

Tips when meeting with your Legislator

A meeting with your legislator is great way to make sure your opinion is heard:

1. Pick the place.

Legislators are generally better able to focus in-district. You should consider in-district meetings even if you aren't a member of the district. Meeting in Madison is fine, but be sure to schedule well in advance.

2. Make an appointment.

If your lawmaker is unavailable, meet with his staff.

3. Bring a small group that represents a variety of constituencies.

Decide beforehand who will lead the discussion.

4. Know who you are talking with.

Know how much they probably know about your issue. Know if they might have a personal interest related to the issue.

5. Know your subject matter.

Be prepared for questions. Don't make misleading statements or mistake the facts. If you make a mistake, call them and let them know afterwards.

6. Provide some materials, but no more than 2 or 3 pages.

Fact sheets, charts, testimonials, and a list of names, addresses and phone numbers are usually placed in the file on the issue and referred to when it is time for the vote.

7. Get your points across in 10-15 minutes.

8. Tell them up front of the purpose, even when making the appointment.

A short briefing or touch-base meeting is sometimes okay.

9. Be polite...even if the legislator isn't.

10. Tell them what you want them to do.

Your goal is to get them to commit to your request. Always ask for what you want.

11. Listen...if he/she didn't say "no" what did he/she say?

12. Follow up with a thank you note regardless of how the meeting went.

Thank him/her for their time, reiterate the points you discussed, and offer to be a resource. This gesture will go a long way, and possibly allow for future meetings.

These tips are courtesy of the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters