

AFS: Talking Points for Government Affairs Fly-In Congressional Meetings – June 2019



Meeting with your Members of Congress and/or their staff is an important way for metalcasters to communicate with policymakers on the importance of the U.S. metalcasting industry to the economy and their state, as well as our key priority issues. Visiting with our lawmakers enables you to educate them about your concerns, serve as a resource, and establish a relationship that can prove mutually beneficial over time. The following outline will help prepare you when you walk through the door for your congressional meetings on **Wednesday, June 12th, 2019**.

Overview for Your Hill Meetings

I. PRE-MEETING

1. Review the industry position papers posted on the AFS website <https://www.afsinc.org/2019-afs-fly-materials-success> and provided in the industry folder you will receive at Registration.
2. **Learn as much as you can about your legislator's background.** For example, determine the congressional committees on which he or she serves, and review personal facts such as hometown, education, and profession before becoming lawmaker. Visit the website of your lawmakers (www.house.gov or www.senate.gov) to review bios, press releases, and bills sponsored. Also, check-out recent news articles online regarding your lawmaker.
3. **Be prepared to talk about trade** – with the recent trade war escalating between China and Mexico, lawmakers will be interested in hearing how tariffs are impacting your business.

II. LOGISTICS

1. At the meeting, **coordinate with AFS members and suppliers from your state and divide up speaking roles during our afternoon breakout session from 4:00 to 4:45 p.m.** It is always a good idea to exchange cell phone numbers with your other state group members.
2. **Bring a company brochure or a few pictures of the castings** your facility produces **on your cell phone** and describe the industry sectors you supply to.
3. **Bring business cards** and **wear your AFS name badge** to your congressional meetings.
4. **Allow time to go through security and to get to your meetings.** The lines for security can be long. Remember, congressional buildings have more than one entrance, so be sure to reference the House and Senate floor plan maps in your congressional directory you will receive at Registration. [Also, see map below.]
5. **Expect to spend no more than 15-20 minutes** per meeting.
6. **Do not start your meeting early;** wait for other members of your delegation to show up at the appointed time.

7. **Space on Capitol Hill is at a premium**, particularly in the House of Representatives, so your meeting could occur in the reception area of the office, or in the hallway.



Sources: Architect of the Capitol, National Journal Research.

III. OPENING OF THE CONGRESSIONAL MEETING

1. **Thank the Member of Congress and/or staff** for taking time to meet.
2. **NEVER discuss or make a campaign contribution** when meeting with your lawmakers. In fact, don't mention political contributions at all.
3. **Provide a general overview of your company** (number of employees, what your facility produces, industries supplied, challenges you face, and new equipment or technology investments). The complete opening remarks should take no more than 3-5 minutes. This will allow time for the Member and/or staff to talk and ask questions.
4. **Ask staff which issue areas they handle** and match those to the AFS priority issues. For example, do not speak about labor issues if the person handles infrastructure issues.
5. **Make a personal connection** with the staff. Find out where they went to college, where they grew up, what state they are from, and/or length of time on the Hill.

IV. DESCRIBE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE METALCASTING INDUSTRY

1. Metalcasters are located in 49 states.
2. There are **1,910 operating metalcasting facilities**.
3. The industry provides 200,000 jobs (directly).
4. **Our industry is comprised of small businesses**, with 80 percent employing fewer than 100 employees. Many foundries are still family-owned.
5. Metalcasters produce thousands of different types of castings that are **found in more than 90 percent of all US manufactured goods**.
6. The **U.S. metalcasting industry is vital to the U.S. economy**, our national security, and infrastructure.
7. The U.S. metalcasting industry maintains a strong footing in **the oil, gas, energy and power generation markets**, as well as **automotive, national defense, construction, industrial, and automotive**.

