Engaging with Elected Officials

How to Become a Champion for Birds and Conservation

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Why is Advocacy Important

- Congressional staff: 94% say a constituent meeting has “some” or “a lot” influence on undecided Congressman

- 64% of Congressional Offices prefer constituent meetings
- Only 7% prefer a DC lobbyist
- More likely to act when they know constituents care

Source: Congressional Management Foundation
Ways to communicate ranked by influence on members who are not firmly decided on an issue

1. In-person visit from constituent
2. Contact from constituents’ reps
3. Individualized email
4. Individualized postal letter
5. Local editorial
6. Comments during phone town hall
7. Phone call
8. Letter to editor referencing the lawmaker
9. Lobbyist visit
10. Form email message

Source: Congressional Management Foundation
Hi, Rosalie,

Thank you for your feedback and attending the town hall. Just wanted you to know I kept your comments in mind and I voted for SB 320. I hope to connect with you at the hearing, but perhaps we'll see each other again at another event. Thank you!

Best,

[Signature]

6.9.17

Rosalie,

Thanks for the update on the Bloom bill and your encouragement on the work that I'm doing. Much appreciated!

Best,

[Signature]
Audubon’s Advocacy Advantage

- Birds allow us to tell a **powerful**, **authentic story**
- **Chapters** with activities to share
- Our members = **power** and **influence**
- **Build relationships** for ongoing advocacy
- Elected officials are **motivated when hearing from constituents**
Saturday, February 27, 2016 | 9AM – 10:30AM
Shell Ridge Open Space | Entrance near Indian Valley Elementary School
551 Marshall Dr, Walnut Creek, CA 94598
To RSVP call: (925) 328-1515
For more details, please visit the website at: www.asmrc.org/AF

Saturday, September 10 | 9AM – 10:30AM
Gary Bogue Trail, Acalanes Ridge | (off Peaceful Lane in Lafayette)
To RSVP, call: (925) 328-1515
This gathering is an opportunity to ask questions about legislation impacting local land conservation, the environment, and other issues of importance while enjoying the natural beauty of Acalanes Ridge.

For more details, please visit the website at: www.asmrc.org/AF
How to Plan an Effective Meeting

*Using your power to influence elected officials*
Different Government Entities

• **Federal Legislators**
  Representatives of Congress
  Senators

• **State Legislators**
  State Senators
  Assemblymembers

• **City Council**

• **Board of Supervisors**
Planning for a Meeting

- Who? **Elected Official vs. Staff**
- What do you want to discuss
- Know the **schedule**
- Reach out well **in advance**
- **Be flexible** on time & location
- Try to include **constituents**
- Keep the group **small**
How to Find Your Congressman

Find Your Representative
Not sure of your congressional district or who your member is? This service will assist you by matching your ZIP code to your congressional district, with links to your member's website and contact page.

Please review the frequently asked questions if you have problems using the service.

Enter your ZIP code: 98029
FIND YOUR REP BY ZIP

Frequently Asked Questions

- Where can I find a list of public e-mail addresses for the members of Congress?
- What should I do when I enter my ZIP code information and get the wrong elected representative?
- Can I forward my message through the Contact Webmaster mailbox?
- Are there alternative ways to reach my elected Representative?
- What is the proper form of address when I write my elected Representative?
- Is it okay for my company/organization to link to the Find Your Representative service?

Where can I find a list of public e-mail addresses for members of Congress?

There is no central listing of member office public e-mail addresses. Each member of Congress establishes their office’s policy regarding the processing and management of e-mail. Generally, if a member has a public e-mail address, it can be found on the member’s website. The office may list a public e-mail address or provide a form directly on the member’s website. The U.S. House of Representatives does not provide a listing of public e-mail addresses for the elected Representatives.
How to Find Your California State Senator and Assemblymember

http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/

Find Your California Representative

Street Address: 220 Montgomery Street
City: San Francisco
Zip: 94104

Enter your California address and click the locate button to find your State Senate and Assembly representatives.

State Assembly (District 17)
Assembly Member David Chiu - DEM

State Senate (District 11)
Senator Scott Wiener - DEM
Scheduling a Meeting

- Website forms
- Call the office
- Email the request
- Offices handle many scheduling requests – don’t be intimidated!
- Meetings are part of the job of an elected official and their staff
Conducting Research

- Visit the elected official’s website
- Search for biography, press releases, issue pages & news stories
- Google search including position on your issues
- Understand background & positions taken
- Know your audience.

https://votesmart.org/
How to Conduct an Effective Meeting

Making the most of your meeting
Ahead of the Meeting

• Call or coffee with participants to create talking points & agenda

• Assign roles
• Introductions
• Provide overview & discuss topics
• Make the ask

• Prepare brief summary handouts

• Determine who will follow up
Preparing Useful Handouts

• **1-2 page summary** is helpful

• Simple, focused, relevant, & updated

• Avoid **long, in-depth written material**

• Include **background on your chapter** like membership numbers, location & activities

• Visit Audubon California for a one-pager template
Conducting the Meeting

• Be early & flexible

• Dress professionally

• Assign roles & stay on topic

• Make the ask

• Note any questions and offer to follow up

• Say thank you & take a photo!
Talking about Difficult Topics

• Make it about **birds**

• Make it **local** and **personal**

• Make it **hopeful/Positive** messaging

• No need for **extremes**
Example: Switching language used when talking about Climate Change

- Climate change
- Global warming
- Our changing climate
- A warming world
- Changing weather patterns
What to Avoid

• Jargon
• Making it too complex, complicated
• Arguments, even if there is disagreement
• Worrying about not knowing the answer or making up the answer
• Being disappointed
How to Follow Up on Your Meeting

Taking advantage of your new relationships
After Your Meeting

• Follow up on any questions or requested material

• Send a thank you note or email

• Use your photo on social media or in the chapter newsletter

• Consider a letter to the editor to publicly thank the official

• Check in periodically

• Send an update to National and State. We love to hear from you!

August 3, 2017

Dear Congressman DeSaulnier,

Thank you again for making the time to meet with us yesterday to discuss federal policy priorities of concern to Mt. Diablo Audubon Society. We enjoyed hearing your feedback on hearings and how we can take action to protect birds and habitat.

We were glad to hear of your support for a strong Endangered Species Act. We also really appreciated hearing your comparison of migratory birds as undocumented migrants!

We will work with Jessica to try to find a time for a bird walk in District 11, hopefully for this fall. We look forward to working with your office on environmental issues.

Sincerely,

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

Rosalie Hoyt
Carol Fisch
Georgette Howington
Araza Rickard
Mike Meidham
Heather Rosenzweig
Nancy Wingerger

Leslie Larson / Audubon Photography Awards
Social Media Ideas

Audubon New York
@AudubonNY

Thank you @RepDanDonovan for supporting the Federal Bird-Safe Building Act! #BecauseBirdsMatter

3:20 PM - 7 Jun 2017

Tweet your reply
Keep Track of Your Official

Elected officials often have **periodic newsletters**. Make sure you subscribe!

Follow on **Twitter**, **Facebook** or **Instagram**
Questions & Answers

Becoming the most effective advocate for birds
Next steps

Visit Audubon Works and Audubon CA website
• Effective meeting tool kit
• One pager template
• Join “Policy and Advocacy” group and “State Chapter Group: CA Chapters”

Send us your report back form

SB 100
• Voice your support for this bill

Don’t hesitate to contact us!
• Email us at: chapternetworkCA@audubon.org