

IMPACT CLIMATE POLICY



STEP UP, SPEAK OUT

A Business Advocacy Guide for Climate Action



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Step Up, Speak Out, Impact Climate Policy

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Businesses play critical and positive roles in our society and must step up to address one of the most significant challenges we face: climate change. Economists and leading scientists worldwide, including the [International Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) and [U.S. National Climate Assessment](#), have issued recent reports demonstrating that immediate action is needed. Increasingly, understanding the impact of climate on their operations, more and more businesses are taking action to move towards greater efficiencies, including use of renewable energy sources. But there's more to be done: we need legislators to enact solid climate policy. Business leaders can and must be a part of this effort.

You know you have the inalienable right to petition your government. And you know the stakes have never been higher.

Policymakers of all political views and at all levels listen to business leaders.

We need businesses to speak up and take action on climate policy that addresses the necessary scale and time frame.

“Policies may take years to have an effect, so these efforts must be made soon. It’s time for companies to use their substantial political influence to proactively support laws that make high-carbon products and choices more expensive, mobilize capital toward a clean economy, support systems change, and help deal with adaptation and the human costs of shifts to clean technology.”

[Andrew Winston, Harvard Business Review](#)

Policymakers respect your leadership skills: your risk-taking, problem-solving, job-creating abilities, and the economic impact of business. You have the credible expertise and influence to explain what responsible businesses want and need based on your firsthand experience and values.

Now is a critical time to be heard: use your powerful business voice to advocate for climate policy and action.

We have compiled this how-to guide to provide you with tips and resources to support your efforts, including a comprehensive list of Planning Resources with links and contact information found at the close of this guide. We are here to work with you. Contact us.

Thank you.

ASBC and BCL



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Part I: Use your corporate voice for Climate Action

Amplify your influence. Follow these actions for effective, impactful advocacy

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS with your Members of Congress

Invite legislators to meet in DC, in their district offices or virtually. If you can't arrange an in-person meeting, call, send letters or emails alerting them to your interests and concerns. Share your company's personal story of why climate action is important. Ask them directly to introduce, co-sponsor or to vote for specific legislation (see the [Climate Playbook](#) for a list of current bills).

For details on how to execute an effective meeting, see Part II: Lobby Your Elected Officials.

NETWORK with others to engage your Members of Congress

- Team up with business advocates: [Citizens Climate Lobby/BCL](#) to hold in-district meetings with members of Congress; [ASBC for Capital Hill Visits and Lobby Day](#); and [CERES LEAD](#) on carbon pricing.
- Encourage your employees to call, email or go visit their Representatives. Provide them with these easy ways to [call](#) or to [email](#) their representatives.

ENDORSE: Publicly support specific climate legislation

Join hundreds of companies, organizations and key influencers by signing these endorsements: [Let's Put a Price on Carbon](#), the [States Carbon Price Coalition](#) [The Energy Innovation Act](#), [Joint Business Statement Supporting Global Climate Strike](#), [Businesses for the Green New Deal](#).

WRITE (or co-author with us) newspaper or magazine OpEds

Express your climate position and actions you have taken. Especially in communities where your employees live and work. [[Industry Can Lead On Climate Change](#) (NYT)]

EDUCATE your company and business networks

- **Your employees:** host “brown-bag lunch” presentations and invite us or other leading advocates as guest speakers; write articles in employee newsletters; feature guest blog posts on your company website; send email action-alerts to all employees
- **Your trade associations:** invite us or other speakers to a conference or to table at a trade show; host a [webinar](#) on your industry. Work with your peer companies to study how a carbon tax will affect your sector (for example, regarding its impact on the Information Technology industry, read an [analysis](#) by the Silicon Valley Leadership Group or [concerns](#) as identified by the National Association of Realtors)
- **Your industry colleagues:** talk to them or help us grow the movement by introducing us to others who might be interested and encouraging them to speak up!
- **Your Chambers of Commerce:** speak on behalf of climate action or bring us as a guest speaker; write an article or blog post; sponsor a resolution to support climate legislation and lobby other members. Join your Chambers and show up regularly to their events
- **Your supply/value chain companies & partners:** introduce us or invite them to join you in meeting with Representatives

- **Your customers:** engage them through company communications, e.g., website, advertising, newsletters, social media and highlight climate action
- **Your local and state government representatives:** an email or phone call from the company leaders and employees

INFLUENCE your Trade Associations to align with effective climate policy

Ensure that the trade groups you support are actively engaging with legislators to pursue effective climate policy. If they are not take your money and membership elsewhere.

