



NLBMDA August Recess Toolkit

Tips for Having a Successful In-District Meeting

Be prepared. Members of Congress respond best when constituents come prepared to the meeting. Dealers who present thoughtful arguments, sound data and relevant personal stories are the ones congressional offices remember.

Tell a personal story. Member of Congress are always seeking personal anecdotes about the impact Washington is having on their constituents. Be sure to make the connection as to how federal policies are affecting your company, fellow dealers and you community as a whole

Use numbers if possible. It's helpful to quantify the affects policies in Washington are having back in the district and state. Where possible, discuss the amount of jobs, number of constituents or economic impact a policy is having or could have on the community.

Be respectful. Confronting or arguing with an elected is not an effective method of persuasion. Congressional offices are more likely to respond favorably to you if you are friendly and respectful of their time.

Go in groups. Your elected representatives are more likely to pay attention to NLBMDA's issues if the dealers they meet with are well-prepared. For groups meeting with lawmakers, it is important that you agree on who will open and close the meeting, as well as any questions you might ask.

Engage the staff. Typically members of Congress have someone from their staff attend the meeting. Talk to them about the issues you would like to discuss prior to the meeting, engage them during the meeting and be sure you have their contact information.

Ask for firm commitments. It is important to make the ask and seek commitment from elected officials.

Give offices relevant information. Documents passed to staff in the district or state will likely be sent to the legislative aide in Washington.

Be sure to follow-up. Politely following up is more likely to persuade lawmakers. Congressional staff are often over-worked and respond best to individuals who follow up their meeting with a phone call or email.

Persistence pays off. If you continue to show your presence and engage lawmakers and their staff throughout the year, they will be more likely to meet with you and discuss the issues you have raised.

Thank for your continuing work on behalf of lumber and building material dealers. For more information please contact Ben Gann at 202-367-2346 or ben@dealer.org.