

Techniques for Having Productive Lobby Meetings

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My Background

- Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL)
 - Large grassroots organization that supports carbon pricing
 - Regularly meets with legislative offices
 - I founded CCL Nuclear Energy Action Team
- Generation Atomic
 - Grassroots nuclear power advocacy group
 - Member of government action team (lobbying, etc..)
- Groups Formed to Save US Nuclear Plants
 - Save Illinois Nuclear Plants (Dresden, Byron, etc..)
 - Save Palisades
 - Save Diablo Canyon



General Principles

- Honey, not Vinegar
 - Always respectful, friendly and appreciative of their work (good cop?)
 - Never argue or try to change their views/values
 - It's not a debate – it's a sales pitch
 - Instead, find common values
 - Tailor message accordingly
 - Find/give reasons why THEY would want to do what your proposing
 - Avoid lecturing (one-way communication)
 - Try to engage in a 2-way conversation
 - It can be more about building a relationship (especially in initial meetings)

General Principles - Continued..

- Information Gathering (know your audience!)
 - Needed to effectively tailor your message
 - Research before meeting
 - Committee assignments
 - Positions on past bills
 - Personal background
 - Press releases
 - Social media (Facebook pages – Twitter accounts)
 - Open-ended questions in meeting
 - What are your thoughts or concerns about nuclear, etc..



Rep. (D-)

Things to research:

- What Committees Are They On?
 - Energy and Water, Appropriations
 - Relevant Past Legislation
 - Sponsored the 100% Renewable by 2050 Legislation
 - Voted against legislation that would open up more state lands to copper mining
 - Background
 - Has two sons
 - Taught at Temple University's Fox School of Business for four years, where he also served as a Social Impact Fellow at the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Institute
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Legislator Meeting Setup

- Contact legislative office, via phone or email
 - May want to ask to speak with key staff
 - May require several tries to get a meeting
- Gather/bring supporting materials
 - To leave behind or refer to at appropriate times in meeting
- You will usually meet with key staff (vs. legislator)
 - A meeting with key staff can be *more* effective!

The Meeting: Beginning

- **Thank them for meeting you, establish how much time they can give you (leader)**
 - “Thank you for meeting with us today-- how much time do you have to meet?”
- **Express Appreciation for something they’ve done in the past (leader)**
 - “We wanted to thank you for supporting (X) and really being a leader for (Y).”
 - Best if you can find an action that is somewhat related to meeting’s purpose (something nuclear related, or more generally a pro-environment action for a Dem, or a pro-energy/jobs action for GOP). Keep it brief (a sentence or two).
- **Introduce yourselves and tell your story (all participants - story teller given more time)**
 - “I’m <name> from <organization?>, and this is <name>. Give brief background then “I’m here because I’m concerned about... This is (NAME), I’ll let them introduce themselves.”
 - “The reason I came to talk to you today is because I’m concerned about (X)” (e.g., climate change, or the reliable, affordable electricity – tailor expressed concern to legislator).
- **State the purpose of the meeting, i.e., the main ask (leader)**
 - “Our purpose today is to ask that you support Bill XYZ, which would facilitate construction of new nuclear plants”

The Meeting: Middle - Questions and Discussion

- **Opening Statement (leader)**

- “Can we answer any questions you have about the bill or discuss any concerns that you have, that might prevent voting for it?”

- **Main Discussion (all participants)**

- Listen first, and listen a lot. Don’t lecture
- Identify their concerns, values and point of view
- Try to find shared values, and reasons why THEY would want to support the bill
- After each response: “Does that answer your question or concern?”

- **Closing Statement (leader):**

- “Do you have any more questions or concerns that we could address?”
- “Do you think it would be possible for you to support the bill?”

Anticipated Questions

- **Renewables enthusiast -- “Wouldn’t we want to use something a bit more sustainable, like RE?”**
 - Renewables must be used to replace fossil fuels, not nuclear
 - Most analysts, as well as the IPCC agree that nuclear (both new and existing) will need grow and play a significant role (as a non-intermittent, clean source)
- **Climate skeptic -- “Considering the polar vortex, I think we should be more concerned about Global Cooling.”**
 - Emphasize jobs, tax base, reliability, and power costs
- **Concerned about cost-- “Nuclear is fine, but it’s just too expensive.”**
 - Give renewables and nuclear similar support (e.g., subsidy) and let the market decide.
 - Inclusion of nuclear will *reduce* the cost of a carbon-free grid by greatly reducing storage costs

The Meeting: End

- **Make secondary ask (leader)**

- Ask if they could support any kind of nuclear support bill, and if so, what kind of changes they would want
- Ask if they would be willing to meet or discuss the issue further in the future

- **Follow Up**

- Offer to do research to address any unanswered questions or requests of additional information
- Respond within a week or so

- **Leave Behind**

- Articles, op-eds, info sheets, reports, expressions of support by leaders or organizations, etc....

- **Take photo (if they want to)**

- **Thank them for taking the time to meet.**

- Send a thank you card/email, the key is to establish a connection and maintain it

Questions?