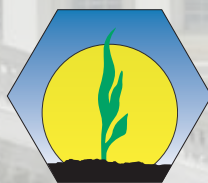


The Constituent Scientist's Guide to Public Advocacy



American Society
of Agronomy



Crop Science
Society of America



Soil Science
Society of America



American Society
of Agronomy



Crop Science
Society of America



Soil Science
Society of America

HEADQUARTERS

5585 GUILFORD ROAD

MADISON, WISCONSIN 53711

PHONE: 608-273-8080

WEBSITES: WWW.AGRONOMY.ORG, WWW.CROPS.ORG, WWW.SOILS.ORG

SCIENCE POLICY OFFICE

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American Society of Agronomy | Crop Science Society of America | Soil Science Society of America
5585 Guilford Road • Madison, WI 53711-5801 • Tel. 608-273-8080 • Fax 608-273-2021
www.agronomy.org • www.crops.org • www.soils.org

Dear ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Members,

The American Society of Agronomy (ASA), Crop Science Society of America (CSSA) and Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) Science Policy Office (SPO) strives, through education and advocacy activities, to inject science into policy making and influence federal funding for and legislation impacting the agronomic, crop, and soil sciences. Composed of a Director of Science Policy, Policy Programs Coordinator, and Science Policy Interns, the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA SPO works directly with White House Offices, Federal Departments and Agencies —Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Energy (DOE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), as well as the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, to promote legislation, rules and regulations, and funding supportive of our sciences.

During the annual budget and appropriations process, the SPO educates policymakers about and advocates for research, education, and extension programs supported by USDA, NSF, DOE, EPA, USGS, NASA, and NOAA. To show our support for these programs, we submit testimony to Congress (view testimony at: <https://www.agronomy.org/science-policy/testimony>) and meet with both White House and Congressional offices to stress funding for our priorities.

In addition to supporting these ongoing education and advocacy efforts, the SPO works closely with constituent member scientists like you. Ultimately, the success of our efforts and future of our sciences depend on the critical relationships that you develop with your congressional delegations.

As an ASA, CSSA, or SSSA member, you have a power that those of us working “inside the beltway” do not—you have a vote and, therefore, a voice! Your Representative and Senators will listen to you. Furthermore, when the more than 9,700 ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members collectively speak in one voice, articulating how essential our sciences are to ensuring sustainable food security and biofuel production, a role for agriculture in mitigating global climate change, adaptation of agriculture to climate change, protection and maintenance of healthy ecosystems, and the house of our nation’s air, water, and soil resources, Congress will listen! Consequently, support for federally-funded agronomic, crop, and soil sciences will be reinvigorated.

The power is in your hands. Let us help you tap into it!

Sincerely,

Karl M. Glasener, Director of Science Policy
American Society of Agronomy
Crop Science Society of America
Soil Science Society of America



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The Constituent Scientist's Guide to Public Advocacy

Who We Are



American Society of Agronomy



Crop Science Society of America



Soil Science Society of America

The American Society of Agronomy (ASA), founded in 1907, Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), founded in 1955, and Soil Science Society of America (SSSA), founded in 1936, are prominent international scientific societies headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin. The more than 9,700 members of the three Societies are dedicated to the sustainable production of food, feed, fiber, and fuel crops, while conserving our natural resources and maintaining and improving the environment. Membership in ASA, CSSA, and SSSA is tax-deductible because the Societies are non-profit, educational organizations. Since their inception, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA have continued to grow, modifying their educational offerings and annual meetings to support the changing needs of members.

Today, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA are seen as progressive scientific societies meeting member needs through publications, recognition and awards, career placement service, certification programs, training, national and regional meetings, and student activities. The three Societies also have a Science Policy Office in Washington, D.C., to give members a voice in the federal government. More information on ASA, CSSA, and SSSA can be found at: www.agronomy.org, www.crops.org, and www.soils.org, respectively.

Membership

As an ASA, CSSA, or SSSA member, you will receive many benefits including subscriptions to Society journals at a reduced rate, discounts on books and publications, and reduced registration fees for our Annual and Regional Meetings. You will also receive the CSA News (a monthly magazine), Newsflash (a bi-weekly email communication about upcoming events, new publications, etc), and the Science Policy Report (a bi-weekly publication covering grant funding opportunities, Congress and the Administration, and information about policy events and reports).

The three societies also organize conventions, meetings, and conferences, and offer development opportunities via short courses, workshops, and online seminars for professionals working in the fields of agronomy, crop, and soil science.

Who are Our Members?

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members work in academia, government, and industry. Key to their success is the ability to present research at our annual meetings, publish in our peer-reviewed journals, and connect with colleagues to exchange information. In addition to identifying with a broad cross-section of agronomic, crop, and soil science disciplines, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members typically have a Master's or Ph.D. degree. About 16% of our membership resides outside of the U.S., giving the Societies a strong global focus.

Membership Distribution	ASA	CSSA	SSSA
Northeast	9%	9%	12%
Midwest	36%	36%	26%
South	25%	27%	25%
West	16%	13%	19%
International	14%	15%	18%

Membership Benefits

Every member receives:

- Monthly CSA News magazine
- Discounts on subscriptions to our highly regarded and well-cited journals
- Discounts on our publications
- Access to the online Member Directory and networking opportunities
- Bi-weekly electronic newsletters— Science Policy Report and News Flash
- Option to publish research in our journals at a reduced rate
- Opportunity to present poster and oral papers at the International Annual and Branch Meetings
- Free online posting of resumes and access to Career Placement Services
- Membership in Divisions of Interest
- Discounts on International Annual Meetings and regional meetings registrations

Membership Opportunities

Members may take advantage of these:

- Scientific Expertise Directory - List your areas of expertise and be included in this new directory
- Salary Survey - View the report of the 2007 bi-annual salary survey of faculty in the U.S. and Canada
- Professional certification programs, the benchmark of excellence
- Awards, scholarships, and fellowships, including graduate and undergraduate opportunities
- Honing leadership skills and gaining visibility by volunteering for Society committees and editorial boards
- Science Policy activities
- Agronomic Science Foundation programs
- Undergraduate programs with Students of Agronomy, Soils, and Environmental Sciences (SASES)

For ASA, CSSA, and SSSA membership information, please email: membership@sciencesocieties.org.

