

Advocating for Your Watershed

How to Effectively Conduct Outreach & Advocate for Environmental Policy

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PennFuture

PennFuture's Mission:

PennFuture works across the Commonwealth with citizens, community leaders, businesses, and elected officials at all levels, because together we can solve some of the most challenging issues facing Pennsylvania.

PennFuture is guided by the mission to protect our water and the environment, and empower citizens to build sustainable communities for future generations.

The Work We Do

Legal

- Represent impacted communities to ensure environmental protections.
 - Legal representation and counsel
 - Enforcement actions
 - Regulatory Review

The Work We Do

- Policy

- Engage with stakeholders to advance legislation that benefits the state's environment
- Educate our legislators to defeat legislation that can cause damage to our environment and communities

The Work We Do

- Outreach

- Educate local residents, communities, and organizations about the challenges to our air and water
- Promote citizen advocacy to take action around important issues

Meeting Your Legislator

Advocates for Conservation and the Environment (ACE)

Dos and Don'ts

Building Relationships

- Develop relationships
 - With both legislators and volunteers
- Do not wait for a crisis
- Familiar faces

Discuss

- Issues, not politics
 - Legislators
 - As environmental experts, legislators expect to hear from us about environmental issues
 - Volunteers
 - Will agree with us on issues such as Bay cleanup, climate action, support for DEP, etc.
- ACE = *Policy, not partisanship*

Avoid

- Non-environmental, non-conservation issues
 - Divisive and socially sensitive topics risk alienating both legislators and volunteers
- Party affiliation
 - Discussing political parties may cause conflict

Do Your Homework

- Bio and other personal information
- District information
- Voting record on environmental issues
- Committee assignments

Training Session

- Establish division of labor
 - Who says what and when
- Assign roles
 - Leader to open and close the meeting
 - Who leads on each issues
- Review background material and talking points

Training Session (con'd)

- Practice for the meeting
 - Introductions
 - Issues
 - Questions
 - The ask
 - Closing
 - Thank you

The Meeting

- Be prompt
- Enter as a group
- Introduce all participants
- Make small talk
 - But stay on task
- Be aware of time constraints
 - Most in-district meetings will be 30 minutes

Topics

- Focus on 2-3 key issues
 - Know them well
- Provide simple talking points and background materials/handouts
- Incorporate emotional stories and anecdotes from your own experience
- Take notes



Meeting with Sen. Lisa Boscola's Leg. Director

Dos

- Know the material well
- Tell the truth
- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know"
- Argue your point based on legislator's self-interest
 - Know their constituencies
 - Know their special concerns and biases
- Be brief; legislators appreciate brevity and concision

Dos (con'd)

- Take along a one-page summary and talking points
- Know the other side's argument
- Be a good listener
- Be courteous, even if the response is disappointing or upsetting
- Say “thank you”

Don'ts

- Don't overstate your position
- Don't threaten any legislators with opposition, defeat, or removal of support
 - Be subtle
 - Votes are sometimes lost because someone got their backs up
- Don't attack an office

Don'ts (con'd)

- Don't be disrespectful of or make unreasonable demands on staff
- Don't get personal or attack your opposition
- Don't dissent from your group's position
- No personal issues

Do No Harm

- Do not be argumentative
- No personal attacks
- No threats
- Do not question motives
 - You never know when you may need him or her as an ally
- If you don't know the answer, get back to them

Close the Deal

- Ask for support for or position on the issue
- Thank legislator for their time
- Follow-up with “thank you” note from the group



Member Engagement

- Annual River Rally
- Workshops
- Lobby Days



Workshop hosted with Trout Unlimited – November 2018

How We Can Help

- Assist with outreach and education to local government and conservation agencies
- Provide information regarding PA and federal clean water policy and legal actions
- Encourage advocacy to help protect the watershed by being a watchdog

Questions?

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PennFuture

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