

Examples of Effective Actions by Strategy

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but rather to serve as a springboard for brainstorming ideas:

Putting a spotlight on the issue in the local media

- Publish letters to the editor (LTEs)
- Submit op-eds
- Pitch story ideas to reporters
- Connect with reporters to offer yourself as an informational resource
- Meet with editorial boards

Keeping the topic at top of mind in public conversations

- Speak out at hosted town hall meetings
- Participate in telephone “town halls”
- Attend public meetings or forum with policymakers
- Coordinate field visits (consider inviting media)

Getting influencers to speak out

- Have office visits with legislators and influential members of the community
- Host conference calls or roundtable discussions with legislator/staff and key influential members representing differing perspective on the issue
- Host joint public education events
- Make joint public statements or sign-on letters (sharing with legislators and the media)
- Organize with partners to reach out to policymakers in public avenues

Demonstrating public desire for policy change

- Call-in campaigns
- Group lobbying visits
- Show up at venues during key votes, policymakers’ press events, or public forums
- Professional sign-on letters or petitions
- Participate in rallies or demonstrations
- Letter writing parties

Building a strong personal relationship with the target (legislator, elected official, etc.) office

- Phone calls (making one, or organizing others to call in)
- Local office meetings
- “Thank you messages” (directly to office, in media, on social media)
- Offer technical assistance on other projects related to your skills and knowledge
- Recognitions/awards
 - *Quick pro-tips on building a relationship: Congressional member & staff surveys demonstrate the benefits of providing materials that visually show impact, providing concise informational materials ahead of meetings, getting to know the district/state director, and in-district meetings.*

Serving as a resource in the policymaking process

- Offer testimony and public comment during hearings (or supporting community members in participating) or in written submissions
- Apply to formally serve on an advisory committee
- Offer advising, presentations, resources as an expert in committees and commissions
- Informally offer useful research/ expert connections for legislative committee or agency staff

10 question “litmus test” for selecting an action:

1. Which specific goal do we hope to achieve through this activity?
2. Who is our target for this tactic, among the identified decision-makers, audience, and/or media outlets?
3. How will this activity communicate and amplify our message?
4. Will this activity alienate any of our strategic targets or hurt our overall credibility?
5. Do we have the time, money, and people necessary to execute this activity, and is it worth the investment of these limited resources?
6. If we plan to secure press attention with this action, is it really “newsworthy”?
7. If appropriate, how will our partners be contributing to this effort (in terms of developing strategy, people, connections, and money)?
8. Will this be fun? Will it sufficiently engage and inspire folks involved?
9. Is this action clear, achievable, and effective?
10. How will this activity set us up for our next one, in terms of strengthening our influence and relationships, creating demand and/or accountability, and building momentum?

[Citation: This was pulled from the Sierra Club movement building handbook.]

Why use this litmus test? If you can't satisfactorily answer all 10 of these questions for the capacity you can offer, the activity may not be the most impactful use of your time. We encourage you to be creative and have fun with your tactics, but also keep your strategy, message, and targets firmly in mind.