

The Cattle Problems As I See Them

Burton Eller

*National Cattlemen's Assn.
425 13th St. N.W., Suite 1020
Washington, D.C. 20004*

1979-It Will Be Another Important Year in Government Affairs

What are 1979 prospects for federal legislation and regulations that will affect cattlemen? What are some of the issues that NCA will be working on?

On this page and subsequent pages, we are presenting some answers to these questions.

Each Congress has two one-year sessions, and 1979 will be only the first year of the 96th Congress. However, there is little doubt that 1979 will be a critical and important year in both the legislative and regulatory areas.

The first session of any Congress generally is less productive because legislation introduced in that year may carry over to the second session. But NCA and the industry still will have to be alert. Even though 1979 is not an election year, we are moving toward the presidential election in 1980. This means Congress will be more volatile in a political sense than it otherwise might be.

What about the basic mood or philosophy in Congress? Proposition 13 in California and similar moves elsewhere seemed to bring a greater awareness, among the electorate, of what has been happening to taxes and the tax dollar. Some of the same trends were apparent in the results of the general election in November.

It appears that, regardless of party label, the 96th Congress will be somewhat more conservative. It may be more careful about what it does with tax dollars, and it may be more wary of legislation which not only tends to increase government costs but which tends to increase the cost of goods and services to the public.

Any legislation of a regulatory nature is likely to be scrutinized more closely. Also, there may be moves to ease certain regulations. For example, there have been predictions of bills to modify the Delaney anti-cancer clause.

More Attention to Regulations

Since regulatory agencies are not always very responsive to the public and what they are doing to the costs of producing beef, for example, Congress may pay more attention to regulatory matters.

At any rate, there is no doubt that most regulations tend to be inflationary. As a result, there will be efforts to minimize the effects of regulations. However, any attack on regulations touches certain groups in our society and economy—and not the least of these

are the consumer and environmental activists and social reformers who want to change the structure of agriculture and our society and who want more rather than less government control. Even though the White House and Congress may appear to be more conservative, the activists in key positions in government, in addition to those outside government, will not be sitting idly by. It will be necessary to maintain vigilance and fight ill-advised regulatory as well as legislative actions.

Public opinion research shows that more people are disillusioned not only with the direct cost of big government but also with its counter-productive effects on the economy. Nevertheless, we must recognize that most people are not likely to move toward substantially less government “protection.”

What we must do now is take advantage of a move which finds the public turning less to government for answers to its problems. We must work harder to keep the regulatory burden from becoming still greater, and gradually it may be possible to reduce the burden.

Changed Attitudes

Going back to Congress—it appears there is a somewhat changed attitude among members of both the House and the Senate. This includes some change among incumbents. Certainly many new members reflect a more conservative philosophy.

However, as we have suggested, cattlemen and NCA must not reduce their vigilance. For one thing, inflation is of increasing concern, and there may be moves to give price and wage control authority to the President. No such authority exists now, but if big labor and the bureaucracy flex their muscles enough, action that could be disastrous to the cattle industry could be threatened. Even though the beef price increase is basically a cyclical development and not a direct result of inflation, there will be a continued tendency to blame the inflation problem not on its basic fiscal causes but on the increase in beef and other prices.

Status of Legislation and Regulations Affecting Cattlemen

The current status of both legislation and regulations which can directly impact beef cattle operators is summarized in the following paragraphs.

By reading this summary, you can get a quick view of major developments on which NCA and its

members and affiliates are working and will be working in the coming year.

We suggest that you retain this information. It will be helpful in future contacts with your Congressman and Senators and with administrative agencies.

Note that the summaries are categorized according to NCA committee subject areas.

The listings represent only some of the many legislative and regulatory problems NCA will be dealing with in the coming year. Additional developments must be monitored constantly by the NCA Washington office and specialists in Denver and Washington.

Animal Health, Diseases & Identification

Brucellosis—The long awaited report from the Brucellosis Technical Commission was completed in 1978. It is a very comprehensive and detailed study of brucellosis and the present eradication program. Although most of the findings have been favorably received, not all of the report has been approved by the industry. The NCA Animal Health Committee will make a thorough review of the study at its meeting in Kansas City.

