



Writing Regulatory Comments: Quick Tips

Follow this guide to draft effective comments that impact public policy and elevate your organization's position.

Overview

Writing regulatory comments, like formal letters to lawmakers, serves two key purposes: shaping policy through the rulemaking process and documenting your organization's position on a specific issue. Both goals are equally important and should guide your approach to drafting regulatory comments. Follow the tips below to craft comments that are effective and leave an impact.

General Process and Best Practices

- **Stay within the scope.** The regulatory and rulemaking processes follow a strict protocol, similar to a legal case. It is crucial to understand the stage and scope of the process for which comments are being accepted. Well-written and informative comments may be disregarded if they fall outside the scope of the current stage.
- **Be mindful of submission rules.** Regulatory comments have strict submission requirements, and will be due by a certain date and must be submitted through a specific process. Before drafting, be sure to understand the submission deadline and other requirements to ensure that your comments will be considered.
- **Consider length and format.** The length and format of your document are important for maximum impact. While regulatory comments tend to be more technical and longer, it's essential to clearly state your main points in the opening paragraphs. Use the rest of the document to provide supporting technical details and expand your argument. Consider using bullet points or numbered lists to ensure clarity and readability.
- **Consult others.** Consulting with partnering organizations and stakeholders in the regulatory process is a best practice to ensure your comments are on-message, within scope, and aligned with others. Sometimes echoing other organizations' comments is effective; other times, offering a different perspective may be more impactful. Coordination helps strengthen the overall response. If possible, it may be helpful to consult with subject matter experts to ensure that any technical information is correct and well presented.
- **Elevate your work!** Once you've submitted your comments, be sure to elevate them when appropriate. Not only do your comments help inform those with regulatory and rulemaking authority in policy making, they also serve as a helpful way to document your organizations work and individual stance on an issue. Share your comments with your members and critical stakeholders, and be encouraged to utilize social media.

Questions?

Contact Jack Murphy, Associate Director of Government Affairs, jmurphy@coloradononprofits.org.