

SAVE SECTION 106

District Meeting Playbook

Local constituents + local stories + one clear ask

THE MISSION: Meet in person with your U.S. Representative and Senators (or more likely, their staff), tell them what Section 106 has done in your community, and ask them to oppose efforts to weaken it.

You do not need to be a lobbyist.

Nearing 700 organizations and Tribal Nations representing 7 million Americans have joined together to defend Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Stage 3 of this campaign is about making that national coalition local: showing Members of Congress that the people who care about Section 106 are their own constituents and voters.

If you have never requested a congressional meeting before, say so. Your inexperience can be evidence of how much this issue matters: “I have never asked for a meeting with my Member of Congress before. I’m here because what is happening to Section 106 is important enough that I felt I had to.”

You do not need to know everything about Section 106. You need to be a constituent with a story and a clear ask.

1. Set up the meeting

Find the official websites for your U.S. Representative and two U.S. Senators and locate their district/state offices. Call the office and ask for an in-person meeting. If the office directs you to an online scheduling form, complete it promptly and then follow up by phone.

Suggested request: “I am a constituent from [where you live] and am calling on behalf of [if you represent an organization, say so]. I would like to request an in-person meeting during the district work period to discuss protecting Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.”

Ask to meet with the Member or the staff person who handles natural resources, historic preservation, infrastructure, permitting, Tribal affairs, or related issues. A meeting with staff absolutely counts: staff advise the Member, track constituent concerns, and often become the office’s point person on an issue.

You don’t have to go alone; you can invite other people who live in the Representative’s district or the Senator’s state to join you. Identify yourselves as constituents when requesting the meeting and again when you arrive. A delegation of roughly 3–6 people is usually manageable.

2. Prepare one or two local Section 106 stories

Assume the staffer knows little about Section 106—or has heard only stories portraying it as red tape. Give them a better story. Choose one or two examples from the district/state where Section 106 consultation discovered, saved, documented, redesigned around, or mitigated harm to an important historic place, archaeological site, cultural landscape, sacred place, or burial ground.

Whenever possible, choose an example where the development, infrastructure, energy, housing, transportation, or other project ultimately moved forward—even if it changed. That makes the key point: Section 106 is not a law that automatically stops projects. It is a process that helps people make better decisions before something irreplaceable is lost.

Build each story in four parts:

- THE PLACE — What historic or cultural resource was at risk?
- THE PROJECT — What was proposed?
- THE CONSULTATION — What did Section 106 allow people to discover, explain, avoid, redesign, document, or mitigate?
- THE RESULT — What was protected or learned, and did the project still move forward?

Aim for 60–90 seconds to tell the story. Bring photographs or artifacts if it helps make the story tangible.

3. Prepare your team before you walk in

Use this five-item meeting worksheet. Decide the answers before the meeting:

- WHO ARE OUR CONSTITUENTS? Be sure people who vote in the district/state are identified early.
- WHAT IS OUR LOCAL STORY? Choose the one or two examples you will tell.
- WHO SAYS WHAT? Assign introductions, the local story, the policy explanation, and the ask.
- WHAT IS OUR EXACT ASK? Everyone should use the same language.
- WHO TAKES NOTES? One person should capture questions, reactions, commitments, and follow-up.

4. Know the ask

The central message is simple: PROTECT SECTION 106. DO NOT WEAKEN IT.

Ask the Member to oppose legislative or regulatory proposals that weaken Section 106, diminish meaningful consultation, reduce public or Tribal participation, or make it easier to damage historic places without adequate review.

Then ask directly: “Will Senator/Representative _____ commit to opposing efforts to weaken Section 106?”

Stop talking and let the staffer answer. If they cannot commit, ask: “Will you discuss our concerns with the Member and the staff responsible for this issue and get back to us?” Before leaving, establish who will follow up with whom and when.

5. What to expect in the meeting

Congressional offices vary. Your meeting may last 30 minutes—or 15. The Member may unexpectedly join for five minutes. A meeting scheduled with the Member may be handled by staff. All of that is normal.

