

## Tips on how to write your own Opinion Editorial or Letter to the Editor and get it published!

Letters to the editor are an easy and effective way for us to voice our opinion to policy makers, corporations and the general public on the negative impacts of climate change. You can use letters to correct or interpret facts in response to inaccuracies, statements by corporations or government officials, to explain the connection between the news story and your priority issues, or to praise or criticize an article. The letters section is one of the most frequently read segments of newspapers.

- **Know your paper's policy**

Find out the newspaper's policy for printing letters. Some have word limits and all require that you include your name, address and phone number. Your address and phone number will not be printed, but most publications will want to call you before they print your letter to confirm that you really did write the letter and that you want to have it published.

- **Keep it simple**

Keep your points short and clear, and stick to one subject. If you focus on one specific issue, you'll already have an edge on the writer who thinks they will be able to fill up their letter with a laundry list of details. Also, stick to commonly used terms and avoid jargon. Connect to basic values such as clean water and healthy communities.

- **Make your letter short**

Make your first sentence short, compelling and catchy. Be direct and engaging. Try to hold each sentence to a minimum of 20 words. Your whole letter should ideally be a maximum of 150 words. No more than four paragraphs total, two paragraphs is best.

- **Get personal**

Newspapers, at their core, are community entities. Editors will be much more likely to publish a letter, and the letter will have much more impact, if it demonstrates local relevance. The tips below are especially relevant if you are submitting a letter to the editor to your local paper.

Use local statistics. For example, a letter focusing on climate change should point out what is at stake in your local area.

Use personal stories. For example, if you or someone in your family relies on agriculture to make a living, for example, you should talk about your experience in a letter to the editor addressing your concerns about how climate change will affect the industry.

Use names to encourage action. If a letter to the editor mentions a Representative or Senator's name, they will see it as their aides comb through all of the press in their district. They care about how they are being perceived in the district, and they will pay attention to a letter that asks them to take a specific action. You should also urge readers to support your position and to let their elected officials know their views

Use your credentials. If you have expertise in the area you are writing about, be sure to include that information even though it may not be printed in your letter.