

## Outreach Etiquette

Suggestions for meeting with your State Senator and Assemblymember

### Top 10 Do's

#### Scheduling the meeting:

- Be patient and flexible
  - Ask for a half-hour meeting but accept a shorter meeting
  - Legislators schedules are fluid and unpredictable
  - If the legislator is unavailable, meet with staff if possible

#### Preparing for the meeting:

- Research your legislator
  - Study their background
  - Read about their interests and accomplishments
  - Familiarize yourself with their legislation
- Bring business cards and district brochures

#### During the meeting:

- Serve as the Local Expert on Water
  - Offer to be their policy resource or contact for future issues
  - Provide background and information on state and local water issues
- Develop a relationship with the legislator's staff
  - Staff can be your advocate from within
- Invite your legislator and their district office staff on a tour of your district's facility and operations
- Ask them to include your water district on their mailing list for communications like their newsletter

#### After the meeting:

- Thank your legislator and staff
  - Send an email or handwritten note
- Follow up
  - Be sure to deliver on any commitments if staff or your Legislator requests additional information
- Keep in Touch
  - Contact your legislator and staff a few times a year

### Top 10 Don'ts

#### Scheduling Considerations:

- Don't wait for a crisis to meet with your legislator
  - Build a relationship over time
- Don't just drop in for a surprise visit
  - Schedule an appointment in advance and keep it

#### During the meeting:

- Don't be Intimidated
  - Legislators work for you, your water district, your community
  - Legislators want to be in the business of helping people, including your water district
- Don't overload
  - Keep your written materials short, simple, and relevant to your issue or district
- Don't Namedrop
  - Keep it to a minimum if you acknowledge contacts in common
  - Namedropping detracts from your message and your meeting time
- Speak in Layman's Terms
  - Avoid or spell out water acronyms
- Don't monopolize the meeting
  - Listen to concerns and questions your legislator and their staff may have
- Don't Wing It
  - Offer to locate and follow-up with an answer if you don't have one right away
- Don't be confrontational!
  - Avoid arguments; Don't permanently damage your relationship with your legislator over one vote or issue
- Don't Mix Policy and Political Campaigns
  - Do not discuss past or future monetary contributions along with a vote or action on legislation at the same meeting