



INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING TESTIMONY TO A MONTANA LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

When writing testimony to a legislative committee in the Montana Legislature, it's important to be clear, personal and direct. Here is a simple structure to follow:

Structure for Testimony

1. Introduce Yourself and Your Connection to the Issue

- State your name, your business or role, and where you are from.
- Briefly explain how you or your business is connected to the issue or bill.

2. State the Purpose of Your Testimony

- Clearly say if you are **for** or **against** the bill or issue. Mention the bill number if applicable (e.g., “I am here to testify in support of House Bill 123”).

3. Tell Your Story

- Share a specific example of how the bill or issue impacts your business, community, or employees.
- Use details that highlight the personal or economic consequences.

4. Explain the Broader Impact

- Describe how the bill could affect not just you, but others like you (e.g., other small businesses, your community, or the visitor economy).

5. Make a Clear Request

- Politely ask the committee to support or oppose the bill based on your experience.

6. Thank the Committee

- Conclude by thanking the committee for their time and offering to answer any questions.



SAMPLE TESTIMONY

Introduction:

"Good morning, Chair [Last Name] and members of the committee. My name is [Your Full Name], and I am the owner of [Your Business] located in [Town/City]. We are a [brief description of your business, e.g., 'small restaurant serving visitors to visitors outside Seeley Lake']. I'm also a member of [any relevant organizations, e.g., 'the Montana Restaurant and Retail Association]."

Purpose:

"I am here today to testify **in support of Senate Bill XXX**, which would [brief description of what the bill does]."

Your Story:

"In recent years, our business has faced [describe a challenge or issue related to the bill, e.g., 'a decline in visitor numbers due to lack of funding for tourism marketing']. For example, last year, we saw a [specific number or percentage, e.g., '15% drop in bookings'], which impacted our ability to hire local staff. This bill would help businesses like mine by [specific benefit, e.g., 'providing better marketing support to attract visitors to our region']."

Broader Impact:

"This issue doesn't just affect my business — it affects our entire community. Many local jobs rely on visitors, from restaurants to retail shops. A stronger visitor economy means more revenue for local businesses, more jobs, and a healthier community overall."

Request:

"I respectfully ask you to support Senate Bill XXX to help businesses like mine continue to thrive and support our communities."

Closing:

"Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have."

This structure will help you deliver clear, personal and impactful testimony that resonates with lawmakers and highlights the real-world consequences of their decisions.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN CRAFTING YOUR TESTIMONY

(With Emphasis on the Broad Impact of Tourism on the Entire Economy)

Use these questions to clarify your story, highlight the role of tourism in your business, and explain the impact of tourism on the broader community. These questions will help you identify compelling points for your testimony and show how interconnected tourism is with other sectors of the economy.

Your Business and Tourism

1. How does your business depend on visitors?

- What percentage of your customers are tourists or visitors?
- How much of your revenue comes from tourists or those indirectly supported by tourism?

2. If visitation increases, what positive impacts does your business experience?

- Are you able to hire more employees or offer more hours to current staff?
- Can you invest in improvements, expand services or upgrade your facilities?

3. If visitation decreases, how does that affect your business?

- Do you have to reduce staff, operating hours, or services?
- Are there challenges in meeting expenses, such as rent, utilities or inventory?

4. How does tourism directly or indirectly support your business operations?

- Does your business supply goods or services to tourism-related businesses (e.g., restaurants, retail shops, or hotels)?
- How does your business benefit from the economic flow created by tourism spending?



The Broader Impact of Tourism

- 1. How does tourism support businesses that are not traditionally seen as part of the visitor economy?**
 - Do you or other local businesses rely on goods and services provided by hardware stores, florists, insurance companies or banks?
 - How do businesses like food suppliers, beverage distributors or bulk supply companies benefit when tourism thrives?
- 2. How do farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers benefit from the visitor economy?**
 - Does increased tourism lead to higher demand for locally sourced food, beverages, or other products?
 - Are there local markets, festivals or farm-to-table experiences that depend on visitors?
- 3. What are some examples of how tourism-related businesses support the local supply chain?**
 - Do hotels, restaurants, or retail shops rely on deliveries or services from other local businesses?
 - How would a decline in visitation impact these supply chains and the businesses that support them?
- 4. How does tourism-related spending ripple through your community?**
 - What happens to local businesses like grocery stores, gas stations or service providers when more visitors come to town?
 - How does tourism-generated revenue support schools, infrastructure, and community programs?



Community Impact

1. How does tourism benefit your community economically?

- How many jobs in your community are supported by the visitor economy?
- What other businesses (e.g., grocery stores, banks, service providers) benefit from tourism spending?

2. How does tourism enhance the quality of life in your community?

- Does it support infrastructure improvements (e.g., parks, roads, community services)?
- Are there cultural, recreational or social opportunities that wouldn't exist without tourism?

3. What challenges does your community face with tourism, and how can they be addressed?

- Are there concerns about overcrowding, traffic or other impacts?
- Despite these challenges, why is tourism still critical for the community's long-term well-being?

4. How do visitors differ from new residents in their impact on your community?

- What benefits do visitors provide that new residents may not (e.g., seasonal economic boosts without long-term strain on local resources)?
- Why is it important to have a balance of visitors and residents to maintain community stability?

Making the Case for Supporting Tourism

1. What personal story or example best illustrates the impact of tourism on your business or community?

- Is there a moment or experience that clearly demonstrates the benefits or challenges of tourism?



2. Why should lawmakers care about the visitor economy?

- How does tourism generate tax revenue, create jobs or sustain small businesses beyond hotels and restaurants?
- What would happen to your community's economy if tourism declined significantly?

3. What specific outcome do you want to see from legislation or policies affecting tourism?

- What support or changes are you asking lawmakers to consider?

Preparing to Share Your Story

1. What's the main takeaway or message you want the committee to remember?

- If they remember one thing about your testimony, what should it be?

2. How can you make your story relatable and memorable?

- What details or experiences will help lawmakers connect to your perspective?

3. Are there numbers, facts or data that strengthen your testimony?

- Do you have statistics on customer percentages, revenue impact, or job creation due to tourism spending?

These questions will help you think broadly about how tourism impacts your business and the wider network of businesses and services in your community. Your testimony can highlight the far-reaching effects of tourism, showing lawmakers how vital the visitor economy is for a diverse range of industries and the overall well-being of Montana's communities.