

How to Testify at a Montgomery County Delegation Hearing

Any individual or group wishing to testify at Montgomery County Delegation public hearings will need to

Sign up by 12:00 p.m. on the day of each Rockville hearing; to sign up use the link(s): [priorities hearing](#) or [bill hearing](#) or call: 410-841-3010/301-858-3010, or e-mail: saha@mlis.state.md.us. If the hearing is in Annapolis, sign up at least 30 minutes prior to the hearing.

Written testimony is not required, but if you choose to bring it, bring 40 copies at least one hour prior to the start of the hearing. The bill number should be clearly indicated in the upper right hand corner of the testimony. If submitting written testimony, you may e-mail it at least 24 hours in advance (72 hours if the hearing is on a Monday) of the hearing start time to saha@mlis.state.md.us to allow time for copying and distribution. If you choose to bring the 40 copies of your testimony to the hearing, the copies must be delivered to hearing staff at least one hour prior to the start of the hearing.

Testimony timing: Individuals will have two minutes to speak, representatives of organizations will have three minutes to speak, and elected officials will have five minutes to speak. Organizations will be limited to one representative speaking for three minutes. If you have a last minute one-for-one witness substitution, please tell the Chair or staff prior to the start of the hearing.

Please note that the order of the bills being heard is at the discretion of the Chair and is not necessarily based on numerical order.

Sample Legislative Testimony Template

Always be sincere and respectful. Tell YOUR story – why this matters to you – but make clear what you want your legislators to do.

Speaking time is limited to 2 minutes for individuals; representatives of organizations have 3 minutes. So time yourself reading your statement to make sure it's the right length.

Below is an outline you can follow and put in your own words:

INTRODUCE YOURSELF. Who are you, where do you live, and what makes it special.

BE FRIENDLY. If you know any of the legislators or know who yours are, greet them as you make your remarks. It personalizes things and will get their attention focused on you.

TELL THEM WHY YOU ARE THERE. It could be as simple as “My neighborhood is by the highway and I’m worried about homes being torn down to make room for a wider highway.”

WHAT CONCERNS YOU ABOUT THE PROJECT? There are several aspects of the Governor’s proposal which are problematic. It threatens homes and neighborhoods. Widening roads isn’t a solution to congestion – history shows it just attracts more cars. Public transit options seem to be an afterthought. Using private financing raises the costs and puts a lot of restrictions on State decision-making and authority. We should not commit \$11 billion to any transportation project that isn’t the result of a comprehensive, thoughtful planning process.

WHAT DO YOU WANT THEM TO DO? Make sure you emphasize you want their full attention on addressing this problem and protecting your home and neighborhood. You don’t need to have a specific legislative solution in mind – that’s their job to figure out.

If you’ve never testified before, remember: Their job is to represent you. This is a forum the Montgomery Delegation arranged in order for you to come and speak to them. So be confident, clear, and compelling!