Web 2.0 Technology

We invite you to take part in the various Web 2.0 communication technologies from ASA, CSSA, and SSSA:

Headquarters Address

5585 Guilford Road
Madison, WI 53711-5801
P: (608) 273-8080
F: (608) 273-2021



Twitter: @ASA_CSSA_SSSA



Facebook: ASA | CSSA | SSSA | SASES



RSS Feeds:

Science Policy News | ASA News & Features | CSSA News & Features | SSSA News & Features

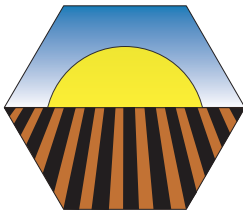
ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Science Policy Office



American Society of Agronomy



Crop Science Society of America



Soil Science Society of America

Science Policy Office

900 2nd St. NE Suite 205
Washington, D.C. 20002

General Inquiries

E: sciencepolicy@sciencesocieties.org
P: 202.408.5382

The ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Science Policy Office (SPO), located in Washington, D. C., works closely with members to educate policymakers about and advocate for the agronomic, crop, and soil sciences. The SPO is staffed by a Director of Science Policy, Policy Programs Coordinator, and Science Policy Interns. ASA, CSSA, and SSSA annually sponsor a Congressional Science Fellowship, which provides a member scientist with the opportunity to work as a scientific resource for a member or on a committee in the U.S. Senate or House of Representatives. Learn more about the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA SPO at:

- <https://www.agronomy.org/science-policy>
- <https://www.crops.org/science-policy>
- <https://www.soils.org/science-policy>

Science Policy Office Vision

The ASA, CSSA, and SSSA SPO will advocate for the importance and value of the agronomic, crop and soil sciences in developing national science policy and ensuring the necessary public-sector investment in the continued health of the environment for the well-being of humanity. The SPO will assimilate, interpret, and disseminate, in a timely manner to Society members, information about relevant agricultural, natural resources and environmental legislation, rules and regulations under consideration by Congress and the Administration.

Goals of the Science Policy Office:

- ✓ Build support for education and funding for the agronomic, crop, and soil sciences within federal agencies;
- ✓ Educate Congress, the White House offices, and federal agencies about the importance of the agronomic, crop and soil sciences;
- ✓ Educate ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members about the political process and the importance of educating policymakers about and advocating for our sciences; and
- ✓ Provide members with timely information about and opportunities for direct action and engagement in the political process.

Becoming an Effective Constituent Scientist

Building a long-term relationship with your congressional delegation is critical to influence policy and/or funding to support the agronomic, crop, and soil sciences. Regular contact with your Representative and both Senators, whether by phone, fax, or email, or via an in-person visit to the Washington, D.C. or district/state offices is a critical step in developing a long-term relationship. Beginning this process is not always easy, so we are here to help. In this booklet, you will find background information and guidance on how to become an effective and respected Constituent Scientist.

Tapping into Our Scientific Expertise

The Science Policy Office taps into the scientific expertise and knowledge of the more than 9,700 members and 13,700 practicing professionals (Certified Crop Advisers, Certified Professional Agronomists, Certified Professional Soil Scientists, and Certified Professional Soil Classifiers) making up the three Societies through ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Core Constituent Scientist Teams (CCST), Rapid Response Teams (RRT), and Science Policy Working Groups (SPWG).



The SPO guides Congressional visits.

Core Constituency Scientist Teams

Core Constituency Scientist Teams (CCST) are developed to increase ASA, CSSA, and SSSA member awareness of and influence on critical, time-sensitive legislation impacting the agronomic, crop, and soil sciences. These CCSTs are organized by congressional district and are composed of a team leader, selected from among our Congressional Visits Day alumni and team members who have agreed to respond to periodic email and phone Action Alerts and contact part of all of their congressional delegation to encourage support for our sciences.



The SPO organizes Congressional educational briefings on hot topics.

Rapid Response Teams

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA each established Rapid Response Teams (RRT), which provide the SPO with the names of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA scientific experts to serve in Science Policy Workgroups, draft comments in response to proposed federal rules (e.g., establishment of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture), identify experts for nomination to federal committees and advisory boards and councils, and provide guidance on national policy, rulemaking, and regulations.



The SPO organizes constituency scientist teams to increase awareness of legislation that impact the agronomic, crop, and soil sciences.

Science Policy Workgroups

The Science Policy Office frequently calls upon ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members' agronomic, crop, and soil science expertise and asks them to participate in Science Policy Workgroups. Workgroups are facilitated by the SPO which schedules and organizes conference calls and interacts closely with Workgroup members to produce a final product, e.g., position papers on hot topics and comments on proposed rules and regulations. Workgroup members also offer their time and expertise to analyze legislation and develop educational briefing materials to be used by ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members when meeting with the administration and Congress.

Science Policy Tools

Congressional Educational Briefings

Constituent scientists participate in Congressional educational briefings covering hot-topic issues identified by congressional staff, e.g., carbon farming, biofortification, and post-wildfire management of soil. For more information on or to view past educational briefings and one-page summary documents, visit the SPO website. (see page 9)

Note: After providing an Educational Briefing for congressional members and their staffs, the SPO and constituent scientists meet with the scientists' congressional delegations and/or their staff. During these meetings, constituent scientists give a short description of what their research does for society via a one page document that presents short points about why, for example, this particular research is important (also known as an educational one-pager).

Congressional Soils Caucus

The Congressional Soils Caucus was established in June, 2006 to educate Congress about the importance of soil and soil science. The Caucus consists of almost fifty members (Representatives) including four Co-chairs—Rep. Jim Costa (D-20th, CA), Rep. Stephanie Herseth-Sandlin (D-At Large, SD), Rep. Tom Latham (R-4th, IA), and Rep. Cynthia Lummis (R-At Large, WY)—from the House Agriculture, Science and Technology, Natural Resources, and other authorizing committees, as well as the Appropriations Subcommittees funding the agronomic, crop and soil sciences. The Soil Science Society of America provides logistical support to operate the Caucus. Learn more at <https://www.soils.org/science-policy/activities/congressional-soils-caucus>.

Congressional Visits Days

Congressional Visits Days (CVD) are two-day events during which agronomic, crop, and soil scientists are brought to Washington, D.C., to raise visibility for our sciences and advocate for funding for federal agencies—USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Department of Energy Office of Science, National Science Foundation, and others supporting the agronomic, crop, and soil sciences. CVDs, coordinated by our societies and coalitions of professional societies and educational institutions, give ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members an opportunity to engage Congress, White House offices, and federal agencies, as well as other scientific professionals in related disciplines.

