

Guidelines for Public Comments or Presentations to the State Board of Agriculture

The Oregon State Board of Agriculture welcomes public participation and receiving comments from members of the public. Comments may be provided in person or virtually or by submitting written comments electronically, or both. Each Board meeting agenda includes time for members of the public to provide verbal comments. Written comments may be submitted in advance. Board members greatly appreciate the valuable input and the time taken by members of the public to prepare and submit comments.

TIPS FOR PROVIDING COMMENTS OR GIVING PRESENTATIONS

Public speaking can be an intimidating experience. These tips are provided to help you prepare and communicate effectively with the Board.

Connecting to Virtual Meetings

Prior to the meeting, download and test the software being used for the meeting. You may join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone. You may also dial in using your phone. If you anticipate having internet connectivity issues, you may want to connect to the meeting with your computer and dial in with your phone for the audio connection. The Board meeting agenda provides video connection details and a call-in phone number.

Arrive Early. Either in-Person or Virtually

The State Board of Agriculture meetings typically begin at 8:30 a.m. and the Board usually proceeds through the agenda items in order. The Board tries to adhere to the time on the agenda; however, sometimes meetings run ahead or behind schedule, so please plan to arrive 10-15 minutes ahead of the scheduled time on the agenda.

Begin by Stating Your Name

Start your public comments or presentation with, "For the record, my name is [insert name], from [your affiliation]." Speak into the microphone. All oral comments and presentations are electronically recorded.

Addressing the Board

- Address the Chair and members of the Board: "Chair ____ and Members of the Board..."
- If you've submitted written comments, if possible, please summarize instead of reading word for word.
- It is helpful to conclude with a comment such as: "Thank you and I'd be happy to answer any questions."

Practice

Write out what you're going to say and practice it aloud until you can present your comments smoothly. Some people find it helpful to record themselves on a digital device such as a cell phone to playback during practice.

For Public Comment - Keep it Short (3 minutes)

Substance, not length, determines the value of comments. While the Board asks that public comments be kept to three to five minutes, if you aim for three, you may have time to answer a question or two from the Board. If you are running over your time you may be asked to conclude before you have completed your comments.

Avoid Repetition

If you are making points that others already have raised, simply endorse what others have said rather than repeating in your own comments. If you are part of a group, designate a spokesperson to take the lead in introducing the issue and other members of the group.

How to Provide Public Comments to the State Board of Agriculture

COMMENTING IN PERSON

	In person meetings	Virtual meetings
If you wish to provide verbal public comment.	A public comment sign-in sheet will be provided the day of the meeting on the entry table to sign-up to provide comment.	Submit a request prior to the meeting to provide oral comment. Instructions are provided on the meeting notice.
When the Chairperson calls your name	Come forward and sit at the presentation table. Before you give your comments, state your name for the record.	Turn on your camera or acknowledge that you are on the telephone. Before you give your comments, state your name for the record.
When to arrive at the meeting	Arrive at least 10-15 minutes early in the event the agenda has been adjusted.	Connect to the virtual meeting at least 10-15 minutes early in the event the agenda has been adjusted.
Is there a time limit for oral comments?	The chair may set time limits (usually three to five minutes) for individual speakers.	The chair may set time limits (usually three to five minutes) for individual speakers.

PROVIDING WRITTEN COMMENTS

	In person meetings	Virtual meetings
If you wish to provide written comments in advance	Submit written comments electronically to kvalness@oda.state.or.us as directed on the meeting notice.	Submit written comments electronically to kvalness@oda.state.or.us as directed on the meeting notice.
Will my comments be sent to Board members prior to the meeting?	Yes, written comments received prior to the deadline will be distributed to the Board members in advance of the meeting and posted on the State Board of Agriculture webpage.	Yes, written comments received prior to the deadline will be distributed to the Board members in advance of the meeting and posted on the State Board of Agriculture webpage.
What if I am unable to supply written comments or materials in advance?	Please bring 20 copies to the meeting for distribution to the Board members, staff and members of the public.	You may include up to two attachments with your electronic comments.