



How to Win Friends and Influence Policy

Solar Power International 2009

Advocates in Action

October 28, 2009

Introduction to SEIA

- U.S. National Trade Association for Solar Companies
 - Over 1000 member companies
 - Members include all solar technologies
 - 14 state and regional chapters
- SEIA's Mission
 - Expand markets
 - Remove market barriers
 - Strengthen research & development
 - Improve education and outreach
- The Voice of the U.S. Solar industry in Washington, DC
- This presentation will be posted on the Grassroots page of SEIA's website
<http://seia.org/cs/government-affairs-and-advocacy/grassroots-and-advocacy>

Overview

- What is advocacy?
- Why lobby?
- Who do I lobby?
- How to advocate effectively
- Example: Full retail net metering
- Conclusion

What is advocacy?

- Advocacy is the general promotion of an idea or cause. It includes:
 - Identifying the issue or problem
 - Educating elected officials, the public, and the media
 - Proposing a solution; and
 - Organizing and motivating people to act



Why lobby?

Definitions and Misconceptions

According to Webster's Dictionary:

lobby

Function: *verb*

Inflected Form(s): **lob-bied; lob-by-ing**

intransitive verb : to conduct activities aimed at **influencing public officials and especially members of a legislative body on legislation**

transitive verb

1: to promote (as a project) or secure the passage of (as legislation) by influencing public officials

2: to attempt to influence or sway (as a public official) toward a desired action

Public perception: Lobbying is everything wrong with American politics

Why lobby?

- “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”
 - U.S. Constitution, Amendment 1
- You have the *right* and *responsibility* to speak to your elected officials.

Why Lobby?

- Elected officials (and staff) are not necessarily policy experts
- They need to be educated on issues of importance to your company and your industry
- The relationship between lobbyist and official should be bi-directional and symbiotic
- **You can affect shape public policy that affects you**

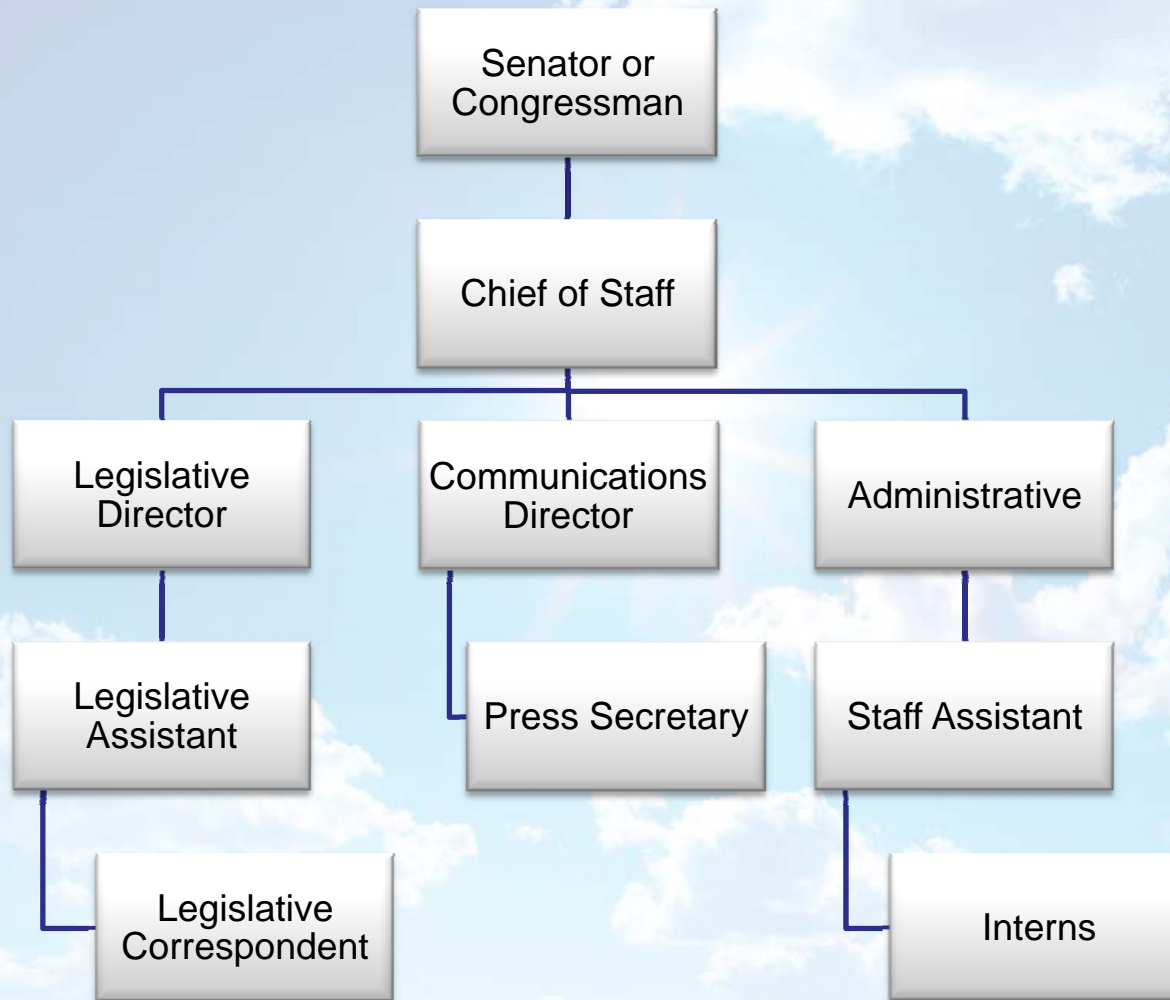
A bright sun with a starburst effect is positioned in the center-right of the frame, shining through a clear blue sky filled with scattered, fluffy white clouds. The sun's rays create a lens flare effect. The overall scene is bright and clear.

