a formal written protest within 10 days after filing the notice of protest. With respect to a protest of the specifications contained in an invitation to bid or in a request for proposals, the notice of protest shall be filed in writing within 72 hours after the receipt of notice of the project plans and specifications or intended project plans and specifications in an invitation to bid or request for proposals, and the formal written protest shall be filed within 10 days after the date the notice of protest is filed. Failure to file a notice of protest or failure to file a formal written protest shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under this chapter. The formal written protest shall state with particularity the facts and law upon which the protest is based. Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays shall be excluded in the computation of the 72-hour time periods provided by this paragraph.

(c) Upon receipt of the formal written protest which has been timely filed, the agency shall stop the bid solicitation process or the contract award process until the subject of the protest is resolved by final agency action, unless the agency head sets forth in writing particular facts and

circumstances which require the continuance of the bid solicitation process or the contract award process without delay in order to avoid an immediate and serious danger to the public health, safety, or welfare.

(d)1. The agency shall provide an opportunity to resolve the protest by mutual agreement between the parties within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, after receipt of a formal written protest.

2. If the subject of a protest is not resolved by mutual agreement within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, after receipt of the formal written protest, and if there is no disputed issue of material fact, an informal proceeding shall be conducted pursuant to subsection (2) and applicable agency rules before a person whose qualifications have been prescribed by rules of the agency.

3. If the subject of a protest is not resolved by mutual agreement within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, after receipt of the formal written protest, and if there is a disputed issue of material fact, the agency shall refer the protest to the division for proceedings under subsection (1).

(e) Upon receipt of a formal written protest referred pursuant to this subsection, the director of the division shall expedite the hearing and assign an administrative law judge who shall commence a hearing within 30 days after the receipt of the formal written protest by the division and enter a recommended order within 30 days after the hearing or within 30 days after receipt of the hearing transcript by the administrative law judge, whichever is later. Each party shall be allowed 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order. A final order shall be entered by the agency within 30 days of the entry of a recommended order. The provisions of this paragraph may be waived upon stipulation by all parties.

(f) In a competitive-procurement protest, no submissions made after the bid or proposal opening amending or supplementing the bid or proposal shall be considered. Unless otherwise provided by statute, the burden of proof shall rest with the party protesting the proposed agency action. In a competitive-procurement protest, other than a rejection of all bids, the administrative law judge shall conduct a de novo proceeding to determine whether the agency's proposed action is contrary to the agency's governing statutes, the agency's rules or policies, or the bid or proposal specifications. The standard of proof for such proceedings shall be whether the proposed agency action was clearly erroneous, contrary to competition, arbitrary, or capricious. In any bid-protest proceeding contesting an intended agency action to reject all bids, the standard of review by an administrative law judge shall be whether the agency's intended action is illegal, arbitrary, dishonest, or fraudulent.

(4) INFORMAL DISPOSITION.—Unless precluded by law, informal disposition may be made of any proceeding by stipulation, agreed settlement, or consent order.

(5) APPLICABILITY.—This section does not apply to agency investigations preliminary to agency action.

## **CHAPTER 98-200**

### **Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1440**

Section 5. Paragraphs (h), (i), (j), (k), and (l) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, are renumbered as paragraphs (j), (k), (l), (m), and (n), respectively, and new paragraphs (h) and (i) are added to said subsection, to read:

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases.—

(1) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.—

(h) Any party to a proceeding in which an administrative law judge of the Division of Administrative Hearings has final order authority may move for a summary final order when there is no genuine issue as to any material fact. A summary final order shall be rendered if the administrative law judge determines from the pleadings, depositions, answers to interrogatories, and admissions on file, together with affidavits, if any, that no genuine issue as to any material fact exists and that the moving party is entitled as a matter of law to the entry of a final order. A summary final order shall consist of findings of fact, if any, conclusions of law, a disposition or penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law to be contained in the final order.