Action Alerts

An *Action Alert* is an email message sent by the Science Policy Office to ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members asking them to take immediate action and contact all or part of their congressional delegations to build support for our sciences. Constituent scientists may be directed to ask their delegations to support or oppose a particular piece of legislation, or vote in favor of increased funding for one of the science agencies, e.g., National Science Foundation. Depending on congressional activity, approximately two to four *Action Alerts* are sent to ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members each year. The *Action Alert* instructs members on how to take action by contacting a Representative or Senator by phone, email, or fax.

What is the timeframe for action?

Will the legislation be on the House or Senate floor this afternoon or the next day, or is the topic more of a long-term issue? In the policymaking arena, timing is everything. Knowing when and how to act will make your efforts more effective and rewarding.

Lawmakers often vote on a bill in committee (called a markup) or on the floor with only a day's notice. For the purposes of influencing this type of action, an email or call works best. Note: it's important to send the email or make the call to the staff person handling the issue/legislation. Contact the SPO to obtain the appropriate staff member's name and contact

If your communication/issue is not time-sensitive, sending a personal letter is an excellent way to establish or maintain contact with your Representative and/or Senator(s). Being aware of both how Congress works and when/how to communicate with Congress is an essential part of getting your message heard and influencing policymakers!

What to Expect—the “Congressional Response”

Congressional offices receive hundreds of communications each day and may or may not have the resources to respond to every fax, email, or letter they receive. By making your “ask” or request simple, you increase the chances of response. Don't be afraid to follow up as, again, congressional offices are very busy places and sometimes constituents must contact their delegation more than one time. Be persistent and patient.

Are you interested in participating in a Congressional Visits Day?

Please contact the SPO. For more information and sample CVD agendas, please visit the webpage at <https://www.agronomy.org/sciencepolicy/educating/congressional-visits/>.

Science Policy Updates

Science Policy Blog

www.science-policy.blogspot.com

Science Policy Blog entries occur on a monthly basis. They describe Hill events (congressional briefings, hearings, meetings and votes), initiating discussions on policy issues and providing breaking science policy news. Receive an RSS feed from the Science Policy Blog by signing up on the blogsite. We welcome comments on the blog, and suggestions for entries can be sent, via email, to sciencepolicy@sciencesocieties.org.

Science Policy Report

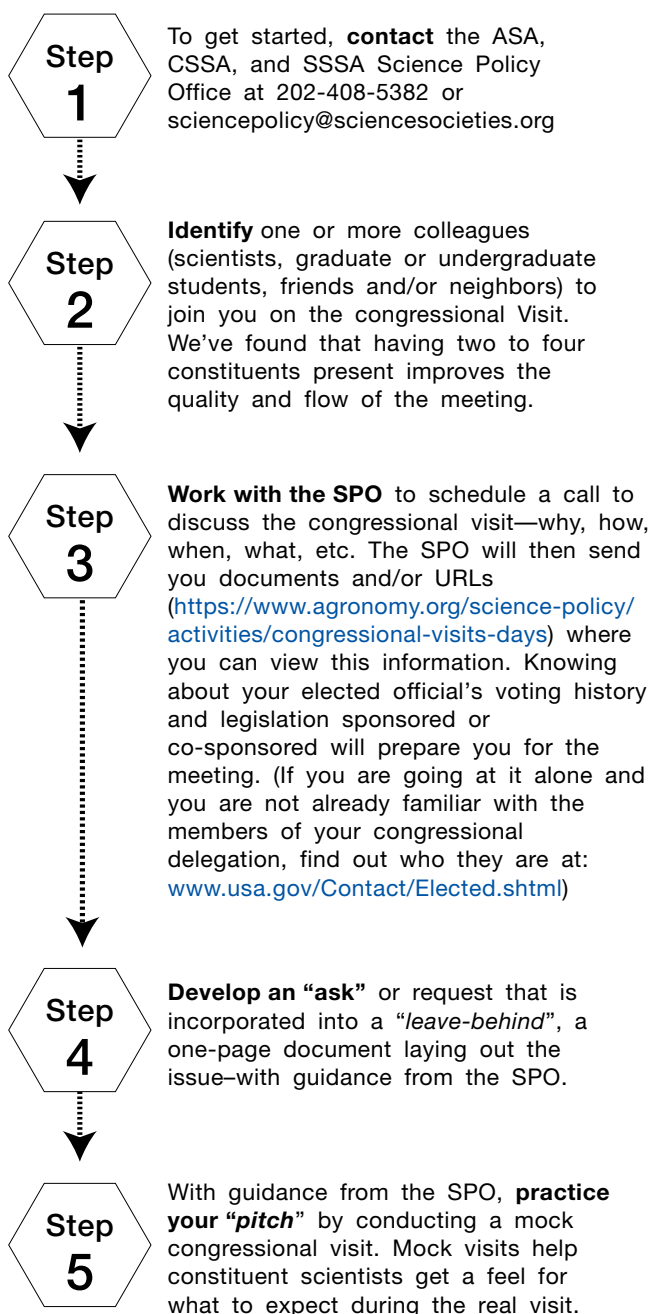
Bi-weekly, the SPO emails the Science Policy Report to all ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members informing them of research, education, extension and conservation funding opportunities, providing the latest news about Congress and the Administration, and advising them of opportunities to serve on federal advisory committees and comment on proposed rules and regulations. The Science Policy Report also lists upcoming meetings and recently released reports and publications relevant to our sciences.

Meeting Your Congressional Members

A face-to-face meeting with your legislators provides you the opportunity to highlight the importance of and build support for your issue or science. The ASA, CSSA, and SSSA SPO organizes opportunities for those members interested in visiting with their congressional delegations, either in groups or as individuals. The SPO will happily assist you in arranging your first or follow-up meeting either in Washington, D.C., or back home in your district/state. Just contact us to get started at sciencepolicy@sciencesocieties.org

How to Prepare for a Congressional Visit

Step by Step



Disclaimer

Federal, State, and University employees are advised to check with their supervisors about any regulations concerning citizen advocacy prior to taking part in the advocacy actions listed in this document. Thank you.



