

Why should I build a relationship with my Elected Official?



By inviting your elected officials to visit a solar facility or installation in their district, you can begin to establish a meaningful relationship with them and their staff. These visits demonstrate the impact of your company, and the industry overall, on the local community. Tours at your facility, office, or project site provide a great opportunity for your elected official to meet you and your employees and can be a good venue to discuss your company's issues and concerns in depth. By seeing the operations first-hand, your elected official will have a better understanding of how certain policies can impact the industry and affect potential job growth in their district or state.

Federal policy has far-reaching effects on the health of any industry, and solar is no exception. This summer, the Senate continues to work to advance a reconciliation package that offers a once-in-a-generation

opportunity for policies that would accelerate solar growth. Demonstrating the economic, climate, and jobs benefits of solar is critical to ensuring that policymakers prioritize these investments.

You can be an emissary for our industry by sharing and reinforcing the message that investing in clean energy is a win for the economy, fighting inflation, energy security, and climate action. Hosting site visits or other events is a key element of this campaign. After their visit, your elected official will have a story that they can share with media, stakeholders, and their colleagues to strengthen support of solar energy. **SEIA staff can help you set up a congressional site visit. We will be in touch throughout the process.**

Find your elected officials:



Scheduling the Event

- Contact the congressional office to schedule a date for the site visit with the elected official. Congressional schedules are tight, and it can take several inquiries to get a response. Given this, it is best to contact the office several weeks in advance. **SEIA staff can help you make contact or reach out on your behalf - see contact info below.**
- Invite the elected official, but also consider requesting the attendance of their Chief of Staff or State/District Director. These are also good people to develop relationships with, and they are more accessible on a day-to-day basis than the elected official themselves.
- Consider whether you want to invite partner organizations and community stakeholders. By including other community stakeholders, you can help highlight different aspects of your project



If you are interested in hosting a solar site visit, please contact SEIA's Legislative Campaign Liaison: **Scott Greenler - sgreenler@seia.org**

Promotion

A congressional site visit is a great opportunity to help get the word out about your company and your contribution to the clean energy transition. However, it's always a good idea to get approval from the legislator's office in advance of the event regarding how you intend to promote the event – before, during, and after. With approval from the congressional office press team, you can:

- Invite local media to the event. In coordination with the office's press team, reach out to invite local TV stations and newspapers to cover the event.
- Make sure you consider locations with good backgrounds for photos
- Post or live stream on social media. Take photos of your own to send to SEIA and reporters who may be interested in writing a recap of the event.

Often the Congressional office will have a good list of local media contacts, and will lead in this effort

Develop a Plan for Your Event

- Determine who will be your main speaker during the visit. Oftentimes the Owner, CEO, or Executive Director is a good fit for this role. Your main speaker should be able to easily provide details about the company, site, and any other relevant talking points.
- Also consider members of your team that have valuable stories to share. Identify employees who are willing to talk about their job experience and help prepare them with some things to say.
- Remember that the most important message to convey is your company's (and your own personal) story.
- You will want to ensure that the visit is concise and impactful. Write out a list of discussion topics for the visit and consider locations that illustrate key points. You may want to consider including:
 - Your mission statement/what your company does
 - Interesting fact from your company background
 - Number of MW in state/district
 - Number of Jobs in state/district
 - Economic investment in state/district
 - Projects in development in state/district

SEIA can help provide talking points, data, and other background material in advance of the meeting

The Ask

- Get acquainted with the elected official's positions on solar policies, and where you can ask for further support. **SEIA can provide you with your legislator's record on pro-solar policies.**
- Be prepared with a specific legislative ask for how your legislator can best continue to support solar energy. **SEIA can help you identify a strategic legislative ask.**
- Focusing on solar policy is important, but it's ok if the elected official wants to talk about other things as well. The goal of the visit should be to build a relationship with your elected official.
- To help build a relationship, you can offer yourself as a resource to the elected official and their office. Your expertise and community involvement are valuable!
- Don't feel that you have to be an expert on specific policy initiatives. Most elected officials are generalists. If you don't know the answer to a question, just say so. Offer to look into the question and get back to them—which is an excellent opportunity to stay in touch and create an on-going dialogue with their office.

Following Up

- Post on social media. If you have active social media accounts, post a picture or two from the event, and tag the Congressperson. Write about what you discussed and thank them for their support of solar energy.
 - Follow up with the elected official by email after the event to thank them for their time, and for their continued support of the solar industry. This is a great time to re-iterate your policy ask!

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