(i) When, in any proceeding conducted pursuant to this subsection, a dispute of material fact no longer exists, any party may move the administrative law judge to relinquish jurisdiction to the agency. In ruling on such a motion, the administrative law judge may consider the pleadings, depositions, answers to interrogatories, and admissions on file, together with supporting and opposing affidavits, if any. If the administrative law judge enters an order relinquishing jurisdiction, the agency may promptly conduct a proceeding pursuant to subsection (2), if appropriate, but the parties may not raise any issues of disputed fact that could have been raised before the administrative law judge. An order entered by an administrative law judge relinquishing jurisdiction to the agency based upon a determination that no genuine dispute of material fact exists, need not contain findings of fact, conclusions of law, or a recommended disposition or penalty.

## **CHAPTER 98-279**

4. The provisions of s. 120.57(3) apply to the division's contracting process, except:

a. A formal written protest of any decision, intended decision, or other action subject to protest shall be filed within 72 hours after receipt of notice of the decision, intended decision, or other action.

b. As an alternative to any provision of s. 120.57(3), the division may proceed with the bid selection or contract award process if the director of the department sets forth, in writing,

particular facts and circumstances which demonstrate the necessity of continuing the procurement process or the contract award process in order to avoid a substantial disruption to the provision of any scheduled insurance services.

Section 3. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases.—

(3) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO PROTESTS TO CONTRACT BIDDING OR AWARD.—Agencies subject to this chapter shall utilize the uniform rules of procedure, which provide procedures for the resolution of protests arising from the contract bidding process. Such rules shall at least provide that:

(a) The agency shall provide notice of its decision or intended decision concerning a bid solicitation or a contract award as follows:

1. For a bid solicitation, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given by United States mail or by hand delivery.

2. For any decision of the ~~Division of Purchasing of the~~ Department of Management Services concerning a request by an agency for approval of an exceptional purchase under part I of chapter 287 and the rules of the Department of Management Services ~~Division of Purchasing~~, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given by posting such notice in the office of the Department of Management Services ~~Division of Purchasing~~.

3. For any other agency decision, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given either by posting the bid tabulation at the location where the bids were opened or by certified United States mail or other express delivery service, return receipt requested.

The notice required by this paragraph shall contain the following statement:

“Failure to file a protest within the time prescribed in s. 120.57(3), Florida Statutes, shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under chapter 120, Florida Statutes.”

## **CHAPTER 99-2**

### **House Bill No. 1037**

Section 47. Paragraphs (d) and (e) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, 1998 Supplement, are amended to read:

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases.—

(1) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.—

(d) Notwithstanding s. ~~120.569(2)(g)~~ ~~120.569(2)(e)~~, similar fact evidence of other violations, wrongs, or acts is admissible when relevant to prove a material fact in issue, such as proof of motive, opportunity, intent, preparation, plan, knowledge, identity, or absence of mistake or accident, but it is inadmissible when the evidence is relevant solely to prove bad character or propensity. When the state in an administrative proceeding intends to offer evidence of other acts or offenses under this paragraph, the state shall furnish to the party whose substantial interests are being determined and whose other acts or offenses will be the subject of such evidence, no fewer than 10 days before commencement of the proceeding, a written statement of the acts or offenses it intends to offer, describing them and the evidence the state intends to offer with particularity. Notice is not required for evidence of acts or offenses which is used for impeachment or on rebuttal.

(e)1. Any agency action that determines the substantial interests of a party and that is based on an unadopted rule is subject to de novo review by an administrative law judge.

2. The agency action shall not be presumed valid or invalid. The agency must demonstrate that the unadopted rule:

a. Is within the powers, functions, and duties delegated by the Legislature or, if the agency is operating pursuant to authority derived from the State Constitution, is within that authority;

b. Does not enlarge, modify, or contravene the specific provisions of law implemented;

c. Is not vague, establishes adequate standards for agency decisions, or does not vest unbridled discretion in the agency;

d. Is not arbitrary or capricious;

e. Is not being applied to the substantially affected party without due notice;

f. Is supported by competent and substantial evidence; and

g. Does not impose excessive regulatory costs on the regulated person, county, or city.

