



HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR TOURISM EFFECTIVELY

Advocacy is not always a formal and daunting process; it's an ongoing series of communication and relationship building. Alaskans' voices are critical in shaping policies that support and grow this vital industry. Let's explore how to effectively engage with lawmakers in a way that's effective and manageable (and not scary!).

UNDERSTAND THE POWER OF ADVOCACY

Advocacy is about more than just speaking up; it's about making a real, tangible impact. Your insights and experiences can help legislators make informed decisions that benefit our communities. Remember, you are an expert and influencer in your field.

IT STARTS AND ENDS WITH RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the core of any productive exchange between people. This is true when engaging in advocacy, and especially true in Alaska, where our elected and community leaders are often neighbors, colleagues, and friends. We enjoy access to leaders other states only dream about.

START LOCAL

Connect with your local city or borough assembly or council members. These relationships are often more accessible and can be incredibly helpful. Plus, it is common in Alaska for members of a local elected body to move on to higher elected office, like the legislature, governor's office, etc.

USE ALL THE TOOLS IN YOUR TOOLKIT



Keep legislators informed about industry developments, challenges, and successes. Regular newsletters, brief emails, and relevant social media posts can keep the conversation going.



Invite legislators to tour your tourism facilities. This hands-on experience provides them with a real sense of the industry's impact.



Arrange coffee or lunch meetings to discuss industry issues in a relaxed setting.



Conversations should not stop when elected bodies are not in session; staying in touch year-round is key to staying top-of-mind.

SESSION

Visit Juneau and testify on specific bills.

Talk to your legislators. Make note of key deadlines.

INTERIM

Request legislative updates from your local representatives.

Share your ideas with legislators as they identify priorities for next session and their campaigns.

Invite legislators to your budget meetings.

Set up meetings and tours to talk about your organization's needs, challenges, and successes.

Develop your organization's agenda for the next session. Share it with lawmakers, stakeholders, and the media.

Make a plan for keeping in touch with legislators during the session.



COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Share Data and Trends

Provide legislators with data on tourism's economic impact, employment figures, and future trends. This information is invaluable for informed policymaking.

Personal Stories

Share personal stories and testimonials from local employees and visitors. These narratives put a human face to the data.

Solutions-Oriented Approach

When discussing challenges, always propose potential solutions or strategies. Don't just complain and ALWAYS be polite.

BE A RELIABLE RESOURCE

Create Memorable, Helpful Handouts

Develop easy-to-understand informational packets that legislators and their staff can refer to, including key facts and figures about the industry.

Update on Legislative Impact

Inform legislators about how specific policies have positively or negatively impacted tourism. Be honest and forthright without exaggerating.

DO

- Reach out. Most elected leaders want to hear from constituents.
- Use a variety of advocacy tools and keep a communication schedule: emails, letters, calls, visits. See and be seen.
- Understand the hard truth: Your political activism on other subjects may impact perceptions of you.
- Be cognizant of how your public comments (like on social media) may be perceived.
- Try to find common ground. If you disagree on most subjects, find one you align on and do something visible to support it.

DON'T

- Be rude or argumentative. This gets you nowhere.
- Assume you are "done" communicating. Advocacy involves constant conversation.
- Avoid talking to leaders who oppose your position. Talk to everyone.
- Assume "someone else will do it" when action alerts go out. Participate and rally others to do the same.
- Think you can't make an impact. You absolutely can.
- Wait until it's too late to speak up. Get involved early in the process.

WHAT PEOPLE THINK ADVOCACY LOOKS LIKE



WHAT IT ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE



HAVE QUESTIONS? | We're here to help. Visit us at alaskatia.org.

