Before Getting Started


2. **Know the names, background, and contact information for your Senator and Representative.** You may look this up at: [https://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov](https://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov).

3. **Contact Your Legislator**

   3.1 **If requesting an appointment** to advocate for our issues (telephone conversation or Zoom/FaceTime call for example), see the sample email below for this purpose**. Keep in mind, the Senator’s or Representative’s Legislative Aides are extremely helpful and knowledgeable and will be providing guidance to the Legislator.

4. **Introduce yourself and GCV** (the size and impact of our organization to the Commonwealth of Virginia). Be sure to say if you are their constituent.

5. **Focus your message** (a few sentences for social media or a few short paragraphs for a telephone or Zoom conversation).

6. **Have a personal connection or story** relating to the issue to share.

7. **If time permits, ask the Legislators what Conservation issue is of most concern to them** and how we might be of help.

8. **Thank them** for their time and work on behalf of the environment. A follow-up note is always appreciated.

   **Subject: Constituent Request for Telephone or Zoom/Facetime meeting, good start to email/letter**

   **Dear [Senator or Delegate],**

   I am your constituent in [location] as well as a member of the Garden Club of Virginia (GCV). I am excited by the opportunity to meet and discuss the 2021 GCV legislative priorities and [see the intersections with your own efforts or I would like to bring something important to your attention regarding: stormwater, for example].

   The Garden Club of Virginia is an active association of 48 Clubs, whose members together form a group of more than 3,500 civic leaders from around the Commonwealth who celebrate the beauty of the land, conserve the gifts of nature, and challenge future generations to build on this heritage. The GCV is the state’s first environmental organization.

   For 87 years, GCV has hosted the nation’s only statewide house and garden tour. The economic impact of Historic Garden Week over the last 50 years is estimated to be over $450 million.

   Please let me know if you are available [propose preferred date and an alternate] for a brief conversation as we collaborate to meet our mutual goals.

   Best,

   [Name] and (ADDRESS)
   [Phone number]
   [Email]

   **For additional assistance see Virginia Conservation Network’s How to Advocate from a Distance:**