

Write for the Climate

Developed by CCL Canada - Nelson-West Kootenay Chapter

When several members of our chapter attended our annual lobbying days in Ottawa in 2017, we heard from Members of Parliament from all parties that they rarely receive mail from Canadians supporting climate action. They would like to act more boldly, but they need evidence that constituents are in support.

So our chapter set to writing a lot of letters. Then we wondered how we could engage the broader community. We decided to try a letter writing event. At the first three hour event at our local library 142 letters were written. We plan to run our letter writing event quarterly. We've also decided to share this idea and materials so that more letters could be written across Canada.

We welcome your feedback and would love to hear from you if you try this out.

Contact: ccl.westkootenay@gmail.com

Goals of this outreach event:

- Educate local citizens about climate change and how they can influence elected officials
- Ensure that our elected officials hear from as many people as possible on climate change
- Raise the profile of your local group or CCL chapter
- Engage your volunteers in a fairly simple, low cost and interesting event

Before the event

- Select a date that doesn't conflict with other local events, especially other letter writing events
- Plan for about three hours and staying a bit later to wrap up
- Book a location such as a public library or coffee shop where it is easy for people to write letters - also consider schools, church gatherings, environmental events
- Ask if you can make photocopies during the event - this makes the cc's easy and letter writers can prepare and stuff their own envelopes
- Ensure you have 2-3 volunteers for the event
- Prepare and circulate a press release and consider an ad in your local paper - see samples
- Advertise in social media, community event calendars, local radio shows, put up posters, circulate info by emails through your networks
- If at a library, give them some posters and a short piece for their newsletter
- Prepare about 3 sample letters with talking points and include who they should be sent to (appropriate Minister, opposition critics, your local MP) - see samples which **you are free to use**)
- Print about 4 copies of each letter and enclose in plastic sleeves
- Prepare a large font list of your topics/sample letter to tape to the table so people know the choices - many like to write on all topics.
- Print labels with "House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6" to simplify addressing envelopes
- Collect supplies in a container that is easy to transport and have ready for next time - see list

At the event

- Encourage letter writers to photocopy cc's if that service is available on site and address and stuff their own envelopes
- Collect envelopes to mail yourself - this will allow you to check address and tally numbers
- Circulate around see who might need help - see letter writing tips
- Take lots of photos, asking permission - see photo permission form
- Have some colouring materials on hand to keep young children happy while parents write

After the event

- Send a thank you to those who provided a space for the event
- Count the number of letters per MP to make your CCL field report easier - all the letters from the event can be submitted as one report
- Do your field report - one as an outreach event and one for the letters (note you have to be on CCL Community to enter field reports)
- If you noticed any corrections needed in your letter templates, edit while still fresh in your mind
- Debrief what you might do differently, and brainstorm ideas for your next event/location
- Consider an op ed for your local paper about your successful event