

Courtesy of ABC Schoolhouse Rock

Speaking Science to Power

Jessica Ottney Mahar
November 7, 2013

Do policy makers value input from scientists? Yes...

“We love the rare occasions we get to meet with scientists because we like to ask questions and draw on their expertise.”

-- Assembly staff member

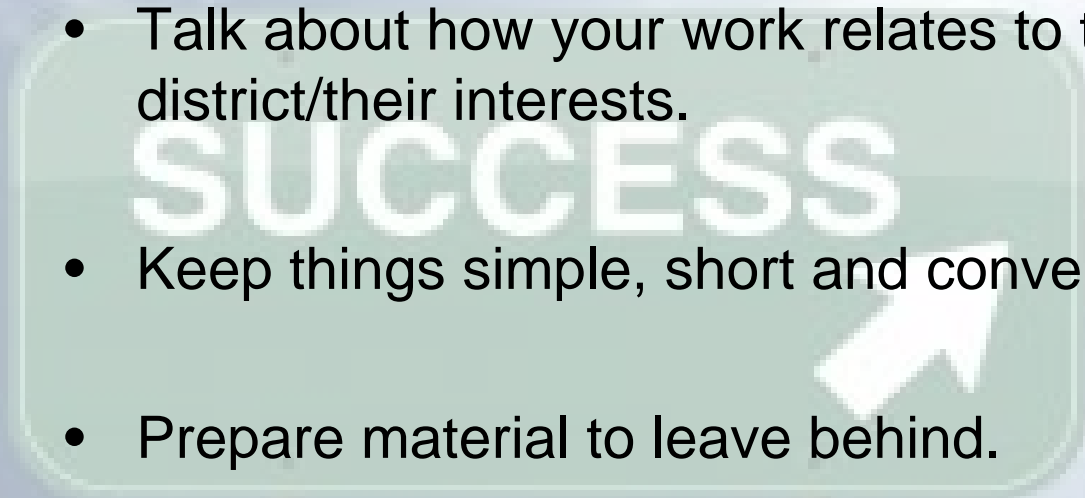
...but only when they can understand what they are being told.

“We met with a Ph.D. from Harvard to learn about a chemical and why it is needed in certain products. She spoke for 20 minutes and after the meeting our staff looked at each other and said, “what the heck was she talking about?”