EMPOWER government relations staff to push for climate policy

Make sure climate is a top priority, has senior level support and allocate financial and other resources to support this effort.

FIND your expert validators and influencers

Research the reputable think-tanks, academics and independent experts in your area that support climate solutions. Cite them to reassure policymakers and gain further support. Find out who your legislator's *Influencers* are and engage them as well.

ATTEND town halls and other public events in your home district

Show up at such meetings and make your voice heard. Let your elected officials know your concerns and ask them to respond to your request for climate action.

HOST a Business Roundtable on climate solutions

Invite policymakers to your business to let them see what you do and who you work with. The positive impact your company makes can be eye-opening. Your company's customers, vendors, and employees may be their constituents, too.

PARTICIPATE in a video endorsement

Highlight your business as part of our series, *Business Leaders Make the Case for Carbon Pricing*, that profiles business leaders and their sectors. Watch these features on [Real Estate](#) and [Brewing](#).

Part II: Lobby your elected officials

As a business leader, your voice is uniquely valuable to lawmakers in your community, your state, and on Capitol Hill. Your voice can cut across party lines. Elected officials rely heavily on input from business leaders as influential community members.

Before you make contact...

- Determine what your “Ask” is. What do you want the official to do? Support specific climate legislation (see [Climate Playbook](#) of bills)? Introduce new legislation? Show bipartisan support to make climate a ‘bridge’ issue?
- Who are the most appropriate officeholders to target for that ask? Make a short list of policymakers who are involved with or who are voting on your issue, then decide. Talk to ASBC or BCL about the Members of Congress who are key to passing climate legislation.
- Talk with those Members of Congress in your sphere of influence that have not committed to action on climate--this is particularly useful and important.
- Partner with an NGO, industry group or pull together a coalition of similarly minded companies to present your climate views and solutions to policymakers.
- Do your homework by researching how a targeted elected official has voted previously on this or similar issues. It’s a better conversation when you are well versed on the legislators’ work.
- In your research, identify work by the legislators that you can appreciate.

Request the meeting...

- Phone your target office to explain what you would like to discuss with your policymaker or official. Send an email with the same information. Congressional offices and others often have online forms to schedule meetings, too.
- If you are a constituent (eligible to vote for the official), say so. And say you’d like to vote for the official in his/her next election.
- Always identify yourself as a business leader and include your title, firm name, and headquarters location.
- Prepare a list of the people you plan to bring with you to the meeting (the official’s security will want this).
- Understand that schedule constraints may have you meeting with the official’s staff, and that any meeting will be brief – usually under 30 minutes.
- Prepare a one-page, well laid out document to leave with your legislators that repeats your ‘ask’ and outlines your points, as discussed.

At the meeting...

- Thank the elected official and staff for their service. Express your appreciation for their time.
- Explain your position on climate, which might include:
 - We accept climate science and the imperative for action;
 - We see these business threats and opportunities from the climate crisis;
 - We are taking the following actions to address climate issues;
 - We expect Congress to take the following action on climate, including supporting specific legislation like carbon pricing (see the [Climate Playbook](#)).

- Help the lawmaker or staff member understand the issue and why it matters to you, your business, and to others in your network to emphasize the number of constituents potentially affected.
- Offer business cost data that show how the lawmaker's action/inaction would help/hurt your business.

At the meeting's conclusion...

- Thank the official and staff for their time, then set a follow-up date for them to get back to you on your "ask."
- Have your photo taken with the official and/or staff, and give them your leave-behind fact sheet and "ask".

