

## **Writing an effective Letter to the Editor:**

Letters to the editor are a short and simple way to increase the visibility of our campaign and impact our campaign targets. Letters to the editor appear in the Opinion section, which is the second-most read section of the paper after the front page! Your letter is mostly likely to be published if it is responding to a recent article or editorial that the paper has published, but it's not a necessity.

1. Keep it simple. Because of the word limit, letters that make just one or two points are easiest to understand and pack the most punch.
2. Keep it short! 150-175 words is best, and papers normally have a limit.
3. Make it personal. The best stories are your own! Feel free to share your own experiences and why you care about the issue.

### **Structure of Letter:**

1. Why are you writing the letter? What are you taking issue with in the article?
2. Provide the solution – what are specific examples of what the article left out? What do you think the conversation should cover?
3. Focus on enhancing or spinning off an article or editorial.

### **Recommended Talking Points:**

1. Nearly 50,000 acres of potatoes cover the landscape in central and northern Minnesota, covering miles in all directions.
2. Conventional potato production relies on pesticides that put the health of our communities at risk, and the people of Minnesota are calling for change.
3. These pesticides are harming people, animals, land, and our water and are drifting from potato fields owned by Ronald D. Offutt, or RDO, the largest potato grower in the world and the major supplier of the potatoes used for McDonald's french fries.
4. Toxic Taters has been pressuring RDO for years to cut their use of pesticides and they ignored our requests. Now we have been demanding McDonald's to lead the fast food industry by purchasing pesticide-free potatoes.
5. We are concerned that, according to the USDA pesticide data program, 24 different pesticide residues are found on frozen potato products and passed on to consumers. These residues include carcinogens, neurotoxins, developmental and reproductive toxins, and honey bee toxins.
6. In mid August, a small organization, Toxic Taters, along with 35 other local, statewide, and national organizations called upon McDonald's to request a meeting to develop and implement a plan to eliminate the use of pesticides on potato products.
7. We called upon McDonalds to live up to their promise they made in 2009 to have their potato suppliers cut their pesticide use.