



Communicating with Legislators Tips to be Effective

Engaging with legislators plays a crucial role in shaping law and policy. Making the most of meetings with lawmakers is important to advancing the goals of Alaska's electric utilities. To help you navigate these conversations, we've compiled a list of valuable tips for building relationships and making a positive, lasting impact on the legislative process.

- Read legislator bios ahead of the meetings.
- Arrive a few minutes early.
- Board members' presence shows respect to the legislator. Designate a representative to speak on behalf of the utility to ensure an efficient flow of conversation. Not establishing this in advance can lead to spending too much time explaining positions.
- Be consistent with your message during the meeting. Don't talk about personal politics and never bring up elections during a meeting with a legislator in the capitol.
- Keep small talk at the start to a minimum. A legislator can be pulled out of your meeting at any time so your 20-minute meeting can turn into a 5-minute meeting if the legislator's schedule changes.
- If your meeting is with staff treat it the same way as if it were with a legislator. Staff do much of the legwork and advise the legislator during the decision-making process.
- Be brief when expressing support for legislation. Then allow the legislators to explain their priorities. The goal is a good relationship, not extracting promises or discussing provisions on certain bills. Be open to a legislator's perspective.
- Stick to your talking points. The legislator may key in on just 1 or 2 of them for discussion.
- Keep in mind legislators are making decisions that impact all of Alaska's electric utility consumers and be mindful that each legislator is accountable to his or her constituents.
- Anything you say to legislators, staff, and other public officials is considered to be in the public realm, whether the conversation takes place in offices or hallways in the capitol, or at receptions.
- Upon leaving the meeting, thank them for their time and acknowledge those who will work on the issues on a day-to-day basis (utility lobbyist or other utility staff).