



Tips on writing letters to legislators

Elected officials need to hear from constituents to learn more about issues and concerns. It is important to choose a topic that you are familiar with and that you are concerned or excited about. You can email comments and testimony directly to your Senators or State Reps on the General Court Website: <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/>

If you are preparing testimony or writing a letter you should cover the following information:

1. A legislator wants to know if you are a constituent. Give your name and town - in letters below your signature; for testimony put it at the top of your written hand-in. It doesn't hurt to mention that you are an active voter. Include your contact information if you are comfortable, an email or phone would be helpful.
2. Give them your credentials such as a member of a planning board or conservation commission. Make clear whether or not you are giving your own view or if you are speaking on behalf of a group such as a commission. DO NOT say you are speaking for the commission, unless this was voted on by members of the commission.
3. It's ok to get personal if you are speaking on your own behalf. If you are passionate about the issue and have information about the issue, your testimony will be welcomed and listened to. Outline how the bill would affect you and provide personal reasons for why you are concerned.
4. Share your knowledge. Legislators are not aware of every topic being debated. You can educate them if you have expertise or knowledge about the subject. Be open to answering their questions if you are testifying in person or if a legislator contacts you via email or phone.
5. Start your testimony with where you stand on the bill - for, against or just sharing relevant information/story. ex. "I oppose this bill" or "I support this bill". Then state your reason(s).
6. Keep it short and sweet and stick to a couple of key points. Three is usually all that they can follow. Simple, clear language is best.
7. Know what you are asking for. Be clear why you support or oppose the bill. Close by reiterating your main point and then asking them to vote for one of these options: a) OTP (ought to pass); b) ITL (inexpedient to legislate) which means "no" on passage; or c) or suggest an amendment the bill and then ask them to vote OTP w amendment.



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