3. The recommended and final orders in any proceeding shall be governed by the provisions of paragraphs ~~(k)(i)~~ and ~~(l)(j)~~, except that the administrative law judge's determination regarding the unadopted rule shall not be rejected by the agency unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that such determination is clearly erroneous or does not comply with essential requirements of law. In any proceeding for review under s. 120.68, if the court finds that the agency's rejection of the determination regarding the unadopted rule does not comport with the provisions of this subparagraph, the agency action shall be set aside and the court shall award to the prevailing party the reasonable costs and a reasonable attorney's fee for the initial proceeding and the proceeding for review.

Reviser's note.--Paragraph (1)(d) is amended to conform to the redesignation of subunits of s. 120.569(2) by s. 4, ch. 98-200, Laws of Florida. Paragraph (1)(e) is amended to conform to the redesignation of subunits of s.120.57 by s. 5, ch. 98-200, Laws of Florida.

## **CHAPTER 99-379**

### **Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 107**

Section 6. Paragraph (1) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, 1998 Supplement, is amended to read:

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases.--

(1) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.--

(1) The agency may adopt the recommended order as the final order of the agency. The agency in its final order may reject or modify the conclusions of law over which it has substantive jurisdiction and interpretation of administrative rules over which it has substantive jurisdiction. When rejecting or modifying such conclusion of law or interpretation of administrative rule, the agency must state with particularity its reasons for rejecting or modifying such conclusion of law or interpretation of administrative rule and must make a finding that its substituted conclusion of law or interpretation of administrative rule is as or more reasonable than that which was rejected or modified. Rejection or modification of conclusions of law may not form the basis for rejection or modification of findings of fact. The agency may not reject or modify the findings of fact unless the agency first determines from a review of the entire record, and states with particularity in the order, that the findings of fact were not based upon competent substantial evidence or that the proceedings on which the findings were based did not comply with essential requirements of law. The agency may accept the recommended penalty in a recommended order, but may not reduce or increase it without a review of the complete record and without stating with particularity its reasons therefor in the order, by citing to the record in justifying the action.

## **CHAPTER 2002-207**

### **House Bill No. 197707**

Section 2. Subsection (3) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases.—

(3) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO PROTESTS TO CONTRACT SOLICITATION BIDDING OR AWARD.—Agencies subject to this chapter shall ~~use~~ utilize the uniform rules of procedure, which provide procedures for the resolution of protests arising from the contract solicitation or award ~~bidding~~ process. Such rules shall at least provide that:

(a) The agency shall provide notice of ~~a its~~ decision or intended decision concerning a ~~bid~~ solicitation, ~~or a contract award,~~ or exceptional purchase by electronic posting. This notice shall contain the following statement: “Failure to file a protest within the time prescribed in section 120.57(3), Florida Statutes, shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under chapter 120, Florida Statutes.” as follows:

~~1. For a bid solicitation, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given by United States mail or by hand delivery.~~

~~2. For any decision of the Department of Management Services concerning a request by an agency for approval of an exceptional purchase under part I of chapter 287 and the rules of the Department of Management Services, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given by posting such notice in the office of the Department of Management Services.~~

~~3. For any other agency decision, notice of a decision or intended decision shall be given either by posting the bid tabulation at the location where the bids were opened or by certified United States mail or other express delivery service, return receipt requested.~~

The notice required by this paragraph shall contain the following statement: “Failure to file a protest within the time prescribed in s. 120.57(3), Florida Statutes, shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under chapter 120, Florida Statutes.”

