

Tips for Submitting Effective Comments

Overview

A comment can express simple support or dissent for a regulatory action. However, a constructive, information-rich comment that clearly communicates and supports its claims is more likely to have an impact on regulatory decision making.

These tips are meant to help the public submit comments that have an impact and help agency policy makers improve the policy.

Summary

- Read and understand the policy you are commenting on
- Feel free to reach out to the agency with questions
- Be concise but support your claims
- Base your justification on sound reasoning, scientific evidence, and/or how you will be impacted
- Address trade-offs and opposing views in your comment
- The comment process is not a vote- one well supported comment is often more influential

Detailed Recommendations

1. The comment period closes at 5pm on June 13,2014. Begin work well before the deadline.
2. Attempt to fully understand each issue; if you have questions or do not understand a part of the policy document, you may ask for help from the agency contact listed on the survey.
3. Clearly identify the issues within the policy on which you are commenting. Be specific when commenting on a particular word, phrase or sentence.
4. Although agencies receive and appreciate all comments, constructive comments (either positive or negative) are the most likely to have an influence. Agency reviewers look for sound science and reasoning in the comments they receive. When possible, support your comment with substantive data, facts, and/or expert opinions.
5. If you disagree with a proposed action, suggests an alternative and include an explanation and/or analysis of how the alternative might meet the same objective or be more effective.
6. Consider including examples of how the proposed policy would impact you negatively or positively.
7. Comments on the economic effects of the policy that include quantitative and qualitative data are especially helpful.
8. Include the pros and cons and trade-offs of your position and explain them. Consider other points of view, and respond to them with facts and sound reasoning.