

## A QUICK GUIDE TO WRITING **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

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## 1 HOW TO WRITE A LETTER

A letter to the Editor is a written way of talking to a local newspaper. Letters to the Editor most often take a position about a community debate or need, and are usually short and to the point. When published, these types of letters can generate plenty of community discussion, since they are not written by journalists, but rather by members of the community. **Below are tips to keep in mind when you are writing your own Letter to the Editor.**

### OPEN THE LETTER WITH A SIMPLE GREETING

A simple greeting like “To the Editor of the Republican Herald” or “Dear Editor” is a fine way to start your letter. If you have the Editor’s name, it is most proper to use it, but a simple greeting is usually fine and just as effective.

### MAKE YOUR POSITION CLEAR UP FRONT

Your first sentence is important because it grabs the reader’s attention and sets the tone of your letter. Make it clear from the start that you support the project. Give a brief and clear explanation of why you support the project in the first paragraph.

### EXPLAIN WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO YOU

Use plain language that most people will understand, and use a simple tone so you don't lose your reader. In your most concise voice, explain exactly why you feel the pipeline infrastructure expansion is beneficial to you, your community, and your state. This is your story.

### INCLUDE FACTS TO SUPPORT YOUR POINT

Be clear about the facts for why the project is good for your community. Use local statistics and personal stories to illustrate your point. You can visit [action.local798.org](http://action.local798.org) to see an overview of facts and figures related to pipeline expansion.

### KEEP IT BRIEF, KEEP IT SIMPLE

We live in an age where there is an almost overwhelming amount of information. Shorter letters usually have a better chance of being published because they can hold the attention of the largest of readers. Letters to the Editor are usually brief and to the point, and typically no more than 300 words. After you finish composing the letter, it is helpful to go back over your letter and see if anything can be cut or condensed.

### STATE YOUR OPINION ABOUT YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME

If you feel strongly enough about an issue to write a letter, you may likely have an outcome that you hope to achieve. This is your opportunity to clearly express that you want to see the project approved.

## 2 SAMPLE LETTER

### GREETING

Dear Editor:

I am writing to express my support for pipeline infrastructure.

### YOUR POSITION

The Nation's energy renaissance gives us a huge competitive edge and is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss. With development of the shale gas reserves, transporting domestic oil and natural gas resources is becoming increasingly important.

New pipelines will bring tremendous direct and indirect benefits to consumers and businesses across the state. If we are going to realize our full potential across the Commonwealth, then we must encourage investments in projects that will upgrade and modernize critical energy infrastructure.

### CALL TO ACTION

We're all in this together. Pipelines connect gas fields in the western part of the state to processing facilities in eastern Pennsylvania. Southeastern Pennsylvania has an opportunity with new pipeline projects to invest in our long-term future. Pipeline project will be able to make these advancements safely, efficiently, and in an environmentally sustainable manner all while growing the economy.

### SALUTATION

Sincerely,  
Your Name

### 3 PIPELINE FACTS

Here are a list of selected facts and stories about oil and gas pipeline infrastructure. Feel free to copy and paste anything you read here to add to your points in your letter to the editor.

#### QUICK FACTS AND MESSAGING ABOUT PIPELINE INFRASTRUCTURE AND U.S. ENERGY

**48%**

Increase in US crude oil production since 2008

**53%**

Increase in US natural gas production since 2008

Increased access to undeveloped regions could create as many as

**690,000**

new jobs by 2030

**\$5.15** Trillion

in private sector capital expenditures over the next 20+ years

**3.5** Million

jobs created or supported by 2035

It now takes an average of more than **3 yrs** To complete an Environmental Impact Statement

The U.S. has the **2nd highest** level of rare earth oxide reserves but, as of 2009, it did not produce any of these resources.

The waiting time for a new mining permit in the U.S. is **7-10 years**, ranked last in the world.

Construction and expansion projects are being blocked through the misuse of federal and state statutes and because of a “build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything” (BANANA) mentality.

#### PIPELINE INFRASTRUCTURE

- ▶ Technological advances have led to tremendous increases in oil and natural gas production, creating jobs and spurring economic development. In a short time, the narrative of U.S. energy production has changed from one of “energy scarcity” to one of “energy abundance.”
- ▶ Our 2.6 million miles of pipeline (enough to wrap around the earth 100 times) have – for decades – transported the lion’s share of our nation’s needed energy, chemical, and water resources. For most of that time, this infrastructure has remained “out of sight and out of mind.”
- ▶ American crude oil production is on the rise. The Energy Information Administration (EIA) projects that America’s crude production will be over 7.4 million barrels per day by the end of 2013—a nearly 50% increase since 2008. However, industry has been restricted from exploring much less producing energy on vast amounts of federal land.
- ▶ The natural gas story is even more astonishing. Natural gas from shale today represents about one-third of all U.S. production and is forecast to supply up to 60% of all U.S. natural gas production by 2030. In fact, EIA now expects the U.S. to become a net exporter of natural gas by 2020 (if not sooner).
- ▶ Unconventional oil and gas alone are expected to generate hundreds of billions of dollars in local, state and federal revenues, and create or support millions of American jobs. Continuing to optimize these valuable resources to help grow the U.S. economy and support working families.

### PIPELINE FACTS

#### THE CRITICAL NEED FOR PIPELINE EXPANSION

- ▶ Much of our energy infrastructure is increasingly inadequate to meet our current and future needs. Ensuring continued access to energy requires a commitment to timely construction of new energy infrastructure projects.
- ▶ Nationwide electricity demand is expected to grow 14% by 2030. At least three nuclear facilities are being taken offline in the next decade – removing the amount of power it takes to keep the lights on in 1.5 million US homes
- ▶ Without new capacity, the United States faces at least a 21% power deficit by 2030 - a 1.1 billion megawatt/hour energy shortage. That is more electricity than the US industrial sector used last year for agriculture, assembly lines and construction combined.
- ▶ Renewables alone are not enough. To fill the clean energy shortage, America would need over 3.8 million acres of solar panels - which would cost approximately \$1.8 trillion and cover an area nearly twice the size of Yellowstone National Park.

#### THE BENEFITS

##### Health

Expanding the use of natural gas will reduce dangerous air pollutants – which lead to the premature deaths of 52,000 Americans each year – and lower the incidence of asthma, chronic bronchitis and heart attacks.

##### Emission Reduction

Adding more natural gas electricity production will significantly reduce our country's carbon emissions and make large strides towards federal greenhouse gas reductions.

##### Safety

Building, repairing and monitoring pipeline infrastructure helps prevent leaks and improve overall safety. There are 2.4 million miles of distribution and transmission pipelines across the United States that require vigilance and investments to maintain.

# THANK YOU

Taking the step to writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper is a very strong and brave action. We thank you and appreciate your time and effort to help spread the word about what kind of benefits that new pipeline expansion can provide is showing in your own words.

We have compiled some informational starters here in this guide to get you going on your letter to the editor. Please feel free to copy anything you find in this text that might appeal to your feelings or experiences. You can be as detailed as you want, using facts and figures to make your point. Mostly, we encourage you to tell your story through your words so that the public can hear your important message.

Your help and consideration allows us to continue to bring positive energy to your community.

Questions?

Contact Us

[information@local798.org](mailto:information@local798.org)