Who do I lobby?

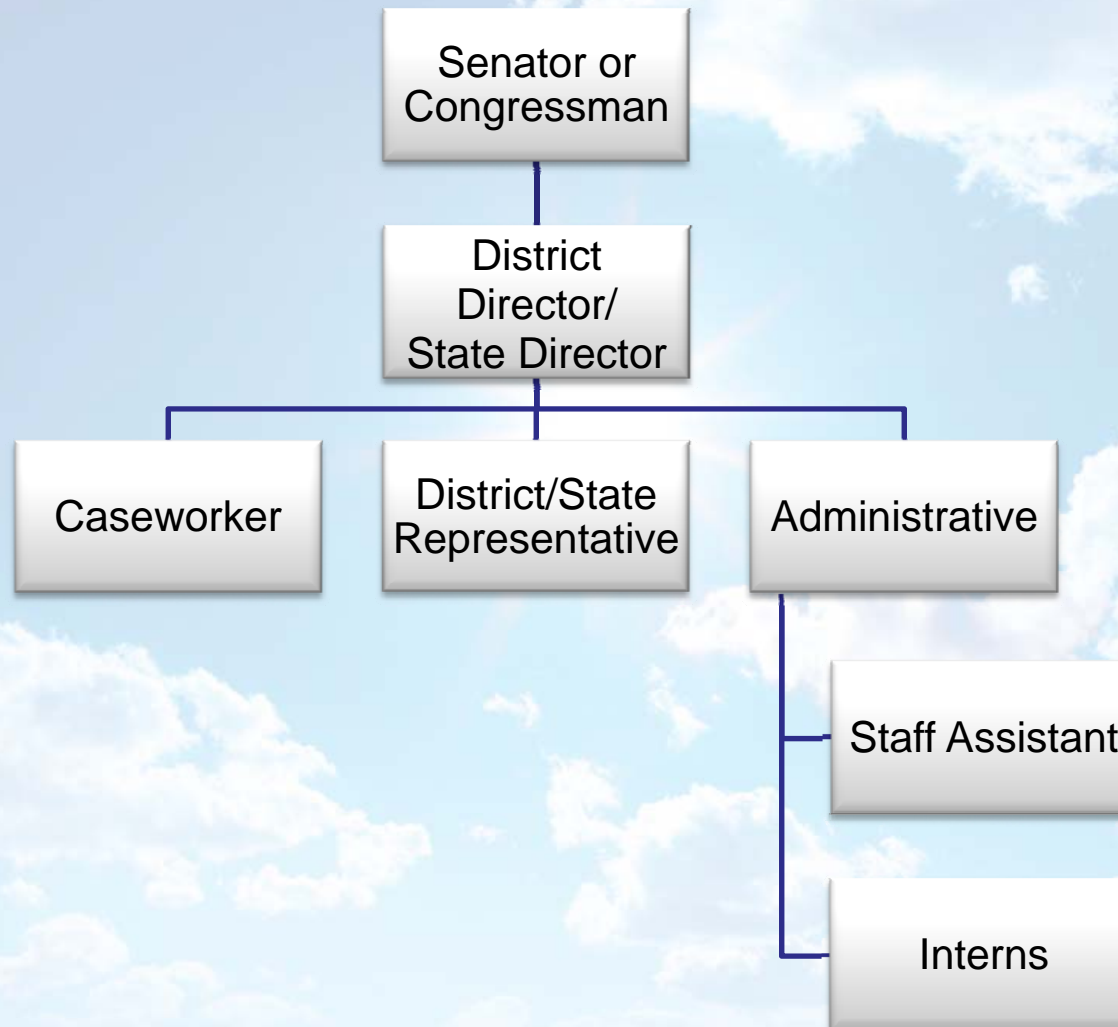
Who do I lobby?