Quick Visit Tips

- ✓ Wear business attire and comfortable shoes.
- ✓ Bring your business cards (do not bring your institution's business cards unless permission is granted from the administration), identification, and an umbrella.
- ✓ Bring your "leave-behind" packet—limit to three pieces of information (leave-behind, background on ASA, CSSA, and/or SSSA, summary or description of your research).
- ✓ If meeting with a legislator (instead of their staff member, which is more common), be on time and patient; their schedules change constantly, so please be patient and flexible.
- ✓ Be prepared for short meetings. You should be able to make an effective "ask" in two minutes, if necessary.
- ✓ On the day of the visit, identify a lead speaker for each congressional meeting
 - Select a note-taker who will write down key points discussed and areas where follow up is indicated.

Developing the “Ask”

Before contacting your congressional delegation, you must have a request, known as an “ask”. Members of Congress and their staff are very busy and appreciate contacts and visits from constituent scientists with a well-defined “ask” on which they can then take action.

Examples of “asks” include: “*Increase funding for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative in FY 2011 by \$200 million,*” and “*Support H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009.*” Often the “ask” is incorporated into a one-page document, known as a “*leave behind*”, which is left with congressional members and staff at the end of the meeting.

A Mock Visit

Performing mock congressional visits, either on the phone with the SPO or with your small group, will help you to feel more comfortable when meeting with your congressperson or their staff. Prepare a script and ask friends or colleagues to stand in for the roles of the congressperson and/or their staff, often a Legislative Assistant.

Sample Script for Mock Hill Visit

Scientists:

Thank you, Congressman Matthews, for meeting with me today.

I am Dr. Anna Cruz, a plant biologist from Purdue University, and with me today are Drs. Steve Brown, Holly Rogers and Kirk Goldstein, also from Purdue University. Collectively, our work focuses on developing drought-resistant varieties of soybeans to help increase yields in areas of the state with limited rainfall.

We are here today representing the Crop Science Society of America (if you have coordinated with the SPO), and first would like to thank you for your history of strong support for science.

We would like to talk about funding for the National Science Foundation, which supports research in plant biology, and ask that you consider a 10% increase in funding for NSF for this fiscal year. As researchers, we depend on NSF funding to support our work. Funded through NSF, our soybean drought studies conducted at Purdue have increased yields in Indiana by more than 20%, which has resulted in millions of dollars in revenues for Indiana farmers. Note: Provide the Congressperson and/or Legislative Assistant (staffer) the opportunity to respond.

Cong. Matthews:

That’s very interesting. Does NSF fund other types of research through Purdue?

Scientists:

Yes, NSF also supports nutrient and carbon cycling research at the University which will lead to yield increases for our major crops, while reducing environmental impacts.

Cong. Matthews:

Well you do know that this year we have a very tight budget and there are lots of competing interests.

Scientists:

Yes, Sir, we understand but for every dollar invested in NSF science, the state gets back more than \$5 in revenue. Also, NSF funding supports education and training of our Purdue undergraduate and graduate students, building the workforce that will be needed to keep American agriculture competitive.

(Giving the “leave-behind” to Cong. Matthews) Here in this one-pager, Congressman, are many examples of innovations developed through NSF-funded research, which have benefited both the economy and workforce of Indiana.

Cong. Matthews:

I wasn’t aware of how important NSF funding was to Purdue and Indiana. I will do my best to support the agency when the appropriations bill which funds NSF is debated and voted upon. Thank you for stopping by.

Scientists:

Thank you, Congressman Matthews, and please don’t hesitate to contact us should you need additional information or have questions.

On the Day of the Visit

Be punctual. Wait outside the office door if you are early.

1. Promptly at the scheduled meeting time, enter the office, telling the congressional member's staff assistant:
 - that you have arrived,
 - with whom you are to meet, and
 - the time of your appointment.
2. When you meet with your legislator or his/her staff member, first thank them for meeting with you.
3. Introduce yourself (who you are, what you do including affiliation, and where you live) while handing them your business card.
4. Introduce the other scientists, who follow suit, providing their business cards as well.
5. Say that you are members of ASA, CSSA, and/or SSSA and are there to represent the Society(ies).
6. State that you are there today to discuss a specific agricultural, natural resource, and/or environmental science funding/issue, e.g., funding for the National Science Foundation, and thank the member/staff for their past support.
7. Give member/staff a copy of your "leave-behind".
 - ✓ Remember, the member/staff wants to know what they can do for you. The staffer is looking for the "ask" to relay back to their boss.
 - ✓ Make sure to relate your "ask" and talking points to your state or district by providing anecdotes.
 - ✓ We recommend that the anecdotes highlight your research and, if possible, link outcomes to potential economic benefits or jobs. (*Note: This is not always easy or even possible to do, which is ok*)
8. Offer to follow up with additional information, particularly on key areas of interest to the member or staffer.
9. Thank member/staff for their time and support.
10. Exit meeting.

After Your Congressional Visit

- After you have visited with your congressperson or staffer, please fill out a "Hill Visit Record" (one per visit) which will be provided to you by the SPO.
- This will help the SPO to update the file on this congressional member in our database as we continue to build a relationship with that office.
- After you return home from your visit, be sure to send a follow-up thank-you letter to the member or email to the staffer with whom you visited. If you have worked with SPO staff to arrange your meeting, we can prepare a draft thank-you note for you. Thank-you notes for legislators should be faxed to members and emailed to staff and:
 - Include relevant points discussed
 - Respond to any informational requests
 - Remind them that you are their resource

Sample Thank You Follow-up Correspondence

Note: When writing a thank-you letter for congressional members, use heading below, write, print, and fax. For staff, just use first name and send as an email

June 23, 2010

The Honorable Anna Cruz
United States House of Representatives/United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515/20510
Fax #: 202-229-8976

Dear Representative/Senator Anna Cruz,

It was a pleasure meeting with you on June 21, 2010. I appreciated the discussion of the importance of federal funding for the Land Grant Universities (LGU). As we discussed, it is imperative that the federal government increase funding for FY 2011 for LGU formula funds-Hatch research and Smith-Lever extension—as further budget cuts will seriously harm the system and ultimately impact the nation’s ability to provide affordable, safe, and abundant food, feed, fiber, and fuel, and compete in an increasingly challenging world marketplace.

Add personal note here, perhaps something relevant to the district brought up during your meeting, etc. (good to do but not mandatory).

Rep./Sen. Cruz, as the FY 2011 spending bills move forward, I urge you to support increased funding for Hatch research and Smith-Lever extension formula funds so that our nation will maintain its capacity to produce adequate and affordable food, feed, fuel, and fiber, without compromising the environment.