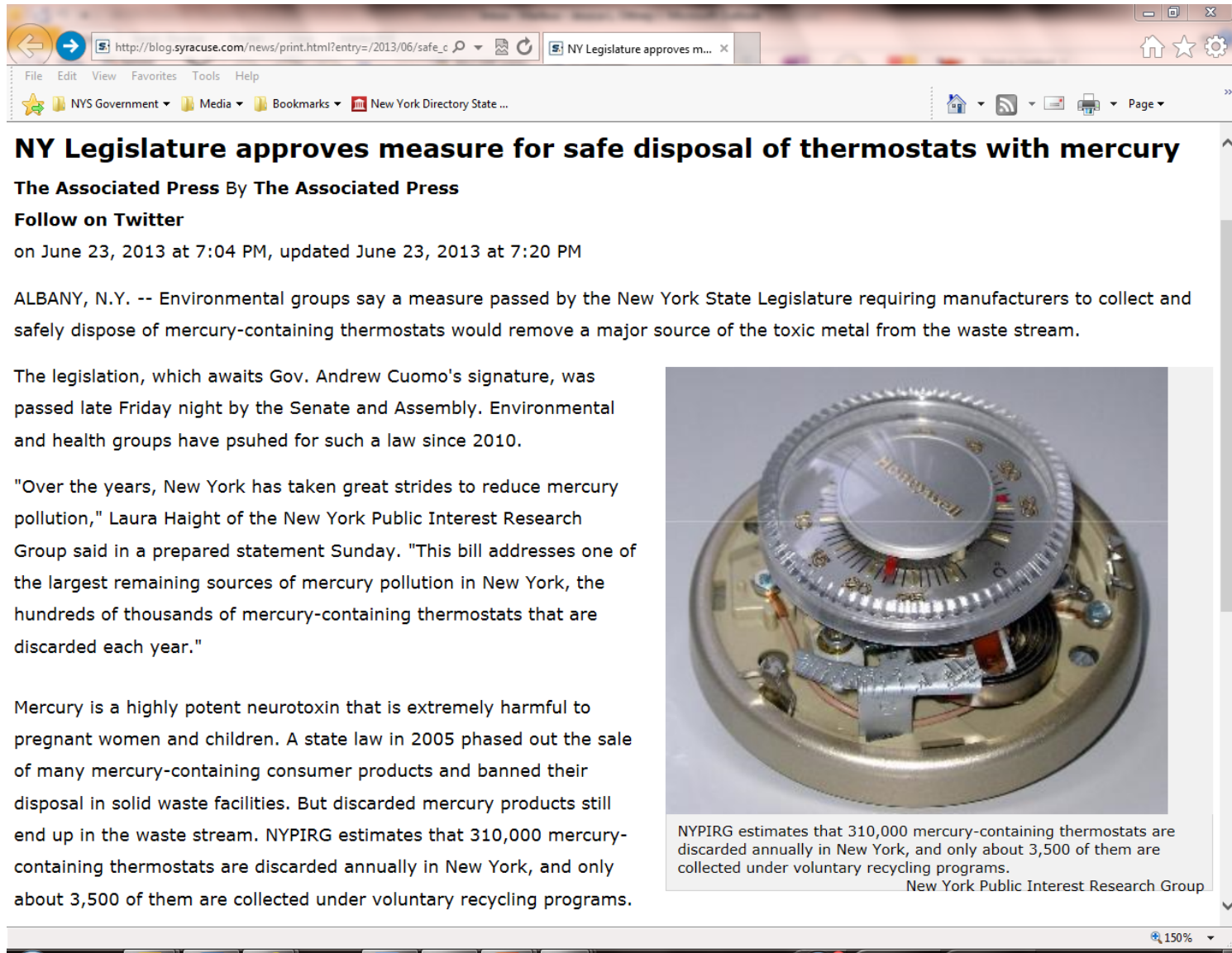
-- Senate staff member

Keys to Success

- Research your audience.
- Talk about how your work relates to them/their district/their interests.
- Keep things simple, short and conversational.
- Prepare material to leave behind.
- Leave time for discussion.
- Follow up (staff are important!)



How does your work relate to theirs?




NY Legislature approves measure for safe disposal of thermostats with mercury
The Associated Press By **The Associated Press**
Follow on Twitter
on June 23, 2013 at 7:04 PM, updated June 23, 2013 at 7:20 PM

ALBANY, N.Y. -- Environmental groups say a measure passed by the New York State Legislature requiring manufacturers to collect and safely dispose of mercury-containing thermostats would remove a major source of the toxic metal from the waste stream.

The legislation, which awaits Gov. Andrew Cuomo's signature, was passed late Friday night by the Senate and Assembly. Environmental and health groups have pushed for such a law since 2010.

"Over the years, New York has taken great strides to reduce mercury pollution," Laura Haight of the New York Public Interest Research Group said in a prepared statement Sunday. "This bill addresses one of the largest remaining sources of mercury pollution in New York, the hundreds of thousands of mercury-containing thermostats that are discarded each year."

Mercury is a highly potent neurotoxin that is extremely harmful to pregnant women and children. A state law in 2005 phased out the sale of many mercury-containing consumer products and banned their disposal in solid waste facilities. But discarded mercury products still end up in the waste stream. NYPIRG estimates that 310,000 mercury-containing thermostats are discarded annually in New York, and only about 3,500 of them are collected under voluntary recycling programs.



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New York Public Interest Research Group



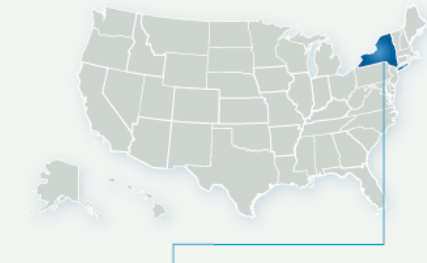
Assemblyman Fred Thiele (above) and Senator Phil Boyle (right) join scientists from The Nature Conservancy and the Biodiversity Research Institute in the field to monitor for mercury in songbirds.



Why does your work matter to them?

New York
The Outdoor Recreation Economy
 TAKE IT OUTSIDE FOR NEW YORK JOBS AND A STRONG ECONOMY

Outdoor recreation is essential to the American economy. Every year, Americans spend \$646 billion on outdoor recreation — on gear, vehicles, trips, travel-related expenses and more. This creates jobs, supports communities, generates tax revenue and helps drive the economy. Throughout America, people recognize that outdoor recreation and open spaces attract and sustain families and businesses, create healthy communities and foster a high quality of life.