Two major areas of concern are those dealing with identification and implied warranty. The report recommends that all animals, on change of ownership, have a permanent non-duplicative identification in order to trace movement and origin of the animal. It also recommends that, through implied warranties, the burden of responsibility be shifted more to the seller than has been the case before. NCA has policy opposing any form of mandatory identification. Members of the NCA Subcommittee on brucellosis have already expressed serious reservations on implied warranties. No doubt policy will be developed at the upcoming convention.

DES—An administrative law judge at FDA recommended that the FDA Commissioner go forward with his intent to ban DES. However, the initial decision by the judge raises serious scientific, legal and economic questions. Commissioner Kennedy has not made a decision as of this writing. If he rules against continued use of DES for cattle, industry appeals to the courts are likely.

Antibiotics—The Food and Drug Administration has proposed the elimination of most low-level uses of tetracycline antibiotics (chlortetracycline and oxytetracycline) in livestock feeds. Furthermore, FDA proposes that these drugs at any level be restricted to a veterinarian's prescription. This is being done on the theory that such uses of antibiotics may result in the transfer of antibiotic resistance from animals to humans.

After intense efforts by the livestock industry, FDA granted administrative hearings on the proposed ban. These hearings may begin in late 1979. FDA also agreed to hold its veterinary prescription proposal in abeyance until after the hearings. Further, Congress gave FDA \$250,000 and instructed that further resistance research be done.

Scabies—The winter months of 1977-1978 saw a very dramatic increase in numbers of scabies outbreaks. Many states set up their own dipping and entry requirements for cattle coming from scabies areas. The NCA, at its 1978 convention, urged the eradication of scabies. In May 1978 a subcommittee on scabies was formed. It developed a previously reported eleven-point resolution on scabies, and this resolution was adopted as interim policy by the NCA board. The USDA-APHIS has contracted with the National Academy of Sciences to review research on scabies.

NCA was successful in getting an additional \$3.5 million put into the USDA budget for 1979 for the scabies program. This money is earmarked for more federally inspected dipping facilities and manpower for the federal-state cooperative program to eradicate scabies.

Beef Cattle Research and Improvement

As in the past, the cattle industry must be aggressive with the Administration and Congress to assure its fair share of the government's research dollar. NCA certainly doesn't favor large government spending, but improved food production efficiency has far more than paid for the public's investment in research.

One example of funding problems is the newly constructed meats laboratory at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center at Clay Center, Nebraska. This ultramodern facility, costing millions of dollars, has been empty since its completion because of lack of funds to man and to operate it. This is being done while government budgeters put more money into certain plant and other research.

While this building was empty, the last Congress appropriated \$21 million dollars to build a human nutrition research center at Tufts University in Massachusetts. This was done even though there are many existing facilities for human nutrition research at state universities.

Research Priorities—The committee will be establishing research priorities for the industry, thereby helping government and private research institutions better understand industry needs. NCA surveyed its members in September on research priorities. Results of this survey will be very helpful to the committee and will be reported later in the BBB.

Committee Chairman Dr. W.J. Waldrip serves on the select Animal Health Science Research Advisory Board, which is responsible for allocating USDA research funds for animal health.

Environmental Management

Recycled Animal Manure—In response to an FDA/EPA request, NCA provided the official industry response on the use of recycled animal manure. Follow-up work will continue in 1979.

Pesticides—Continued use of pesticides will be a major issue again this year. Last year, an industry task force reviewed and submitted comments on the rebuttable presumption against registration for 2,4,5-

T. The General Accounting Office recently submitted a report which would subject pesticide substances to the provisions of the Delaney amendment. Expected litigation on the subject may require the cattle industry to seek legislative action.

Feedlot Odors—The committee will remain active in providing technical advice to states seeking remedial legislation to solve problems associated with this aspect of feedlot management.

Animal Damage Control—NCA's subcommittee on animal damage control participated in the Department of Interior study of alternatives for animal damage control programs, and it made specific recommendations for broadening program coverage. The 1979 predator effort will again involve legislative appropriations and testimony on the current environmental impact statements affecting animal damage programs.

Water Pollution—State 208 water quality plans will be implemented this year. NCA will monitor Congress for any attempts to give EPA authority to enforce best management practices, which are now voluntary.

Foreign Trade

Meat Import Law—The cattle industry was successful in 1978 in getting major legislation amending the 1964 Meat Import Act passed by Congress—only to have the bill vetoed by President Carter. The legislation encompassed most of the NCA policies adopted at the 1978 convention. The measure included a counter-cyclical quota formula tied directly to cow slaughter, restrictions on the President's ability to suspend quotas, and inclusion of all forms of fresh, chilled and frozen beef.

