



# How to Advocate Effectively

Understanding the Legislative Process

# Introducing a Bill

- Bill are introduced in relevant committees
  - Environmental bills are introducing in the Environment Committee, Housing bills are introducing in the Housing Committee, etc.
  - If a bill has relevancy for more than one committee, than it has to appear in front of all of the relevant committees
    - i.e. Toxic chemicals in children's products could be raised in Children's and Environment
  - In even years, bills can only be introduced by the committee members of that committee
  - In odd year, any legislator can introduce a bill in any committee
  - **ACTION ITEM: Getting legislators to introduce bills with strong environmental language**
  - **ACTION ITEM: Get your legislator to co-sponsor bills**





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## Raising a Bill


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- Once a bill is introduced, there is a deadline for when it can be raised.
  - We are almost at the deadline for several environmental bills – most are Feb 27
- Once the bill is raised, a public hearing is scheduled
- You can submit testimony or testify! Legislators and any public officials testify first, THEN the general public
- Environment Committee hearing is this Wednesday – the deadline to sign up to testify is Tuesday Feb 14
- **ACTION ITEM: Sign up to submit comments and testify in support of the bills**

## Participating in a Public Hearing

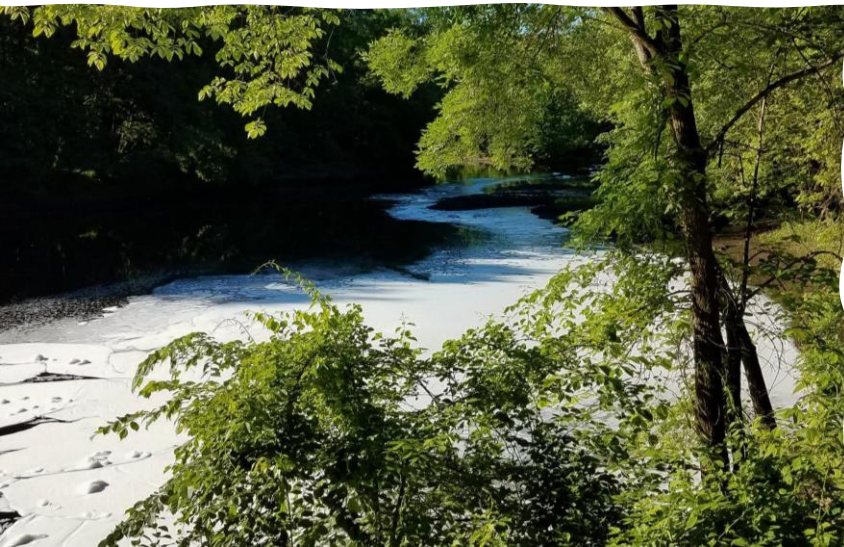
- Public hearings are virtual and in-person!
- Speakers are limited to three minutes, but written testimony can be as long as you want.
- You are encouraged to condense your spoken testimony to keep it at the limit.
- Env. Orgs provide bill numbers and talking points
- General public testimony has BIG impact – studies have shown that each person that testifies counts as 50 people
- **ACTION ITEM: Write testimony, submit it, and testify!**





# Getting the Bill passed out of Committee

- After the public hearing, the Committee will vote on the bill
- LOTS of bills die in Committee
- Important to be firm, but polite and respectful
- **ACTION ITEM: Urge Committee members to support the bills – this is especially important if your legislator is on the committee, but anyone can call or e-mail**



# Onto the House or Senate Floor

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- Each bill has an “HB” or “SB” in front of the number
- This correlates with the legislator that introduced the bill
  - If a Representative introduces the bill, it is an House bill; if a Senator introduces the bill, it is a Senate bill
- Once the bill is passed out of the Committee, it will go to the Chamber of that legislator
  - House bills go to the House of Representatives, Senate bills go to the Senate
- **ACTION ITEM: Continue to work to get co-sponsors for the bill**
- **ACTION ITEM: Urge the Speaker of the House or the Senate President to raise the bill for a vote**



## Onto the next Chamber

- Once it passes one Chamber, it goes to the next Chamber
- House bills then go to the Senate; Senate bills go to the House
- **ACTION ITEM: Continue to work to get co-sponsors for the bill**
- **ACTION ITEM: Urge the Speaker of the House or the Senate President to raise the bill for a vote**

# Getting it to the Governor's Desk

- Once the bill has passed all the Committees and both Chambers, it has to go to the Governor's desk for a signature
- He has a deadline of two weeks to sign it, veto it, or do nothing, in which case it passes into law
- **ACTION ITEM: Call the Governor's office and urge him to sign the bill**







# And Remember....

- **STAY ALERT!**
- Bills can change and negotiations can happen overnight that weaken the bill
- Read the emails you get from the advocate to stay on top of the latest info
- **ACTION ITEM: Read the e-mails that you get and take action – it generally only takes a few minutes, but it has a huge impact**