

GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY



How to Host Your Lawmaker

Do you wonder how you and your company can impact the public policy process?

While the NWRA Government Affairs team works daily to cultivate relationships with legislators and provide input on bills and regulations that have impacts on the waste and recycling industry, nothing is more important to the NWRA advocacy effort than constituent relationships with lawmakers. There are many things NWRA members can do to increase positive exposure of the industry and build or renew relationships with members of Congress back in their home districts. Foremost among these is hosting lawmakers at your facility.

Facility Tours

Facility tours of your operations are one of the most effective ways to initiate or build upon a relationship with your U.S. representative, U.S. senators or local lawmakers. These are excellent opportunities to increase lawmakers' understanding of the waste and recycling industry and your company's importance in the community. Lawmakers can see first-hand the operations of your facility and how legislative and regulatory issues affect your business. Visits to local operations also allow lawmakers to meet large numbers of their constituents, something they always welcome and that builds legislative goodwill.

Your guests will have the opportunity to view aspects of the operations that they have only read or heard about previously. They can begin to develop a deeper understanding of the employees, procedures, and equipment that are integral parts of a waste and recycling operation. Use these demonstrations to discuss current issues with the lawmakers such as the need to increase domestic demand for recyclable materials, improving America's infrastructure, or a workforce issue and point out potential impacts on specific functions of the site, providing the lawmakers with "up-close-and-personal" perspectives on the issue.

When organizing a visit or tour, it is important to think through the logistics. For example, you may want to spend more time in one part of the facility to demonstrate how that operation would be affected by particular legislation. Every operation is different, but there are some guidelines to make the tour effective and successful.

Schedule a meeting by calling the state or district office and asking for the scheduler or appointment secretary. Explain your purpose and whom you represent.

2018 Congressional Recess Schedule

Senate District Work Schedule

March 24-April 8

May 26-June 3

June 30-July 8

Aug. 4- Sep. 3

Target Adjournment - Oct. 26

House District Work Schedule

March 23-April 9

April 28-May 6

May 25-June 4

June 29-July 9

July 27- Sep. 3

Sep. 15-Sep. 24

Target Adjournment - Oct. 12

Sample Legislator Meeting Request Letter

(To be put on your letterhead)

(Date)

The Honorable (Full Name)

United States Senate

Washington, DC 20510

Attention Scheduler: Constituent Meeting Request

Dear Senator (Last Name):

I am writing to invite you on a tour of [name of your company]'s facilities in [operation location] during the [insert date range] recess.

Our company [insert brief description of your company] and is a member of the National Waste & Recycling Association. NWRA is the voice in the nation's capital for the private-sector waste and recycling industry that is essential to maintaining the quality of American life.

Waste and recycling impacts all residential, commercial and industrial properties on a daily basis. The waste and recycling industry directly employs about 420,000 men and women as of early 2018 with a total payroll of more than \$21 billion. It is estimated overall that the private sector waste and recycling industry accounts for over one million jobs and generates nearly a quarter of a trillion dollars in U.S. GDP.

I hope that your schedule will allow you to visit our company's facilities and meet our employees. Please have your staff contact me at [your phone number] to arrange a tour.

I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

[Your signature]

Name

Title

Before the Tour

- Send an invitation in writing to your lawmaker and, if possible, deliver it personally to the local office. Legislative schedules tend to run very full, so offer a range of possible dates. If an invitation to visit is timed around a district work period, the chances of the member accepting your invitation are excellent.
- Once the lawmaker has accepted a firm date and time, announce the fact to all employees. Promote the visit internally with information about the visitor's importance and a short biography.
- Transportation for the lawmaker may be necessary and should be arranged with the scheduler.
- Map out the tour to achieve your objectives for the visit. Know when your lawmaker has to leave and develop an approximate timetable that will keep you on schedule, allowing for the fact that the lawmaker may want to spend extra time in particular locations.
- Build in time for conversations en route so you don't find yourself rushing past key elements of the tour near the end. Assign someone with responsibility for receiving messages for the visitor during the tour if necessary and make sure that individual knows how to reach you.
- Arrange for photographs of the visitor with employees and other guests during the tour. There's nothing secret about the visit, so consider the positive value of an announcement to the local press. Work closely with the lawmaker's press secretary on internal and external publicity.
- Choose the tour guide with care. Whether the facility manager or another senior executive, the guide should be articulate, knowledgeable about facility operations

and the company's issues, and know by name everyone the visitor is likely to meet en route. Select a key hourly employee to be part of the tour and the planning as well.

