

Tips for Contacting your Mayor

The **first** thing to do is to determine whether your mayor has signed on to the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement. If s/he has not, your project will be to lobby him/her to sign it. Check www.seattle.gov/mayor/climate/quotes.htm to see if your mayor has signed onto the Mayors' Agreement. (As of February 26, 2006, five Minnesota mayors have signed on: Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, Eden Prairie, and Apple Valley.)

Second, set up a meeting with your mayor or a member of his/her staff. See the box below that describes the process.

Third, review the talking points (enclosed). Take them with you when you go to visit your mayor. Be sure you know what you want to say ahead of time, but be flexible based on the amount of time you have for your meeting. Also enclosed is both an info sheet on the Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement and the actual Agreement for you to leave with your mayor.

Finally, follow up by writing a thank you letter to your mayor. If your mayor has agreed to sign on, praise him or her for that. If s/he has not and will not, simply talk about why it is important for your city to participate. Send a copy of the letter to your local newspaper and to CGS-MN: 5492 Bald Eagle Blvd. E., White Bear Lake, MN 55110.

Scheduling a Visit with your Mayor

Setting Up Your Lobby Meeting

Look up the phone number for your mayor's office in the phone book or online. Tell the scheduler that you would like to meet with the mayor to discuss the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement. Be flexible with your time to increase your chances of meeting with the mayor her/himself. If that is impossible, meet with the director of city's environment department. The mayor's Press Secretary, Constituent Correspondent, or another high-ranking person in the environment department would also be acceptable.

Before the Meeting

Fax a copy of the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement (enclosed) to the person you are scheduled to meet. This way the person you meet with will already know what you intend to talk about and can be prepared with questions for you. This will ensure your meeting is focused and productive. It will also give a professional impression.

If you are going with a group, draft an agenda for your meeting that gives everyone a chance to speak. If your group is bigger than five people, let everyone introduce him/herself but choose a few representatives to speak.

Be clear and specific about what you are asking for. Make sure you explicitly ask your mayor to sign on to the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement.

During the Meeting

Be accurate. Tell the truth. If you aren't sure about a specific fact or can't answer a particular question make a note of it. You can contact Lisa Ledwidge or the Citizens for Global Solutions office for clarification, then call your mayor back and answer the question. This builds your credibility as a reliable source of information.

Be brief. Keep your meeting focused. Present your case, answer questions, make your request for action, set a date with the member/staffer for when you can follow up to find out their position on your issue, and politely depart. Set up a time/date to follow up with your mayor about your visit.

Be courteous. Treat the staff well and work to build a positive relationship with them.

After the Meeting

Did everything go according to plan? Talk with your group to discuss the outcomes of your visit. What worked? What didn't? What new information do you have on your mayor's positions?

Send a thank you letter. Be appreciative of the mayor's time and attention to your issue. Remind him/her of the date and time you set to follow-up on your visit. Follow up until you have a firm response to the request you made during your lobby visit.

Contact Lisa Ledwidge (612-804-6522 or Lisa.L@mindspring.com) so that CGS-MN can track progress toward our shared goal of signing up more Minnesota mayors to the climate agreement.

Questions? Contact Lisa Ledwidge, CGS-MN volunteer: 612-804-6522, Lisa.L@mindspring.com

These tips were adapted from Citizens for Global Solutions Partners Toolkit for November/December 2005.