Writing Policymakers

Policymakers welcome your opinions and expertise on issues affecting you, your community and your state.

Why Write your Policymakers?

- ➲ To voice support or opposition for a specific proposed policy or piece of legislation
- ➲ To inform them of a problem in your community
- ➲ To share with them your knowledge
- ➲ To thank them for their vote on a certain measure
- ➲ To offer your expertise for future legislation and regulatory efforts

Keep the following tips in mind as you write to your policymakers:

- √ **Accuracy and attention to detail.** Be sure to use the proper form of address and correct spelling of the policymaker's name.
- √ **Identify yourself as a constituent.** Whenever possible, give your official title and any professional degrees following your signature.
- √ **Short letters are best.** Try to keep your letter to one page. Be sure not to use jargon or confusing technical terms.
- √ **Concentrate on a single issue and state your purpose for writing at the outset.** Letters should cover only one topic and be timed to arrive while the issue is current.
- √ **Correctly identify the issue.** If you are writing about a specific policy issue, remember to describe it by its official title and number (if applicable) as well as by its popular name.
- √ **Tell your policymaker how the issue would affect you and the rest of his or her constituents.** Your own personal experience and district-specific information are the best supporting evidence as well as data and research supporting your position.
- √ **Be sure your facts and assertions are accurate.** Often policymakers use constituent mail to make points during speeches to debates and to convince fellow policymakers of their position.
- √ **Ask your policymaker for his or her position on the issue.** Indicate that you look forward to hearing from him or her on the issue.
- √ **Praise, praise, praise.** If your policymaker pleases you by supporting an issue, let him or her know.

Be sure to send a note of appreciation if your position is supported.