



ACTION FIGURES: TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE ACTIVISM

We're your voice to Congress. Be ours in your state.

COMMUNICATE YOUR POSITION

A typed or handwritten letter carries the most weight with any recipient. See our tips “For Better or Verse” for writing powerful letters.

Follow-up telephone calls are a good way to re-emphasize the importance of your message. A telephone call shows that you care enough to spend a little money, and if you can actually speak with the recipient, phone conversations offer unparalleled opportunity for feedback.

ATTEND PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Public hearings provide an opportunity for public comments on a particular project or vote. This kind of community involvement can make a strong statement. Here are some things to consider when attending a public meeting:

- Time is limited at public hearings, so arrive early to sign up for a slot to speak.
- When you speak, focus on your main points. You will often be able to submit written statements that will allow you to address additional concerns.
- Be polite and respect others' ideas. A hearing is a forum for the exchange of ideas, not a neighborhood contest.

MEET WITH YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Meeting with elected officials is an opportunity to make personal contact with decision-makers and convey your position in a persuasive and animated manner. A personal visit allows you to tell your senator or representative what you think about a certain issue or bill and ask her/him to take positive action. Below are some suggestions for a successful meeting.

Before the Meeting:

- Request a meeting in writing with specific times and dates. Follow up with a call to the scheduler to confirm the meeting.
- Make sure to convey what issue or bill you would like to discuss.
- Decide on talking points to express your most important ideas.
- Set a goal for the meeting. Do you want the representative to vote for or against a bill or to introduce legislation?

During the Meeting:

- Be prompt.
- Keep it short and stick to your talking points.
- Take the time to thank the elected official for past votes in support of your issues.
- Provide personal and local examples of the impact of the legislation.
- Be honest and don't claim to know more than you do about an issue. You don't have to be the expert, just a committed and active constituent.
- Set a deadline or timeline for response.

After the Meeting:

- Write a thank you letter to the legislator.
- Send any materials and information you offered.
- Follow up on deadlines and if they are not met, set up others. Be persistent.



DISTRIBUTE MEDIA KITS

Get to know your local media and find out who are writing stories that relate to your organization. Let them know that you want to be a resource for information, and ask that they call you when they are preparing a story about an oil and/or natural gas issue. Send them information as frequently as possible. A good way to do this is to distribute media kits on issues of interest. A media kit typically includes fact sheets, press releases, background information and visual aids when appropriate. Log on to www.iogcc.state.ok.us to download helpful information to distribute to media in your area.

HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE

A press conference is a forum to which members of the media are invited to cover an important announcement and to engage in a question-and-answer exchange about the issue at hand. A press conference enables your organization to deal with a large number of reporters at one time. It also allows reporters to better understand a complex issue and could lead to in-depth interviews. While a press conference is an effective way to disseminate information, you must make sure the reason for a conference is a major development that is relevant and newsworthy. Below are some guidelines to follow when organizing a press conference.

Before the conference:

- Target and invite all relevant news outlets.
- Know and accommodate reporters' deadlines.
- Choose a convenient location and an appropriate day and time if your announcement is not "breaking news" or a crisis.
- Make sure your date/time does not conflict with other planned news events that may take away from your coverage.
- Select a room for the conference that is comfortable and efficient for working with reporters.
- Consider the need for teleconferencing, as some interested reporters may not have the budget to travel to your conference.

During the conference:

- Express no more than three major points.
- Avoid inaccuracies and misunderstandings by providing written facts, statistics and visual aids.
- Answer each question completely, truthfully and succinctly.
- Maintain eye contact with reporters.
- Have experts available to answer technical questions.
- Avoid answering questions emotionally.
- NEVER say "no comment" or ask to be "off the record." If you need more time to answer a question, feel free to tell the reporter you will respond after the conference but before his or her deadline. Then follow through with your promise.
- Be aware of time restraints.

After the conference:

- Immediately distribute any promised information.
- Collect your thoughts and answer any remaining questions asked by reporters.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

1. Speak with confidence and authority.
2. Never speculate.
3. Discuss facts - not policy - unless you are authorized to speak for the department.
4. Develop key messages BEFORE speaking to the media.
5. Remember that you are speaking to the public - not the media.
6. Expect ANYTHING you say to appear in print or on the air.
7. If you make a misstatement, correct it immediately.
8. Avoid adding personal opinions to responses.
9. Credibility is everything.
10. State your message as many times as possible, repeating what you want the public to know.