8. U.S. metalcasters **face challenges due to unfair trade practices by a number of foreign competitors**, inadequate investment in infrastructure, workforce shortages, and recent surge in regulatory mandates from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Labor Relations Board, Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), Department of Labor (DOL), and other federal agencies. In fact, **businesses with 50 or fewer employees face regulatory costs nearly 20 percent higher than the average for all firms.**
9. The manufacturing sector is a highly valued sector. **Every dollar of manufacturing economic activity returns \$1.35 of indirect economic activity** (per the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). This is the highest return as compared to any other sector of the economy.
10. **U.S. manufacturers' account for one-third of energy consumed** in the nation.
11. **Share your facility's good news story**, such as the benefits your company is seeing from the recently enacted tax reform measure, sustainability projects, new equipment installed, community outreach, or utilizing new technology.

V. **REVIEW THE INDUSTRY PRIORITY ISSUES**

1. **Be brief and clear.** Cover only a few topics and stick to the **priority issues that are relevant to the staffer's responsibilities.**
2. Be sure to politely ask your lawmaker to do something! For example, "I hope you'll co-sponsor and support passage of ..." Be sure to **thank your lawmaker if they have cosponsored a bill as part of the industry priority issues.**
3. **Personalize the issue.** Give examples of how the issue affects your business and your legislator's constituents. Always have one good example.
4. **Look for common ground and respect their point of view**, even if it is contrary to yours.

VI. **OVERVIEW OF AFS' 2019 PRIORITY ISSUES**

1. **Support Strengthened Buy American Provisions**

Background: In the last five years, U.S. federal agencies have spent more than \$30 billion on goods manufactured by foreign companies. In fact, the Department of Defense (DoD), the largest purchaser of manufactured goods in the world, has spent in excess of \$200 billion on manufactured goods made by foreign owned firms since 2007.

Under current law, federal agencies can **use domestic content waivers to Buy American laws** to purchase goods or services from foreign companies when an American-made good is unavailable or there is a significant cost difference.

Message: **AFS urges lawmakers to cosponsor and support passage of the BuyAmerican.gov Act of 2019 (S. 1324/H.R. 2472)** which will:

- a. Create a centralized website to track and display requested waivers to Buy American laws.
- b. Offer the opportunity to challenge pending waivers.
- c. Require federal agencies to report on implementation and compliance with Buy American laws.

The U.S. metal casting industry is alarmed by the wide-spread use of these waivers and the lack of a government-wide tracking system. When awarding government contracts, it makes sense to reinvest our U.S. taxpayer dollars in U.S. manufacturers and local jobs. To cosponsor, lawmakers should contact in the Senate: **Sam Mulopulos**, Legislative Assistant,

Office of Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), or Nora Todd, Senior Advisor, Office of Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH). In the House, contact Alex Beckmann, Legislative Assistant, Office of Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL) or Mark Ratto, Legislative Director, Office of Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL).

2. Support the Transit Infrastructure Vehicle Security Act

Background: The U.S. metalcasting industry is concerned about the Chinese government's continued **use of a range of state subsidies** and predatory practices to support its market ascension in the rail and bus manufacturing sectors of the United States' economy. In the past four years, the Chinese state-owned enterprise China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC) has aggressively targeted the U.S. market as part of China's "Made in China 2025" initiative. This comprehensive industrial plan lists rail manufacturing among other industries such as robotics, artificial intelligence, and aerospace equipment. Using state-backed financing, below-market loan rates, and an array of other anti-competitive tactics, CRRC has now secured \$2.6 billion in contracts to build metro transit cars for Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. They are also pursuing transit orders in cities such as Washington D.C., New York, and others.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has to date provided hundreds of millions of dollars to transit agencies for the purchase of these railcars, including systems in Boston and Chicago. Metalcasters produce critical components for our nation's transportation and infrastructure, including a wide variety of castings for the rail and bus transit systems such as axle components, rail suspension, rail coupling, hatch covers, rail braking, engine blocks and more.

Message: **AFS urges lawmakers to support passage of the Transit Infrastructure Vehicle Security Act – S. 846 / H.R. 2739**, which would:

- a. Prevent federal transit funds from being used by transit agencies to award a contract or subcontract for the procurement of passenger rail cars or transit buses to Chinese state-owned or supported companies.
- b. Create a certification process for transit agencies to ensure their funds are not being used to purchase rolling stock from a covered manufacturer; and,
- c. Ensure transit agencies develop and execute a cybersecurity plan.

