

## FORMAT:

- Letter is **addressed to a leader**: senators, congressional representatives, state senator, governor or mayor (for help with locating this information, see [HERE](#)). Header contains full name and address of your leader
- **First paragraph** describes who you are (including your 'credentials' and relevant experience/expertise), mentions that you are a voting constituent or where you are from, and states why you are writing (highlight your "ask")
- **Second paragraph** provides details and facts about the issue, including why it is important to you and to the people living in this region. This section makes it clear that you have done your research and you are an informed citizen. You will demonstrate that you are informed by presenting at least four concrete facts with citations from a minimum of three sources.
- **Closing paragraph** describes specific actions you want taken and identifies a specific bill or resolution (if relevant). Closing sentence includes a request for a response
- Letter is **formatted neatly** and uses typography for emphasis (underlining or bold face, bullets, etc. - but does not overdo it)

\*\*\*Before you submit, read these exemplary letters to a leader written by former students\*\*\*

## EXAMPLE LETTERS

*The letters below use very clear formatting and typography to get the point across. A busy staffer could read only the bold parts and understand the most important points of the letters. The language is professional and respectful, and the tone gets across a sense of urgency without sounding alarmist. It is also effective to list WA-specific facts that will be of concern to the representative's constituents. (Minor edits have been made to preserve the authors' anonymity)*

Senator Maria Cantwell

511 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell,

I am a student in the Geology Department at Western Washington University where my research has a focus on glaciers and climate in the Pacific Northwest. I am a constituent of yours voting from my hometown of <town>, WA. As an earth and climate scientist, President Trump's

proposed budget cuts to a wide variety of scientific organizations are deeply concerning and will be harmful for many of your constituents. **I am writing to request that you fight against the proposed budget cuts for the US Geological Survey in the 2018 budget.**

While specific budget numbers for organizations within the DOI have not been finalized, the USGS is slated to receive a 15% cut in their budget. Washington state faces a wide spectrum of geologic hazards and is particularly susceptible to changes in water resource availability due to climate change. The USGS provides critical research on topics such as water resources and geologic hazards, making the USGS in Washington an invaluable resource to residents of Washington State.

**While we live in a beautiful area, our coasts, mountains, glaciers and rivers pose certain risks as well as rewards.** The USGS research helps to mitigate the following issues that Washington faces:

- Washington state has over 3000 miles of coast line, which is susceptible to coast erosion, flooding, and saltwater intrusion of coastal aquifers.
- Six major volcanic peaks are part of the Washington Cascades, which pose risks of lahars (volcanic landslides), outburst floods, and eruption.
- 450 km<sup>2</sup> of glaciers and permanent snowpack in Washington state provide water to us for agriculture and energy production in the summer months when rain is scarce. As the glaciers dwindle, so does our summer water supply.
- Our rivers are vital to Washington agriculture but require an intimate understanding in order to effectively manage dams and flow rates, and mitigate flooding risks.

These are issues that the USGS addresses through its research at five offices in Washington State through programs like the Cascade Volcano Observatory and the Washington Water Science Center. **Budget cuts to the USGS will reduce the ability of Washington State to mitigate natural hazards and manage resources.**

The USGS is vital to Washington state, so **please work to prevent or minimize cuts to the USGS's 2018 budget.** Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your service as my representative. I would like to hear your thoughts on the issue and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

<name>

<address>

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The Honorable Patty Murray

154 Russell Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Patty Murray,

My name is <name>, I am an student at Western Washington University studying physics and astronomy. This letter is in regards to the recent proposed budget cuts on NASA, specifically the Office of Education. In the last decade we have been experiencing unprecedented development in science and technology, and these cuts will be a step backwards that will have widespread negative effects on the future of scientific growth for our country. As a registered voter and constituent, I ask that you **vote against the proposed budget changes to NASA and specifically the removal of the *Office of Education*.**

The NASA Office of Education's mission is to accomplish three things:

- Strengthen and maintain the high quality of NASA employees.
- Attract students and children to STEM fields and promote diversity within those fields.
- Continue to grow American interest in NASA missions.

With the removal of this department, we will lose countless scholarships and support. In Washington State alone there are 11 universities, 1 school district, and 2 museums that are partnered with the NASA Office of Education through the WSGC (Washington Space Grant Consortium). In 2015, 90% of the 1127 alumni who were supported by WSGC remained in STEM fields. These students, with the help of the Office of Education, are able to pursue a career in Washington State. If our country maintains a vested interest in science and STEM fields, we will continue to lead the world in scientific achievement and research. I believe that now, more than ever, it is critical for the public image of NASA to be one of scientific growth and achievement.

Thank you for considering my requests regarding the proposed budget cuts to NASA and the removal of the Office of Education within NASA. In light of the recent success of the March for Science, with an estimated 20,000 in attendance for Seattle alone, I believe that the Washington state community shares my concerns on the proposed changes of this crucial program. I hope that you **vote against the implementation of this budget, and seek to strengthen NASA through the rest of this and future terms.** I look forward to hearing back from you on this pressing issue.

Sincerely,

<name>

<address>