The President claimed to have not signed the passed legislation because of the restrictions placed on his authority to suspend quotas. He has stated publicly his support for the counter-cyclical formula. He has also stated his hopes that new legislation with a counter-cyclical formula will be introduced in the 96th Congress. Many members of Congress have already stated their intentions to introduce new legislation.

The NCA membership will decide at its upcoming convention whether to pursue changes in the 1964 Meat Import Act. Some NCA affiliate organizations at annual meetings following the President's veto, recommended that NCA actively seek changes similar to those in the 1978 legislation. Their recommendations stipulate that any new legislation should include limitations on the President's authority to suspend quotas.

Trade Negotiations—The current round of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations is about completed. The President's Special Trade Representative, Ambassador Robert Strauss, intends to present the MTN package to Congress within the next month. As of this writing, NCA does not know what is in the total package for the cattle industry. Until all of the details are presented, we will not be able to make any

recommendations to Congress.

We are aware of the following agreement: Japan has increased its quotas for high quality beef from 16,800 metric tons to 30,800 metric tons. This increase of 14,000 metric tons will be phased in over the next five years. (NCA's recommendations were 50,000 metric tons over the next five years.) NCA also has been informed that certain agreements have been made with the EC which include increased access for high quality beef and reduction of certain tariffs and levies.

Extension of Waiver—The Administration is attempting to get an extension on its waiver to impose countervailing duties on subsidized imported goods. The Trade Act of 1974 granted the President this waiver through Jan. 3, 1979. The Administration wants this waiver extended long enough for Congress to consider and act upon the MTN package. There currently are a small number of items where no countervailing duty is being imposed; none of these is beef or beef products. The NCA Foreign Trade Committee will be briefed on the MTN at the convention by government officials and will develop recommendations for the association.

Export Controls—It can again be anticipated that in the new Congress bills will be introduced to control agricultural exports. These bills will likely be in the form of licensing or mandatory reporting. NCA will remain alert to any such moves by members of Congress or certain agencies and will oppose such action.

Labor

Labor Reform—Despite continued inflationary pressures, big labor can be expected to work just as hard in the 96th Congress as it did in the 95th to "reform" the National Labor Relations Act to expedite union organizational efforts or to repeal Section 14B of the Taft-Harley Act (right-to-work). The marketing component of the national food bill is more than double the farm value of foods (1977), and labor takes the biggest share of the food expenditures pie (32% in 1977).

Boxed Beef—Association policy undoubtedly contributed to progress last year in removing bans on boxed beef from labor contracts in the Kansas City, Omaha and Topeka areas, but more work remains to be done in other areas to relieve this kind of product discrimination.

OSHA—NCA will continue to support efforts by Congress to restrict OSHA's impact on small businesses. Businesses with 10 or fewer employees are currently exempted annually from OSHA enforcement through a rider on the HEW appropriations bill.

Minimum Wage—The last Congress raised the minimum wage levels through 1982 but also established a minimum wage advisory committee to study the impact of such increases on over-all employment. Bill Byrum, farmer-cattle feeder from Michigan and executive staff officer of the Michigan Cattlemen's Assn., serves on the committee.

Foreign Nationals—Aside from specific legislation, NCA will study the foreign national situation to seek ways to allow cattlemen quicker and better access to such persons as part of the labor force.

Lumping—Legislation is expected to be reintroduced to prohibit the payment for unloading trucks at warehouse docks under threat of delays, force or violence.

Marketing

Beef Pricing and Market News Reporting—Much of the legislative attention of the new Congress in the area of marketing will undoubtedly focus on trade practices in the marketing of beef and on beef pricing and market news reporting. Rep. Smith (D-Ia.) will again introduce legislation in the new Congress. Also, legislation will most likely be introduced addressing what some Congressmen view as unhealthy concentration in the cattle and beef industry.

The study on beef pricing released in December by Packers and Stockyards, USDA, the “investigation” carried on by the House Committee on Small Business and joint venture and acquisition moves in the packing industry prompted expressions of concern by some Congressmen.

Mortgaged Livestock—The USDA Taskforce addressing the problem for commission firms, auction markets, dealers, and packers in buying or selling livestock on which there are liens and security interests will most likely recommend steps be taken within USDA to correct the problems involving the Farmers Home Administration. Legislation may also be introduced to attempt in some way to set aside the liability faced by buyers and sellers in this regard.

Farm Bargaining—Farm bargaining bills pushed by the general farm organizations will again be introduced in the new Congress. Processors and distributors are organizing a strong opposition move. NCA predecessors opposed previous moves to legislate compulsory bargaining.

Inflation and Wage and Price Controls—President Carter’s authority to use government procurement powers to enforce the wage and price guidelines is being challenged by the paperworkers’ union. Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.) and 9 other U.S. representatives and Sen. Joh Heinz (R-Pa.) joined in the action, by filing an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief.

Inflation undoubtedly will continue to receive “front and center” attention. It is possible that Congress will choose to enact, or the President will seek, some kind of standby wage and price control authority if the so-called voluntary program does not work. If there were controls, raw agricultural commodities might be exempted, and the controls would be on food industry margins. This approach has been followed previously. Under the current voluntary program, farm products are not covered, but processor and retailer margins are.

Private Lands and Water Usage

160 Acre Limitation—Both regulations and legislation are expected to address the Interior

Department’s proposal to limit ownership of reclamation land under the 1902 Reclamation Act.

Preservation of Prime Ag Lands—Although prime agricultural lands legislation died in the 95th Congress, the issue is expected to surface again this year. Groups such as the American Land Forum are expected to push for laws for retention of prime ag lands. NCA opposes what appears to be an effort to achieve national land use control policy.

Natural Diversity Legislation—Under the guise of “protection of natural ecosystems for future generations,” it appears that some form of natural diversity legislation will surface again (it was defeated in the 95th Congress), with strong backing from environmentalist groups.

National Water Policy—The President will begin implementation of policies to review and recommend changes in national water policy. This issue will involve state water rights, small water-shed programs and restrictive conservation programs affecting irrigation.

Eminent Domain—One legislative proposal which died in the 95th Congress, but which will be back in the 96th Congress, is the coal slurry pipeline, involving eminent domain and state water rights.

National Trails—The expansion of the national trails system (several measures did pass in the 95th Congress) will continue in the new Congress. Some legislation will seek to establish a Tall Grass Prairie National Park, which would take prime private grasslands in Kansas.

Product Research, Promotion and Consumer Relations

“Beefendum”—NCA will be joined by other organizations in conducting a major effort in 1979 to obtain a favorable vote in a beef referendum. Passage is a must in order to provide for badly needed beef research, information and education.

Diet-Health—The controversy over diet-health relationships continues. Some advocates of the relationship, including the diet-fat-cholesterol-heart disease theory, continue their attacks on beef. Persons in Congress and administrative agencies of the federal government are among those with an anti-meat bias. Evidence continues to grow that the alleged relationship is unfounded, but diet modification advocates in Washington and the federal government continue their pressure. Stronger efforts at diet modification, as a prelude to nutrition policy and agricultural policy, are expected.

Labeling—Congress and regulatory agencies are expected to put strong emphasis on labeling of food products for nutrient content. Such action can have pluses or minuses for the cattle industry. NCA effort needs to include initial input to maximize the positive and minimize the negative.

Food Advertising—The Federal Trade Commission is expected to propose that television advertising be banned when the majority of the audience is young children—supposedly too young to understand the

difference between a commercial message and programming. Animal food products, including red meats, could be prime targets because of alleged health dangers of these products.

Beef Prices—Inflation will be a major concern to consumers and the federal government in the year ahead. Beef supplies will continue to decline; prices will average higher; and some persons may turn to Washington for alleged relief. NCA will continue to counter any public and government overreaction with factual information about why beef prices are increasing. NCA also will continue to put beef prices in perspective—in relation to other items.

Consumer Protection Agency—Efforts to legislatively establish a Consumer Protection Agency have been defeated over the years, but advocates may push for such legislation again.

Product Standards, Labeling and Inspection

Foreign Meat Inspection—NCA will continue to support legislation that would require imported meats, meat products and foreign meat processing facilities to be subjected to the same strict inspection and sanitation standards required of domestically produced meats. A related effort would be to require the labeling of such meats as being imported.

Meat Product Standards and Safety—The Delaney clause of the food additives amendment requires the Food and Drug Administration to ban any additive that is found to induce cancer in man or animals. The amendment needs updating so that the determination of whether a given substance should be allowed in the food supply is based on appropriate scientific investigation and tests rather than on the degree of refinement of the detection devices and procedures.