(b) Any person who is adversely affected by the agency decision or intended decision shall file with the agency a notice of protest in writing within 72 hours after the posting of the notice of decision or intended decision ~~bid tabulation or after receipt of the notice of the agency decision or intended decision~~ and shall file a formal written protest within 10 days after filing the ~~notice of protest.~~ With respect to a protest of the terms, conditions, and specifications contained in a solicitation, including any provisions governing the methods for ranking bids, proposals, or replies, awarding contracts, reserving rights of further negotiation, or modifying or amending any contract ~~an invitation to bid or in a request for proposals,~~ the notice of protest shall be filed in writing within 72 hours after the posting receipt of notice of the solicitation. ~~project plans and specifications in an invitation to bid or request for proposals,~~ and The formal written protest shall be filed within 10 days after the date the notice of protest is filed. Failure to file a notice of protest or failure to file a formal written protest shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under this chapter. The formal written protest shall state with particularity the facts and law upon which the protest is based. Saturdays, Sundays, and state ~~legal~~ holidays shall be excluded in the computation of the 72-hour time periods provided by this paragraph.

(c) Upon receipt of the formal written protest ~~that which~~ has been timely filed, the agency shall stop the ~~bid~~ solicitation ~~process~~ or the contract award process until the subject of the protest is resolved by final agency action, unless the agency head sets forth in writing particular facts and

circumstances which require the continuance of the ~~bid solicitation process~~ or the contract award process without delay in order to avoid an immediate and serious danger to the public health, safety, or welfare.

(d)1. The agency shall provide an opportunity to resolve the protest by mutual agreement between the parties within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state legal holidays, after receipt of a formal written protest.

2. If the subject of a protest is not resolved by mutual agreement within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state legal holidays, after receipt of the formal written protest, and if there is no disputed issue of material fact, an informal proceeding shall be conducted pursuant to subsection (2) and applicable agency rules before a person whose qualifications have been prescribed by rules of the agency.

3. If the subject of a protest is not resolved by mutual agreement within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state legal holidays, after receipt of the formal written protest, and if there is a disputed issue of material fact, the agency shall refer the protest to the division for proceedings under subsection (1).

(e) Upon receipt of a formal written protest referred pursuant to this subsection, the director of the division shall expedite the hearing and assign an administrative law judge who shall commence a hearing within 30 days after the receipt of the formal written protest by the division and enter a recommended order within 30 days after the hearing or within 30 days after receipt of the hearing transcript by the administrative law judge, whichever is later. Each party shall be allowed 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order. A final order shall be entered by the agency within 30 days of the entry of a recommended order. The provisions of this paragraph may be waived upon stipulation by all parties.

(f) In a protest to an invitation to bid or request for proposals procurement ~~competitive-procurement~~ protest, no submissions made after the bid or proposal opening which amend or supplement amending or supplementing the bid or proposal shall be considered. In a protest to an invitation to negotiate procurement, no submissions made after the agency announces its intent to award a contract, reject all replies, or withdraw the solicitation which amend or supplement the reply shall be considered. Unless otherwise provided by statute, the burden of proof shall rest with the party protesting the proposed agency action. In a competitive-procurement protest, other than a rejection of all bids, proposals, or replies, the administrative law judge shall conduct a de novo proceeding to determine whether the agency's proposed action is contrary to the agency's governing statutes, the agency's rules or policies, or the solicitation ~~bid or proposal~~ specifications. The standard of proof for such proceedings shall be whether the proposed agency action was clearly erroneous, contrary to competition, arbitrary, or capricious. In any bid-protest proceeding contesting an intended agency action to reject all bids, proposals, or replies, the standard of review by an administrative law judge shall be whether the agency's intended action is illegal, arbitrary, dishonest, or fraudulent.

(g) For purposes of this subsection, the definitions in s. 287.012 apply.

## CHAPTER 2003-94

### **Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1584**

Section 5. Paragraphs (e), (i), and (k) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases.—

(1) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.—

(e)1. Any agency action that determines the substantial interests of a party and that is based on an unadopted rule is subject to de novo review by an administrative law judge.