- Local
 - Mayor (Curt Pringle)
 - City Councilman (Lori Galloway, Harry Sidhu, Lucille Kring)
- State
 - Assemblyman (Curt Hagman, Jim Silva, Van Tran, Jose Solorio, Jeff Miller, Michael Duvall)
 - State Senator (Bob Huff, Mimi Walters, Lou Correa)
- Federal
 - Congressman (Ed Royce, Gary Miller, Loretta Sanchez)
 - Senator (Dianne Feinstein, Barbara Boxer)
 - Administration officials (President Obama, Energy Secretary Chu, etc.)

Organization of Congressional Office (DC)



Organization of Congressional Office (State)





How to advocate effectively

Effective Advocacy

- Goal: educate members of Congress (and their staff)
- Give them the tools to make your case
- Make them PASSIONATE about your issue
- Keep them updated on your issues, ***especially when you aren't asking for something***

Effective Advocacy

- Members and staff
 - Extremely busy
 - Depend upon outside sources of information
 - Are not able to co-sponsor/support everything – always prioritizing
 - Answerable to their constituents
 - Most responsive to people with whom they have long-term relationships
- You should
 - Have a concise message
 - Present a clear “ask”
 - Be an educated advocate
 - Do your homework and know the facts
 - Have clear numbers
 - Cite similar examples (state/local programs)

Effective Advocacy

- All politics is local
 - Emphasize your connection to the Member of Congress
 - Utilize local contacts – lots of work can be done outside of Washington, D.C. (or Sacramento)
- Relationships Matter
 - Effective advocacy requires strategic, long-term, trusting relationships
 - Keep in touch even when you have not particular agenda

Effective Advocacy

- Tools of the Trade

- Letters
- E-mail
- Phone calls
- Face-to-face meetings
- PAC Contributions
- Letters to the editor/op-ed pieces
- Paid advertisements

