

CHAPTER 3. PREPARATION OF CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

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1. What is congressional correspondence?
2. What are the guidelines for congressional correspondence?
 1. **What is congressional correspondence?** Congressional correspondence includes all written communications sent to or received from Members of Congress, congressional committees, staff members, individuals, and organizations whose correspondence has been forwarded by a Member of Congress for assistance in preparing a reply.
 2. **What are the guidelines for congressional correspondence?** The following guidelines apply when preparing congressional correspondence.
 - a. **Due dates.** The deadline for preparing a response to a congressional letter is 5 business days from the date of receipt in the Office of the Secretary of Transportation's (OST's) Executive Secretariat (S-10), and 5 business days from the date of receipt in the FHWA Executive Secretariat (Exec Sec). Action offices are expected to meet the due date as assigned. If circumstances are such that the due date must be extended from 1 to 5 days, contact the Exec Sec for further instructions. Requests for extension from S-10 must be made in writing or by email, but they should be discussed with Exec Sec before any action is taken.
 - b. **Acknowledgment letters.** The S-10 and Exec Sec send an acknowledgment letter to a Member of Congress when their letter is received by OST or Exec Sec.
 - c. **Interim replies.** S-10 is currently preparing the interim replies following a request for an extension for correspondence prepared for signature by the Secretary or the Deputy Secretary of Transportation.
 - d. **Types of congressional replies.**
 - (1) **Reply to constituent.** When a Member specifically requests the reply be sent directly to the constituent, forward a copy of the reply and incoming to the Member (shown on the incoming), unless the Member specifies that they do not want a copy.
 - (2) **Reply to Member.** If a response is sent to the Member, prepare the reply in accordance with the instructions on the following pages.
 - e. **Guidance on reports to Congress.** (See Appendix D).

Congressional committee correspondence. When a Member of Congress writes as Chairman/woman or Member of a Committee, address the reply as follows:

Senate Committee Chairman/woman

The Honorable (Full Name)
Chairman/woman, Committee on (Full Name of Committee)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

blank line

Dear Mr./Madam Chairman/woman:

Senate Subcommittee Chairman/woman

The Honorable (Full Name)
Chairman/woman, Subcommittee on (Full Name of
Subcommittee)
(Full Name of Parent Committee)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

blank line

Dear Mr./Madam Chairman/woman:

House Committee Chairman/woman

The Honorable (Full Name)
Chairman/woman, Committee on (Full Name of Committee)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

blank line

Dear Mr./Madam Chairman/woman:

House Subcommittee Chairman/woman

The Honorable (Full Name)
Chairman/woman, Subcommittee on (Full Name of
Subcommittee)
(Full Name of Parent Committee)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

blank line

Dear Mr./Madam Chairman/woman:

Check with Exec Sec before preparing a reply to a female Committee or Subcommittee chair, the Chair may have chosen an alternate form of address.

Figures 3.1 - 3.6 provide samples of congressional correspondence with specific procedures and instructions.



Type date here after signature

Letter From Staff Member

In Reply Refer to:
HXX-XX

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

blank line

Dear Senator (Surname):

blank line

When correspondence is received from a staff person of a Member of Congress or a congressional committee, address the reply to the Member or the Chairperson of the Committee. Reference the staff member's letter in the opening paragraph. The reply may be sent directly to the sender only if the reply pertains solely to congressional staff work or if a direct reply has been requested.

Envelope Example:

ATTN MR/MS (FULL NAME)
THE HONORABLE (FULL NAME)
UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

NOTE: Do not use an ATTENTION line on the outgoing letter; only use on the envelope if the Member asks that the reply be sent to the attention of a particular staff member.

blank line

Sincerely yours,

blank line

blank line

blank line

blank line

(Full Name)

(Title)



Letter to Deceased Member of Congress

In Reply Refer to:
HXX-XX

Mr. (Full Name)
Chief of Staff to the late
 Senator (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

blank line

Dear Mr./Ms. (Surname):

blank line

If it becomes necessary to address a letter to the office of a deceased Member of Congress, before a successor has been appointed or elected, address the letter to the chief of staff, administrative assistant or secretary as shown below.

