



Lobby Tip Sheet

Your legislators need to hear from you and your organization. Your member of congress represents you in Washington. It is important for your voice to be heard as your elected representative makes decisions on issues that impact birds, their conservation and their habitat.

Making the most of your efforts: Learn about your representative and what committee they may sit on and what issues they consider to be key priorities. This can help you understand where they stand on issues and enables you to be more effective as a lobbying constituent.

Create and build a relationship with your representative – through phone calls, letters, e-mails and face to face meetings.

- Call your representative's office, talk to their legislative aides who handle environmental issues.
- Write a letter or e-mail.
- Write a letter (or two) to the editor about the issue.
- Meet with your legislator and/or aide at least once.
- Attend town hall meetings to ask questions of your representative about the issue.

Communication: Focus your communication to one message you want your representative to hear. Get to the point. Whether in person or in writing, be courteous, respectful, and interactive in your communications. Be specific about what you are asking. Do you want them to sign-on to a bill or vote for a specific piece of legislation? Be sure to ask for a response. Use a simple fact sheet to help get your message across.

Meeting with your representative or their aides: While meeting with your representative may seem a difficult task, it can be quite simple. A meeting can be arranged in your representative's home office or in their DC office. Each member has a scheduler to whom you should submit a meeting request in writing (fax or e-mail). When you request a meeting you should state the purpose of your meeting: the issue or specific bill you wish to discuss. Give your name, address and names of anyone else that may visit with you. Offer a proposed meeting date and how much time you would like for your meeting. Your representative and their aides are busy and you can ask for 30 minutes, but you may only get five minutes. Even if your representative cannot meet with you, meeting with their staff can help build a valuable relationship.

What to take on your visit: Because your representative and their aides are busy, you need to be prepared. Take a folder of materials you can leave behind. The packet should contain a one page fact sheet about your issue and specifically outline what you are asking your representative to consider.

Follow-up: Make sure you thank your representative and his staff for their time. It is important that they see you recognize that their time and effort is valuable. Follow up with a thank you note and let them know which issue you met with them about (another plug for the issue).



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Insert your organization logo and contact information here: