



### **💬 Inside the Hill: 5 Tips to Master Your Meetings with Congressional Staff**

As you gear up for Water Week in D.C., we pulled together the top takeaways from our exclusive, un-recorded conversation with seasoned Hill insiders John Cane, Logan Ferree, Josh Mahan and Bebe Schaefer. Whether you're meeting with a member of Congress or their staff, these five tips will help you maximize your time and leave a lasting impression:

#### **◆ 1. Build Relationships, Not Just Meetings**

The staffer you meet today might be a future chief of staff or committee lead. Treat every meeting as an investment in a long-term relationship. Focus on building trust with staff — because they're the ones shaping priorities, recommending actions, and briefing their bosses.

#### **◆ 2. Preparation is Power — Before, During, and After**

Send materials in advance so the right staff are in the room. During your meeting, tailor your message to the staffer's level of expertise and jurisdiction. Afterward, follow up with any needed materials or answers — politely and persistently. Staffers aren't ghosting you; they have a heavily inbox flow to manage.

#### **◆ 3. Lead with the Ask — but Know Your Audience**

Start meetings with a clear and concise ask, especially when meeting with committee staff who value precision and may only have a few minutes. In personal Congressional member offices, a brief intro to your organization and local connection before the ask can also help set context.

#### **◆ 4. Leave Room for Dialogue**

Don't just deliver a polished pitch — create space for questions and conversation. A two-way dialogue helps gauge interest, surface objections, and opens the door to collaboration. Sometimes honest, critical feedback is more valuable than polite nods.

#### **◆ 5. Be Flexible and Respectful of the Process**

Hill schedules are unpredictable. Meetings may run late or change last minute — roll with it. Avoid going over a staffer's head unless absolutely necessary, and always be mindful of the pressures and constraints they're under. Patience and professionalism go a long way.