# PERSONAL VISITS WITH LEGISLATORS

## Before the Visit

1. Call the legislator’s office & ask to speak to the scheduler.

2. Make an appointment
   - Explain to the scheduler that you would like to set up a meeting with your legislator. Some elected officials’ schedulers have a process for these kinds of requests, others will just schedule with you over the phone.
   - Arrange details of the date & time. They often ask for the names of people who will be attending.
   - If the legislator is unable to meet, ask to meet with the staff person handling the issue.
   - Follow up by sending a thank-you and confirmation of the arrangements.

3. Prepare for the meeting
   - Ask how much time you will have with the legislator. It will usually range from 15 –45 minutes.
   - Prepare a “Leave Behind”. The “Leave Behind” should be a one page synopsis of your position, highlighting why your position is important. Make copies to distribute.
   - Educate yourself about the legislator – their background, previous votes on related issues & the committees they serve on, if any.
   - Develop 2-3 key points that you want to convey.
   - Consider what questions may be asked & develop concise answers to those questions.

4. A week before the meeting contact the scheduler to confirm.

## During the Visit

1. Arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the meeting. Decide on your agenda items and assign who will carry which pieces of it.

2. Briefly introduce yourself & other attendees. Thank the official or staff person for meeting with you.

3. Clearly explain the issue.
   - Refrain from reading your “Leave Behind. Use laypersons’s terms & personal experiences to convey how the issue affects you or your community.
   - Be sure to leave time for everyone to speak; no one should dominate.

4. Invite questions. Then ask directly for his or her support.

5. Thank the legislator or staff person for their time.
   - Sum up any commitments made by the legislator.
   - Offer to provide further information or a meeting with other residents.
   - Leave your one page “Leave Behind”.

## After the Visit

1. Write a thank you note or email to the legislator & any staff with whom you met. Briefly restate your position & include any additional information that may have been requested. Provide a summary of your understanding of the outcome of the meeting.

2. Maintain contact with the legislator as the issue progresses. Continue to provide feedback or input to remind the legislator or staff person of your ongoing interest in the issue.