Mr./Ms. (Full Name)
Secretary to the Late (Member's Full Name)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

blank line

Dear Mr./Ms. (Surname):

blank line

Sincerely yours,

blank line

blank line

blank line

blank line

(Full Name)

(Title)

Making Copies – Responses Signed in HOA

In Reply Refer to:
HXX-XX

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

blank line

Dear Senator (Surname):

blank line

The following copies are to be made for all congressional correspondence:

1. Prepare one copy of all congressional correspondence signed by an FHWA official for the following OST offices: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs (I), General Counsel (C), Undersecretary for Policy (S-3), Assistant Secretary for Policy (P) and other OST offices as appropriate.
2. Prepare copies as called for on the control sheet.
3. For all congressional correspondence, regardless of the signature level, prepare copies for the FHWA organizational elements as follows:
 - a. One copy for the Legislative Analysis Team Leader (HPLS-40).
 - b. When a congressional letter is signed by the Federal Highway Administrator or a higher-level DOT official, the copies listed in paragraphs 1 and 3 (a) through (c) are made by Exec Sec. Do not make copies for HOA once the package is returned.
 - c. Copies as required to keep other FHWA offices informed.
 - d. Provide a copy of all congressional responses to the appropriate Division Office of that State.
4. Exec Sec will fax a copy of final congressional replies signed by the FHWA Administrator, Deputy Administrator, or Executive Director to the Member's Washington office.

NOTE: Where instructed by Exec Sec, copies will be distributed electronically to the appropriate offices.

blank line

Sincerely yours,

blank line

blank line

blank line

blank line

(Full Name)

(Title)



Making Copies – Responses Signed by AA’s

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

In Reply Refer to:
HXX-XX

blank line

Dear Senator (Surname):

blank line

The following copies are to be made for all congressional correspondence:

1. Prepare one copy of all congressional correspondence signed by an FHWA official for the following OST offices: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs (I), General Counsel (C), Undersecretary for Policy (S-3), Assistant Secretary for Policy (P) and other OST offices as appropriate.
2. Prepare copies as called for on the control sheet.
3. For all congressional correspondence, regardless of the signature level, prepare copies for the FHWA organizational elements as follows:
 - a. One copy for the Legislative Analysis Team Leader (HPLS-40).
 - b. One copy for Exec Sec (attach copy of any enclosures).
 - c. Copies as required to keep other FHWA offices informed.
 - d. Provide a copy of all responses sent to Members of Congress to the appropriate Division Office.
4. Responses being mailed to a Member's Washington office should be faxed followed by mailing the hard copy.

NOTE: Where instructed by Exec Sec, copies will be distributed electronically to the appropriate offices.

blank line

Sincerely yours,

blank line

blank line

blank line

blank line

(Full Name)

(Title)



Type date here after signature

Responding to a Congressional District Office

In Reply Refer to:
HXX-XX

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senator
(Mailing Address)
(City, State Code Zip Code)

or

The Honorable (Full Name)
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
(Mailing Address)
(City, State Code Zip Code)

blank line

Dear Senator or Congressman/woman (Surname):

blank line

Thank you for your letter of March 10 regarding _____
_____.

This is the format for a letter prepared and addressed to a Member of Congress's district office.

When an outgoing reply is sent to a Member's district office, a copy is also sent to the Washington office along with a copy of the incoming letter. A copy of the incoming correspondence should be paper-clipped to an envelope addressed to the Washington office and placed behind the outgoing reply on the right hand side of the package. For responses signed by HOA, Exec Sec will mail the letters to the Member's district office and send a copy to his/her Washington office. Responses signed by the Associate Administrator (AA) will be sent to the Member's district office. The AA's office will also mail a copy of the response and incoming to the Member's Washington office. Envelopes for the district and Washington offices should be included with the correspondence package.

blank line

Sincerely yours,

blank line

blank line

blank line

blank line

(Full Name)

(Title)

blank line

cc:

Washington Office



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Type date here after signature

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.
Washington, DC 20590

Letter Signed by AA or Other FHWA Officials

In Reply Refer to:
HXX-XX

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

or

The Honorable (Full Name)
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

blank line

Dear Senator/Congressman/woman (Surname):

blank line

Thank you for your letter of May 10 regarding _____
_____.

This is the format for a response sent to a Senator or Congressman at his/her Washington office.

Senators or Congressmen/women frequently forward correspondence received from a constituent or organization. Prepare the response to the Washington office unless otherwise instructed in the Member's incoming letter. If the outgoing reply is being sent directly to a district office, follow the instructions in "RESPONDING TO CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OFFICE" for sending a copy to the Washington office. This includes outgoing responses being sent directly to the constituent. Return the incoming correspondence to the Member if it is requested.

blank line

Sincerely yours,

blank line

blank line

blank line

blank line

(Full Name)

(Title)

blank line

Enclosure: