



REBUILDING STRONGER!

LOBBYING VS. ADVOCATING

Need / Awareness Messaging

Advocacy is the process of stakeholders making their voices heard on issues that affect their lives and the lives of others at the local, state, and national level. It also means helping policymakers find specific solutions to persistent problems.

Lobbying, on the other hand, involves activities that are in direct support of or opposition to a specific piece of introduced legislation. While nonprofits can engage in some lobbying, the IRS has strict rules about what portion of their budget can go toward these activities. There are also prohibitions on any use of federal funds for lobbying.



LOBBYING VS. ADVOCATING

Advocacy

ISI staff members can educate a member of Congress about the impacts of a policy on our constituency, or we can invite a member of Congress to visit our organization. We can also write and tell them how we feel about a bill, but we cannot encourage them to pass, strike down, or amend legislation. That is lobbying.

To write your representative, find out who they are by going [here](#). You can also contact the Clerk of the House who maintains addresses and phone numbers of all House members and Committees. Call (202) 224-3121 for the U.S. House switchboard operator. In addition, you may choose to visit your member's website directly for more information.

Lobbying

Asking your member of Congress to vote for or against, or amend, introduced legislation is lobbying. Anyone working for a nonprofit (501 C3), like ISI, cannot lobby.

We are prohibited from emailing a “call to action” to our members urging them to contact their Congress person or senator in support of action on introduced legislation or pending regulations.

We are also prohibited from preparing materials or organizing events in support of lobbying activities or efforts.

Letter or Emails to Lawmakers

TEMPLATE

[Date]

The Honorable [person]

[Office Address]

[City, State, Zip]

Dear [person]:

[State why you are writing. Do not urge them to support, fight, or amend any legislation, unless you are eligible to lobby. 501c3 nonprofits can advocate but not lobby politicians, senators, or members of Congress.]

[Explain how their interest can help benefit the infrastructure industry and communities. Don't encourage action on a piece of legislation, unless you are eligible to lobby.]

[Thank them for their time and consideration.]

Sincerely yours,

Your name

Your Title

Your Business

Address

Phone number

Letter or Emails to Lawmakers

EMAIL EXAMPLE I

Date

The Honorable _____

Office Address

United States House of Representatives /

United States Senate

City, State, Zip

Dear [Representative/Senator]:

COVID-19 has proved that our civil infrastructure is woefully inadequate to handle pandemics and climate-change threats. To turn things around, lawmakers need to encourage infrastructure stakeholders and communities to prioritize sustainability, resiliency, and equity when they plan, design, and build infrastructure moving forward. The public is demanding it!

One reason we are struggling to contain COVID-19 is that our infrastructure wasn't built with resiliency or sustainability in mind. That needs to change. Here forward, infrastructure must be built better and stronger. This message won't be heard unless it flows from the top, from lawmakers such as yourself.

Solutions that already exist, like the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure's Envision sustainability framework and rating system, can lead the way. Please learn about Envision and spread awareness to local communities that are seeking solutions. If we're all speaking the same language, using the same framework, we can collaborate and work together to sustain infrastructure projects, and, thereby, protect the environment, enhance human health, and boost economies.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Title, address, city, state, zip, phone number.

*Letter or Emails to Lawmakers***EXAMPLE II**

[Date]

The Honorable [person]

[Office Address]

[City, State, Zip]

Dear [person]:

I know you are passionate about building infrastructure, which is why I implore you to learn about the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure's Envision framework and rating system to help communities rebuild more sustainable, resilient, and equitable civil infrastructure.

COVID-19 has made it painfully obvious that the current planning, designing, and building methods for civil infrastructure have been woefully inadequate to prevent and mitigate pandemics. For the architecture, engineering, and construction (A/E/C) industry and the public-sector, this moment should be a wake-up call to rebuild better—with sustainability and resiliency in mind— or explain to future generations why we did not.

The public is begging for sustainable, resilient, equitable infrastructure, but many communities do not know where to start. They often search in earnest for solutions, not knowing that a solution already exists. For ten years, ISI's Envision framework and rating system has helped communities like Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Kansas City, Vancouver, and Toronto deliver more sustainable, resilient, and equitable civil (roads, bridges, dams, etc.) infrastructure. We encourage you to learn about Envision sustainability and resilience and share that knowledge with others. Speaking the same language and collaborating together, we can design and deliver infrastructure that meets the needs of future generations.

If lawmakers, such as you, start talking about the critical need to build infrastructure with sustainability and resilience, stakeholders and communities will bake it into their projects at the planning and designing phases. That will empower our communities to attack threats caused by climate change, deforestation, and urbanization.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name,

Title,

Business address, phone number.

Letter or Emails to Lawmakers

EXAMPLE LETTER III

July 27, 2020

The Honorable Representative
United States House of Representatives
Insert address

Dear Representative [insert name]:

I wanted to make you aware of a formidable problem that isn't being addressed in H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act. The bill overlooks sustainability and resilience in the rebuilding process. That is a serious oversight. As COVID-19 has proved, civil infrastructure has been woefully inadequate to handle a pandemic, which leads one to surmise that it will also be inadequate in handling future threats brought about by climate change.

Indeed, the public is demanding civil infrastructure be built better and stronger, and communities are seeking answers to that very challenge. But, many communities are focused on inventing solutions— *unaware that a solution already exists*. For ten years, the Envision sustainability and resilience framework has been used by Los Angeles, Miami, Kansas City, New York City, Toronto, and Vancouver to build sustainable and resilient civil infrastructure.

As we look for ways to rebuild, please encourage communities to rebuild with sustainability and resiliency. If lawmakers encourage prioritization of sustainability and resilience, if they learn about solutions like Envision, communities will embrace sustainability and resilience during the planning stages of their projects and will take action. That will go a long way in protecting the environment, enhancing human health and wellbeing, and bolstering economies. We don't just need to rebuild, we need to rebuild better!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dyan Lee
The Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure
Washington, D.C. 20005 / 972-841-0982

Letter or Emails to Lawmakers

EXAMPLE LETTER IV

July 20, 2020

The Honorable Vice President Biden
Delaware

Dear Honorable Vice President Joe Biden:

I wanted to inform you of a formidable problem that is not being addressed in H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, but ties in nicely with your campaign to 'Build Back Better.'" The bill overlooks "sustainability, resilience, and equity" in the rebuilding process. That is a serious oversight. As COVID-19 has proved, civil infrastructure has been woefully inadequate to handle this pandemic. Why? Infrastructure stakeholders don't always prioritize sustainability, resiliency, and equity. That needs to change! If we do not bake resiliency, sustainability, and equity into civil infrastructure projects — if we don't think long-term — we will find ourselves struggling with the same issues in the future.

Indeed, the public is demanding civil infrastructure projects be built better and stronger, and communities are seeking ways to do just that; but, many communities are focused on inventing new solutions. They are unaware that a solution already exists.

For ten years, the Envision sustainability and resilience framework has been used by Los Angeles, Miami, Kansas City, New York City, Toronto, and Vancouver to build sustainable and resilient civil infrastructure. If other communities find out about the Envision sustainability and resilience framework, they can incorporate it into their projects from the start. This would allow their communities and agencies to "Build Back Better." It would allow us to enhance human health and wellbeing, bolster economies, and protect the environment.

Please learn about the Envision sustainability and resiliency framework — which was created by the Harvard Zoffnass program and is backed by the civil infrastructure community— and see if this is something that could be a solution that enhances your plans for "Building Back Better." If every city, community, and agency embraces this framework and speaks the same language on projects, we can Envision a better America!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dyan Lee
The Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure
Washington, D.C. 20005 / 972-841-0982