



# SEND A MESSAGE

In the digital world, a formal letter to your city, state, or federal representative might seem a little old-fashioned, but if it's a complex issue, it could be exactly what is needed. Of course, we also encourage you to use social media when it's appropriate. Choose whatever form you're comfortable with that is the most effective way to state your case.

## Everyday Issues.

For small, immediate things like potholes, problems with crosswalks or bike lanes, or other more neighborhood-centric problems there are some quick routes to solutions, such as calling [311](#) in many cities, or using the [SeeClickFix app](#). Many officials have embraced social media, so look up city council members or your mayor and see where they hang out. Post a photo on Instagram or Twitter or Facebook. Be sure to include details – location of the problem, the date, even measurements or other specifications. The clearer the message the more likely something will be done.

Please, [@MyUSRepresentative](#), fix my roads! I support a vehicle miles traveled program.

Please, [@MyGovernor](#), don't widen the by-pass! Improve the light rail system with my tax dollars!

Please, [@MyMayor](#), have you ever seen a pothole so big? Main Street needs work now!

## Bigger Issues.

To address something such as an aging bridge, or to express your opinion on how to pay for infrastructure repair, it may be more effective to write an actual letter or email.

For contact information for Federal, State, and Local officials, start with [USA.gov](#). Most representatives read every email, but if they're garbled or incomplete or overly-aggressive, they may not be taken seriously.

- Start with a polite opening.
- State your topic.
- Explain the specific problem.
- State what you're hoping will change (long-term solutions), and what you would like to see happen right away (immediate request)
- Sign your name.

So, whether it's an actual letter that you put in an envelope and mail, or an email, or part of a form submission, *it might look like this:*

Make your case. Just shouting "the roads are a mess!" will be less effective than identifying what's really wrong (the roads are torn up, they're congested, they're not well-lit, etc.). Include photos, if appropriate.

Let your representatives know what you're willing to do, too. For instance, tell them you're willing to deal with construction or added taxes or new funding methods. Because functional and safe roads are *worth* it.

Dear Mayor Smith,

I am writing on behalf of a group of parents concerned about the traffic around our local elementary school. [\[topic\]](#)

Rapid growth in the area has caused two nearby streets to become major cut-throughs for cars avoiding the jammed main streets. The smaller side streets around the school are being torn up by the increased traffic, and a lack of traffic lights (it's all four-way stops right now) has led to more accidents. [\[specific problem\]](#)

We believe immediate road repair is needed along with the installation of a traffic light at 3rd and Elm. Another possibility might be turning Oak Street into a one-way street. [\[long-term solutions\]](#)

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and talk about solutions. [\[immediate request\]](#)

Sincerely,  
Your Name  
Your e-mail address  
The name of your group (if applicable)



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## Additional Resources.

Below are some additional resources. Pick your preferred method and let your representatives hear from you!

### Twitter

Mayors, Governors, and US Representatives and Senators listed by category:

- [Twitter @gov page.](#)

### Facebook

Some helpful user-created lists:

- [US Senate](#)
- [US House](#)
- [US Governors](#)

If you have suggestions or additions for this topic, please send us an email at [info@bepreparedtostop.org](mailto:info@bepreparedtostop.org).

We read every letter, too!