Geoscience and Congress

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Geological Society of America
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WE'RE WORKING ON A CURE FOR FUNDING CUTS.
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...

GRAPH

CLIMATE DATA

THE SCIENTISTS

VOTING INTENTIONS SURVEY

OPINION POLL

THE POLITICIANS
Different Communication Styles

SCIENTIST
- Background
- Supporting Details
- Results/Conclusions

PUBLIC
- Bottom-line
- So What?
- Supporting Details
Climate “jargon”

- Anthropogenic v. human-caused
- Spatial v. space
- Temporal v. time
- Radiation v. energy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific term</th>
<th>Public meaning</th>
<th>Better choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>enhance</td>
<td>improve</td>
<td>intensify, increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aerosol</td>
<td>spray can</td>
<td>tiny atmospheric particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive trend</td>
<td>good trend</td>
<td>upward trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive feedback</td>
<td>good response, praise</td>
<td>vicious cycle, self-reinforcing cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theory</td>
<td>hunch, speculation</td>
<td>scientific understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncertainty</td>
<td>ignorance</td>
<td>range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>error</td>
<td>mistake, wrong, incorrect</td>
<td>difference from exact true number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bias</td>
<td>distortion, political motive</td>
<td>offset from an observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sign</td>
<td>indication, astrological sign</td>
<td>plus or minus sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>values</td>
<td>ethics, monetary value</td>
<td>numbers, quantity</td>
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<tr>
<td>manipulation</td>
<td>illicit tampering</td>
<td>scientific data processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scheme</td>
<td>devious plot</td>
<td>systematic plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anomaly</td>
<td>abnormal occurrence</td>
<td>change from long-term average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Your Offices

- Identify Member
  - House.gov
  - Senate.gov

- Member’s website

- THOMAS
  - thomas.loc.gov

- Twitter, Facebook
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

- 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