Thank you again for your time. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carl Jurgeons

Dr. Carl Jurgeons
123 Main Street
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: 301-231-4488
Email: CJurgeons@gmail.com

Contacting Your Senators and Representatives

There are many options for communicating with your congressional delegation...



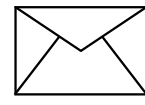
Phone



Email



Fax



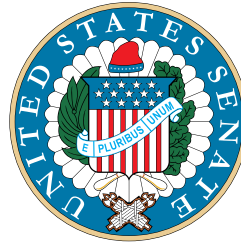
Write



Visit



House of Representatives
www.house.gov
(type zip code in box)



U.S. Senate
www.senate.gov
(find your state)



U.S. Congress
www.Congress.org
(enter your zip code)

Note: These websites will tell you who your Representative and Senators are and link you to their biography, a web contact form, voting record, stance on issues, and other information.

Calling your Congressional Office

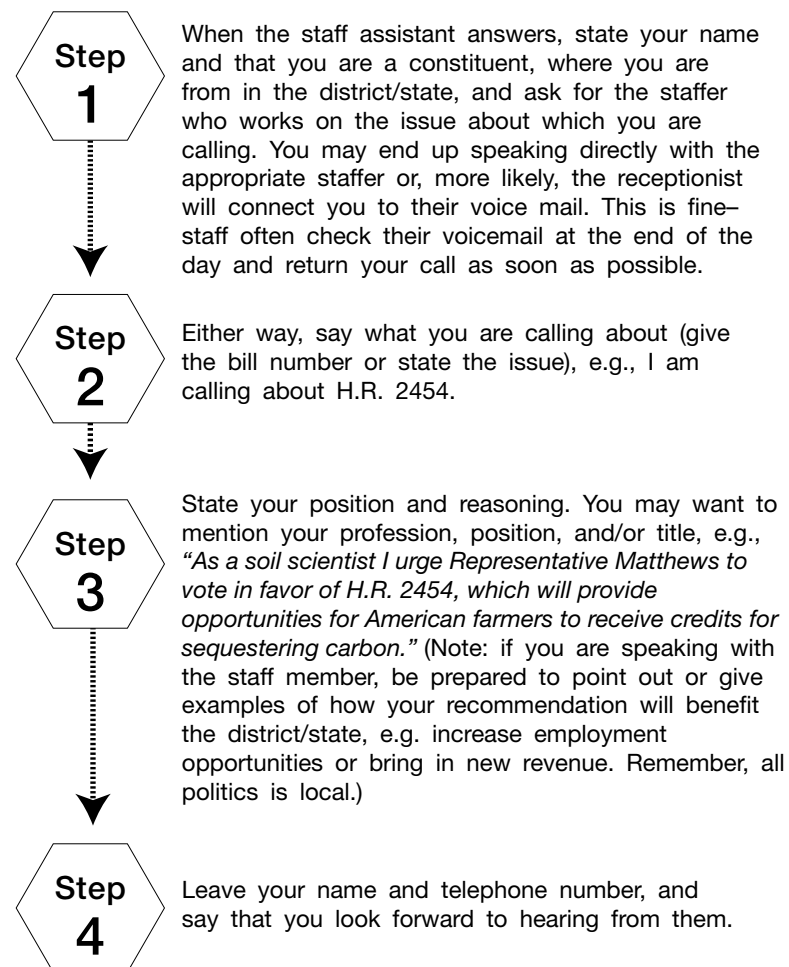
Initially, it might seem intimidating to call your Representative or Senators' offices, but remember that your congressional delegation was elected to serve the constituent's (your) interests whether you voted for them or not.

You may think that others will call to make their views known on popular issues you care about, so you do not have to, but that is not true. You may also feel that lobbyists have more influence. This is untrue.—one constituent can have as much influence on legislation as a whole lobbying outfit. In fact, one call from one constituent at the right time can influence the outcome of a vote on a piece of legislation; the SPO has witnessed this on more than one occasion—really!

Call with confidence and make your voice heard!

Making a Call

Step by Step



Quick Call Tips:

The Science Policy Office Can Help!
The SPO Can:

- ✓ Help you frame your message.
- ✓ Research your congressional delegation.
- ✓ Update you on the status of issues important to you!
- ✓ Provide names and contact information for Congressmen and their staff.
- ✓ Set up a meeting for you in D.C. or back home in the district/state.



Sample Call

Following is an example of a call between a researcher, Tom Woodall, from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and the Science Legislative Assistant, Chelsea Bee, from the office of the corresponding Representative, Tonya Baker (D-2nd WI). A mock call is available here: <https://www.agronomy.org/files/science-policy/activities/congressional-visits-days/calling-your-congressional-office-part-1.mp3>.

Staff Assistant:

Good Morning, Representative Baker's Office.

Tom Woodall:

Hi, this is Dr. Tom Woodall from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. I'd like to speak to the staffer who handles appropriations for the National Science Foundation.

Staff Assistant:

*Hold on please wait while I check if our science Legislative Assistant is available.
(Pause)*

Note: You will be connected directly to the LA, or, if she isn't available, her voicemail.

I'm sorry, Chelsea Bee isn't available right now. May I transfer you to her voice mail?

Tom Woodall:

Sure, thank you.

Staff Assistant:

One moment please. (pause)

Tom Woodall (after prompted by voice mail):

Hello, my name is Tom Woodall and I'm a plant physiologist at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. I'm calling about funding for the National Science Foundation in this year's (FY 2011) appropriations bill. As a scientist, I urge Rep. Baker to support a 10% increase in funding for the National Science Foundation.

