

## Effective Letter Writing Techniques

1. **Include the Bill Number, Title, and Your Position in the Subject Line.** Never bury the bill number and the action you want the legislator to take in the body of the letter.
2. **One Bill per Letter.** Legislators file letters according to the bill number.
3. **State the Facts.** Describe the impact the bill would have on your city. Use “real world” facts; legislators like to know how a bill would specifically affect cities in their districts. The League often provides a sample letter that includes space to describe local impacts. Take the time to provide such examples. This part of the letter is the most valuable to the legislator.
4. **Think About the Message.** Letters may be targeted to specific legislators or entire committees. Think about who you want to act on the bill and message accordingly. If you are writing in support of transportation funding, emphasizing how the project will reduce greenhouse gases might be important to one legislator, while highlighting how the project could encourage additional development and jobs might be important to another. Both messages are correct, but your effectiveness will be in selecting the right message.
5. **Check for Amendments.** Always check the League’s website ([www.cacities.org/billsearch](http://www.cacities.org/billsearch)) to make sure you are addressing issues in the latest draft. Bills are often significantly amended and the issue you are writing about may have changed or have been deleted altogether by the time you send your letter.
6. **Send follow-up letters to the appropriate legislative committees as a bill moves along.** You can often use your original letter with some modifications. Visit [www.cacities.org/billsearch](http://www.cacities.org/billsearch) to track the bill’s location. In addition, *CA Cities Advocate*, the League’s online newsletter, features stories on key legislation.
7. **Provide a Contact.** At the close of the letter, provide a contact person in case there are questions about the city’s position.
8. **Know the Committees on Which Your Legislator Serves.** A legislator is likely to pay more attention to the bill positions of their constituents especially when it comes before his or her committee. At the committee level, this is even more important because your legislator has greater ability at this point in the legislative process to have the bill amended.
9. **Copy the Right People.** Send a copy of the letter to your senator, assembly member and the League. Please also send a copy to each committee member and staff if applicable.