

# Your Guide to Town Halls

Once again, it's recess time for Congress. For much of August, the House and the Senate will leave Washington and return to their home states and districts. Across the country, people like you are ready to make your voices heard. After all, the first six months of the Trump administration have been full of dangerous and divisive attacks on the people, places, and things that we love. These attacks eliminate safeguards that protect our health and sell out our public lands, showing over and over again that Trump and his Administration prefer helping corporate polluters rather than protecting our communities and our most cherished landscapes. During this recess, the American people are watching, and they will continue to demand that their concerns are heard and our health is protected. So, where to start? We've put together this guide to help.

**1. Find out when your Representative or Senator's next town hall or public meeting is being held.** Check [Town Hall Project](#), check local news outlets, or call 1-303-816-3559 and we'll connect you with your member of Congress to ask directly.

**2. Prepare! Think of the question you want to ask (we've included some samples below), show up early, find a comfortable seat,** and look for any microphones that have been set up to take comments. Sit close to one so you will be more likely to be able to ask a question. If you are planning on bringing a sign that opposes your member of Congress and her or his agenda, remember that it decreases the likelihood that you will be able to ask a question.

**3. Be civil, but don't let them off the hook** -- demand they answer the question you asked, not the question that they want to answer.

**4. Take pictures and video.** Having video of what your elected officials say is a great way to hold them accountable. Post pictures and video on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram and tag @SierraClub so we can see and share them.

## Sample Questions:

### Budget and Appropriations

- Trump's proposed cuts to the EPA budget put our communities and health at risk. Relaxing enforcement on clean air, water, and climate hurt me and my family because (we have asthma, we are worried about water quality, I'm concerned about climate change, etc). **What are you doing to stand up to Trump's radical agenda and the deep cuts to essential environmental and public health safeguards he is proposing?**
- EPA's budget today is already 20 percent lower than it was back in 2010. Congress and Trump have proposed slashing the EPA budget, leaving critical programs unfunded and putting my family's health and our environment at risk. **Will you fight to secure greater funding for critical EPA programs?**
- Climate change is a threat to our health, our economy, and our community. Trump's budget chief, Mick Mulvaney, called climate change funding "a waste of money" and proposes

eliminating dozens of critical programs to fight climate change. **What will you do to ensure this critical funding is not eliminated?**

- We have a right to clean air, safe drinking water and communities that are free of toxic pollution. The Trump Administration's proposal to drastically cut the EPA's budget takes the cop off the beat and lets polluters do what they want. **Will you commit to vote against any spending measures that gut the EPA?**

### **Safeguarding Our Air, Water, Lands, and Health**

- Donald Trump's anti-climate executive order is the single biggest attack on climate action in U.S. history, period. This action to undo the the Clean Power Plan and other air and water safeguards has real effects in our community--we count on these protections to keep us healthy. **Will you publicly oppose actions, like this order, that attack air and water safeguards and lifesaving public health protections? Will you support legislation that would stop Donald Trump's anti-climate and anti-public health executive actions?**
- Both the House and Senate are pushing legislation to make it harder for our environmental agencies to issue standards to protect the environment and public health and our environment. These safeguards protect communities. **Will you oppose efforts to undermine agency rulemaking authority?**
- Methane pollution poses an immediate danger to our climate and public health. It has 87 times the warming power of carbon dioxide, making it a huge driver of climate disruption. Methane pollution is also a serious health risk. **Will you stand up for and defend critical environmental protections enacted by the Obama Administration, like rules to limit methane pollution?**
- We are seeing the impacts of climate change around the country, and even here in our state, as wildfires, severe drought, and more dangerous storms are on the rise. **Will you support efforts to curb carbon and methane pollution, both major drivers of climate disruption?**
- Some Senators and Representatives have introduced bills to repeal standards protecting downwind states and our national parks from air pollution like smog haze, **will you vote no on any effort to gut clean air standards?**
- Congress has targeted a number of clean air and clean water standards for repeal. **Will you oppose efforts to repeal important clean air and clean water standards so that our kids and communities are safe and healthy?**
- [For Senators] The House of Representatives just passed HR 806--a bill that is a direct attack on the Clean Air Act's protections against harmful smog and other air pollution. Smog makes us sick, aggravating asthma and causing kids to miss school and have to go to the emergency room. **Will you oppose the Senate version of this bill, and oppose any attempt to undermine the clean air act?**