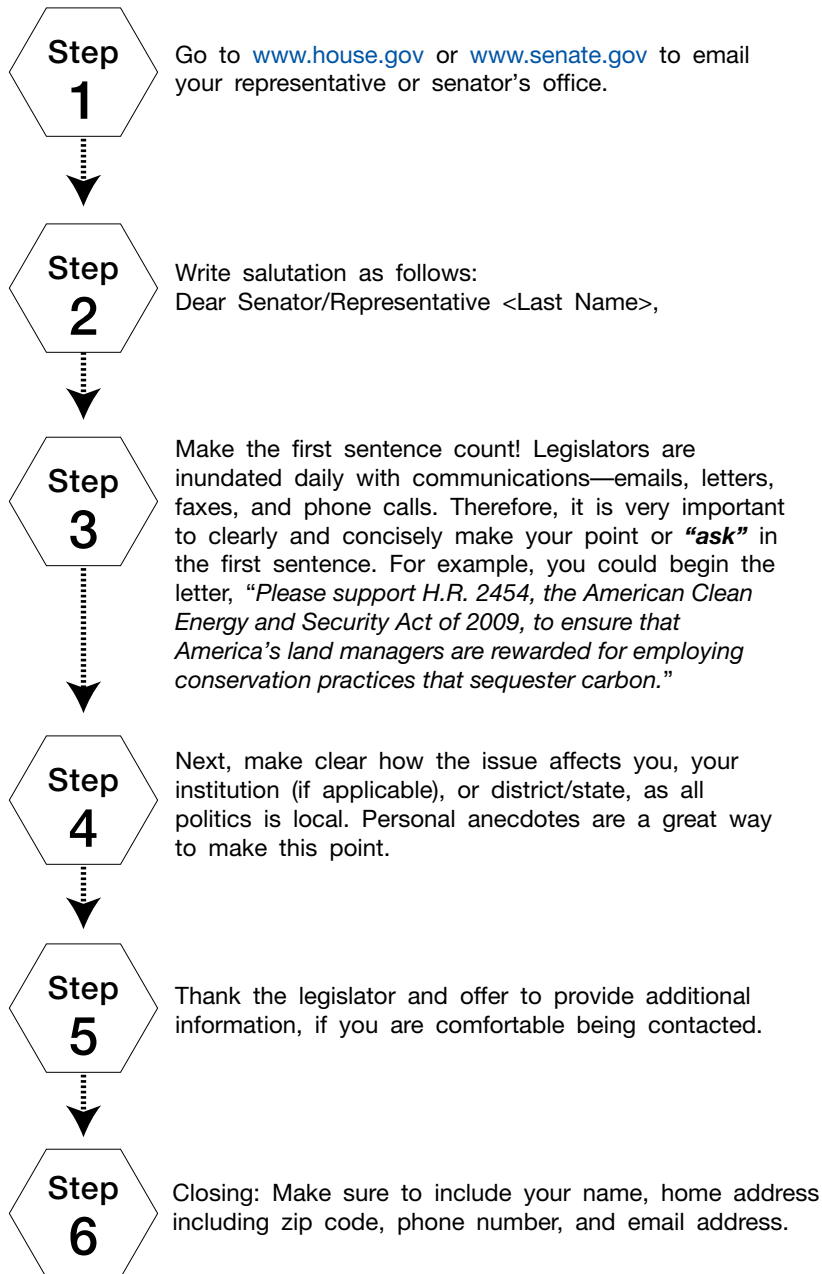
My colleagues and I at the University of Wisconsin are conducting NSF-supported research on cropping systems that will reduce nitrogen pollution while improving agricultural productivity in Wisconsin. Without NSF funding for this valuable research, we will not have the resources we need to provide new solutions to solve nutrient issues on and off the farm. Please let the Congresswoman know that I support a 10% increase in funding for NSF. Thank you for your consideration.

Emailing Your Congressperson

Communicating through email is a great way to connect with your congressional delegation and influence policy. Many legislators request that you fill out an online web contact form available on their websites. While this format may seem a bit cumbersome, it ensures that only constituents get through (the system filters out non-constituents) and that your email is sent directly and immediately to your legislator’s office and routed to the appropriate staff person. *Note: This approach also filters out spam.*

Writing an Email

Step by Step



Quick Email Tips

- ✓ Cover only one issue per email
- ✓ Make point (or “ask”) clearly and concisely in the first sentence.
- ✓ Optimal Length: 100 words, not more than 200.

Note: When emailing a congressional staffer, use a descriptive subject heading and address them as “Mr./Ms. <Last Name>”.

Getting Your Email Noticed

If you are writing about a specific piece of legislation, include the bill number, e.g. S.135 Senate (all Senate bills begin with an “S.”) or H.R. 2215 (House bills start with “H.R.”). If you do not know the bill number, try searching for it on the Library of Congress’ legislative information website: www.thomas.loc.gov; once there, type the name of bill, e.g. “American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009”, into “Search Bill Summary and Status” box. You can also review the legislation that your congressional delegation has introduced by selecting your Representative or Senator in the drop-down menu at the middle of the page.

Sample Email

Dear Senator Shelby:

As a scientist and constituent, I urge you to cosponsor S. Res. 446 recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the Crop Science Society of America. The resolution identifies the Crop Science Society of America as one of the premier scientific societies in the world, evidenced by its world-class journals, international and regional meetings, and development of a broad range of educational opportunities. The Crop Science Society of America 50th Anniversary Resolution serves as an important statement not only for crop science, but also for our nation, as crop science plays an important role in the production of feed, fiber, food, and fuel and helps to identify and develop plants appropriate for use in industrial processes.

Thank you in advance for supporting crop production and crop science.

Sincerely,

Sally Grey

Writing a Letter to Your Congressperson

Despite all of the advances in and acceptance of electronic communications, a personal letter is still the single most powerful method for communicating with your legislators. Members of Congress often say it is very satisfying to receive a personal letter from a constituent. For example, Rep. Tammy Baldwin, a Democrat from the 2nd congressional district of Wisconsin, reads excerpts from her constituents' letters during "One Minute Speeches" made by members on the House floor before legislative business. In summary, sending a letter is an excellent method for building a relationship with your congressional delegation and seeing action taken on issues important to you.

However, when compared to email, phone calls, and faxes, letters are a rather slow method for making contact with your congressional delegation; since the 2001 anthrax attacks on congressional offices, the process has become even slower. Additional mail screening processes have delayed mail delivery, sometimes by as much as six weeks. However, you can speed up the process by mailing handwritten or typed letters to your legislators' district/state offices. These offices do not have the lengthy mail-screening processes of the House and Senate office buildings, so mail should be delivered in less than a week. Additionally, district/state staff will open your mail and send it by fax to the D.C. office.

Note: Any communication with an approaching deadline is best handled with email or phone.

Things to Consider when Sending a Letter to Congress

- Letters may take four to six weeks to arrive; send the letter to the district or state office for faster delivery.
- Do not send photos and glossy pages by mail, as they will be destroyed during the irradiation process.
- Letters are a very effective way to form a personal connection with your congressional delegation, as well as express your opinion on an issue.
- A handwritten letter is an excellent way to say 'thank you' or follow up on previous communications or visits with your legislators.

