

Meeting with your Legislator - *Effective Ways to Present Positions*

- Personal visits with key Members of the Legislature is a highly effective way of helping legislators understand your position. Legislators welcome visits from stakeholders on specific issues, as many times they see you as a resource and an expert on the issue.
- At the beginning of the meeting, state who you are, whom you represent, what you want to discuss, and what specific action you want the legislator to take.
- Do not be surprised if the legislator does not know about the issue or bill. Legislators have to know about many issues and may specialize in areas unrelated to your work.
- Avoid overwhelming the legislator with technical information and instead try to focus on the bigger policy picture.
- Use personal or community stories to bring the issue to life.
- If a legislator asks you a question and you do not know the answer, offer to find the answer and then forward the information to the legislator and appropriate staff.
- In order to maximize your meeting, it is good to have some general background information on who you will be meeting with. Is the legislator a Democrat or Republican? Are they from Northern California or Southern California? Have they supported your cause in the past? This will help you frame your position more effectively.
- Make sure you know the other side's argument. If you are supporting a bill, or opposing a bill, it is important to be aware of the other side's position and reasoning. This will help you mitigate any counter arguments brought up during your meeting with the legislator.
- End the meeting by making sure your "ask" is clear and thanking the legislator for their time. It is a nice touch to send a thank you letter to the legislator and any staff that was present during the meeting.
- Make sure to follow up with the office of the legislator on any future meetings discussed or further information that was needed.