Beef Grading—Proposals over the next couple of years will focus on three main aspects of grading: (1) Revision of standards (procedures) for slaughter cattle to provide for more uniformity of grading and to minimize opportunities for mistakes, fraud and corruption. (2) Revision of standards for feeder cattle to improve communications between buyer and seller, as an aid to market reporting, and to provide some measure of predictability of the animal's slaughter potential. (3) Exploration of new grading methods to improve objectivity and to provide the consumer with better information indicative of the product's eating quality and value and to reward cattlemen for producing superior products.

Public Lands

Rangelands Improvement Act—The livestock industry was successful in getting a statutory fee formula for grazing enacted during the 95th Congress. The 1979 efforts will concentrate on implementation of this Act (PL 95-514). This will include new fees in March 1979 for BLM, Forest Service and National Grasslands; new stewardship programs for cooperative working agreements between public lands users and federal-state agencies; improved wild horse and burro management programs; and the

seeking of authorized funding levels for rangeland improvements.

Wilderness—With the recent Forest Service announcement of RARE II proposals, NCA can expect many proposed changes to come before Congress—which must decide on the final wilderness areas. That effort is soon to be followed by BLM wilderness review proposals, due early in 1980. NCA will be working in 1979 to establish a firmer cooperative network of communication and resource information with major associations dealing in rangeland resources.

Government Reorganization—NCA will work hard to oppose the President's proposed reorganizational plan which would decrease the effectiveness of USDA by transferring the Forest Service and the Soil Conservation Service to the Department of Interior. (Also see Miscellaneous category below.)

Environmental Impact Statements—Some 153 environmental impact statements on public lands are required by court mandate (NRDC vs. Andrus). NCA will continue efforts to provide the best technical information available to state affiliates in their efforts to bring balance in the preparation of EIS's in their area.

Taxation

Carryover Basis—Legislation will be introduced in the new Congress to repeal the carryover basis provisions; also, there will be other bills which will provide for the modification thereof, rather than outright repeal. Al Ullman (D-Ore.), chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee, has taken a strong position against repeal, as has the Administration through Treasury; however, Treasury has given some recent indication of a willingness to talk about the issue.

Special Use Valuation—NCA will spearhead legislation to amend the provisions for farm and ranch property valuation (estate), including repeal of the \$500,000 limitation, reduction of recapture period, and modification of material participation requirements.

Proposed regulations are pending on special use valuation on which NCA has recommended, and will continue to push for, a number of changes. Further action should be forthcoming early in 1979.

Regulations—1976 and 1978 Acts—Very few regulations to implement the 1976 Tax Reform Act have been published even in proposed form. No doubt time delays will continue, but additional proposed rulemaking can be expected to be forthcoming this year. The '78 Act changed certain of the '76 provisions, of course.

Tax Reform—The new Congress will not be in a frame of mind to consider tax reform at this session.

Technical Corrections to the 1978 Act will be considered, however.

Fringe Benefits—Congress will attempt to clarify, and perhaps further restrict, the tax treatment of fringe benefits and business deductions.

Windfall Profits Tax—Further developments in oil pricing will likely prompt certain congressmen to seek a windfall profits tax.

Social Security—Review of the Social Security system, both taxes and benefits, will likely be a priority issue for some congressmen. There will be a search for ways to supplement social security taxes. One of the prime targets already receiving attention from Senate and House committee chairmen Long and Ullman is a value-added tax.

Value-Added Tax—Trial balloons being sent up by chairmen Long and Ullman indicate introduction of legislation to create a value-added tax (federal sales tax) to supplement the income tax and the social security tax. This would allow some additional tax cuts and a holding of the line on social security taxes and still take as much or more out of the pockets of taxpayers.

Miscellaneous—Attempts will again be made in this Congress to exempt farm and ranch trucks from highway use taxes and certain trailers and semi-trailers from the excise tax.

Transportation

Deregulation of Railroads and Trucks—Battle lines are being drawn on the Administration plan to make transportation deregulation a high priority item. Labor unions and regulated trucking firms have given notice of their strong opposition to tearing down the protective regulatory walls of government. Both legislation and proposed regulation changes are expected during the coming year. Proposals to increase railroad rates will also be in the spotlight.

Truck Lengths and Weights—Sen. Kennedy will no doubt renew his attempt to limit truck lengths and weights and to effectively ban twin trailers in certain states where they are now allowed.

