



Lakes In Action Advocacy Training

**Let Your Voice Be Heard: Steps to
Developing a Compelling Message**

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(1) What (in general) - Framing the Issue

- Define the basic issue
- What are the raw facts to convey, prior to adding any messaging (i.e. spin)
- For internal consumption only

(2) Why? - Setting Goals

- What are the goals of this communication?
 - Advocating a particular policy?
 - Broadcasting information w/o expressing an opinion?
 - Marketing for the organization?
- What result are you looking for?
 - Citizens/members actively advocating for a policy
 - Better informed audience
 - Contributions to your group

(3)Who? - Determine the Audience

- Who is the intended recipient of the info
 - Public in general
 - Government
 - Members

(4)Where? - Determine the Types of Media

- What media are you going to use
 - Different media will react to different messages
 - e.g. Statewide radio vs the local paper
 - Balance your needs with what you can do
 - If time, do different messages, but often must craft message for several different media types
 - Get to know your media contacts

(5) When? - Timing the Message

- When is best time to put out the message?
 - What is too soon, too late?
 - What deadlines do the different media types have - local paper different than local TV
- How immediate is the need to get the message out?
 - If for an event, maybe plan a couple of releases highlighting different items
 - If for legislation, do you need to know the legislation before commenting?

(6) How? - Determining the Form of the Message

- What's the best vehicle to deliver the message?
 - Press release
 - E-mail blast to members, also sent to media
 - Press conference
 - Personal phone call or visit

(7) What (the specifics)

- Now you're ready to write the piece
- Things to consider:
 - Be concise
 - Assume audience knows nothing
 - Use quotes if possible
 - Be consistent across communications on the same issue
 - Say who you are!

What's In a Name?

- Consider these three names used by different groups to refer to the changes to permitting and other natural resource regulations in the recently enacted SS AB/SB 24:
 - Proponents: **“Regulatory Reform Bill”** or **“Presumptive Permitting Bill”**
 - Many environmental groups: **“The Polluters Over People Bill”**
 - Wisconsin Lakes called it **“The Default Permitting Bill”**
- What are the positives and negatives of each of these choices, and what do they say about how each group answered the six questions?