



## WHY WRITE TO AN ELECTED OFFICIAL?

Writing to an elected official is one of the most crucial steps in regards to advocating for an issue or cause. At the end of the day, a lot of decisions that have to deal with protecting the environment fall into the laps of our elected officials. Whether it is a hand-written letter or an email, both are a means of communicating with an official to ultimately persuade them to your side. For example, if multiple people write to their elected official in regards to opposing new uranium mills in the Grand Canyon, that official is more likely to listen and to possibly even be persuaded to vote in their favor if the letter is well-written and informing.

## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING TO AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

Elected officials are not always going to necessarily know the in's and out's surrounding a specific issue, so it is up to their constituents to hold them accountable by writing to them and informing them. To write to an elected official, a good letter must contain several components.

***Make it specific.*** Have your letter address a very specific issue. If it is a bill that you wish to write about, mentioning the specific name for the bill is a must (i.e. SB 1070, Debris Landfill bill, etc.).

***Focus on a major point.*** Clearly state the issue that you are writing to the official about and *back up the main point* as much as possible. If you attempt to tackle too many issues in one letter, the entire meaning of the letter could be lost.

***Make it local.*** The letter will ultimately be more compelling if you can address how the issue is impacting your community or your region with an example.

***Make it personal.*** Tell your official how this issue affects your life through a compelling story.

***Ask for a specific action.*** Tell your official if you want them to vote in favor or oppose the issue that you are working strongly for or against.

***Always follow-up.*** You can do this through email, telephone, or another written letter. Following up will hold your elected official accountable to their constituents.



## SUBMITTING A LETTER TO AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

Below are elements to include when submitting a letter to an elected official:

- Use the official's correct title and spell their name correctly
- Include your name, return address and email address in the closing
- You can use [this link](#) when looking up specific official's contact information

Example layout:

Date:

*The Honorable Jane Dune*

*Name of office held* (Governor, US Senator, Congressman, State Senator, Regent etc.)

*Institution* (State of Nebraska, U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress, Nebr. Legislature, Board of Regents, etc.)

*Street address*

*City, State, Zip*

RE: (Subject name or *name of legislative bill* and number)

Dear Governor Doe:

I write to encourage you to oppose/support \_\_\_\_\_.

This issue is important to me because ...

Sincerely,

John Smithers

Street Address

City, State, zip

Email address