At least **53%** of New York residents participate in outdoor recreation each year.¹

New York offers spectacular outdoor recreation opportunities at treasured destinations, including Finger Lakes National Forest, the Shawangunk Mountains and many others, bringing in dollars from residents and out-of-state visitors alike.

View all 50 states and learn more at:
outdoorindustry.org/recreationeconomy

In New York

OUTDOOR RECREATION GENERATES...

\$33.8 BILLION in consumer spending	305K direct New York jobs ²
\$12.4 BILLION in wages and salaries	\$2.8 BILLION in state and local tax revenue

Preserving access to outdoor recreation protects the economy, the businesses, the communities and the people who depend on the ability to play outside.

Nationally

OUTDOOR RECREATION GENERATES...

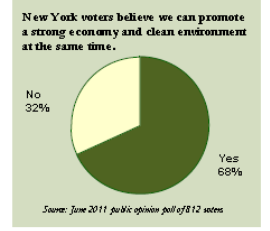
\$646 BILLION in consumer spending	6.1 MILLION direct American jobs ²
\$39.9 BILLION in federal tax revenue	\$39.7 BILLION in state and local tax revenue



The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) is New York's funding source for critical environmental programs. The EPF supports a diverse number of programs in the broad categories of Open Space, Solid Waste, and Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. The Trust for Public Land conducted research summarizing and quantifying the significant economic benefits to local communities throughout the state of EPF investments to protect New York's environment.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Through its various programs, the EPF supports hundreds of thousands of jobs in New York State across a broad spectrum of industries, including outdoor tourism, forest products, and agriculture. EPF supported industries generate billions for the state's economy every year. Additionally, according to The Trust for Public Land for every \$1 of EPF funds invested in land conservation, \$7 in natural goods and services is returned to the State of New York. Nearly 70 percent of New Yorkers believe that we can have a clean and strong economy at the same time.



Generate Jobs and Strengthen Local Economies by protecting Open Space

Between 1998 and 2008 the EPF protected 338,000 acres, helping to create jobs and business, increase tourism, support the agriculture and forest products industries, and provide natural goods and services.

- Outdoor recreation is a major component of New York State's economy contributing \$11.3 billion to the state's tourism economy each year — over 23 percent of the state's total tourism industry.³
- Approximately 130,000 jobs in New York State are supported by active outdoor recreation activity which includes biking, hiking, and canoeing. Active outdoor recreation generates annual tax revenues for the state of nearly \$800 million.⁴
- EPF protected lands support wildlife-associated recreation in New York. In 2006, over 4.5 million residents and visitors participated in fishing, hunting, or wildlife watching in the state. This activity generated over \$3.5 billion in sales.⁵

Support New York's Agriculture and Forest Industries

Working farmland and forests are two critical industries protected by the EPF. Farmland preservation programs protect farms from being developed and enable farmers to reinvest in their businesses and hire additional workers. Protection of timber lands helps maintain a competitive forest products industry.

- Agriculture is big business in New York. In 2007 there were 26,400 farms in New York State with annual sales of \$4.4 billion. These farms provided almost 120,000 jobs directly.⁶
- Farm production combined with agri-service and food manufacturing sectors generates \$22 billion annually for New York's economy.⁷
- Forest-related manufacturing and logging contribute \$4.5 billion to New York's economy and employ 39,000 New Yorkers.⁸

1. Participants in hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing were estimated separately and are not part of this figure.
 2. Direct employment in the outdoor recreation sector — as opposed to indirect, implied, multiplier or ripple effects that include the sector's spending, jobs and wages as they circulate throughout the economy.
 3. Except where shown, all statistics based on a national survey of outdoor recreation conducted after Q4 in 2011 and 2010.
 4. Metropolitan Industry Council and National Marine Manufacturers Association contributed funding and data to support this study.
 5. Hunting-related statistics were provided by the National Shooting Sports Foundation. Fishing-related statistics were provided by the American Sportfishing Association. Wildlife viewing statistics were developed from data provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

OUTDOOR INDUSTRY
 4509 PEARL EAST CIRCLE, SUITE 300
 BOULDER, CO 80301 | 303.444.3383

Remember:

- ✓ Know what is important to your audience.
- ✓ Be clear and concise about your “ask.”
- ✓ Be conversational. Don’t read!
- ✓ Provide summary and background information to support them in their work.
- ✓ Invest time in becoming “literate” in policy matters related to your work.
- ✓ View communicating with policy makers as a relationship you are going to have to cultivate. You may need to think long term, beyond the passage of a bill, and support them or others through implementation.