2. The agency action shall not be presumed valid or invalid. The agency must demonstrate that the unadopted rule:

a. Is within the powers, functions, and duties delegated by the Legislature or, if the agency is operating pursuant to authority derived from the State Constitution, is within that authority;

b. Does not enlarge, modify, or contravene the specific provisions of law implemented;

c. Is not vague, establishes adequate standards for agency decisions, or does not vest unbridled discretion in the agency;

d. Is not arbitrary or capricious. A rule is arbitrary if it is not supported by logic or the necessary facts; a rule is capricious if it is adopted without thought or reason or is irrational;

e. Is not being applied to the substantially affected party without due notice; and

~~f. Is supported by competent and substantial evidence; and~~

f.g. Does not impose excessive regulatory costs on the regulated person, county, or city.

3. The recommended and final orders in any proceeding shall be governed by the provisions of paragraphs (k) and (l), except that the administrative law judge's determination regarding the unadopted rule shall not be rejected by the agency unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that such determination is clearly erroneous or does not comply with essential requirements of law. In any proceeding for review under s. 120.68, if the court finds that the agency's rejection of the determination regarding the unadopted rule does not comport with the provisions of this subparagraph, the agency action shall be set aside and the court shall award to the prevailing party the reasonable costs and a reasonable attorney's fee for the initial proceeding and the proceeding for review.

(i) When, in any proceeding conducted pursuant to this subsection, a dispute of material fact

no longer exists, any party may move the administrative law judge to relinquish jurisdiction to the agency. An order relinquishing jurisdiction shall be rendered if the administrative law judge determines from ~~In ruling on such a motion, the administrative law judge may consider~~ the pleadings, depositions, answers to interrogatories, and admissions on file, together with supporting and opposing affidavits, if any, that no genuine issue as to any material fact exists. If the administrative law judge enters an order relinquishing jurisdiction, the agency may promptly conduct a proceeding pursuant to subsection (2), if appropriate, but the parties may not raise any issues of disputed fact that could have been raised before the administrative law judge. An order entered by an administrative law judge relinquishing jurisdiction to the agency based upon a determination that no genuine dispute of material fact exists, need not contain findings of fact, conclusions of law, or a recommended disposition or penalty.

(k) The presiding officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of findings of fact, conclusions of law, and recommended disposition or penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law to be contained in the final order. All proceedings conducted pursuant to this subsection shall be de novo. The agency shall allow each party 15 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order. An agency need not rule on an exception that does not clearly identify the disputed portion of the recommended order by page number or paragraph, that does not identify the legal basis for the exception, or that does not include appropriate and specific citations to the record.

## **CHAPTER 2006-82**

### **Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 262**

Section 7. Paragraphs (k) and (m) of subsection (1) and paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases.—

(1) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.—

(k) The presiding officer shall complete and submit to the agency and all parties a recommended order consisting of findings of fact, conclusions of law, and recommended disposition or penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law to be contained in the final order. All proceedings conducted under pursuant to this subsection shall be de novo. The agency shall allow each party 15 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order. The final order shall include an explicit ruling on each exception, but an agency need not rule on an exception that does not clearly identify the disputed portion of the recommended order by page number or paragraph, that does not identify the legal basis for the exception, or that does not include appropriate and specific citations to the record.

(m) If a recommended order is submitted to an agency, the agency shall provide a copy of its final order and any exceptions to the division within 15 days after the order is filed with the

agency clerk.

(3) **ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO PROTESTS TO CONTRACT SOLICITATION OR AWARD.**—Agencies subject to this chapter shall use the uniform rules of procedure, which provide procedures for the resolution of protests arising from the contract solicitation or award process. Such rules shall at least provide that:

(a) The agency shall provide notice of a decision or intended decision concerning a solicitation, contract award, or exceptional purchase by electronic posting. This notice shall contain the following statement: “Failure to file a protest within the time prescribed in section 120.57(3), Florida Statutes, or failure to post the bond or other security required by law within the time allowed for filing a bond shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under chapter 120, Florida Statutes.”

## **CHAPTER 2008-104**

### **Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 704**

Section 12. Effective January 1, 2009, paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases.—

(1) **ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.**—

(e)1. An agency or an administrative law judge may not base ~~Any~~ agency action that determines the substantial interests of a party ~~and that is based~~ on an unadopted rule. The administrative law judge shall determine whether an agency statement constitutes an unadopted rule. This subparagraph does not preclude application of adopted rules and applicable provisions of law to the facts ~~unadopted rule is subject to de novo review by an administrative law judge~~.