The U.S. government should not continue to allow federal taxpayer dollars to subsidize a Chinese state-owned company and take business away from American manufacturers, including U.S. metalcasters.

To cosponsor, lawmakers should contact in the Senate: **Madison Smith**, Legislative Assistant, Office of Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX), or **Brian Conlan**, Senior Adviser – Economic Policy, Office of Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI). In the House, contact: Andrew Noh, Legislative Director, Office of Rep. Harley Rouda (D-CA), or Jay Campbell, Legislative Assistant, Office of Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR). See back of Issue Brief for list of cosponsors.

3. Reduce Barriers to Career and Technical Education in our Nation's Education System

Background: Today, more than 80 percent of metalcasters report a talent shortage in the industry – from production level, maintenance and technician positions, to machinists, electricians, patternmakers, and foundry engineers. Over the next decade, nearly 3.5 million manufacturing jobs will likely need to be filled. To compete globally, U.S. metalcasters require high-quality workers, as well as a strong technical workforce. There have been

several bills introduced to provide funding for tuition assistance programs for participants in apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.

- **Describe challenges your foundry is facing finding qualified workers.**
- **Describe types of outreach and searches your foundry uses to locate qualified workers.** Highlight outreach to schools, use of “Foundry in a Box”, work with community colleges and technical schools, apprenticeship and training programs at the plant, temp firms, and search firms.

Message: AFS urges lawmakers to support passage of the following:

- **Jumpstart Our Businesses by Supporting Students Act (JOBS Act) - S.839** – This bipartisan bill expands financial aid (Pell grants) to include students enrolled in high-quality and rigorous short-term job training programs that are at least eight weeks long and lead to industry-based credentials. *Note: No House companion legislation currently.*

To cosponsor, lawmakers should contact in the Senate: **Megan Harrington**, Legislative Assistant, **Office of Sen. Rob Portman** (R-OH) or **Karishma Merchant**, Senior Adviser, **Office of Sen. Tim Kaine** (D-VA). See back of Issue Brief for list of cosponsors.

- **Education Freedom Scholarships and Opportunity Act – S.634/H.R. 1434** – This legislation would expand elementary, secondary, and vocational education opportunities by creating a federal tax credit to nonprofit scholarship funds and allows for scholarships related to career and other forms of workforce training.

To cosponsor, lawmakers should contact in the Senate: **Ariel Gordon**, Legislative Aide, **Office of Sen. Ted Cruz** (R-TX). In the House, contact: **Miriam Fry**, Senior Legislative Assistant, **Office of Rep. Bradley Byrne** (R-AL). See back of Issue Brief for list of cosponsors.

4. **Modernize America’s Infrastructure Network**

Background: Our nation’s infrastructure is in desperate need of a major overhaul.

Investment is currently only one-third of what it was in 1960. Every day there are numerous examples of structurally deficient bridges, dams and levees, as well as inadequate roads, airports and water pipes. The metalcasting industry’s ability to obtain key supplies from suppliers to our facilities—and finished castings from our factories to our customers—requires an efficient multi-modal national transportation network. We can no longer afford to defer investment in our nation’s infrastructure.

- **Metal Castings are important to rebuilding our nation’s Infrastructure.** 40% of U.S. casting production is dedicated to infrastructure. Provide examples of key castings you supply for our nation’s infrastructure.
- **Constructing, maintaining and expanding our pipelines, transmission lines, substations, offshore platforms and other types of energy infrastructure** is essential to our nation’s future.

Message: Urge lawmakers to pass a comprehensive infrastructure package that includes:

- **Issuing Tax-Exempt Bonds** – provide state and local governments, as well as private-sector purchasers with tax credits to attract non-federal investment to help grow and repair America’s aging infrastructure.
- **Establishing a National Infrastructure Bank** – this bank would offer long-term, low-interest loans to finance projects that are larger than \$100 million, achieve goals of regional or national importance, and are backed by an identified revenue stream that repays the loan.

