



Hints For Speaking at Public Hearings

- **Come early.**
Try to arrive fifteen minutes ahead of the hearing time. Be there so you hear the introductions. There are advantages to speaking early.
- **Sign in to testify when you arrive.**
The judge will call witnesses to speak from the order they have signed in. An additional sign up list will be available throughout the hearing.
- **Prepare what you are going to say beforehand.**
Even though it's not required, you may want to prepare a written statement. There is nothing wrong with reading your statement.
- **Make your presentation as specific as you can.**
Don't let the listeners guess what your position is. Emphasize your most important points.
- **Stay to the point.**
If a number of individuals have made the same point, you may repeat it, but don't dwell on it. You could represent a different service area or show how the issue isn't an isolated issue. If there are many speakers, you may be asked to limit the time you speak.
- **Add your own perspective.**
Each person comes to a hearing with unique information or background. Give specific examples that support issues important to you.
- **Speak slowly and calmly.**
- **Be sworn in.**
Your testimony will not become part of the record in the case unless you are sworn in as a witness.

If you have read a written statement or have other papers you want to give the judge as evidence, please bring copies with you. Bring an original, two copies for the court reporter and a copy for each party in the case (usually, that should be about 20 copies total).

Sometimes one of the parties in the case may want to ask you a question about something you said. This is called "cross-examination". Listen to the whole question. It is usually friendly. They may just want to make sure they understand your point.