2. Notwithstanding subparagraph 1., if an agency demonstrates that the statute being implemented directs it to adopt rules, that the agency has not had time to adopt those rules because the requirement was so recently enacted, and that the agency has initiated rulemaking and is proceeding expeditiously and in good faith to adopt the required rules, then the agency’s action may be based upon those unadopted rules, subject to de novo review by the administrative law judge. The agency action shall not be presumed valid or invalid. The agency must demonstrate that the unadopted rule:

a. Is within the powers, functions, and duties delegated by the Legislature or, if the agency is operating pursuant to authority derived from the State Constitution, is within that authority;

b. Does not enlarge, modify, or contravene the specific provisions of law implemented;

c. Is not vague, establishes adequate standards for agency decisions, or does not vest unbridled discretion in the agency;

d. Is not arbitrary or capricious. A rule is arbitrary if it is not supported by logic or the necessary facts; a rule is capricious if it is adopted without thought or reason or is irrational;

e. Is not being applied to the substantially affected party without due notice; and

f. Does not impose excessive regulatory costs on the regulated person, county, or city.

3. The recommended and final orders in any proceeding shall be governed by the provisions of paragraphs (k) and (l), except that the administrative law judge's determination regarding an ~~the~~ unadopted rule under subparagraph 1. or 2. shall not be rejected by the agency unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that such determination is clearly erroneous or does not comply with essential requirements of law. In any proceeding for review under s. 120.68, if the court finds that the agency's rejection of the determination regarding the unadopted rule does not comport with the provisions of this subparagraph, the agency action shall be set aside and the court shall award to the prevailing party the reasonable costs and a reasonable attorney's fee for the initial proceeding and the proceeding for review.

## **CHAPTER 2011-208**

### **Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 170**

Section 12. Paragraph (d) of subsection (3) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases.—

(3) **ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO PROTESTS TO CONTRACT SOLICITATION OR AWARD.**—Agencies subject to this chapter shall use the uniform rules of procedure, which provide procedures for the resolution of protests arising from the contract solicitation or award process. Such rules shall at least provide that:

(d)1. The agency shall provide an opportunity to resolve the protest by mutual agreement between the parties within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state holidays, after receipt of a formal written protest.

2. If the subject of a protest is not resolved by mutual agreement within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state holidays, after receipt of the formal written protest, and if there is no disputed issue of material fact, an informal proceeding shall be conducted pursuant to subsection (2) and applicable agency rules before a person whose qualifications have been prescribed by rules of the agency.

3. If the subject of a protest is not resolved by mutual agreement within 7 days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state holidays, after receipt of the formal written protest, and if there is a disputed issue of material fact, the agency shall refer the protest to the division by electronic means through the division's website for proceedings under subsection (1).

## **CHAPTER 2016-116**

### **Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 183**

Section 4. Paragraphs (e) and (h) of subsection (1) and subsection (2) of section 120.57, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

120.57 Additional procedures for particular cases.—

(1) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.—

(e)1. An agency or an administrative law judge may not base agency action that determines the substantial interests of a party on an unadopted rule or a rule that is an invalid exercise of delegated legislative authority. ~~The administrative law judge shall determine whether an agency statement constitutes an unadopted rule.~~ This subparagraph does not preclude application of valid adopted rules and applicable provisions of law to the facts.

2. In a matter initiated as a result of agency action proposing to determine the substantial interests of a party, the party's timely petition for hearing may challenge the proposed agency action based on a rule that is an invalid exercise of delegated legislative authority or based on an alleged unadopted rule. For challenges brought under this subparagraph:

a. The challenge may be pled as a defense using the procedures set forth in s. 120.56(1)(b).

b. Section 120.56(3)(a) applies to a challenge alleging that a rule is an invalid exercise of delegated legislative authority.

c. Section 120.56(4)(c) applies to a challenge alleging an unadopted rule.

d. This subparagraph does not preclude the consolidation of any proceeding under s. 120.56 with any proceeding under this paragraph.