After the meeting...

- Send a thank-you note and post a photo from the meeting on your company's social media.
- Email the photo with a short news release to your local and/or industry media.
- If you do not hear from the official by the planned follow-up date, contact his/her office politely until you have received a response.

[Watch a webinar on this topic](#)

Part III: Craft your message & cultivate the media

The climate crisis needs thoughtful, solution-oriented coverage in the media. Draw positive attention to your business and reach key customers, citizens and policymakers by optimizing your message through media.

Newsflash: Responsible business works in the public interest.

Too often, the news narrative suggests business and the public are on opposite sides. Your business is proof that's not true. For mission-driven, green, and value-based businesses, public policies that are good for business are usually also good for our country.

Because of how you operate, media may be interested in public positions you take on legislation or regulation. Beyond your usual news releases or your annual charitable donations and special events, how you manage to do well and do good and what you think is a good or bad piece of legislation are stories with built-in interest. The challenge is to provide fast-moving and overworked media with what they need, when they need it.

Prepare for your media opportunity.

Breaking through the info-clutter to capture media attention is a big challenge. Being prepared and doing your homework is important. Meanwhile, with the rise of special-interest blogs, magazines, podcasts, and other niche publications that often have large and/

or highly engaged audiences, your options for getting featured can expand greatly if you learn to pay close attention to what kind of stories an outlet usually publishes.

- **Collect your thoughts and assets.** If you have a strong view on climate issues such as carbon pricing, clean water, clean energy, or climate justice that directly affects your business, don't wait until the next piece of legislation comes up. Write down a brief message explaining your views now. Even better: Think about personal anecdotes or examples that show how you came to your point of view or why it's important. Gather data to support your point, from within your business or from third-party sources. Make sure you have high-resolution photos of yourself and your business readily available. Having these resources handy can help your pitch to make your ideas stand out.
- **Choose the right journalist(s) to contact.** Research the media outlets where you want to appear and which journalists cover stories on government policies, climate change, and business. Pay attention to bylines over time to get a sense of what a journalist's beat or specialty is.
- **Start locally.** Get comfortable pitching and being interviewed by local newspapers, TV stations and other news outlets before you connect with national source. Your story already has a 'why should I care' connection in a local context that's harder to create in a national one.
- **Give media a reason to notice right now.** For example, in the event of extreme weather share how it's disrupting supply chains or how sea level rise could affect your industry? How is your business planning and taking action so that what's happening elsewhere is less likely to happen where you are? Holidays and anniversaries can be useful time hooks. Pitch those stories farther in advance than ones related to breaking news: a good rule of thumb is 3 to 5X the publication frequency (3 to 5 months ahead for monthlies; 3 to 5 weeks ahead for weeklies).
- **Find the decision-makers.** Look on the media's website for editors, writers, correspondents, reporters, producers, and bookers. The goal is to find someone who can present your idea at editorial meetings where decisions are made. Learn where and when these decisions are made and identify the team best matched for your story.
- **Make contact.** Introduce yourself and ask if the person is interested in your perspective on an issue. If they have time, make an initial verbal pitch and try for an in-person meeting. If they're on deadline and not able to talk, set a time to call back.
- **Tailor your pitch to the medias needs.** Depending on the outlet, your ideas likely have an edge because your triple-bottom-line business is out of the ordinary. An upcoming or recent government decision, a noted public health concern or environmental problem may offer an opportunity to state the business case for a sustainable approach. Pay attention to whether the outlet has recurring features or segments where your voice might be a good fit.
- **Change medias expectations.** To change how the media views the story, offer a narrative about stewardship vs. shortsightedness, the value of climate mitigation now versus the costs of business-as-usual, etc. Your idea will stand out when your opinion is different from the usual business view and your reasoning is different from that of typical cause and charity groups. Give reporters a story to help them cover the issue in a fresh way, and you'll be bringing sustainable thinking to the fore.