- Potentially hazardous areas should be roped off and safety gear provided for all guests. Key equipment should be in operation during the tour to assure action interest; inoperative machinery makes for a dull tour. Remember that appearances are important.

During the Tour

- Begin the visit in your office with a brief presentation of important facts about the facility and the tour including history, environmental problems and how they are addressed, standards, and advances in health and safety, new technology, etc. Give an overall view of the industry and its impact on the local community such as jobs and community relations efforts.
- Provide an economic profile including data such as number of employees, payroll, products, taxes, local expenditures for material and services, and so on - but don't overwhelm the visitor with more technical or economic data than an interested layman can absorb. (Some of this information could be sent ahead of time to the legislator or the staff member briefing him or her for the visit.)
- Be sure to discuss what type of work is done at your business and how it impacts the social and economic fabric of the district or state. Raise the issues of concern to you and your employees as a business and what position you want your lawmaker to take.
- Discuss how OSHA and EPA regulate the waste and recycling industry. Emphasize that it is one of the most regulated industries.
- Discuss your good safety record and any awards or recognition your company has received. Don't be afraid to discuss the perceived negatives regarding the industry and how your company addresses these issues. You have got them there so you can show them how you exactly address these issues.
- Be prepared to introduce the member of Congress to employees during the tour - remember, they are his or her constituents. Make sure to involve all those with whom he or she has a personal or political relationship.
- If a meeting or luncheon is not part of the visit, conclude it with a small discussion in your office to answer the legislator's questions and to make your final points about issues you want to cover.

After the Tour

- After the visit, send a thank you note to the legislator, reiterating important points made during the visit. If photographs were taken during the tour, include those as well. Send copies of stories about the visit that appear in local newspapers and internal company publications.
- Let NWRA's Government Affairs Division know about the tour and details of what occurred.
- Above all, follow up on the relationship established by the visit. Stay in frequent touch and find ways to build the relationship into a personal and political friendship that can be of value to you and your company throughout the lawmaker's career.

Writing to Legislators

The following are tips on writing to legislators.

- Write on your company stationary. It is important for lawmakers to see that your company is located in his or her district.
- While it is preferable to send your letter as an email or a .pdf attachment to an email due to security concerns, you may also wish to send a hard copy version as reinforcement. When doing so, you may either send it to your member's local office or to their Washington office at one of the following addresses:

When writing to members of the Senate:

The Honorable (name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

When writing to members of the House:

The Honorable (name)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

- Identify the bill or legislative issue. Give the bill number or the popular title.
- Identify yourself and mention the state, legislative district, and the city or county in which you are a voter.

- Be knowledgeable. If you feel strongly about a particular bill, the force of your feelings combined with thorough knowledge of the issue can make your communication more effective.
- Describe your concerns clearly. Legislators handle many issues - make sure you differentiate your topic of concern.
- Keep it short and to the point. Time is valuable and a concise letter will get better attention. A letter should not be longer than one page. Quality, not quantity, will get a legislator's attention.
- Communicate in your own words. Demonstrate how the legislation will impact your company and your employees.
- Present the best argument. End by asking for consideration of your position. A communication from a concerned constituent will always merit the attention of a legislator.
- Be polite. Never threaten or argue. After a vote is taken, it is valuable to write your lawmakers again, either thanking them for their votes or politely explaining both that you regret that they did not vote the way you had wanted and your thanks for their willingness to consider your views.