

How to Be An Effective Groundwater Advocate

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Make Your Voice Heard!



Today's Objectives

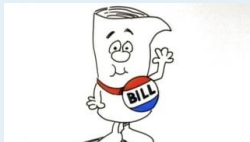
- WHY: Making the case for member engagement in advocacy
- HOW: Overview of the basics of grassroots advocacy
- WHAT: Opportunities offered to get engaged

Making the Case for Grassroots Engagement

- 1st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects the rights of citizens to petition their government
- Federalist 10, written by James Madison, laid out the importance of lobbying/advocacy and competing interests
- Madison argued factions could lead to downfall of democracy, unless factions were counteracted by other factions—hence, lobbying

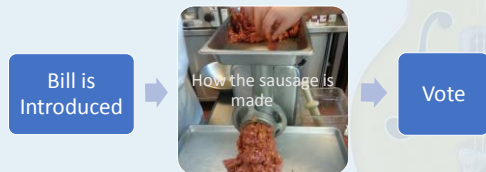


Making the Case for Grassroots Engagement



- It always starts with an idea
- "There ought to be a law..."
- Where does this come from?
- You, me, organizations, state agencies and even the legislators themselves!

Making the Case for Grassroots Engagement



Making the Case for Grassroots Engagement

- You are the expert.
- Facts and figures are useful, but stories are compelling
- Thousands of bills are introduced each Congress. Their fates are often in the hands of grassroots advocates
- Now more than ever, constituent voices matter.



How Can I Make A Difference?



How Can I Make a Difference?

- Visiting Washington, D.C.
- Grassroots in your state
- Short on Time: Grassroots at home



How Can I Make a Difference?

- Visit your congressional delegation
 - Either at home or in Washington, D.C., *their* job is to represent *your* interests
 - You are an expert
 - You are a resource
 - You have an opinion
 - You're a voter



Visiting Your Congressional Delegation

- Anatomy of a Congress Office
 - Member of Congress
 - Chief of Staff
 - Legislative Director
 - Legislative Assistant
 - Legislative Correspondent
 - Staff Assistant



Visiting Your Congressional Delegation

- Try and schedule a meeting with the legislator when possible.
- "Walk-in" meetings are fine, but scheduling an appointment ensures a better chance of a face-to-face, especially during session.
- Meeting with the aides sometimes is just as good, if not better!
- Be constructive and courteous. Do not overstay the time allotted, or overkill the situation with a sales pitch or long stories.
- You are the expert! Let the legislators know that and they will appreciate it. You will become a resource to them.



Make the Most of Your Meeting

- **Have an "Ask" or Be a Resource**
- Tell your story or make your case for a specific need
 - Provide examples
 - Provide data
 - Tie it to the district or state
 - Be aware of opposition or the devil's advocate
 - Is there a cost?
 - Economy, economy, economy



Make the Most of Your Meeting

Making your argument:

- There is little to no opposition to this issue
- We have done thorough research on this issue.
- Our proposal will save the State "X" dollars.
- Our bill will create "X" jobs
- This bill is revenue-neutral; it won't require a tax increase or spending cut elsewhere
- Similar bills have been enacted in other states with positive results.



Make the Most of Your Meeting

Things to Avoid Saying (if you can)

- We don't know what this will cost
- Why don't you just cut spending here in order to pay for what we want
- We are divided on this issue
- Idle (or real!) threats i.e. "if you don't do this for us..."



Making the Most of Your Meeting

- You are a constituent
- You are the expert
- Be prepared
- Staff are young, but influential
- A first meeting is just step 1
- **"I don't know, but I'll find out" beats a half-truth every time.**



Opportunities to Get Engaged



Fly-Ins * Drive-Ins * Town Hall Meeting * Legislative Action Center * Site Visits * District Meetings * State Associations * GA Subcommittees * Washington Update newsletter * Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor * Action Alerts * NGWA PAC



2018 NGWA Groundwater Fly-In & Water Resources Congressional Summit

- March 6 and 7 Washington, D.C.
 - 20F Conference Center (venue)
 - Washington Court Hotel (conference hotel)
 - WQA and Irrigation Association also participate
 - Two-day event is the premiere opportunity to engage in advocacy with NGWA members
- "If you don't speak up for groundwater, who will?"**



2018 NGWA Groundwater Fly-In & Water Resources Congressional Summit

- March 6:
 - Keynote luncheon speaker
 - Join colleagues from NGWA, IA, and WQA for a half-day briefing from policymakers, influencers, and stakeholders on issues in Washington
 - Receive a tailored policy briefing on NGWA issues
 - Meet your group
 - Practice your talking points
 - Evening reception with Capitol Hill staff, members of Congress



2018 NGWA Groundwater Fly-In & Water Resources Congressional Summit

- March 7
 - Meet with House and Senate offices
 - NGWA provides your schedule of visits
 - App on your smartphone directs your day, gives you chance to provide feedback, and make notes for follow-up
 - Wrap-up event with your colleagues to exchange stories



Want to avoid the Beltway?

- Attend a Town Hall
- Visit your member in his/her district
- Join your state association
- Host a site visit



Avoid the Beltway: Town Halls

- Visit your members' websites to find dates/times for town halls
- Sign up in advance
- Show up early and introduce yourself
- Practice your question in advance
- Leave your business card and follow-up



Avoid the Beltway: Host a site visit

- Drilling sites, brownfields clean-ups, or just your office are important ways to show groundwater's presence in your district
- Plan ahead; Check the congressional schedule to see when they'll be in the district
- NGWA can help with publicity, talking points, and putting your best food forward
- Consider safety regulations, photo opportunities, NGWA calendar



Avoid the Beltway: Visit the District Office

- Check the congressional schedule
- Same rules as Washington, D.C. meetings apply
- Bringing representatives from multiple businesses helps to reinforce breadth and depth of NGWA
- NGWA can provide information on who to contact and details on approach



Avoid the Beltway: Congressional Drive-In

- Involved in your state association?
 - Coordinate a "Drive-In"
 - Same rules apply, but amplified impact
 - Coordinated effort can begin with state capitol or district offices of members of Congress
 - Talking points used in NGWA Groundwater Fly-In can serve as template for "ask"
 - Fly-In objectives can be reinforced by tying it back to the district



Short on time? start simple



Short on time? Start simple.

- NGWA's Legislative Action Center
 - www.ngwa.org/advocacy
 - 2017 Legislative Action Alerts
 - Restore parity for geothermal heat pumps
 - Delay the ELD mandate
 - Stay Tuned:
 - Tax Reform
 - PFAS Health Study
 - Grad school tuition deduction
 - End of year spending package



Short on time? Start simple.

- Sign up for a Government Affairs Subcommittee
 - Education & Awareness
 - Energy
 - Transportation & Infrastructure
 - Water Resources
- Make sure to read the *Washington Update*



Short on time, start simple

- Follow the issues
- Market yourself in your community to become known as a resource.
- Identify and build relationships with key legislators Attend town hall/campaign events
- Identify and build coalitions – there is strength in numbers!
- Don't forget about the state regulators either. Add them to your mailing lists, invite them to your shows! Build those relationships!



NGWA PAC

- NGWA-PAC is a bipartisan political action committee to support the election of candidates to the House & Senate



- NGWA-PAC serves allows NGWA members to support and help elect candidates who care about the issues that matter to our businesses

- PACs allow the pooling of contributions, which increases the impact of contributions, rather than acting alone to support candidates



If you don't speak up for
groundwater, who will?

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