



2013 FARFA Guide to Activism & Lobbying: Why You Should Meet With Your Legislators

There are many ways to share your views on important policy matters with your elected officials. You can send letters. You can make phone calls. You can sign petitions. These days, it seems to be even easier with email and automated petitions that allow you to simply enter a few lines of information and push a button.

These various strategies are valid ways of engaging our political system and the media, but they don't always yield the most effective results. *When it comes getting our state and federal legislators to make policy changes regarding our local food and independent farm system, the best way to influence an elected official, by far, is to meet with them in person.*

Elected officials are deluged with emails and postcards and petitions. What makes them take the time to pay attention to an issue? *When they see that their constituents have taken the time to really pay attention.* An automated email or online petition says you took 10 seconds to press a button that a friend sent you, and you may or may not ever pay attention that issue again.



A phone call or individualized letter says that you care enough to break out of your normal routine for at least a few minutes, and they also personalize the issue; phone calls and non-form letters each carry the same weight as many, many form emails or petitions combined. In-person meetings are at the top of the ladder, from this perspective, because they show the greatest commitment.

In addition, normal human psychology plays a role. Politicians and their staff are social, by nature of what they do. If you're a teacher, work in sales, or have any occupation that requires interacting with others, then you understand that your best work happens face-to-face. Legislators like to see you, shake your hand, and hear what you have to say. You literally “put a face” to the issue when you meet them in person.

Face-to-face meetings with your elected officials and their staff are a powerful way to get to know them and communicate your views on important issues. It's a critical step in educating them about the issues that affect our lives, which may ultimately bring them to our side and help us make the changes needed to protect our independent farmers and food producers.

For tips on having effective meetings with your legislators, please refer to the handout “Tips for Successful Meetings With Your Legislators.”

For more information, visit www.FarmAndRanchFreedom.org

Questions? Contact info@FarmAndRanchFreedom.org or (254) 697-2661