Locks and Dam 26—The 95th Congress authorized the replacement of Locks and Dam 26 on the Mississippi River at Alton, Ill., and the imposition of a waterways use (fuel) tax; however, the new Congress will need to provide funds and otherwise assure implementation of the legislation.

Truck Drivers' Hours—The Dept. of Transportation's proposed revisions of regulations governing driving hour limitations are pending. While the proposal does not extend coverage of the limitations to truck drivers not now covered, it would impose additional restrictions which would be very costly and grossly impractical, especially with respect to perishable commodities and products.

Rural Transportation Advisory Task Force—A task force is being established jointly by the Depts. of Agriculture and Transportation to study and report on movement of agricultural commodities and transportation needs of agriculture. The report may prompt both the introduction of legislation and proposals to change regulations.

Energy—Congress will wrestle with various energy proposals during coming sessions, relating to the development of alternative sources, imports of oil,

deregulation of prices, energy priorities, and the like. The 95th Congress, in the energy bill that was passed, failed to come to grips with several tough decisions.

The Secretary of Agriculture is in rulemaking process for the purpose of certifying to the Secretary of Energy and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission the natural gas requirements of essential agricultural uses for full food and fiber production, as provided in Sec. 401(c) of the Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978.

Miscellaneous Subjects

Senate Filibuster—Senate Rule 22, governing "extended debate," has again come under fire, particularly from liberals who wanted to pass such legislation as office of consumer advocacy and labor reform. The Senate leadership—Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.)—is expected to attempt to limit filibuster techniques, originated by the late Sen. James Allen (D-Ala.), by limiting each Senator's allowed time following a vote to end a filibuster. Others will likely press for a sliding scale system by which debate (the filibuster) may eventually be cut off by a majority vote. A majority of 3/5 of the entire Senate is now required. This issue promises to be one of the first big battles of the 96th Congress.

Federal Budget—Attempts will be made via constitutional amendment and/or other avenues to get a handle on federal spending and bring it in line with revenues collected—toward balancing the federal budget. Certain persons, in and out of Congress, will continue to present strong opposition to such attempts.

Public Participation—Activists will continue to press for more and clearer legislative authority and regulatory sanction for the federal government to pay witnesses, to subsidize activist groups through the grant process, and to pay legal fees for attorneys to represent them in the governmental process.

Government Reorganization—Both legislative proposals and additional reorganizational plans from the President will be forthcoming. The Administration is expected to push restructuring of the Depts. of Agriculture and Interior—moving of the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service from USDA to Interior and possibly changing the name to Dept. of Natural Resources; and moving food regulatory functions from the Food and Drug Administration to USDA and possibly changing its name to Dept. of Food and Agriculture. Congress will have its own ideas of how reorganization should be carried out.

Government Regulation—The movement toward lifting burdensome and needless government regulation from the backs of business and the citizenry will gain some momentum during the coming year. Both the Congress and the Administration will give the issue attention, along with the business community and agriculture. Tangible progress will be hard to come by, however, in the face of opposition from the bureaucrats affected, labor unions, consumer and environmental activists, and, in some cases, the

regulated entities themselves. Deregulation proposals will likely range from transportation rates to the legalized labor union monopoly.

Tips on Writing Your Congressman

What if every NCA member wrote to or called his Congressman or Senators in 1979? The result undoubtedly would be beneficial to the member and to the industry.

You are urged to write at least one letter to one or more of your members of Congress, on an issue of importance to you.

When writing to your lawmakers, address them as follows:

The Honorable John Doe U.S. House of Representatives Washington, D.C. 20515	The Honorable John Doe United States Senate Washington, D.C. 20510
--	--

Dear Mr. Doe:

Dear Senator Doe:

Here are tips to follow when you write letters:

1. Write on personal or business letterhead if possible.
2. Be sure your return address is on your letter, not just the envelope.
3. Identify your subject clearly. State the name of the legislation; give the bill number if possible.
4. State your reason for writing; give your personal experience; tell how the issue will affect you and your area.
5. Be reasonable. Don't ask the impossible. Don't threaten.
6. Ask your legislator to state his or her position on the issue.
7. Consider the importance of timing. Generally, but not always, try to write your position when a bill is in committee. Watch for NCA requests to contact your members of Congress.
8. Thank your lawmaker if he or she pleases you with a vote on an issue. If a vote is contrary to your position, don't hesitate to note that also.