



The Legislative Connection

PACD Legislative Guide for Conservation Districts

Winter 2010

Tips on Meeting with Elected Officials

As you consider meeting with your elected leaders please remember that constituent contacts often speak loudest because constituents vote. These gatherings remind legislators who sent him/her to the Capitol and what is important to them. Since a legislator's livelihood depends on re-election, meeting and understanding the concerns of those who vote in November is an important part of their job.

The key to a successful encounter with elected officials is to know how to break through the barriers. You need to know what to ask, who to ask, and how to ask. Remember legislators listen to their constituents. Remind legislators of the valuable services the conservation district provides to his/her voters. List 3 priorities and be very specific. You do not need to inundate the elected official with too much information. You can verbally provide an overview and supply a one or two page fact sheet with more detailed information on the issues.

Please do not assume that the elected official remembers what you stated several months or years ago – remember your issue is only one of many they deal with regularly. There are literally thousands of trade associations and businesses interested in influencing legislators. The goal is to single yourself

out as a vital component of Commonwealth operations deserving special consideration on legislative affairs.

Please do not be discouraged if you meet with legislative staff instead of the elected official. There are actually several advantages of meeting with staff instead of legislators. They can sometimes offer you more time and may be more knowledgeable about your specific issues. When you are meeting, always have a spokesperson who introduces the group and outlines the specific issues. Make sure to frame the message in understandable terms and make it pertinent to your specific conservation district. Finally, set the stage for follow-up contacts and then follow-up on a regular basis to become part of the legislative process.

It is important to work with the PACD office, using the annual legislative program and the letter and press release templates the association provides to you. By working in conjunction with PACD, legislators will understand the conservation district legislative needs from a statewide and local perspective. The relationship garnered from efforts in Harrisburg and locally will benefit all conservation districts across the Commonwealth.

Conservation Districts Can Present a Unified Voice

The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts recently embarked on a successful marketing effort to set and meet specific awareness goals and reach target specific audiences with a new public relations approach. One of the major goals of the new PACD marketing program is to present an organized, unified image throughout Pennsylvania. Uniform, recognizable logos and other marketing tools will be easy to remember and all conservation districts will benefit from the power of repetition. By using shared colors, typefaces, fonts, and slogan that captures the essence of what all conservation districts offer the public, conservation districts will have the opportunity to benefit from increased recognition. Repetition is the key to public retention and first impressions matter. By using the marketing tools, the public will see consistent and professional logos, slogans, and displays. Your conservation district has the option of using any or all of these materials.

A full suite of marketing materials has been developed and is part of a comprehensive Conservation District Marketing Plan. Those conservation districts wishing to adopt the new look, one that comes as a result of surveying key target audiences, will have numerous resources available to them:



- Full business package templates – business cards, letterhead, PowerPoint templates, website templates, displays;
- Online brand download center where all resources may be easily accessed and downloaded at a fingertip; and
- Imprint shop account where business package materials and marketing items may, at the district's discretion, be ordered efficiently and cost-effectively.

For conservation districts that decide to move ahead with adopting the new look, press releases and announcements are available for circulating to local press and constituents.

How to Write a Resolution

One of the real benefits of PACD membership is the opportunity to have an effective legislative voice regarding the public policy issues that affect conservation districts and our environment. All PACD members have the opportunity to craft and vote on separate legislative policy positions as resolutions. Twice a year PACD committees review these resolutions and recommend policy decisions to the PACD Executive Council, comprised of one delegate from every PACD conservation district member.

It is, therefore, important that local conservation district boards understand the correct procedure for drafting resolutions. The following guidelines can help your conservation district write and adopt successful resolutions.



- A resolution is a statement of policy or position on an issue.
- Each resolution should have a clear and concise title.
- Each resolution should address only one issue.

The goal of the resolution is to inform and educate the reader in order to inspire them to take action approving the resolution. To do this, a successful resolution must do two things: 1) identify and explain the problem that needs to be addressed (the WHEREAS portion) and 2) propose a solution that will address the problem as identified (the RESOLVED portion).

The first portion of a resolution identifies and states the problem that needs to be addressed. The problem should be stated in factual terms. Opinions are not expressed in this portion of the resolution. Each fact should be listed as a separate sentence or paragraph that begins with WHEREAS, and is followed by a semi-colon. The final WHEREAS ends with a semi-colon followed by "therefore be it".

The RESOLVED portion of the resolution states the action that you propose to address the problem identified in the WHEREAS portion of the resolution. Because resolving most problems involves an exercise of judgment, this is the portion of the resolution where the author expresses their opinions. If the author proposes more than one solution, each separate solution to the problem should be listed as a separate sentence or paragraph that begins with the word "RESOLVED". When a resolution contains multiple "RESOLVED" statements, they are linked by the phrase "and be it further" at the end of each RESOLVED statement, except the last one. When properly written, this section "stands alone" or clearly restates the problem in summary form and explains to the reader the action necessary to address that problem, without having to refer back to the "Whereas" statements.

Once a resolution has been written and approved by the conservation district Board of Directors, a PACD region, a PACD committee, or the PACD Executive Board it should be submitted to the PACD which will refer it to a PACD Committee for consideration and action before being presented to the Operations Committee and the entire Executive Council. All actions reported by the committee should be by majority vote of the Committee. The PACD Committee can take any of the following actions:

- 1.) Recommend approval of the resolution as written.
- 2.) Recommend rejection of the resolution.
- 3.) Amend the resolution or redraft it as they so decide; or
- 4.) Recommend that the resolution be transferred to another committee, be tabled, or referred for further study to avoid action on it directly.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, this is the part of the resolution that explains the issue or problem; and

WHEREAS, each resolution should address only one issue or problem; and

WHEREAS, each "Whereas" statement should address only one fact, idea or supporting argument related to the issue or problem; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that this is the part of the resolution that restates the basic issue or problem and proposes a solution to the issue or problem identified in the "Whereas" statements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each "Resolved" statement should address a separate action to be taken or solution proposed to resolve the issue or problem; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the "Resolved" statement should stand alone and the action proposed therein should be clearly understood by the reader without having to refer back to the "Whereas" statements.



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