


How to Write an Effective Lobbying Letter



Address lobbying correspondence to the author of the bill with copies to members of the committee hearing the bill and to your local legislator.

Use your business letterhead when communicating your position on a bill.

May 8, 2008

TO: Members of the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee

SUBJECT: **SB 1055 (MACHADO) – TAXATION: CANCELLATION OF INDEBTEDNESS: MORTGAGE DEBT FORGIVENESS. SET FOR HEARING MAY 12, 2008. SUPPORT**


We **SUPPORT SB 1055** (Machado), which would give financial relief to troubled borrowers by excluding debt forgiven by a lender from a borrower's taxable income.

SB 1055 would help to address California's current mortgage market situation and ailing economy by helping borrowers whose lenders agree to a short sale, a short payoff, a loan modification or a loan refinance in which some or all of the borrower's original debt obligation is forgiven. Rather than taxing that forgiven debt as income, this bill would instead allow borrowers to exclude the forgiven debt for state income tax purposes.

The tax relief provided by this bill would be limited in scope, applying only to debt forgiven in 2007 and 2008, in acknowledgment of California's current budget shortfall. We believe that such targeted relief would provide tangible financial benefits to troubled borrowers while also helping California conform to federal tax law.

For all of these reasons, we **SUPPORT SB 1055** (Machado).

Sincerely,



Robert Callahan
Policy Analyst

cc: The Honorable Mike Machado
Mike Proso, Office of the Governor
Frank Prewoznik, Assembly Republican Caucus
Michele Justin, Assembly Republican Caucus
Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee

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Keep your letter short. A succinct, one-page letter will have more impact than a longer one. If you have documentation of the bill's impact on your business, enclose it, but keep the letter short.

Indicate immediately which bill you're addressing by its bill number (AB if it originates in the Assembly, SB if it originates in the Senate), by an identifying phrase and whether you support or oppose the bill. This will help legislative staff in routing your letter.

Use boldface type, underlining or italics sparingly to emphasize important points.

Act promptly. Too many good lobbying letters arrive after a vote already has been taken.

In many committees, staff members file correspondence according to the date of the bill's next hearing. If you know the date, be sure to include it. Including such information will help ensure your letter is read in time to have an impact.

Be sure to make clear for whom you're speaking.

Get to the point of your letter quickly: your support for or opposition to the bill.

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Be sure to be clear about what action you want the legislator to take.

Provide concrete, credible information on the impact of proposed legislation on your business.

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If you have a personal relationship with the legislator, take a moment to write a quick, handwritten note to draw his or her attention to your letter.

Later . . . If the legislator does what you ask, be sure to send a thank you letter.

Elected officials prefer to hear from persons in authority rather than just from staff members. A letter will have more impact if the business owner or person in a management position signs the letter.

Be sure to send a copy of your letter to the Governor. Also please send a copy to the CalChamber staff members assigned to the bill so they can include information on your support or opposition in their committee testimony.

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