

## Tips on Writing Effective Letters to the Editor

The Guide Outfitters Association of BC's proposal to change BC's *Wildlife Allocation Policy* could significantly reduce resident hunters' access to wild game, resulting in 5,000 fewer hunting permits going to BC residents. We are urging BC Wildlife Federation members to bring this important issue to the attention of their local media by writing letters to the editor.

The letters to the editor section of your local newspaper presents an ideal forum for getting your message to a broader audience, whether you're trying to influence local community members or government. More people read the letters to the editor section than any other part of the newspaper except the front page. Following are a few guidelines for getting your letter printed.

To maximize your chances of getting published:

- Respond directly either to an article or commentary published in the previous two days (for dailies) or the previous issue of a weekly paper. Follow the format used in the target publication. The typical format is to reference either the story that appeared in the paper or the issue the prominent issue you're discussing: *Re: "Proposed Wildlife Allocation Policy Changes Unfair to BC Hunters."* When referencing a story that appeared in the paper include the headline and date in the Re: line.
- Focus on one important point (don't try to address multiple issues in one letter). Keep your letter focused and short. Most newspapers limit letters to less than 200 words.
- Use language familiar to the layperson. Avoid jargon or acronyms.
- Never use all capital letters or bold text to emphasize a word. It will rarely be printed that way and may prevent yours from being considered. You may italicize one or two words, but most papers will print it in plain text regardless — the words must speak for themselves. Use quotation marks to indicate the title of a book, article, etc.
- Don't insult or attack other parties such as competing organizations or the government.
- Don't overstate or exaggerate your points. Use verified facts. One overstatement makes every following point suspect.
- Localize your letter – if relevant, explain how the issue will affect hunters and residents in your area; editors prefer to run letters about issues of local importance and interest.
- Close with the thought you'd like readers to remember. Consider the central point you want people reading the letter to take away.
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- Be sure to include your contact information (name, phone number, email address). Many newspapers will only print a letter to the editor after calling the author to verify his or her identity and address. Newspapers will not give out that information, and will usually only print your name and city should your letter be published.
- E-mail your letter in the body of the email (never send unsolicited attachments) and put “Letters to the Editor re: your topic or article name” in the subject line.

### Example

**Please do not send out this letter word for word. Editors know when they are receiving form letters and disregard them. Put your letter to the editor in your own words!**

Dear Editor:

**Re: Proposed Wildlife Allocation Policy Changes Unfair to BC Hunters**

As a BC resident and avid hunter I was shocked to learn about the Guide-Outfitters Association of British Columbia’s proposal to reduce my hunting opportunities in favour of foreign big game trophy hunters. Like many British Columbians, I rely on hunting to feed my family, so this proposal basically takes food out of the mouths of my children.

Over the years, there’s been a steady erosion in the number of hunting permits granted to British Columbians. More than 70,000 BC hunters apply for 13,000 lottery licenses to hunt moose annually, so only 1 in 5 hunters gets to hunt moose every year.

Most provinces and U.S. states limit foreign hunters to 5-10 percent of the wild game allocation. But the Guide-Outfitters Association of BC is pushing to increase that limit to 25-40 percent in BC, which is unprecedented in North America.

There has to be a reasonable balance between residents’ access to hunting to provide organic, wild meat for their families and foreign trophy hunters desire to pursue wild game in this province. I would like to see a fair wildlife hunting allocation with 90 percent going to British Columbians and 10 percent going to foreign trophy hunters and the outfitters who guide them.

I encourage all British Columbians to write their local MLA and let them know that BC’s wildlife is a public resource and not for sale.

(Name)

(City/Town)

(Phone Number)