- **Find a good fit for your story.**

If your story on regenerative agriculture doesn't find a home in the business section, try the lifestyles or family section. If your story on clean water doesn't connect with the business section, try the travel, recreation, or health sections. Even great ideas have a lot of competition; if your idea is not chosen, you will still have strengthened your position as a useful media source for future stories.

- **Write op-eds, guest columns, and guest blogs.**

Beyond being a source for media interviews, you may want to write pieces for publication. Research publications and other outlets where you'd like to be published to understand their requirements. Identify writers' guidelines on their websites, or call to request them. Research your chosen topic to relate your experience as a sustainable business owner to larger related issues.

[Watch a webinar on this topic](#)

Part IV: Share your views on social media

Use social media to **amplify your views** and influence.

With social media you can...

- **Attract people** who like your views and will join your email list or follow you on social media for more information about your mission or to try your products.
- **Reinforce existing customers loyalty** to you as a high-road business and prime them for your valuable promotions.
- **Build relationships** with fellow business leaders who are potential vendors, your networking allies, leads, sources; and with your customers.
- **Focus on attracting policymakers and nonprofits** who share your view and value your involvement.
- **Tie in with live events** of all kinds: trade shows and conferences, community celebrations, public demonstrations, and more.

Getting started...

Develop a strategy. Who is your intended audience? What goals would your content accomplish with them?

Strengthen your core. Establish your basic identity to be used across all media channels to ensure a consistent image and core message. Make sure your vision and values underlie all news and opinions you post over time.

Choose fewer outlets and greater frequency. Decide how often you can realistically commit to posting on social media, and stick to a schedule. Use an editorial calendar and scheduling tools such as Facebook Publisher and Hootsuite to plan ahead and automate posts. Choose a few social media outlets to engage on; then post frequently, consistently, and at the highest quality level you can manage.

Keep a consistent “voice.” Your company has a voice, a personality, (e.g., authoritative, scientific, professorial, thoughtful, enthusiastic, collegial, friendly, confiding, etc.). Use consistent language across all media, from long-form blogs to a 140-character tweets, that fits your company’s style, appeals to your audience, and builds a sense of community.

Don't exploit a crisis. Even if your product or service ties in, don't try to co-opt a serious event for business purposes. If you post anything after a weather disaster, violent incident, or other all-too-common crisis, keep it strictly, simply sympathetic.

Think mobile first. Most people now use their phones as their primary social media device; size your images appropriately and make sure your post appears correctly on smartphones.

Learn from your results. Track responses to your posts. When you have a number of data points, you can analyze what kinds of posts your followers best respond to.

Write enticing Facebook posts. Your Facebook posts should be short (one or two sentences) and attention-getting in a good way. Include a link, a graphic, and a call to action (e.g., visit our website). Facebook favors videos hosted on its own platform, so try posting your videos directly to Facebook and using Facebook Live to stream your next event.

Look on Twitter. Check Twitter for late-breaking news and discussions about policy (and everything else). Tag other accounts to engage them and use popular hashtags to engage in discussions you want to be part of:

- **Keep your tweets very short** with a clear link and call to action. Use graphics and upload video directly to Twitter whenever possible. Use Twitter Lists to track other accounts of interest. Use Bitly to shorten your links and see who clicks on them (bit.ly).
- **Boost influence with your personal Twitter account** and a balance between your company, your brand, and yourself. Present some unique value on your own Twitter account that a follower wouldn't get by just following your brand. Use this account to build on your personality and influence as a business leader. Add a bio and tag your company's Twitter account in it.
- **Use Instagram wisely,** as purely visual platform, it works best for brands with a wealth of photo content to build a narrative and a following. Unless you're using paid advertising, other platforms work better for sharing links and having users click on them.

[Watch a webinar on this topic](#)

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This guide has been developed by the American Sustainable Business Council and Business Climate Leaders.