0–3 min	Introductions: names, hometowns, organizations. Make the constituent connection explicit. If this is your first congressional meeting, say so.
3–7 min	Why you are there: “Section 106 gives communities and Tribal Nations a voice before federally funded or permitted projects damage historic places. More than 600 organizations and Tribal Nations have come together because proposals now under consideration would weaken that process.”
7–15 min	Tell the local story. This should be the heart of the meeting.
15–20 min	Make the ask: “We are asking the Senator/Representative to stand up for Section 106 and oppose efforts to weaken it.” Ask for a response.
Remaining	Listen. Ask what the office is hearing. Capture questions, concerns, and requests for information.
If you get 60 seconds	“I’m a constituent from _____. I don’t normally ask Congress for meetings, but I’m here because Section 106 matters. It gives communities and Tribal Nations a voice before federally funded or permitted projects damage historic places. In our community, it helped _____. More than 600 organizations and Tribal Nations are asking Congress not to weaken it. Will the Senator/Representative stand up for Section 106?”

6. Tough questions: short answers

“Doesn’t Section 106 delay infrastructure and development?”

Most reviews are resolved routinely. Where real conflicts exist, consultation helps identify historic resources early and consider ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate harm. Section 106 generally does not give anyone a veto over the project. Then tell your local example.

“Are you saying Section 106 is perfect?”

No. We support evidence-based improvements that make review more efficient and effective. But efficiency should come from better planning, earlier consultation, adequate staffing, technology, and other demonstrated improvements—not from weakening protections or taking communities and Tribal Nations out of the process.

“What about permitting reform?”

America can build faster without sacrificing public participation, Tribal consultation, and historic places. Fix demonstrated bottlenecks rather than weaken a law based on anecdotes or assumptions.

“Why should this matter here?”

Tell your local story. Explain who in the district/state benefits from having a voice before federal decisions affect places that matter to them.

“What exactly are you asking us to oppose?”

Changes that weaken Section 106’s protections, curtail meaningful consultation or public participation, diminish Tribal rights, or reduce consideration of avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating harm. Those threats are coming from the ACHP, the White House, and Congress itself. The letter to Congress spells it all out.

If you do not know an answer, do not bluff. Say: “That’s a good question. I don’t know the answer, but our coalition has people who do. May I get the answer and follow up with you?” Then report the question back to the coalition.

7. Bring a small leave-behind packet

- The [one-page](#) Protect Section 106 leave-behind, customized with the Member’s name and—if possible—a short local story.
- The coalition [Open Letter to Congress](#) with signatories.
- The coalition [press release](#).
- The [Washington Post coverage](#) of the coalition and the threat to Section 106.
- Optional: one photo or one-page illustration of your local Section 106 story.

Do not spend the meeting reading the materials. They are there for staff to remember the meeting and consult afterward. Bring your business cards or put your contact information on the one pager.

8. Before you leave—and immediately afterward

Before leaving, ask again whether the Member will oppose efforts to weaken Section 106. Identify the staff contact for the issue, any additional information requested, any commitment to brief the Member or other staff, and when you should follow up. Thank them even if they disagree.

Immediately afterward, complete [the coalition’s online meeting report](#). Your report is part of the campaign’s national intelligence: it will tell us which offices are supportive, undecided, concerned, or opposed; what objections recur; what information offices need; and where follow-up advocacy should be concentrated.

Report: office and district/state; date and length; attendees from both sides; whether the Member participated; local story discussed; issues and questions raised; your exact ask; the office’s reaction; commitments or promises; information requested; follow-up owner and deadline; and any additional observations.

One last thing

You may feel uncomfortable doing this. Do it anyway. Congress hears routinely from professional advocates. There is something different—and powerful—about hearing from a museum director, Tribal leader, archaeologist, architect, historian, preservation volunteer, local official, business owner, or concerned resident who says: “I don’t normally ask for meetings with Congress. I am here because this matters.”

More than 7 million Americans have already stood up together publicly. Now we need to make that coalition local. Tell Congress what Section 106 has done in your community. Tell them what could be lost if it is weakened. And ask them to protect it.