

# Providing Public Testimony

## *Tips for effective written and oral comments*



### A Message from the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency

Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency's Board of Directors holds public comment periods and hearings when amending regulations, creating new regulations, or amending the consolidated fee schedule. Comment periods and hearings are opportunities for Spokane Clean Air to receive oral and written comments from individuals who want to share their thoughts. Written and oral comments receive equal consideration. The Board is committed to providing safe and effective meetings and hearings and believes that public input is very important part of the rulemaking process.

#### Planning and Preparing Your Comments

Please consider the following suggestions if you are planning on providing written comments or oral testimony at a hearing:

- **Research.** Research the topic before the public hearing. The public hearing is for the Board to receive comments, not to answer questions.
- **Prepare Comments.** Written comments are not limited in length but should be kept on point. Oral comments are often limited to several minutes. Comments should be brief and to the point. Writing down your comments or key points will help you stay focused when you speak.

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Plan to arrive at the hearing on time. Provide your name and address on the sign-up sheet. The sign-up sheet is what is used to call people up for their turn to speak. If you have brought written comments, give written comments to the designated Spokane Clean Air staff, for the official record.

#### Making Oral Remarks

- Come up to testify in the order your name is called.
- At the microphone, state your name and address.
- All comments should be directed to the Board and shall be confined to the matters that are specifically before the Board at that time.
- Stay within the timeframe set by the Board, which is typically three minutes.

- Your allocated time includes any closing statements and/or rebuttals you may have.
- If asserting a statement of fact, you may be asked to document and identify the source of the factual datum asserted.
- You may not ask questions of anyone else testifying.



#### Hearing Ground Rules

Spokane Clean Air believes all interested parties have a common goal for public events – a desire for a secure, non-intimidating and respectful atmosphere that allows all voices to be heard. Spokane Clean Air proposes specific ground rules to achieve this goal. We will ask all individuals who do not follow ground rules and create an unsafe or intimidating environment to leave.

The following ground rules should support productive and civil meetings and hearings:

- Please hold down the noise – it's important to be able to hear everyone speak and to ensure a good recording of all comments.
- Silence cell phones during the hearing and step out of the room to have a conversation.
- No distracting, disruptive or intimidating behavior.
- Respect the right of others to have an opinion, even if you do not agree, including using respectful language.
- Clapping, cheering or jeering disrupts speakers and slows the process. Such notice contributes to an intimidating atmosphere and is prohibited.
- Silent expressions of support or opposition by giving a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” for a few seconds are not disruptive and are allowed.

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