

MONTANA CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
TIPS ON WRITING, FAXING OR E-MAILING
A LETTER TO YOUR LEGISLATOR

A Letter to a legislator is often very important, when time permits. Sometimes it may be necessary to fax a letter or short note. A single letter might be the difference between the success or failure of a key bill. E-mails have become a key means of communication as well, and can usually be accessed anywhere any time. A poor letter or E-mail is worse than no communication at all.

- Make sure that the full name, initial, and title of the legislator are correct. “Minor” errors can be extremely significant.
- Formality is the safest course in correspondence... unless you are on more personal terms with the legislator.
- Clearly identify the bill you support or oppose. Identify each bill by number and title.
- Localize your letter/E-mail. Express your views in terms of what the proposed bill means to your community and your conservation district.
- Supply the legislator with factual information about your conservation district.
- State your case clearly and concisely. Give specific reasons why you believe a bill is necessary and why it warrants his or her support—or why you oppose the passage of a bill.
- Be concise. Don’t waste words.
- If you are writing on behalf of your organization, or in an official capacity, use printed letterhead. It gives your communication dignity and stature.
- Always remember to sign your given name and surname.
- Don’t demand action or imply threats. Once in writing and sent, you can’t take it back.
- Be factual, don’t exaggerate.
- Be polite.
- Be careful of your spelling, grammar, and handwriting.
- Most legislators will attempt to reply to letters/E-mails from constituents. Because of other demands on their time, the replies will sometimes be delayed. To be sure to find out how your legislator stands on a given issue, ask for a reply.

When you are writing letters to elected officials

Sample Salutations

GOVERNOR

Governor Brian Schweitzer, Governor
State of Montana Room 204,
State Capitol Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Schweitzer:

SENATOR

The Honorable _____
Montana Senate
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620-1702

Dear Senator _____:

REPRESENTATIVE

The Honorable _____
Montana House of Representatives
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620-1702

Dear Representative _____:

Your Legislators' Phone Numbers and Home Addresses:

SENATOR

Address: _____
City & Zip: _____
Home Phone: _____
Work Phone: _____
Legislative Phone: _____

REPRESENTATIVE

Address: _____
City & Zip: _____
Home Phone: _____
Work Phone: _____
Legislative Phone: _____