### **Clean Energy**

- In early June, Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA) introduced the Energy and Natural Resources Act of 2017 (S.1460). Unfortunately, this bill does not put advancing the public interest at the center of American energy policy, and instead leans more strongly in the direction of polluter profits. ***Will you fight to remove the harmful provisions that would promote dirty fuels infrastructure like pipelines and LNG export facilities?***
- [For Senators] The most troubling provisions in the Energy and Natural Resources Act of 2017 (S.1460) simply do not make sense in a rapidly warming world. The bill removes requirements for less carbon-polluting federal buildings, expedites oil and gas drilling, pipelines and other

mineral development, weakens fuel economy standards, and reduces opportunities for public participation in critical decisions on the development of publicly owned natural places. ***Will you vow to work with the bill sponsors and support amendments that advance clean energy technologies and energy efficiency?***

### Cars and Efficiency

- President Trump has signed an executive order ordering the EPA to reexamine and reopen a decision by the Obama administration to continue strong fuel economy and greenhouse gas restrictions for passenger vehicles. These standards help protect, our air and climate, while saving money for consumers. **Will you commit to protecting and supporting strong car fuel economy standards?**

### Public Lands, National Parks, and Wildlife

- America has a rich heritage of national parks, national monuments and national refuges. Will you oppose Trump's actions to undermine protections for national monuments like Bears Ears in Utah?
- Will you stand in support of all public lands by opposing any legislation that would undermine the Antiquities Act, and speak out against administrative efforts to shrink or compromise existing national monument?
- Some in Congress have threatened to use the budget process to push for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, will you vote against backdoor efforts to allow oil drilling in America's last great wilderness?
- Some in Congress have said that the Endangered Species Act should be thrown out. America is blessed with a unique natural heritage of wildlife. Will you stand up to those would gut the ESA?

### Trade

- Trump has pledged to renegotiate trade agreements, and I'm deeply concerned that his renegotiation will not be based in concern for communities and our climate. My basis for evaluating any trade deal is clear: any deal should support -- not undermine -- a more stable climate, clean air and water, healthy communities, and good union jobs. **Will you commit to opposing any trade renegotiation that fails to meet this standard?**
- Will you call for any renegotiation of NAFTA to exclude the investor-state dispute settlement system that allows corporations to sue governments over our environmental and health protections in unaccountable tribunals?
- Will you call for the NAFTA renegotiation process to be transparent and participatory, meaning that proposals are based on input from the public -- not corporations -- and negotiating texts are made available online?

### Border Wall

- The current conversations around securing the border present a false narrative around safe

communities and true national security. Instead of focusing on humane, sensible measures to address root causes driving migration, President Trump wants to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Widely recognized as an ineffective boondoggle, a border wall will cost billions, yet have no discernable impact on immigration along the border. **Will you oppose the construction of a border wall?**

- President Trump has called for walling off the entire U.S.-Mexico border as part of a misguided agenda that would harm our communities and our environment. Building a wall would not only harm people and communities, it would cost billions of taxpayer dollars, and would require condemning land owned by hundreds of private landowners and municipalities. In addition, Big Bend National Park, Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, and other public land would be carved up by a wall severely impacting habitats and endangered species. **Will you oppose use of federal funds to pay for a wall along the southern border of the United States?**
- President Trump has requested in his FY 18 budget \$1.6 billion dollars to build a border wall along the U.S. Mexican Border. However, the target for this wall is the pristine Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, which has over 400 species of rare birds and huge impacts on the local economy. My family loves access to public lands like these. These walls will likely impede on species migration, increasing species vulnerability to morbidity during flooding and overall damage to this pristine the refuge. Do to these negative impacts, we ask that you not support the funding or building of these walls. **Will you fight against funding for border wall construction, protect access to public lands, and protect border communities?**

## Can't Attend a Townhall? Do this...

### Call your Senators and Representatives!

Call 1-303-816-3559 and we'll connect you with your Member of Congress directly. Once you're connected to their office, let them know that you can't make the town hall in your district, ask them if they'll be holding one in your community, and let them know what issues you're concerned with--you can even pass along a question to your Member of Congress.

**Send a Postcard!** If you don't have a town hall meeting in your area, then drop off postcards or letters at your nearest Congressional district offices. Also, take a photo and post it to social media tagging @SierraClub and or #ClimateResistance.

[You can sign up and get a downloadable postcard to print out and take with you here!](#)