

TIPS FOR WRITING A LETTER TO YOUR LEGISLATOR

1. **Be succinct.** Legislators and their aides receive a lot of correspondence. If your letter is long, they are less likely to read it in its entirety and may miss important information. You can deliver a thoughtful, effective message in just a few paragraphs.
2. **Explain the reason for your letter.** Provide background information on the issue at hand. This is your opportunity to convince the reader that the issue is relevant and important. Provide compelling reasons and a factual basis to justify his/her support of the bill. Feel free to use your own personal experiences or experiences of others, but BEWARE – if you owe back sales tax and have not yet resolved your matter with the Division of Taxation, be very careful about sharing personal details.
3. **Be polite and respectful.** You will attract more flies with honey than vinegar. We are asking legislators to for their support and should avoid being rude or condescending.
4. **Follow proper letter-writing form.** Include the date, name/address of the recipient, your return address and sign your letter. Be sure to proofread to correct any spelling or grammatical errors.
5. **Only write to YOUR representatives.** Please do not bombard other districts' legislators with letters. They are receiving correspondence from their own constituents. And the opinions of each legislator's own constituents are the opinions that matter most to him/her.

Following these guidelines, here is a sample structure for the body of your letter:

Paragraph 1: Introduce yourself. Tell the legislator who you are. Let them know that you are a constituent and reside/work/have some connection to his/her jurisdiction. If you are a member of or are involved with community organizations that are relevant to the issue at hand, this is time to say it!

Paragraph 2: Explain the issue. Tell the legislator that you are writing to discuss the problems associated with assessing sales tax on horse boarding. Let the legislator know why this is an important issue and educate him/her on the negative effects that you have experienced as a result of the tax.

Paragraph 3: Request action. Come right out and ask the legislator to support the bill. Specifically request that they vote in favor of the bill. Provide the number of the bill (here: A1301) and give the name of the sponsor (here: Assemblyman Ronald Dancer). You also can identify the Committee reviewing the bill (here: Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee).

Paragraph 4: Conclusion. Briefly recap the issue. And do not forget to thank the legislator for reading your letter and considering taking the action you have requested of him/her.