About the American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC)

ASBC advocates for policy change and educates business owners, public, media and legislators about the need and opportunities for building a vibrant and sustainable economy. Along with our business organizational members we represent more than 250,000 companies across size, sector and geography that believe in the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit. Put what you've learned in this guide to work and become a member of ASBC for in-person access to elected officials and policymakers, peer-to-peer networking with business leaders, personalized media and policy training and more. Visit ASBCouncil.org to join today.



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About Business Climate Leaders (BCL)

[BCL](#) is an initiative of [Citizens' Climate Lobby \(CCL\)](#), a nonpartisan grassroots advocacy group with nearly 200,000 supporters in over 500 local chapters. BCL helps American businesses understand and take action in shaping federal climate policy. Working through our nationwide network, our volunteer professionals help businesses leverage climate advocacy investments with minimal risk and resources. [Learn more](#). BCL encourages business leaders to support and endorse the [Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, H.R. 763](#), the first bicameral, bipartisan carbon pricing ever introduced in Congress! Please contact us at info@businessclimateleaders.org



Planning Resources

There are some simple steps and rules to follow in developing your plan of advocacy action with elected officials in order to be prepared and organized with solid information.

To start:

- Know the status of national and state climate bills
- Identify and contact your federal, state, and local elected officials
- Arrange meetings with those officials
- Learn about and comply with the laws governing lobbying

Following are important links to resources for planning and outreach.

[The Climate Playbook](#)

A run-down of all of the climate related bills before Congress.

[Learn About The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act.](#)

An equitable bipartisan solution that puts a price on carbon emissions. Research shows that this solution will reduce America's emissions by at least 40% within 12 years, grow the economy and create 2.1 million additional jobs over the next 10 years, improve our overall health, and is revenue neutral.

[Track Upcoming Congressional Activity](#)

This webpage provides links to upcoming House and Senate floor activities. This includes committee hearing schedules, roll call votes, nominations, and brief descriptions on how the legislative process works.

[State and Local Recommendations for Reopening the Economy](#)

This Report offers recommendations for policies and other action on climate and related issues that states and localities can implement.

[Track Status of Congressional Bills and Resolutions](#)

This webpage provides the ability to search for past Senate and House bills and resolutions and track upcoming legislation. Search for bills and resolutions by sponsor, committee, subject, and current status. Review voting records for each member of Congress past and present.

[Track Status of State Bills](#)

This webpage provides links for upcoming and past legislature bills for each of the 50 states. Search for bills by subject, current status, and Governor approval.

[Senate Switchboard](#)

This general contact page for the U.S. Senate includes information on how to email the Senate, send postal mail, general phone numbers, and contacting the Senate webmaster.

[House Switchboard](#)

This general contact page for the U.S. House of Representatives includes the House phone number and mailing address and links to the phone directory of Representatives.

[White House Switchboard](#)

This webpage includes information on contacting the White House via telephone, postal mail, and submitting questions online.

[Find Your Senator](#)

This page lists senators alphabetically and includes DC Office address and phone number, personal website, political party, and state represented. The search feature allows searching for senators by name, state, or election class.

[Find Your Representative](#)

This page allows searching for your House representative by matching your zip code to congressional district. This will bring you to link to your representative's website and contact information.

[Meeting with Your Representatives](#)

How to schedule a meeting with your national representative.

[Directory of Representatives](#)

Lists all members of the House by state and district, with links to each member's website. From there, you can find addresses for DC and local offices, staff information, and procedures for scheduling a meeting.

[Get to Know Your State Government](#)

This webpage provides links to all 50 State Governments, including the State Senate, State Assembly, and general State Government switchboard.

[Meet Your State Representatives](#)

This webpage allows you to type in any address across the 50 states and will find your national and state representatives. From there, you can find a representative's website and navigate to the contact page which will give you directions on meeting with them.

[Lobbying Disclosure Act Guidance](#)

Provides updated information and requirements on the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, including regulations on 'gifts' to Congress, registration requirements, and reporting activities.

Note: Anyone who lobbies professionally needs to meet certain requirements for registration, reporting, and disclosure. ASBC helps its business members engage in advocacy in ways that meet the lobbying rules.



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