



# HOW TO WRITE A PUBLIC COMMENT

Administrative agencies serve three main functions. In their quasi-legislative function, agencies create regulations through the agency rule-making process. In their executive function, agencies enforce the regulations they create and laws created by legislatures. Finally, in their quasi-judicial function, agencies adjudicate violations of regulations or laws they oversee.

Public comments can bring research and expertise to bear on legislative decision making, proposed rule changes, and to the regulations created and enforced by local, state, and federal agencies as they implement the policies and programs within their charge.

## TIPS FOR WRITING A PUBLIC COMMENT

- **Read and understand the proposed rule change you are commenting on.** Feel free to reach out to the agency if anything is unclear.
- **If a rule raises many issues, do not feel obligated to comment on every one.** Select those issues most relevant to your expertise, or those you are best able to comment on. Remember to include the page number, column, and paragraph citation from the document to clarify what your comment references.
- **Support your comment with relevant data, facts, or expert opinion.** Gather background materials that support your main points regarding the regulation. Any attachments included in your comment must be cited specifically and be accompanied by a request that the resource be read in addition to your comment.
- **Identify your credentials and experience that may distinguish your comments from others.** If you are commenting in an area in which you have relevant personal or professional experience, say so.
- **Keep your comment well-organized.** Use subheadings and bolded lettering to draw attention to your key points. If you have more than one major concern about the regulation, you might also include a summary section to start your comment.
- **Use jargon free language and keep your comment concise.** Use topic statements to begin each new section, and concluding statements to end. Although there is no minimum or maximum page number for public comments, remember to be purposeful with your words.

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- If you are uploading multiple comments, it is suggested that you use the following titles:
  - Attachment1\_[insert document title]
  - Attachment2\_[insert document title]
  - Attachment3\_[insert document title]
- Remember that comment periods for federal agencies close at 11:59 pm eastern time on the date comments are due.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT FORMAT**

Most often for comment on rule changes in federal agencies, you will submit your public comment via <https://www.regulations.gov>. Below is a template you may use for your own public comments.

[date]

[your name]

[position]

[school/organization]

[address]

**RE: [Name of Agency, "Name of Regulation"]**

Dear [Agency or Agency Secretary]

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on [Regulation Title]. I am [1-2 sentences introducing yourself and your credentials, as they relate to the comment you are writing].

[Body of your comment crafted with the tips above in mind].

Sincerely,

[Your Name]