

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH LEGISLATORS

Many people have asked us how they can make their feelings about the budget crisis known to the decision makers in Sacramento. On the next page, you will find the Contact Information for the Governor and the State Legislators for Escondido. If you are not sure who specifically represents you, a link is provided which can be accessed to provide you with that information. Once you have identified the representative(s) you wish to contact, we hope that the following guidelines prove helpful.

LETTERS: We've been told that letters that are no longer than one page have a better chance of being read. The following represents a suggested format which can be mailed or faxed.

The Honorable (Name of Legislator)
California State (Senate or Assembly)
State Capitol Building Room _____
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Wyland *or* Dear Assemblyman (Last Name),

In the body of the letter, It is important to identify yourself as one of their constituents. Specifically describe the issue you are writing about. If possible, give an example of how the issue affects you and/or our district. A brief personal story might be shared to better illustrate your concerns.

Politely urge them to support your request and tell them how you hope they will vote. Some writers like to offer an alternative solution to the problem, while inviting the legislator to contact them should they have any questions or a need for clarification.

After you have encouraged them to support your request, and then written your closing, it is very important that you include your name, address and phone number. Some writers also politely request a response.

Sincerely,
Your Name
Address
Phone Number

PHONE CALLS: Make sure to state your name and address, and indicate that you are one of their constituents. Oftentimes, secretaries or aides will be speaking with you. Briefly make your position known as they are often charged with keeping track of the pros and cons on a given issue, and then reporting that tally to the legislator. It is helpful to have your facts organized in advance, to keep the call concise and to the point. Again, it can also be helpful to share how this issue affects you personally, while encouraging the legislator's support of your request.

FOLLOW-UP: It is often suggested that we follow up with a note of appreciation if they ultimately act upon our concerns and vote accordingly. Thanking them for their support is as important as asking for it.