How to Prepare for Your Meeting With Your Member of Congress

Data Collection

The national NAYG N 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?
• How many nuclear pow er plants are in your state?
• What is the capacity factor of the reactors in your state?
• What are some of the other nuclear assets in the member’s state/district, such as academic programs, jobs and manufacturing facilities?
• How many people are employed in the nuclear supply chain?
• How many people are employed at the local nuclear power plant?
• 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 wish 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.
• Let your constituency, the member and/or his or her staff copy of “Straight Talk on Nuclear” and your business card.

Meeting Request

• You can also write a letter to your member of Congress requesting a meeting.

Contact Information

• Each member of Congress has a minimum of two offices. All members have an office in Washington, D.C., and as 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 or their 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 advisor or aide rather than the actual member. This is just as good! Convey your message to whatever is available.
• Members of Congress will only be in their home districts when Congress is in recess. Trying to set up a meeting before the member is home will save some available time. Take whatever time you need.
• If you are able to write a letter to your member of Congress requesting a meeting, be sure to include your contact information so the member of Congress can reach you. Follow up on the request about a week after you send the letter.

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.nuclearadvocacynetw ork.org/legislatorsearch.aspx.
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!

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 NNI 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!