
Lobby Meeting Best Practices

Lobbying is all about developing relationships. Before we're able to move our targets toward our position on a bill or an issue, we need to first establish ourselves and our organization as a trusted source of information. Whether you're meeting with your legislator for the first time or fiftieth, keep these tips and tricks in mind as you develop the relationship.

Before the Meeting

- Prepare for your meeting by doing a bit of research on the legislator's background and priorities. Find out what kinds of bills they have sponsored, and think about how you can tie our issues to their priorities.
- Meet with your lobby group ahead of time to familiarize yourselves with each other. Decide who will play the following roles: story teller, lead communicator, time keeper, and note taker. Regardless of what roles you take, each person should have a chance to speak at least once during the meeting.
- Think about which talking points you want to have each person cover. Does one person have a close personal connection to the issue and could therefore play the role of storyteller? Does someone else have knowledge about the issue and could be the lead communicator?
- Gather any printed materials you will leave behind with the legislator (a fact sheet, a news story, etc.) as well as the report-back forms.

During the Meeting

- Everyone in the group should share their names and where they live at the start of the meeting. It's important for the legislator to know that they are meeting with constituents.
- We recommend following the heart-head-hand method. Begin with the heart: an appeal to emotion. Start by sharing your personal connection to the issue. Why do you care about this issue? This part of the meeting is more likely to stick with the legislator than any other information you give them.
- Proceed with the head: a few key facts and information about the issue and the bill.

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- Close with the hand: make the ask of the legislator. You should decide on the ask prior to the meeting. Examples include will you support/oppose this bill? Will you introduce or cosponsor a bill to tackle this issue?
- Write down the legislator's questions and stances on the report back form throughout the meeting. If they ask a question that you don't know the answer to, it's better to say you don't know and you will get back to them later.
- Try to keep the legislator on topic. It can be easy for them to veer off into other subjects, like local sports, weather, etc., particularly if they do not want to make a commitment to a particular bill or stance.
- If you're comfortable with it, ask for a group photo with the legislator so we can post it to social media later. More often than not, legislators are happy to show that they are meeting with constituents.
- Leave behind your fact sheet or other materials with the legislator.

After the Meeting

- Meet to debrief. Did the legislator align with the Sierra Club's stance on the issue? Did they have any questions you plan to get back to them about? Did anything surprise you during the meeting?
- Decide who will share a picture or scan of the report-back forms with Sierra Club staff. This is important so that we can keep records of lobby meetings and legislators' stances and questions. You will also want to text or email any pictures you got to Sierra Club staff.
- Take a minute to give each other a pat on the back - you took action for the environment today in one of the most challenging and impactful ways!
- When you are back at home, write an email to the legislator to thank them for their time today. Assure them that you will circle back soon with answers to their questions.

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