



## The Storm: Protecting the Clean Air Act (Spring 2010)

### Event Planning Guide

Elected officials in Washington, DC are working to advance a comprehensive climate and clean energy bill this spring – but storm clouds are gathering in Congress as corporate polluters push their own legislation that would gut the Clean Air Act’s ability to protect Americans from the dangers of global warming pollution. It’s up to us to create a grassroots Storm of our own to say “no” to Big Oil and Dirty Coal and “yes” to our health, our economy, our security and our environment!



You can join the Storm by visiting your local congressional office this spring – and bringing 20 or more people from your community along with you. **Be sure to bring umbrellas and raingear to create a compelling visual signifying the potential storms that we will see in a rapidly warming world!** Showing up in numbers will send your elected official a powerful message that Americans will not stand for the weakening of one of our nation’s most successful environmental laws. As part of your Storm action you’ll present your elected official with a letter urging him/her to commit to protect the Clean Air Act, reinforcing your call for decisive action on climate change and clean energy.

If you’ve never visited your congressional office before, don’t worry. Just follow the steps below to ensure the success of your Storm action, and feel free to contact us at [storm@1sky.org](mailto:storm@1sky.org) if you have any questions. We look forward to taking action with you!

### **Before the Storm**

#### **1. FIND YOUR LOCAL CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE**

Visit <http://www.congressmerge.com/onlinedb/index.htm> to find the location of your local congressional office. Consider scouting the office location in advance to figure out a good place nearby for people to meet up.

#### **2. PICK A DATE AND TIME**

Congressional offices are open during business hours, so pick a day during the work week for your Storm event. Consider holding your action around lunch time to maximize the number of people that can participate.

#### **3. RECRUIT YOUR COMMUNITY**

This is critical! Showing up at the office with 20 or more people will ensure that your Storm action has a large impact. Recruitment is also a great way to get others involved in helping you plan and execute your action. As you recruit for your event and follow up, **remind everyone to**

**bring raingear and umbrellas with them.** Consider the following tactics to help you build a crowd, and be sure to track how many people RSVP:

- Reach out to your friends, family, neighbors and co-workers by phone, e-mail and online social networks (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc. – see <http://www.1sky.org/resources> for our social media how-to guide);
- Reach out to local 1Sky supporters in your area – e-mail us at [storm@1sky.org](mailto:storm@1sky.org) if you'd like a list of people to call;
- Publicize your event at public events and via local e-mail lists, blogs, postings in local newspapers/community calendars, local access TV and radio, and other media;
- Create flyers with the details of your event (purpose, meeting location, date and time) and put them up around town, leave copies behind in public places and hand them out at public events and in public places. Include your contact information so people can RSVP to you!

#### **4. PREPARE YOUR MATERIALS**

Print out and familiarize yourself with the letter to deliver to your congressional office, as well as our talking points (both available at <http://www.1sky.org/resources>). Be sure to share these materials with anyone visiting the office with you, and plan out the visit in terms of who introduces the group, who covers certain topics, what talking points you agree upon, etc.

#### **5. ALERT THE MEDIA**

Getting media coverage of your Storm event is another great way to amplify your impact. Refer to our media how-to guide (available at <http://www.1sky.org/resources>) for a template press advisory and to get some tips on getting the word out to local media outlets in advance of your action. Make sure to have a media spokesperson prepared in advance with the media how-to guide and talking points as well.

### **The Day of the Storm**

#### **1. REMIND AND ENGAGE THE MEDIA**

Send a press release to your media contacts the morning before the action to remind them to cover your event. Our media how-to-guide (available at <http://www.1sky.org/resources>) has a template press release and will again provide you with all the tips you need. If media contacts show up at your event, direct them to your spokesperson.

#### **2. GATHER THE CROWD**

Get together with your fellow action participants at your planned meeting location, and take some time to greet everyone and let them know how the event will proceed. **Make sure to sign everyone in so you track everyone who attends and get their contact information.** This is important so you can work with these people to plan future actions and continue holding your elected official accountable.

#### **3. TAKE PHOTOS AND VIDEO**

Get your group together, take out your umbrellas and raingear and snap a group picture! Feel free to bring homemade signs with the 1Sky logo and other slogans (e.g. "Senator/Representative \_\_\_\_\_, Protect the Clean Air Act!" "No Dirty Air Act!") as well.

#### 4. HEAD INTO THE OFFICE

When your group arrives at your congressional office, tell the receptionist at the front desk why you're there. Continue taking photos and video if possible, and ask for a meeting – your elected official or a staff-person might be available.

#### 5. HAVE A CONVERSATION

Whether you get a meeting or not, present your views on the Clean Air Act, in line with the game plan and talking points your group mapped out in advance of the visit. If there are any questions answer them as directly as possible. It is perfectly acceptable to say that you do not know the answer to a question – be confident and say you'll get back to them later. Never make up an answer, as that can damage your credibility!

#### 6. MAKE THE ASK

Ask if your elected official will sign the pledge to protect the Clean Air Act. You may not get an immediate answer, but it is important to be clear and direct about the purpose of your visit. Encourage your elected official to be a climate leader by signing the pledge and hand over the lobby packet, and be sure to get the contact information for a staff-person so you can follow up.

### **After the Storm**

#### 1. FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR CONTACTS

Send your best photos and video to your event attendees, congressional staff and media contacts. Be sure to tailor your message appropriately for each audience:

- For event attendees: celebrate a successful event! **Let everyone know that you will be in touch with them about next steps to follow up with congressional staff and keep holding your elected official accountable.** Be sure to also ask how people would like to stay involved so you can start building a network for future actions!
- For congressional staff: send them an action summary (include the number of people who attended and their names/occupations, if possible). Tell them why you were motivated to act and be sure to again ask them to pledge to protect the Clean Air Act.
- For media contacts: re-send them your press release, as well as an action summary. This will serve as a final reminder for the media to cover your action. Be sure to thank the media contacts that attended your event.

#### 2. WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In addition to media outreach efforts, writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper(s) is a great way to highlight your action in local media outlets. Check out our media how-to guide at <http://www.1sky.org/resources> for a template.

#### 3. TELL US HOW IT WENT

Last but not least, e-mail us at [storm@1sky.org](mailto:storm@1sky.org) to let us know how your event went! Again be sure to include an action summary and good photos/video, as well as the names and titles of the congressional staff you contacted and a description of how you were received by the office. This will ensure that we can communicate your success to your elected official's Washington, DC office, magnifying our collective impact. We will also be in touch with you about next steps to ensure that we continue to hold your elected official accountable!