



Letter to the Editor Guide

Thank you so much for helping with our Letters to the Editor Campaign. Other than the front page, the editorial page is the most commonly read page of many newspapers. Therefore, it serves as an important tool for citizens to make their voices heard in a political campaign. Letters to the editor can be used to express your point of view in general or in specific response to a printed letter, editorial, or article. Only a few of the letters to the editor received by a newspaper are actually printed, so every letter we write needs to count, by staying succinct and on message, using terms everyone understands. Here are some tips for writing letters to the editor.

We are happy to do a quick fact check and proof read on your letter before you submit it. Feel free to email info@fairbearhunt.com or call us at (207) 747-4079.

Guiding Principles

Be prepared and follow the rules. Most papers allow between 150 and 300 words. Shorter letters tend to have a higher chance of being printed and read. Each newspaper has rules regarding submission, for example, some have a form on their website, while others should be sent via email. (*We can tell you the specifics and help with submission!*)

Be timely. A timely response to a specific story will increase the likelihood that your letter will be published.

Stick to the message. In most cases, it is a waste of limited time, space, and energy to spend even one sentence talking about our opponent's point of view. Deliver our message instead of rebutting their points. Why give the opposition any more publicity that it already has? Our message: Bear hounding, baiting, and trapping are reckless, inhumane, and unnecessary practices. Mainers are ready to lose the notorious distinction of being the *last* state in the country to still allow all three egregious methods.

Be personal. The reader should know how and why the issue affects you, your family, and your community.

State your opinion with conviction. Use common sense language that most people understand. Articulate but don't infuriate: be reasonable, rational, and show respect for others.

Be clear. Start off by referencing the article or letter to which you are responding, if there is one. Here is a standard lead sentence: "I support the efforts by Maine citizens to advance a ballot measure to protect Maine's bears and hounds."

Be positive. Steer clear of extreme rhetoric that could alienate our silent supporters.

Choose your words carefully. A short, pithy letter to the editor may not be edited at all and this is an opportunity to get your message to the public, direct and unfiltered.

Be thorough. Be sure to include your daytime phone number and cell phone number, if you have one, along with your letter. An editor may call to confirm that you are the author.

Let us know. Please send original letters, editorials, or articles related to us! We'd love the press clip of your letter when it runs. You can email letters to info@fairbearhunt.com or mail them to:

Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting PO Box 15367 Portland, ME 04112.

Feel free to use facts and ideas from our overview and myths vs. fact sheets (available at fairbearhunt.com/the-den), but be sure the letter reads as your own work. If you want help crafting a unique letter, let us know and we can send you a template to work from!

Thank you for your help with this very important part of the campaign, gearing up for November 2014!

Let us know if you have any questions, call (207) 747-4079 or email info@fairbearhunt.com.