

GLOBAL WARMING SOLUTIONS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The letter to the editor is one of the most commanding tools of advocacy. With one, your passion can reach tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands readers. The editorial page (where the letters appear) is the most widely read section after the front section.

Once you have identified the paper you want to write to, check out their editorial section or the “contact” page on their website. This will often list how to submit your letter. It is great to get several friends to write on the same topic at the same time, this makes it appear like an issue of greater concern.

Don't be disappointed if your letter does not get printed. Newspapers get many letters every day and can't print all of them. Most papers won't print the same writers over and over again. Therefore, if you have had a letter published recently, try to get a friend or co-worker to sign the next one.

Don't be afraid to ask for action -- tell readers what you want them to do. This includes your elected representatives; you can be sure they read the letters to the editor.

GOAL: Get as many letters to the editor published as possible regarding Global Warming Solutions, with a strong push in November, to coincide with Global Warming Solutions Month of Action.

Steps

- 1 Find the email address or method of submitted your letter to the editor
- 2 Scan the media for good stories or “hooks” to write your letter in response to.
- 3 Create sample “talking points” that you can plug into any letter
- 4 When a good hook appears, write your letter (keep it short) and submit
- 5 Follow up with the paper to ensure they received your letter
- 6 Send your letter to friends and get 3 friends to write letters coming from different angles
- 7 If your letter gets printed, clip it and send it to your public officials and to us, at Holly@chesapeakeclimate.org.
- 8 Repeat

Writing Tips:

- Start with a strong introduction outlining the problem. Remember, values and moral are most compelling.
- Increase your credibility by mentioning anything that makes you especially qualified to write on a topic (i.e. “As a local resident”, “As an asthma sufferer”)
- Speak affirmatively, clearly, and to the point. Avoid run on sentences.
- Personalize it. The sample LTE should be used as a guide to write a personalized letter. When choosing your facts choose information that is relevant to your area.
- Most papers limit LTE's to 250-300 words. Stay within the guidelines to avoid having parts of your letter edited out.
- Keep it simple. Very simple: present the problem and the solution, no more than 2 facts.
- Try to connect your LTE with an article that has been recently printed in the paper. Referring to another article will increase the chances of the LTE being printed.
- Spellcheck, spellcheck, spellcheck! Then thoroughly reread your letter to avoid silly mistakes.

Talking Points:

- Maryland is facing a climate crisis from global warming.
- With over 3,100 miles of coastline, Maryland is the third most vulnerable state in the nation only behind Louisiana and Florida. Even a small change in sea level would be devastating to the Chesapeake Bay.
- Other effects of global warming include: agricultural damage to due irregular weather, health problems, heat waves, ecosystem shifts.
- Maryland is in a unique position to be a **national leader** in the fight against global warming.
- The state must commit to science-based reductions: cut our global warming pollution at least 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2050.
- Bringing our state toward a clean energy future would protect the Chesapeake Bay and position ourselves for strong economic growth well into the future

Sample Letter to the Editor

Title: Voluntary greening will fall far short (Published BaltSun 3-22-2007)

The Sun's article "Green" (March 11) reported on various companies' efforts to address global warming. These voluntary efforts are welcome but will fall woefully short of the progress urgently needed.

Many scientists believe that the world has only about a decade in which to reduce greenhouse gas emissions profoundly if we are to avoid the "tipping point" - the point of no return after which climate change will accelerate irreversibly.

There is little debate within the scientific community that the crisis is already here: Indeed, The Sun's article "Insurers shrink from coasts" (Feb. 18) was a chilling reminder of this problem.

The Global Warming Solutions Act, which is similar to a law enacted in California, is before the Maryland legislature.

It is a good beginning, and we have no time to lose.

Joseph Adams
Towson