

How to Write an Effective Letter to an Elected Official¹

Writing to your Member of Parliament, Ministers and other key elected officials is a critical part of advocacy. Why? Letters help build political will in support of legislative action on a particular issue. Too often politicians complain that they do not hear from their constituents on important issues. Let's change that!

Here are some tips to assist you in composing your letter.

- **Use a respectful tone.** The reader will be more receptive to your letter and request if it's respectful in tone.
- **Use your personal voice.** Our appeals gain strength when they are personally written by constituents. Include a personal reference such as: "As a mother of two children...." "As a student writing to you from...." Follow it with a "What worries me" sentence, and a "Please act" sentence.
- **Follow the talking points suggested by KAIROS.** Be sure to specify what you want the government to do following your personal opening paragraph(s) and concluding remarks. Choose talking points that resonate with you the most.
- **Point to positive opportunities for change.** Stress the opportunities that will arise by taking action.
- **Be brief.** The most powerful letters are personal and to the point.
- **Request a response.** Often elected officials will respond to your letter or email. However, it's always good practice to write that you look forward to their response.
- **Letter? Email?** Any message to elected officials is important. Hand written letters tend to hold more weight as they feel more personal and the writer took extra time and care. But don't let that stop you from mailing a typed letter or sending an email. It's important that elected officials hear from you no matter how it's delivered.

¹ With thanks to The Citizens' Climate Lobby, Nelson - West Kootenay Chapter, from which this resource is based