Getting Your Letter Noticed

If you are writing about a specific piece of legislation, include the bill number, e.g. S.135 (all Senate bills begin with an "S.") or H.R. 2215 (House bills start with "H.R."). If you do not know the bill number, try searching for it on the Library of Congress' legislative information website: <http://thomas.loc.gov>; once there, type name of bill, e.g. "American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009", into "Search Bill Summary and Status" box. You can also review the legislation that your congressional delegation has introduced by selecting your Representative or Senator in the drop-down menu at the middle of the page.

Sending a Fax to Your Congressperson is the same process as writing a letter. Look at the quick tips for some faxing suggestions.

Writing a Letter

Step by Step



In general, don't use letterhead from your university or business (unless you own the business) as this is a personal communication.



Address letter as follows:
Representative: The Honorable First and Last Name
Senator: The Honorable First and Last Name
Salutation: Dear Senator/Representative Last Name



Make the first sentence count! Legislators are inundated daily with communications—emails, letters, faxes and phone calls. Therefore, it is very important to clearly and concisely make your point or “ask” in the first sentence. For example, you could begin the letter, “*Please support H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, to ensure that America’s land managers are rewarded for employing conservation practices that sequester carbon.*”



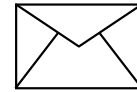
Next, make clear how the issue affects you, your institution (if applicable), or district/state, as all politics is local. Personal anecdotes are a great way to make this point.



Thank the legislator and offer to provide additional information, (if you are comfortable being contacted).



Closing—Make sure to include your name, home address including zip code, phone number, and email address.



Quick Letter Writing Tips

- ✓ Write legibly or type your letter.
- ✓ Keep your letter to one page and cover only one issue per letter.
- ✓ Include your full name, home address with zip code, phone, and email.
- ✓ Congressional offices process a very large volume of correspondence, so don't be shy about following up with another letter or phone call if you don't hear back.



Quick Faxing Tips

- ✓ Use a cover-page when sending your fax.
- ✓ Keep your fax to one page, cover one issue per letter.
- ✓ Include your full name, home address with zip code, phone and fax numbers, and email address.
- ✓ Call the office to make sure they received your fax.
- ✓ Remember, congressional offices receive a huge volume of correspondence and may or may not have the resources to respond to every fax they receive. So, don't be shy about following up with another phone call.
- ✓ Follow up.

Sample Letter

April 23, 2010

The Honorable Sam Dixon
1126 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Dixon,

As a soil scientist and resident of the 17th district of California, I am writing to urge you to join the Congressional Soils Caucus. The Congressional Soil Caucus was established in June of 2006, through the efforts of the Soil Science Society of America, to heighten the awareness of and appreciation for the importance and role of soils and soil science among policymakers and the public. The Caucus also has an important role to play in promoting proper soil management and conservation and ensuring the continued production of high-quality and abundant food, feed, fiber, and fuel, while protecting and enhancing the environment and natural resource base across the nation.

Currently there are 50 Caucus members, including fellow California Representatives Dennis Cardoza (18th), George Radanovich (19th), and Jim Costa (20th). Caucus members are provided educational briefings on timely topics and issue areas such as sustainable bioenergy production, climate change mitigation, food security, and other relevant and timely topics. Caucus members may also propose topics for briefings.

Given your interest in water quality issues associated with the Monterey Bay and membership in the House Oceans Caucus, joining the Congressional Soils Caucus will provide you with additional scientific knowledge on how best to manage and protect this invaluable resource.

In closing, Rep. Dixon, I again urge you to consider joining the Congressional Soils Caucus. Meanwhile, please don't hesitate to contact me should you have questions or require additional information.

Thank you for supporting soil and soil science.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ken Burns

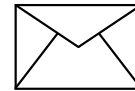
Dr. Ken Burns
1300 Jocelyn Street
Salinas, CA 93901
Phone: (831) 324-2229
Email: KBurns@gmail.com

Engaging the Media

Advocating for our sciences is considered by many scientists an important aspect of their professional responsibilities. One effective approach for promoting our sciences is the writing of an editorial or op-ed published in your local newspaper. Again, this is because all politics is local.

Disclaimer:

Do not contact the media before consulting with the administration of your institution or organization. Many employers, especially universities, have policies on interacting with the media, so it is important to be familiar with these policies. Your institution's Public Information Officer (PIO) is likely to be a key contact, and can help you navigate the steps involved in reaching out to the media. Also, while we encourage you to interact with the media as a citizen and scientist, please remember that unless you are a member of the Executive Board, you are not considered an official spokesperson of the Societies, unless you first discuss your activities with and receive approval from ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Science Communications Director, James Giese (jgiese@sciencesocieties.org).



Letters to the Editor

Use a letter to the editor to respond to or directly rebut an article previously published in the newspaper or magazine.

Op-eds

Op-ed is an abbreviation of 'opposite editorial', because these pieces are typically published on the page opposite the editorial page. While the publication's editorial board publishes editorials, other authors submit op-eds. Op-eds are an appropriate place to express opinions as well as facts. Submitting an op-ed will get your issue into the public view and raise awareness in your community.

Quick Writing a Letter to the Editor Tips

- ✓ Keep the tone friendly and conversational, not defensive or antagonistic.
- ✓ Offer your professional knowledge that is relevant to the topic.
- ✓ Use facts and figures to back up your claims.
- ✓ Letters to the editor should run no more than 200 words.
- ✓ Relating your experience to the local community will help make a letter to the editor more relevant and publishable.



Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I read with interest your editorial, (give title, date, and URL, if applicable) and am writing to express my concern. At first glance, the soil resource may seem a mundane topic to acknowledge with a Senate Resolution. Soil and proper soil management, in fact, is at the root of many challenges we face today, including:

Food Security: No fewer than 30 countries have experienced food riots in recent years because of food scarcity. Further, more than nine million of the world's children will die of starvation or malnutrition this year. Affordable food depends, to a great extent, on healthy soils, managed in a way to maximize production, while protecting the environment.

Climate Change: Research shows that healthy soil stores carbon, effectively reducing man's impact on the atmosphere and offsetting fossil fuel emissions.

