



Basic Tools for Lobbying the Montana Legislature

Important Resources

Legislative Services web site: <http://leg.mt.gov/>

Leave a Message for Legislators and Committees:

Phone messages: (406) 444-4800 from 7:30 am and 5 pm

Website messages: <https://leg.mt.gov/web-messaging/>

Governor's Telephone: (406) 444-3111 or via the web at governor.mt.gov/contact

MEIC's legislative website and bill tracker: meic.org/our-work/legislature/

MEIC's website provides the following useful information:

- A brief description and update of priority bills divided by category: Meic.org/bill-tracker/
- Contact information for legislators: <https://meic.org/our-work/legislature/legislators/>
- MEIC's legislative newsletter and alerts: <https://meic.org/our-work/legislature/capitol-monitor/>

How to Lobby During a Pandemic

BE SAFE! Live to fight another day. Don't enter the Capitol if you don't have to. Some legislators will gather in the Capitol but others will participate remotely. That means you can also participate in legislative hearings from the comfort of your own home.

First, know what's going on:

1. Visit MEIC's website at "meic.org" to follow the bills and issues in which you are most interested. Each high priority bill will have a description and link to help you learn more about how you can help.
2. Join MEIC's weekly ZOOM meetings every Thursday at 5:00 PM to learn what's going on, how you can be involved, and to ask questions. You can participate using a telephone or a computer. Visit meic.org to learn how to join.
3. Keep up-to-date by joining MEIC's email list so you can get alerts and our weekly list of "3 Things You Can Do This Week."
4. Read MEIC's Capitol Monitor newsletter for more details on specific legislation. We will periodically send these electronically and via hardcopy and we will post them on our website.

Second, know how to testify remotely:

1. **If you want to testify remotely you must register on the legislative services website by 12 pm (noon) the day before the hearing.** You can register to testify here: <https://leg.mt.gov/public-testimony/> When you register you must fill in the box regarding written testimony. You can include written testimony or attachments when you register but you do not have to do so even though you do have to put something in that box for written testimony. Instead you can write in the box that you have no written testimony.
2. **The registration form** allows you to say whether you want to testify via phone or computer. If you register to testify via computer the committee will not see your video feed only your name and Zoom profile photo if you have one. If you want to add a photo to your Zoom account so that legislators can see you (it adds a personal touch to an impersonal online

format), login to your Zoom account on the web, click “Profile” and add a photo by clicking “change” and then upload the photo you want to use.

3. **After you register** you will receive a receipt via email. This only confirms your registration. The day of the hearing you will receive the Zoom link or phone number for the hearing.
4. **The day of the hearing**, click on the link that was e-mailed to you that day (if you do not receive the email, check your spam folder).
5. **During the hearing** they will ask for proponents of the bill followed by opponents. You will need to click on the “raise your hand” function at the bottom of the screen when they call for proponents or opponents. To raise your hand on the phone hit *9.
6. **When the hearing administrator calls on you** to testify, you must unmute yourself. To unmute on Zoom, click the microphone button on the lower left of the screen so the red line through the microphone image disappears. On the phone you can unmute yourself by dialing *6.
7. **When you testify** always address your comments to the Chair and the Committee, followed by your name, how to spell your name, and where you are from. For example, start your testimony by saying, “Mr/Madame Chair, members of the committee, my name is ----, that is spelled ---. I am from ---.”
8. **When testifying** try to limit your comments to 3 minutes (about one typed page double-sided). Try not to repeat what others have said. Use personal stories whenever possible.
9. **After you testify**, stay until the hearing is over in case a committee member has a question for you. If you get asked a question always respond by addressing the committee Chair first followed by the the committee member who asked the question (i.e., “Mr. Chair, Senator ---, thank you for your question”).

Contacting legislators before or after a hearing:

You can contact legislators through the legislative services phone number and email at the top of this page or you can use MEIC’s website to find their direct e-mail and phone number. You can also send them your comments in writing to:

- Montana Senate, P.O. Box 200500, Helena, MT 59620, or
- Montana House of Representatives, P.O. Box 200400, Helena, MT 59620

When You Call to a Legislator

- Have a script of what you would like to say. You are likely to get their voicemail. Please be respectful and keep your message short
- If you talk to a legislator or they call back, address them as Senator or Representative
- Say your name and where you are from
- Provide a bill number and a very brief description
- Be brief, honest, explicit, and courteous
- Try to provide a personal perspective
- Don’t overstate your case and always admit if you don’t know an answer
- Thank them for their time
- Follow-up with any information you promise to provide

This will be a session like no other. It’s up to us to stand up for public health, a healthy climate, and a clean and healthful environment.

Legislative Leadership & Contact Information

A full list of legislators and relevant committees is available by [clicking here](#).

Officers of Senate

- President: Mark Blasdel, R-Kalispell
- President Pro Tempore: Jason Ellsworth, R-Hamilton
- Majority Leader: Cary Smith, R-Billings
- Majority Whips: Doug Kary, R-Billings; Steve Fitzpatrick, R-Great Falls; Gordy Vance, R-Belgrade
- Minority Leader: Jill Cohenour, D-Helena
- Minority Whips: JP Pomnichowski, D-Bozeman; Pat Flowers, D-Bozeman; Diane Sands, D-Missoula

Officers of the House of Representatives

- Speaker: Wylie Galt, R-Martinsdale
- Speaker Pro Tempore: Casey Knudsen, R-Malta
- Majority Leader: Sue Vinton, R-Billings
- Majority Whips: Seth Berglee, R-Joliet; Dennis Lenz, R-Billings; Lola Sheldon-Galloway, R-Great Falls; Derek Skees, R-Kalispell
- Minority Leader: Kim Abbot, D-Helena
- Minority Caucus Chair: Marilyn Marler, D-Missoula
- Minortiy Whips: Tyson Running Wolf, D-Browning; Laurie Bishop, D-Livingston; Derek Harvey, D-Butte

Who is your legislator?

If you do not know who your legislators are, you can search by zip code on Project Vote Smart's website: www.votesmart.org

