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# Geoscience and Congress

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## Policy for Science

- Science funding
- Agency oversight and authorization
- Open access
- Security policy
- STEM Education
- High-skills immigration



# America COMPETES Reauthorization Act

- Geosciences \$1.2 billion, \$104 million cut
- Education directorate flat
- Office of Integrative Activities 11% cut, fund graduate research fellowships
- DOE Office of Science Biological and Environmental Research (BER) \$550 million, 7% below FY2015
- Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) \$1.2 billion, down 30%
- APRA-E down 50%





## Science for Policy

- Natural Hazards
- Climate change
- Mineral development
- Energy
  - Oil
  - Gas
  - Geothermal
  - Nuclear
- Water resources



## Power of Constituents

- Constituent visits to the Washington office (97%) and to the district/state office (94%)
- Questions at town hall meetings (87%) and letters to the editor (80%)
- Constituents who make the effort to personally communicate with their Senators and Representatives – except via fax – are more influential than lobbyists and news editors.

---Congressional Management Foundation





# District Visits





# What is your role?

- Pure scientist
- Science arbiter
- Honest broker
- Issue advocate

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE...



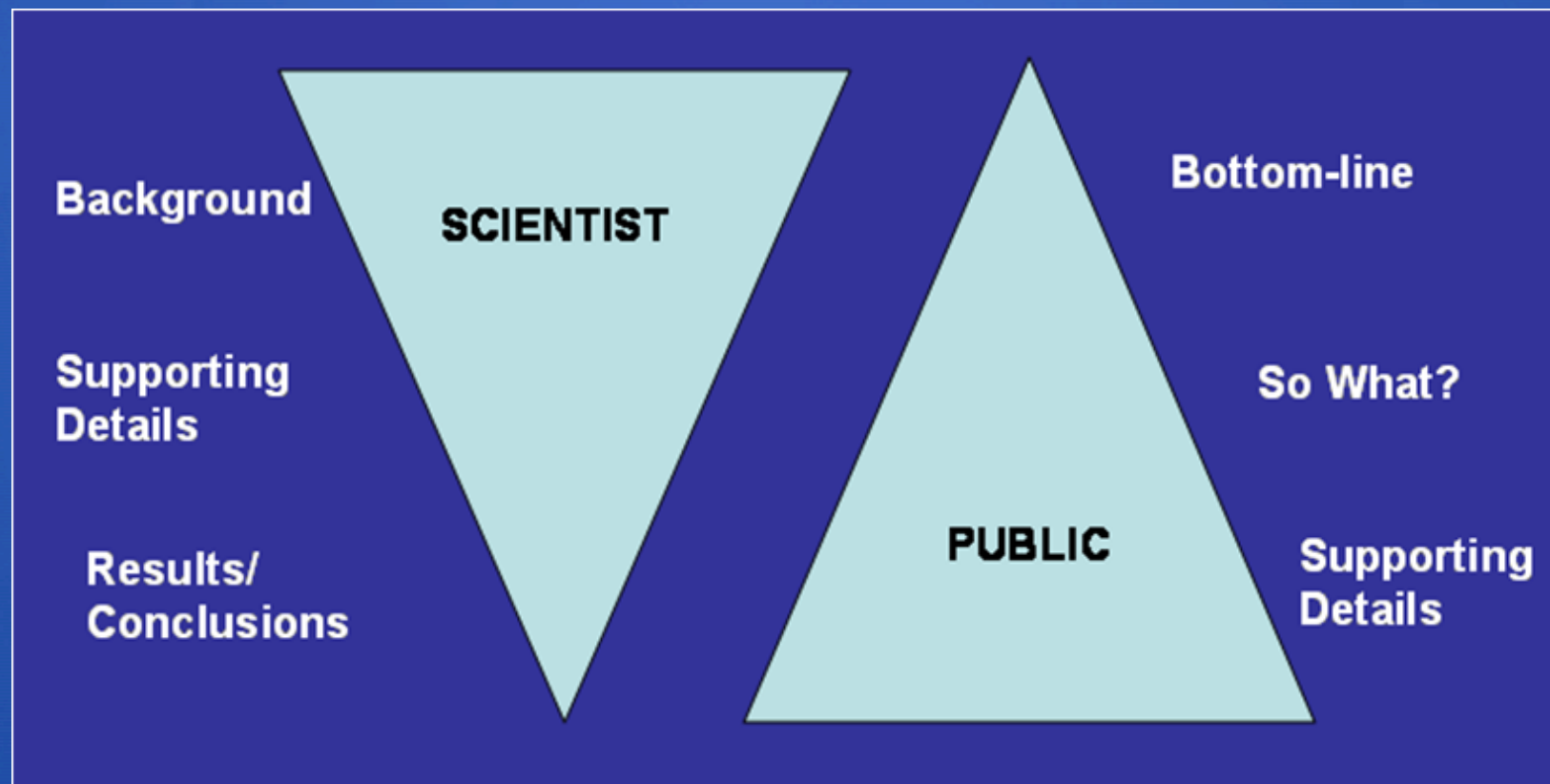
THE SCIENTISTS



THE POLITICIANS



# Different Communication Styles





## Climate “jargon”

- Anthropogenic v. human-caused
- Spatial v. space
- Temporal v. time
- Radiation v. energy

## Terms that have different meanings for scientists and the public

Scientific term	Public meaning	Better choice
enhance	improve	intensify, increase
aerosol	spray can	tiny atmospheric particle
positive trend	good trend	upward trend
positive feedback	good response, praise	vicious cycle, self-reinforcing cycle
theory	hunch, speculation	scientific understanding
uncertainty	ignorance	range
error	mistake, wrong, incorrect	difference from exact true number
bias	distortion, political motive	offset from an observation
sign	indication, astrological sign	plus or minus sign
values	ethics, monetary value	numbers, quantity
manipulation	illicit tampering	scientific data processing
scheme	devious plot	systematic plan
anomaly	abnormal occurrence	change from long-term average



# Research Your Offices

- Identify Member
  - House.gov
  - Senate.gov
- Member's website
- THOMAS
  - thomas.loc.gov
- Twitter, Facebook





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Have an open discussion based on what matters to the office (find common ground)

- National security?
- Energy independence?
- Health issues?
- The economy?
- Education?



ALL of these issues are related to science funding.  
Make that connection for them.

# Follow up

- Thank staff for time
- Check in every few months
- Build relationship
- Thank Member when he votes the way you have asked
- Invite to tour local facilities



# Letters

- Congressional websites have forms or reach out to contacts
- Single topic
- 1 page
- Sent via email

# Letters

The Honorable Jennifer Smith

United States Senate

Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Smith:

- Reason for writing, your information/credentials/link to district
- Importance of issue
- Restate Request

# Phone Calls

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- Capitol Switchboard 202.224.3121 or your contact
- Best for quick messages, i.e. vote yes or no

# Building Relationships



Take the time to build trust and keep in touch



# Geosciences Congressional Visits Day

- September 29-30