



Tips on Communicating with Congress

There are a number of ways of communicating with Congress- each with their own effectiveness in demonstrating your concerns to your Representative or Senators.

Writing a Letter:

To Members of Congress and their staff, handwritten letters carry more weight than emails or phone calls. Try to keep your letter personalized, short, targeted, and informative.

In a high security era, mail to Congress in Washington, DC now goes through a very thorough screening process and takes 4-6 weeks to get there. You may want to consider sending your letter to the local district office or you can mail it to our Washington, DC office and we will deliver it for you: 122 C St. NW, Suite 240, Washington, DC, 20001.

If you decide to write a letter, this list of helpful suggestions will improve the effectiveness of the letter:

1. Your purpose for writing should be stated in the first paragraph of the letter. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly, e.g., House bill: H. R. ____, Senate bill: S. ____.
2. Be courteous, to the point, and include key information, using examples to support your position.
3. Address only one issue in each letter; and, if possible, keep the letter to one page.

Addressing Correspondence:

To a Senator:

The Honorable (full name)
__(Rm.#)__(name of)Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

To a Representative:

The Honorable (full name)
__(Rm.#)__(name of)House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

Note: When writing to the Chair of a Committee or the Speaker of the House, it is proper to address them as:

Dear Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman:

Dear Madam Speaker:

Phone Calls:

To find your senators' and representative's phone numbers, you can find their direct number at www.house.gov or www.senate.gov or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202)224-3121 and ask for your senators' and/or representative's office.

Remember that telephone calls are usually taken by a staff member, not the member of Congress. Ask to speak with the aide who handles the issue about which you wish to comment.

After identifying yourself, tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/Representative (Name) that I support/oppose (S.___/H.R.___)."

You will also want to state reasons for your support or opposition to the bill. Ask for your senators' or representative's position on the bill. You may also request a written response to your telephone call

Photo Petitions:

Photo petitions or postcards are a useful way to illustrate local support of your issue. It literally puts a face to the name for the member of Congress and their staff. You can use a dry erase board and ask people to write their own message and sign the board with their name and full address (more than just city and state, as above, is really useful.) Then take their picture and let them know you will deliver it to their Representative or Senators as appropriate.

You can then print the photos and deliver them in person to the local district office.

Postcards/Petitions:

Postcards and petitions aren't as effective as other forms of communication to members of Congress, but they are an excellent tool of educating the public and getting new people involved in keeping Alaska wild. They can also be a great visual for press events or for hand delivering to members of Congress at in person district meetings.

