

- Prepare visual aids (photos, maps, etc.) if they will strengthen your presentation.
- Go and visit the area you are trying to protect, if possible. It is more effective to speak from personal familiarity with the area. Even one or two visits to the area will help you get to know it, so you can speak more personally and confidently about it.
- If you are organizing others in your community to attend the hearing and testify, you might ask supporters to visually identify themselves with your position. Many conversation groups ask citizens to wear green to show support for the environment. At one recent hearing, Seattle Audubon Society distributed baseball caps (with their logo) for citizens to wear to show support for protecting bird habitat.

At the hearing, do the following:

- When you arrive at the hearing, there will probably be a sign-in sheet for you to list your name, address, and position on the proposal legislation. You should also indicate whether or not you plan to speak. Even if you do not plan to testify, be sure to sign in so that your position will be part of the public record.
- The sequence of speakers will likely follow the order in which people signed in. Get there early and sign in—usually the earlier you speak, the stronger the impact.
- Begin your testimony by giving your name and address and state if you represent an organization. Only one person should give the official testimony on behalf of the organization. All other members should speak as individual citizens.
- Address the decision-making body correctly, for example: “Mr. Chairman, members of the Renton City Council...”
- Make eye contact with the members. Speak slowly and clearly so that they understand you and your testimony is recorded properly.
- State your position on the proposed legislation and give a few reasons why. Include a personal story, if possible.
- Be prepared to answer questions from the decision-makers. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. Offer to get the answer and send it in for the record.
- Before you retreat from the podium, thank the legislative body for the opportunity to speak. Place yourself or your organization at the disposal of the members for further information or assistance.
- Listen and record and statements made by the opposing side. Make notes of factual errors or new ideas.
- Show tact. It is not tactful to applaud or show disapproval of any speaker.