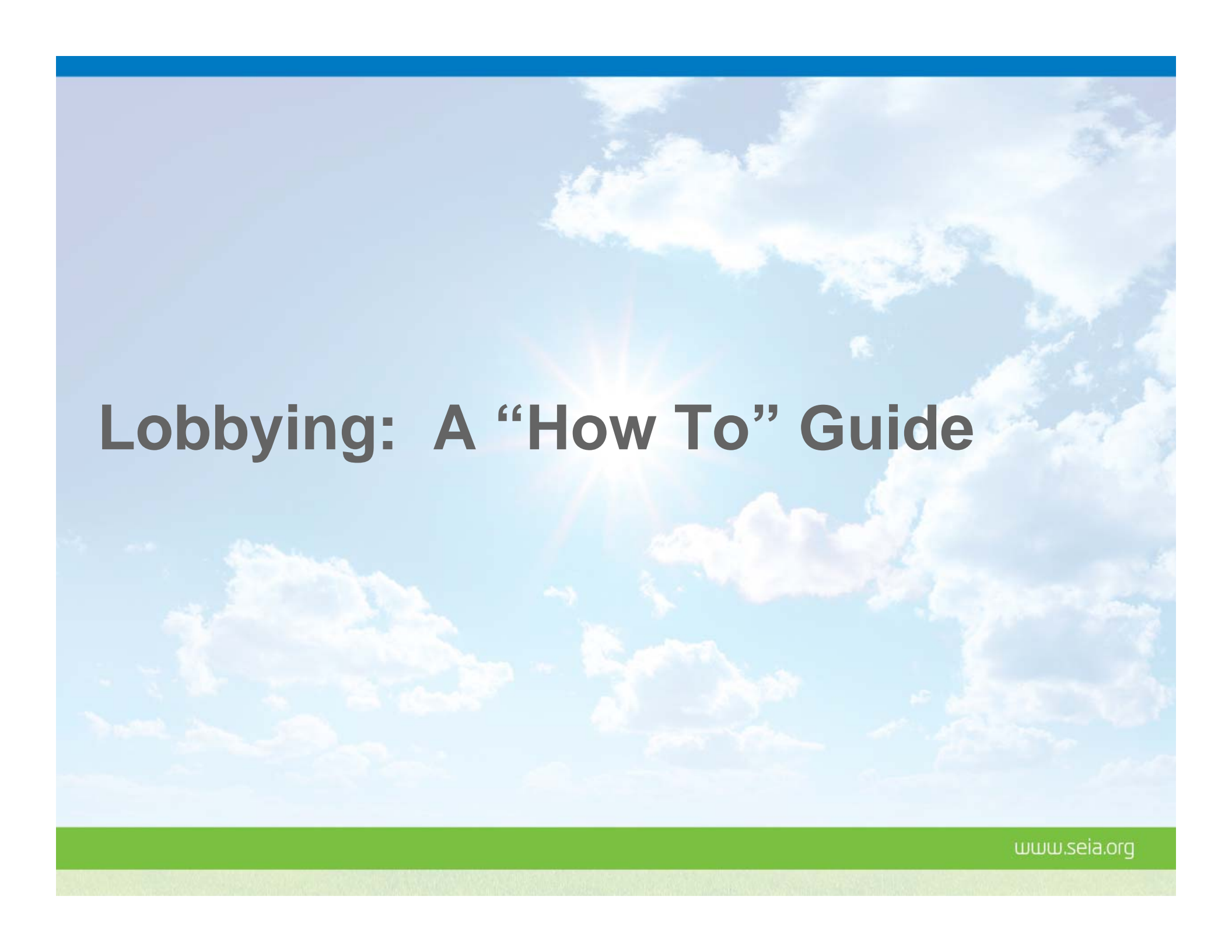
Direct Advocacy

Indirect Advocacy

- Coalitions and Partnerships (Politics makes strange bedfellows)
- Look for partners:
 - Companies (including competitors)
 - Grassroots
 - Non-Profits
 - Candidates

Effective Advocacy – Giving

- Different ways to contribute
 - Volunteer on a campaign
 - Direct giving to a candidate
 - PAC contributions
- A political action committee (PAC) allows an industry to support candidates who are committed to expanding their marketplace
- PACs provides access to events with high-level decision-makers in Washington, DC
- Support is a two-way street
- SEIA does have a PAC



Lobbying: A “How To” Guide

Lobbying: A “How To” Guide

- Preparation
 - Background research regarding the Member
 - Identify your goal
 - Prepare written materials
- Presentation
 - Keep it short
 - Sell yourself and your cause
 - Do’s, Don’ts, and other tips
- Follow-up

Preparation

- Background information to gather
 - What Committees does the Member serve on?
 - Is the Member in any leadership positions?
 - What issues has the Member supported in the past?
 - What legislation has the Member introduced?
 - What is the Member's voting history? (for/against policies you care about)
 - Has the Member made recent public statements on your topic?
 - What is the Member's reputation?

Preparation

- Identify your goal. What are you trying to achieve?
 - Champion → Support & provide leadership on an issue
 - Sponsor → Signatory to legislation or letter
 - Supporter → Agreement to vote for an issue
 - Meet & Greet → No specific goal, just a getting-to-know-you
- Gather/prepare written materials
 - Information about your company
 - One-page description of the issue and solution
 - Supporting documents, if appropriate
 - SEIA's website (www.seia.org) is a great resource for policy positions and written materials

Presentation

- Keep it short and focused
 - A concise presentation is most effective
 - Members and their staff have 15 to 30 minutes per visit
 - Get “the ask” out ASAP
 - You may be interrupted at anytime by votes, schedules, other visitors, calls, etc.

