

Lobbying 101

Have you ever fundraised for your organization? Convinced a prospective landowner to protect their land? Called your legislator about a pressing issue? Then you've probably lobbied!

At its core lobbying consists of gathering information on a specific issue or pending legislation, scheduling meetings or calls with your legislators, and presenting the info you've gathered in a clear, concise, and persuasive manner to get them to take action.

Every legislator has a wealth of competing issues to tackle on behalf of their constituents and with the right application of research, persuasion, and relationship building, you can make land conservation chief among them.

STEP 1: GETTING STARTED

Choose your issue— Lobby meetings are often centered around a specific “ask” of the legislator, such as their support or opposition on a particular piece of legislation, releasing a statement or signing on to joint letters, etc. .

Schedule your lobby visit— The first step in planning your lobby visit is to schedule your meeting. Members' calendars often fill up quickly, so it's best to contact them as far in advance as possible.

- **Find Your Representative or Senator:** Visit the Connecticut General Assembly page [HERE](#) and type in your location to find your legislators. The General Assembly also maintains several lines through which you can be transferred to a legislator or to the bill status information room.
 - House Democrats 1-800-842-8267
 - House Democratic Leadership 1-800-842-1902
 - House Republicans 1-800-842-8270
 - House Republican Leadership 1-800-842-1423
 - Senate Democrats 1-800-842-1420
 - Senate Republicans 1-800-842-1421
- **Send a Meeting Request** by email, phone, or fax to your legislator's office. Their contact info can be found on their personal websites.
- **Follow-up with a call** to your senator or representative's office and confirm your meeting a few days in advance.

Recruit attendees—Recruit other activists and community leaders to take part in your lobby meeting. CLCC staff would be happy to attend as well if need be.

STEP 2: PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

It's critically important to be prepared for your meeting with specific "asks" that you want your representative or senator to work toward and the background information necessary to demonstrate why the issue should be a priority for them.

- **Research your elected Officials**— Look up your elected official to see if they've taken any other action on the issue at hand. Also, look on their website to find out what committees they sit on and what their policy priorities are.
- **Review Recent News**—Read up on the latest developments surrounding your issue. Check out CLCC's website and subscribe to our email list for the latest updates on issues we are working on [HERE](#).
- **Prepare or collect any materials**—If you plan on giving your legislator or their staff any materials, be sure to have them prepared well beforehand. CLCC's advocacy toolkit includes many helpful handouts for you to bring along [HERE](#).
- **Meet with your lobbying group to plan out your lobby visit**— Before your visit, meet with your fellow advocates who will be participating in your meeting. Designate who will be facilitating the meeting and who will say what. Confirm that everyone understands the objective of the meeting and what the "ask" is to ensure that you stay on topic during the meeting.

STEP 3: SPEAKING WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

Follow your Agenda— Your representative or senator's time may be limited, so try to prioritize your talking points accordingly.

- **Introductions**— Thank them for taking the time to meet with you then have everyone in the group introduce themselves with a brief background on who they represent and, if appropriate, background on their connection to the issue.
- **Thank them for their previous support of your issue**— If your elected official has a good voting record on the issue you are lobbying on, be sure to thank them for their past support/opposition of a specific piece of legislation, a statement they issued, or any other action they took to advance your cause.
- **Overview of local impacts**— Talk about specific local events, projects, or success stories that speak to the value or adverse effects of the issue at hand.
- **Clearly make your asks**—If the meeting is about pending legislation, ask specifically, "Will you support/oppose ____?"
- **If they're unresponsive**—
 - Ask them to provide specific reasons why they will not support/oppose the specific legislation.
 - In a respectful but assertive manner, express your disappointment and provide them with reasons why they should reconsider their position.
- **Next Steps**— How else can your member help to advance your cause? What are their goals for the legislative session? How can you be helpful to them? If possible, it can also be useful to find out if they have heard of other efforts or pending legislation that the community should be aware of. Let them know that you'll be in touch with them going forward.

STEP 4: FOLLOWING UP

Thank the office for their time and provide follow up info as needed— Send a follow up email or call to the office thanking them for their time and pass along any additional information that the legislator may have asked for during the meeting. Remember that one of the major objectives of your contact is to establish an ongoing relationship with your legislator and establish yourself as a reliable source of information going forward, so keep in touch!