

Tips for Meeting with Members of Congress

While you may have already contacted your Congressional representatives by phone, fax or email, a face-to-face meeting can be the most persuasive means for gaining their support of the Pickens Plan. We urge you to coordinate with your fellow [District Group](#) members to conduct a joint meeting with your U.S. Senators, U.S. Representative or senior Congressional staffers.

Following are tips for conducting an effective meeting.

Step 1: Getting Started

- Contact all New Energy Army members in your district to get them involved.
- Find a place/time for a preparation meeting.
- Find out where your senator/representative stands on energy issues.

Step 2: Schedule Meeting with Congressional Representative

- Call district office
- Describe purpose of meeting and ask to schedule time with your Member of Congress at the district office
- If in-person meeting is not possible:
 - Request a conference call with the Member of Congress, or
 - Meet with district director or relevant staffer
- Let your Pickens Plan Regional Leader know about the meeting in case he/she can add insights.

Step 3: Conduct Preparation Meeting

- Develop key messages you want to convey about why aspects of the Pickens Plan are important to your state/district.
 - What is your core message?
 - What specifically are you asking for? (will depend on your rep's stand on energy issues)
 - Anticipate objections and your response.
- Assign roles for members of your group.
 - **Meeting Leader** – handles introductions, meeting purpose and close
 - **Storyteller** – conveys a compelling story as to how energy independence (or lack of) affects him/her personally
 - **The Asker** – drives home what action you want taken
 - **Meeting Recorder** – takes notes about key points for follow-up action
- Develop a clear agenda and timing (to be sure you cover your key messages in the time allotted)
 - Introductions
 - Meeting purpose
 - Compelling story (3 minutes or less)

- The “Ask”, e.g., sign the Pickens Pledge, vote for energy legislation, encourage colleagues to vote for energy legislation
- Discussion: objections and responses
- Confirm any necessary follow-up steps
- Thank you
- Conduct a mock meeting
 - One team member plays the elected official/staff member role; all others practice their parts in the meeting
 - Discuss what went well and what could be improved

Step 4: Conduct Meeting with Elected Official(s) and/or Staffers

- Meet at a designated location near the Congressional office so you can go as a group
- Be on time
- Keep focused on your agenda and message
 - Don't let others get sidetracked
 - Clearly articulate the problem, solution and action to be taken
 - Be compelling
- Allow time to listen to reactions
- Be polite, but prepared to address opposition
- Seek specific answers
- Clarify follow-up steps (if any)
- Wrap up before your allotted time ends
- Thank the Member of Congress and/or staffer

Step 5: Follow up

- Send thank you note confirming actions agreed to in the meeting.
- Let your regional leader know about the outcome of the meeting.