

## **Tips on Writing Letters to the Editor (LTE) and Policy Makers**

Media use letters-to-the-editor (LTE) as a sort of a confirmation for who their readers are and what's on the local, regional, state and national agenda.

Most media outlets have format requirements (length maximum, to whom it should be sent, how to send it, etc.). Always check the web site if you can, which is usually on the Op-ed page where the daily letters appear.

### **LTE should:**

- Begin with a reference to an item/story/other printed letter
- Be brief – Stick to 250 words or less. One or two sentence paragraphs, no more than two or three paragraphs.
- Make your point – stay on message, but be clever. Avoid over abusive tones.
- Offer an action/solution/additional resource if appropriate, i.e. *“The Great Old Broads for Wilderness have worked on this project and have issued a report available on their Web site...”*
- Be signed – your name, an address, phone # and/or email address. Maybe even indicate your expertise, i.e. “Broadband Leader” or “retired biologist”, etc.
- Are usually written to editorial sections of the publication, not the news section
- Be emailed letters – most effective.
- Be sent in the “body” of an email, unless otherwise specified, i.e. Attached document.

### **LTE should not:**

- Be generic
- Be bashing

### **Other Tips:**

- Call and follow-up on your submitted LTE.
- After one week, call the opinion page editor and ask about the status of the LTE.

## **Placing an Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed)**

1. Decide on a spokesperson
2. Contact opinion page editor to inquire about interest, available space, and a deadline for submission.
3. Follow up with a phone call to confirm that they received it.
4. Strategize a group plan, so everyone does not write an Op-Ed or LTE all at the same time, but staggered over a period of time.