

Tips for Writing Your Member of Congress

Taking the time to write a letter shows sincerity and thoughtfulness. Your correspondence will be more effective if you follow these guidelines provided by the American Institute of Physics:

- **Timing is important:** A letter sent after Congress acts is a missed opportunity, while correspondence sent months before an issue is considered is likely to be forgotten. AGI strives to provide you with the most up-to-date information on issues, and will continue to send alerts of critical times for communications.
- **Avoid scientific jargon:** Remember that members and staff are mostly generalists.
- **Limit your letter to one page and one subject:**
 - In the first paragraph, explain your reason for writing. Briefly note your "credentials," and include other pertinent information.
 - In the second paragraph, describe the importance of the issue. Cite relevant facts and avoid emotionalism. Frame your discussion from a national, rather than a personal, perspective.
 - In the third, and concluding paragraph, request (not demand) a specific action. Thank the Member for his/her consideration of your views. Offer assistance.

Ensure that your letter includes your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail. Due to increased security for postal mail, it is better and faster to send your letter by email or fax.

For an email, be sure to include a specific and clear subject heading, such as: Please support "bill name", "bill number". If possible, put the text of the letter into the main body of the email. Attachments are not recommended. Some members have email forms on their web sites, where you can copy and paste your letter into the main message box.

For a fax, be sure to include a specific and clear subject heading, such as: Please support "bill name", "bill number".

The correct address style is:

The Honorable _____

United States House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable _____

United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative _____:

Dear Senator _____:

Cite a specific bill when possible. Please contact the AGI Geoscience Policy Program (govt@agiweb.org) with any questions. A list of the House committees is available [here](#), and a list of the Senate committees is available [here](#). More information on all the House and Senate Committees is available on their respective websites.

Click [here](#) to visit the House's "Find Your Representative" page and enter your zip code to determine who is your congressional district representative. Visit the Senate's website [here](#) to view the contact information for senators of the current congress and to learn more about your senators.

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