~~3.2.~~ Notwithstanding subparagraph 1., if an agency demonstrates that the statute being implemented directs it to adopt rules, that the agency has not had time to adopt those rules because the requirement was so recently enacted, and that the agency has initiated rulemaking and is proceeding expeditiously and in good faith to adopt the required rules, then the agency's action may be based upon those unadopted rules if, subject to de novo review by the administrative law judge determines that rulemaking is neither feasible nor practicable and the

unadopted rules would not constitute an invalid exercise of delegated legislative authority if adopted as rules. An unadopted rule ~~The agency action~~ shall not be presumed valid ~~or invalid~~. The agency must demonstrate that the unadopted rule:

a. Is within the powers, functions, and duties delegated by the Legislature or, if the agency is operating pursuant to authority vested in the agency by ~~derived from~~ the State Constitution, is within that authority;

b. Does not enlarge, modify, or contravene the specific provisions of law implemented;

c. Is not vague, establishes adequate standards for agency decisions, or does not vest unbridled discretion in the agency;

d. Is not arbitrary or capricious. A rule is arbitrary if it is not supported by logic or the necessary facts; a rule is capricious if it is adopted without thought or reason or is irrational;

e. Is not being applied to the substantially affected party without due notice; and

f. Does not impose excessive regulatory costs on the regulated person, county, or city.

~~4.3.~~ The recommended and final orders in any proceeding shall be governed by ~~the provisions of~~ paragraphs (k) and (l), except that the administrative law judge's determination regarding an unadopted rule under subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2. shall not be rejected by the agency unless the agency first determines from a review of the complete record, and states with particularity in the order, that such determination is clearly erroneous or does not comply with essential requirements of law. In any proceeding for review under s. 120.68, if the court finds that the agency's rejection of the determination regarding the unadopted rule does not comport with ~~the provisions of~~ this subparagraph, the agency action shall be set aside and the court shall award to the prevailing party the reasonable costs and a reasonable attorney ~~attorney's~~ fee for the initial proceeding and the proceeding for review.

5. A petitioner may pursue a separate, collateral challenge under s. 120.56 even if an adequate remedy exists through a proceeding under this section. The administrative law judge may consolidate the proceedings.

(h) Any party to a proceeding in which an administrative law judge ~~of the Division of Administrative Hearings~~ has final order authority may move for a summary final order when there is no genuine issue as to any material fact. A summary final order shall be rendered if the administrative law judge determines from the pleadings, depositions, answers to interrogatories, and admissions on file, together with affidavits, if any, that no genuine issue as to any material fact exists and that the moving party is entitled as a matter of law to the entry of a final order. A summary final order shall consist of findings of fact, if any, conclusions of law, a disposition or penalty, if applicable, and any other information required by law to be contained in the final order.

(2) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO HEARINGS NOT INVOLVING DISPUTED ISSUES OF MATERIAL FACT.—In any case to which subsection (1) does not apply:

(a) The agency shall:

1. Give reasonable notice to affected persons of the action of the agency, whether proposed or already taken, or of its decision to refuse action, together with a summary of the factual, legal, and policy grounds therefor.

2. Give parties or their counsel the option, at a convenient time and place, to present to the agency or hearing officer written or oral evidence in opposition to the action of the agency or to its refusal to act, or a written statement challenging the grounds upon which the agency has chosen to justify its action or inaction.

3. If the objections of the parties are overruled, provide a written explanation within 7 days.

(b) An agency may not base agency action that determines the substantial interests of a party on an unadopted rule or a rule that is an invalid exercise of delegated legislative authority.

~~(c)~~(b) The record shall only consist of:

1. The notice and summary of grounds.

2. Evidence received.

3. All written statements submitted.

4. Any decision overruling objections.

5. All matters placed on the record after an ex parte communication.

6. The official transcript.

7. Any decision, opinion, order, or report by the presiding officer.