Presentation

- Sell yourself and your cause
 - Specifically ask for your legislator’s support (or whatever you identified as the goal)
 - Have a “one-pager” that summarizes the issue, but be knowledgeable about the details that aren’t on paper.
 - Be persuasive – use your personal stories
 - Identify the national and local benefits you think this action will provide. Give examples (e.g., jobs in their district).
 - Don’t argue against yourself
 - Tie in why the issue is important to the Member’s district or core concerns
 - Be prepared for tough questions and unnecessary tangents

Presentation – Other Tips

- Guide the conversation
- Stay on message
- “I don’t know” is an acceptable answer for you to give
- “I will find out for you and get back to you” is a better answer
- Relationships matter – think long-term
- Say “thank you”

Presentation – Other Tips

- What if you are told “no?”
 - Find out what exactly the concerns are
 - Try to obtain conditions that will bring them to support
 - Sometimes, being right just isn’t enough
 - Agree to disagree
 - **Always think long-term** – how can this “no” turn into a “yes” on another issue down the road?

Presentation – Other Tips

- Be mindful of ethics rules
 - A Member, officer, or employee may accept a gift, other than cash or cash equivalent, having a value of less than \$50.
 - Many offices have more stringent provisions.
 - Offers of meals and travel require careful consideration.
 - Do not be insulted if staff are unable to accept something you present them.

Presentation – Other Tips

- Do
 - Arrive on time
 - Identify yourself and your affiliation clearly
 - Be friendly, organized and well-prepared
 - Keep chit-chat to a minimum
 - Be a good listener; take notes
 - Ask for a specific commitment and deadline
 - Thank people for their time
- Don't
 - Say anything you are not confident is true
 - Air dirty laundry or reveal confidential business information
 - Threaten or take a negative tone
 - Discuss political fundraising

Follow-Up

- Immediately after the meeting, send a thank you along with any additional information you promised.
- Keep in touch with the appropriate staff in Washington, DC and in the district offices of your Congressional representatives.
- Invite your representative to visit your organization.
- Provide feedback to your Government Affairs team.
- Visit the SEIA booth (# 3254) and our website www.seia.org



A Real-World Example: National Retail Net Metering

Advocacy Example: National Retail Net Metering

- Have a concise message/Present a clear “ask”
 - Across the entire U.S., an energy patriot that installs a solar system or other renewable energy property on their home or business should be paid the “retail” rate for any energy that they generate but do not use.

Advocacy Example: National Retail Net Metering

- Be an educated advocate
 - Do your homework, know the facts, know the common arguments
 - Why does this need to be mandated at the federal level?
 - Does anyone oppose this? Why?
 - How does this affect grid stability, the distribution system, and the need for transmission?
 - What kind of generation are you avoiding (coal, gas, nuclear)?
 - Have clear numbers
 - How much will this cost ratepayers, in the short term and long term?
 - How much pollution will this policy avoid?
 - How many jobs will it help create?
 - Cite similar examples (state/local programs)
 - What happened in the states that have net metering?
 - What were any problems and how have they been learned from?

Advocacy Example: National Net Metering

- Find the right person to champion your cause
 - Look to the committees of jurisdiction
 - Gather background research regarding the Member, the district, and the state
 - Prepare written materials
 - Form partnerships/coalitions – identify all the individuals and companies in the district/state that care and mobilize them

Advocacy Example: National Net Metering

- PATIENCE & PERSEVERENCE
 - A lot of folks have been working on issues for much longer and without as much progress
 - The legislative process is meant to be slow and deliberative
 - This is not a one-shot deal. More opportunities will come.
 - DON'T burn bridges – you WILL see these people again
 - DO continue to build relationships with Members and with coalitions
 - An idea might not make it into law even if folks show up every day and fight for it. But it's certain that nothing will happen if folks never show up.

Thank You

Scott Hennessey

Katherine Gensler

Solar Energy Industries Association

www.seia.org

202-682-0556