

## TIPS ON EFFECTIVE LETTER / EMAIL WRITING

- Individually written letters, rather than mass generated form letters, make a greater impression on your legislator. Type your name, address, and phone number at the top.
- Most state legislatures are only in session part of the year. The Virginia State Legislature is in session from the first week of January to the end of February (odd years) or mid-March (even years). When the legislature is out of session, it may be more effective to send your letter to your legislator's district office.
- Be specific. Your purpose for writing should be stated in the first paragraph of the letter. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, be sure to identify its full name and number, e.g. House Bill: HB\_\_\_\_\_, Senate Bill: SB\_\_\_\_\_. Try to send your letter while the issue is still alive.
- State your position. Explain why you support or oppose this particular issue. Keep in mind that local examples concerning the impact of this legislation are very powerful. Be courteous and to the point, keeping your letter focused on one issue.
- Ask for a response. Indicate to your legislator that you would appreciate a reply containing his/her position on the issue. "Sincerely yours" is a proper way to conclude your letter.
- Follow up. If you agree with your legislator's vote, take the time to let him/her know that. Similarly, if you disagree with his or her vote, inform your legislator.

## STRUCTURE OF A SAMPLE LETTER

Date

RE: Name of budget amendment or issue

The Honorable John Doe  
Delegate, Virginia General Assembly  
Assembly  
House of Delegates  
P. O. Box 406  
Directory)  
Richmond, VA 23218  
Dear Delegate (or Senator) Doe:

Or

The Honorable John Doe  
Senator, Virginia General  
910 Capitol Street  
Room XXX (from Senate  
Richmond, VA 23219

(Paragraph 1) Introduce yourself; be sure to mention if you live in his/her district. State what you are asking him/her to do (support funding for your museum, for the VFH or VCA or other

agency; support for a tax exemption, bond issue, etc.).

(Paragraph 2) Indicate why you think it is important. List ways in which the museum, agency, etc. has been of help to you or your community.

(Paragraph 3) Thank him/her for their consideration of this issue, and for past support. Indicate that you would appreciate hearing what the legislator's stand is on the issue.

Sincerely yours,  
Your Name