Water Quality: Soil serves as a natural filter, keeping hazardous chemicals and biological agents out of our drinking water and helping us to recycle this vital human resource.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "The Nation that destroys its soil destroys itself." That has been the case with many now extinct, yet once thriving civilizations (e.g. Mayan, Indus River Valley, and Mesopotamian). Senate Resolution 440 is important because our present civilization is faced with the same challenge; we must care for our limited soil resources for generations to come. If not, crops will fail and hunger will persist even though we have the technical know-how to support food production.

It is in this context that I express my thanks to the U.S. Senate for passing Senate Resolution 440 in the hope that more attention will be brought to the importance of the soil resource.

Sincerely,

John Brown

John Brown
Basalt, CO

Facts About Congress

U.S. Senate

- Each state has 2 Senators.
 - Senators serve six-year terms on a rotating basis.
 - The Senate has “advice and consent” powers, which includes approving treaties, cabinet members, ambassadors, Supreme Court justices and federal judges, and military officers, and also elects the Vice President in the event of an Electoral College deadlock.
 - The Senate also is responsible for trying impeachment hearings.
 - The Senate is composed of 19 standing committees, along with their respective subcommittees, and many authorizing committees.
 - The Vice President is ex officio President of the Senate.
 - The Senate elects a President pro tempore (“pro temp”) to serve in place of the President ex officio, usually the most senior member of the majority party.
 - The President pro temp is 3rd in line for presidential succession.
 - Each party elects a party leader, known as the Senate Majority Leader and the Senate Minority Leader.
 - The Senate Majority Leader controls the agenda by scheduling debates, hearings, and votes.
 - Each party also elects assistants to the Majority and Minority Leaders, known as the Majority and Minority Whips, who are responsible for securing the votes of their respective parties
- Senators were originally elected by State Legislatures, but the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides for direct election.

U.S. House of Representatives

- Each congressional district has one Representative.
- There are 435 congressional districts.
- American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are represented by delegates who may only vote in committee or on procedural matters.
- Representatives and Delegates serve 2-year terms.
- Puerto Rico is represented by a Resident Commissioner, who serves for four years. The Commissioner is not allowed to vote on the Floor.
- The Speaker of the House is elected by a simple majority and is 2nd in line for President under the Presidential Succession Act.
- As in the Senate, each party elects a leader, the House Majority and Minority Leaders, as well as Majority and Minority Whips.
- The House has the power to initiate revenue bills, appropriations bills, and elect the President in the case of Electoral College deadlock.
- The House also has the power to impeach federal officials.
- Congressional districts may be re-drawn and reapportioned every 10 years, following the Census. Please visit <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/findyourreps.xpd> for more information.
- The House is composed of 20 standing committees, along with their respective subcommittees, and many authorizing committees. There are also several joint House-Senate committees.

Your congressional delegation includes your two U.S. Senators (in the Senate) and one Representative (in the House of Representatives). Regardless of political affiliation, your congressional delegation is interested in your concerns as a voting constituent!



Resources

Legislative resources

- White House (www.whitehouse.gov)
- U.S. House of Representatives (www.house.gov)
- House Committees (www.house.gov/house/CommitteeWWW.shtml)
- Find Your Representative (<https://forms.house.gov/wyr/welcome.shtml>)
- U.S. Senate (www.senate.gov)
- Senate Committees
(www.senate.gov/pagelayout/committees/d_three_sections_with_teasers/committees_home.htm)
- Find Your Senator (www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)
- Legislation (<http://thomas.loc.gov/>)

Scientific Organizations

- American Association for the Advancement of Science (www.aaas.org)
- Research America (www.researchamerica.org)
- National Academy of Sciences (www.nasonline.org)
- International Food Policy Research Institute (www.ifpri.org)

Government agencies

- U.S. Department of Agriculture (www.usda.gov)
- National Science Foundation (www.nsf.gov)
- U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science (www.sc.doe.gov)
- U.S. Geological Survey (www.usgs.gov)
- U.S. Forest Service (www.fs.fed.us)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (www.noaa.gov)
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (www.nasa.gov)

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Science Policy Office

- Science Policy Office (www.soils.org/sciencepolicy)
- Coalitions (www.agronomy.org/science-policy/about-us/coalitions)
- Congressional Soils Caucus (CSC) (www.soils.org/sciencepolicy/caucus)
- CSC Members and Co-chairs (www.soils.org/science-policy/activities/congressional-soils-caucus and <https://www.soils.org/sciencepolicy/caucus/files/members.pdf>)
- CSC Briefings (www.soils.org/science-policy/activities/educational-briefings)
- Tools for Communicating with Congress (www.soils.org/sciencepolicy/tools)
- Congressional Visits (CVD) Day
(www.agronomy.org/science-policy/activities/congressional-visits-days)
- Historical resources/activities (www.agronomy.org/science-policy/activities)
- Videos/Podcasts
- Testimony (www.agronomy.org/science-policy/testimony)
- Blog (www.science-policy.blogspot.com)
- Science Policy Report (www.agronomy.org/science-policy/sspr)

The Budgetary Process:

- Understanding the Federal Budget (www.newyorkfed.org/education/addpub/budg4.pdf)
- The Budget timeline (www.cra.org/govaffairs/budget/process.html)

Glossary of Terms

Note: For the Congressional Glossary of Terms please visit:

http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/b_three_sections_with_teasers/glossary.htm

For the Glossary of Budgetary terms please visit <http://www.cbo.gov/budget/glossary.shtml>

- One-pager:** A one-pager is a succinct, to-the-point document providing background on a particular issue, e.g., carbon sequestration; it does not go into great detail. It takes little time to read and process because the layout assures quick understanding without much investigating.
- “Ask”:** A specific legislative request, e.g., *“Please fund NSF at \$8.5 billion in FY 2012.”*
- Action Alerts:** These are periodic email messages from Science Policy staff to ASA, CSSA, and SSSA members. When a vote on a relevant bill is imminent, action alerts let members know to contact their congressional delegation quickly to advocate for favorable legislation or a specific position.
- Congressional Delegation:** The Representative from your congressional district and your two Senators.
- Appropriation:** The allocation of funding to legislation and the federal agencies.
- “Leave-behind”:** A one-page (usually) document which includes background information on a particular issue, e.g., nutrient management, and a specific “ask”, e.g., *“Please pass legislation making nutrient management planning mandatory.”*
- CCST:** A Core Constituent Scientist Team (CCST) is composed of a Congressional Visits Day (CVD) alumnus and two or more fellow scientists/graduate/undergraduate students, who, when contacted, take immediate action and contact their congressional delegation with a specific message.