- **Addressing the Urgent Shortage of Truck Drivers by supporting the DRIVE-Safe Act (S.569 / H.R. 1374)** -- enhances safety and training standards for newly qualified and current drivers by offering younger drivers (18-21) with the opportunity to enter the industry safely by creating a two-step apprenticeship program.

To cosponsor, lawmakers should contact in the Senate: **Andrew Terp**, Legislative Assistant, **Office of Sen. Todd Young (R-IN)** or **Kathryn Sullivan**, Fellow, **Office of Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT)**. In the House, contact: **Connor Lentz**, Legislative Director, **Office of Rep. Trey Hollingsworth (R-IN)**.

- **Streamlining the permitting process at the federal, state, and local level** – It takes an average of 5 years to complete an environmental impact statement, a federal requirement for many projects. Expedite regulatory permit processes.
- **Ensuring the use of American-made materials** – Require that the iron, steel, non-ferrous metals, and manufactured products used to rebuild the nation's infrastructure, including metal castings, are produced domestically. Specifically, extend the Buy America provisions to all federal infrastructure programs.

5. **Invest in Our Nation's Water Infrastructure**

Background: Nationwide, a large portion of our water infrastructure—including drinking water, wastewater and storm water systems, pipes, locks, and dams—is approaching or has already reached the end of its useful life. Without sustainable, reliable supplies of water, attracting new businesses to communities across America becomes more challenging. The American Society of Civil Engineers gave the nation's drinking water a D in its 2017 Infrastructure Report Card. Over the next 20 years, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that over \$470 billion in drinking water infrastructure investment will be needed as aging pipes, and treatment and storage facilities require upgrades and replacement.

- **U.S. metalcasters manufacture critical components for our water infrastructure systems.** If your foundry produces municipal/water infrastructure castings be sure to highlight types of castings produced and if they are used in drinking or wastewater systems or other in your Hill meetings.

Message: **Urge Lawmakers to fully Support Authorized Funding for the following water programs in the Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations measure:**

- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund** at \$1.81 billion. Since 1988, Congress has provided \$45 billion in federal capitalization grants, which have generated more than \$133 billion in clean water infrastructure projects.
- **Drinking Water State Revolving Fund** at the fully authorized level of \$1.3 billion. These capitalization grants have generated more than \$38 billion in total funding.
- **Water Infrastructure Finance & Innovation Act (WIFIA)** program at authorized level of \$50 million in FY2020 — an amount that could be leveraged into more than \$5 billion in loans for water and wastewater projects.
- **Replacing Lead Service Lines** at \$20 million for a program to help communities and low-income households.
- **Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability** program at \$4 million for the program that would help drinking water systems adapt their infrastructure.

- **Encourage the use of resilient materials in water infrastructure construction** – Recent disasters have demonstrated the risks associated with using flammable and weak materials.

VII. **CLOSING THE MEETING**

1. **Thank the member and/or staff** for their time.
2. **TAKE A PICTURE WITH THE MEMBER OF CONGRESS AND SHARE THE PHOTOS WITH AFS** – email to ssalmon@afsinc.org – to be posted on the AFS website.
3. **Leave behind the industry folder** with drop off pieces and be sure to obtain staff business cards to use for follow-up.

VIII. **FOLLOW-UP**

1. Complete the **AFS Congressional Meeting Feedback Form** (found in your conference packet and posted on the AFS website). One form per meeting.
2. **Email a Thank You Letter** and re-emphasize key points you discussed during the meeting. Be sure to provide any additional information you may have promised and send a copy of any pictures taken with the legislator. A sample thank you letter will be posted on the AFS website.
3. **Stay in touch with your congressional offices.** Email positive news stories about your company.
4. **Host a plant tour** with your lawmaker and/or their district director. Lawmakers will be on recess and back in the state the week of July 4th, the entire month of August, and first two weeks of October. AFS can assist with setting up plant tours.
5. **Invite your lawmaker to an AFS Chapter meeting or host a roundtable discussion** with your lawmaker and include local foundries and industry suppliers.

If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Salmon in the AFS Washington Office,
at 202-452-7135 or ssalmon@afsinc.org

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