

HELPFUL BASICS ON HOW TO LOBBY YOUR REPRESENTATIVE(S) AND SENATOR(S)

- DO:** Be well informed on the specific issues you plan to discuss with your legislators and be ready to answer any questions. The better prepared you are, the more effective your position will come across. The Northwest Municipal Conference will usually have concise position statements and other materials available on the hot-button legislative issues to help you prepare.
- DO:** Educate your legislators as to the specific impact a bill or issue will have on your community and your taxpayers. Providing your legislators with specific costs or other data can refute misinformation they may have on the bill or issue. Quite often, information regarding the fiscal and/or other impacts can sway their position.
- DO:** Develop a positive working relationship with your legislators. This will make them more receptive to your outreach efforts and more likely to trust your perspective on an issue or bill.
- DO:** Always be courteous and respectful when contacting your legislators even if he or she disagrees with your position. Remember that legislators are often trying to balance several different perspectives when deciding an issue.
- DON'T:** Be afraid to contact or meet with your legislators. Legislators are usually very willing to listen to your position on an issue. Remember, your constituents are their constituents.
- DON'T:** Exaggerate or misrepresent the local government position on bills or other issues. Stick to an honest representation of the facts.
- DON'T:** Attempt to bargain or negotiate a bill on your own. NWMC has lobbyists in the Capitol who are well-versed in the art of legislative negotiations and have access to all the “moving parts” on the bill. However, please share any information or perspectives that you have garnered from your legislators that would be of value to our lobbying efforts.
- DON'T:** Argue with a legislator or threaten them in any way. Making enemies in the Capitol is not a positive strategy for advancing our legislative agenda.