

Nuclear Advocacy

Young professionals can help further the nuclear renaissance through congressional outreach. The knowledge North American Young Generation in Nuclear (NAYGN) members have can help educate key decision-makers on the benefits of nuclear science and technology. NAYGN encourages its members to meet with their members of Congress and other local elected officials on a regular basis. By building a relationship with elected officials, you can, with NAYGN's help, put a personal perspective on a technical subject. This relationship will give you the opportunity to address your member of Congress from home and provide him or her with accurate information on issues and policies affecting the nuclear industry. As constituents, you can help persuade them to support nuclear when they return to the Capitol.

Since its inception in 1999, NAYGN has helped its members prepare for nuclear advocacy activities. Since 2005, NAYGN has organized five "Hill visits" for members attending the national conference in Washington, D.C. The tactics used in D.C. can be used at a congressional meeting anywhere.

The Contacting Your Member of Congress Communication Plan is a starting point for members who want to be more politically active. Preparing for all public discussions on nuclear subjects can be daunting for any young professional, but NAYGN has captured the key ingredients to help you prepare for such a meeting. Included is an outline of how to prepare, establish and conduct meetings with members of Congress.

How to Prepare for Your Meeting With Your Member of Congress

Data Collection

The core of NAYGN has already prepared for you a high-level briefing sheet on national nuclear facts, "Straight Talk on Nuclear."

Be sure to know the facts about nuclear energy in your home state. State-specific data sheets are available on the Nuclear Energy Institute website. Review your state-specific data prior to meeting with your member of Congress.

State-Specific Data You Should Know

- How many nuclear power plants are in your state?
- What percentage of total electricity generation in your state comes from nuclear energy?
- How many people are employed at the local nuclear power plant?
- What is the capacity factor of the reactors in your state?
- What are the economics of having a generating station in the community?
- How much CO₂ emission is avoided by utilizing nuclear power for your state?
- What are some of the other nuclear assets in the member's state/district, such as academic programs, jobs and manufacturing facilities?
- Are there any current legislative events relevant to nuclear energy, such as appropriations or used fuel storage?
- What are the state or district economics of the nuclear supply chain?

Logistics

- Identify your team prior to calling for an appointment. When setting up your meeting with a member of Congress, you may be required to list all of the participants.
- Make copies of "Straight Talk on Nuclear" and collect other informational materials you want to give to the individual.

How to Conduct a Meeting With Your Member of Congress

- Make sure to be on time and respect the member's other commitments by not overstaying your meeting.
- Introduce everyone on your team to the member of Congress.
- Be sure to emphasize that you are one of the member's constituents and you set up the meeting to discuss the future of nuclear energy in the United States.
- Identify which team member will speak about each topic, such as safety.
- Before you leave, give the member and his or her staff copies of "Straight Talk on Nuclear" and your business card.

How to Meet Your Member of Congress

Locate Your Elected Representatives

You can find all of your state and local elected representatives on the Nuclear Advocacy Network's website: www.nuclearadvocacynetwork.org/legislatorssearch.aspx.

Contact Information

- Each member of Congress has a minimum of two offices. All members have an office in Washington, D.C., and an office in their home district. The member's home-district office is the one you want to contact.
- The phone number and address of the office will be listed on the member's website.

Meeting Request

- Call the telephone number listed on the website.
- Ask the receptionist to put you in contact with the member's scheduler.
- Suggested script:
 - "Hello, my name is [your name] and I am a constituent of [congressman's name] and a member of North American Young Generation in Nuclear. I would like to schedule a meeting for a few of my neighbors and me to discuss our beliefs about nuclear energy with the congressman. We are happy to meet with [congressman's name] whenever his/her schedule allows."
- Remember:
 - Many times, the congressman's office will schedule a meeting with an adviser or aide rather than the actual member. This is just as good! Convey your message to whomever is available.
 - Members of Congress will only be in their home districts when Congress is in recess. You may have to wait months before the member is home and has some available time. Take whatever time slot you receive.
- You can also write a letter to your member of Congress requesting a meeting. Be sure to include your contact information so the member's office can reach you. Follow up on the request about a week after you send the letter.



Helpful Hints

- Always be on time.
- Do not interrupt the member of Congress. Let him/her speak.
- Do not make up data. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. Offer to follow up with the member's office and then do so.
- Speak English! Don't assume the member understands the technical terms you use every day.
- Leave a few copies of "Straight Talk on Nuclear" with the member along with your contact information.
- Offer to work with NEI to set up a visit to a nuclear power plant for the member and staff.
- Follow up with a thank-you note to the member of Congress and scheduler. You may need their help in the future!

Key Ingredients

The Contacting Your Member of Congress Communication Plan teaches you how to:

- 1) meet your member of Congress by providing contact information and a meeting request script
- 2) prepare by collecting data and establishing team logistics
- 3) conduct a meeting with a list of helpful hints.

Note: Although this communication plan is geared toward members of Congress, the same procedure can be used to meet with your governor, mayor, state legislator, city council member and local township leadership—they all need to hear from you!

Contacting Your Member of Congress Communication Plan

