

Tips for Writing or E-mailing Your Elected Official

It is important to let your elected officials know your views on an issue before they make their decisions. The keys to writing an effective letter or e-mail are:

- 1) Always be honest in your discussions in order to establish and maintain credibility with legislators.
- 2) Keep your letter short and to the point. Address only one issue in your letter or e-mail, and try to keep your letter to one page.
- 3) Be courteous and respectful, not confrontational.
- 4) State your purpose for writing in the first paragraph. (For example, "I am writing to urge you to oppose the proposed tobacco tax increase.")
- 5) If your letter is about a specific piece of legislation, identify it by the bill number or the common name for the legislation, such as "the proposed sales tax increase."
- 6) Describe how the issue affects you and, whenever possible, include facts and examples to support your position. Personal experience can strengthen your position on the issue and encourage the legislator to listen more closely to your position.
- 7) Ask what your legislator's views on the issue are. This request for a response underscores your ongoing interest in this issue.
- 8) Include your name and complete address, even in your e-mail, so your legislator can respond and will know you are a constituent he or she represents.