



WILDLIFE ADVOCATE PROGRAM

TIPS FOR CALLING YOUR LEGISLATOR



What is the most important tool you have that can affect policy issues in Washington, DC?
Your Voice!

Members of Congress were elected to represent the best interests of their constituents, so it is important for you to be heard on the issues that are most important to you.

General Tips for Talking to Your Legislator and/or Their Staffer

- Always be clear and concise when speaking with your legislators.
- Building relationships with the legislative staff members can be very beneficial.
- Think about your audience – is it better to speak to someone in your Member’s DC office or their state/district office?
 - Someone in your region may be better equipped to understand your story and elevate your message up to the Member.
- Timing is essential. If the issue is an immediate concern, a phone call or email may be most effective. If time allows, you may want to take advantage of the method of writing a letter or setting up a meeting (through the district or DC office).
- Follow-up is important. Your legislators meet new people daily, so following up with a staff member ensures that your issues stay top of mind for the office.

How Do I Reach My Congressional Delegation?

Phone Call

- When reaching out to a Member’s office, call the main number and ask to speak to the staffer who works on your issue area.
- If you are a constituent of the Member, make sure to mention that during your call. This allows the office to note that this is an issue that is directly affecting someone in their area.

“Hello. This is John Doe from New York City, NY. Would you be able to connect me to the individual who handles the “Animals” policy issues for your office?”





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Email

- Typically, email address formats for staffers are standard, regardless of the office.
 - **House:** first.last@mail.house.gov
 - **Senate:** first_last@membername.senate.gov
 - Make sure to doublecheck the spelling of the staffer before sending the email to ensure your information is received by the correct person.

Postal Mail

- When writing a letter, make sure to address your Member appropriately.
 - For senators and representatives, it is customary to address them as "The Honorable _____".
- Handwritten notes and letters tend to stand out.

What Do I Say?

- Introduce yourself – your name, where you are from and what organization you are representing.
- Make sure to include the specific bill that you are reaching out to your Member about and a quick summary for context.
- Include a few sentences about your reasoning for supporting or opposing the bill.
- Share a story about how this bill impacts you, people you know or any of the Member's constituents.
 - Including statistics will help paint a picture of the story you are telling your legislator.
- Do not forget to thank the Member for his/her time!

