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# A CALL TO ACTION

**A**s we all know, the U.S. government is powerful: Bills, laws, acts, etc. are proposed, passed and vetoed almost every day, and there is a proposal, law, bill or act for everything.

In my off-garden center hours, I belong to a charitable organization that does a lot of lobbying on the Hill. Until recently, I never really realized how much time and effort people dedicate to fight for their causes. Recently, about 50 people from the organization I work with took time off of work and their daily lives to go to Washington, D.C., to talk to members of Congress about some of the things that would benefit the cause. Let me tell you, it really paid off. Members of the House and Senate took the time to sit down and listen to these people talk and learn about what needed to be done to help.

## Take Action

That is where you come in. This industry is full of initiatives, proposals, bills and so much more that are in the process of moving through Congress, and they need your help. Topics like immigration reform, energy costs, health care, quarantine issues, tax breaks, small-business issues, etc. are all things that affect the green industry in a positive or a negative way.

So here is the part where you can help out. You all have city, state and federal representatives that are in those positions for a reason. You

can do a number of things to show your support for this industry by sending those officials a letter, making visits or calling them. Trust me, it makes a difference.

I know many times you cannot make a trip to Washington, D.C., or go visit the correct government representative and that is why we have some great associations in this industry to help out. The American Nursery and Landscape Association and the Society of American Florists, to name a few, have lobbyists that are in Washington every day pushing for certain issues to help your businesses succeed.

However, sometimes these lobbyists need help and that is why they create things like lobby days where industry professionals get a chance to go to Washington, D.C., (or your local state capitol) and talk to representatives and senators about the industry and how these government officials can help. To learn more about how to participate in these lobby days or the associations and what they do on the hill, visit [www.anla.org](http://www.anla.org) and [www.safnow.org](http://www.safnow.org), respectively.

## Time To Help Out

Another way you can help is to sign up for Action Alerts with each of the organizations above as well as with your local associations. The nice thing about the alerts is when an important issue comes up, you get an E-mail asking to participate by writing a letter or clicking on a link that takes you to the issue's support Web site.

Not only are the associations mentioned above into important governmental issues, a lot of your local green industry associations are as well. Make sure to contact them and see what they are doing to get involved. So many of them are right on the cutting edge of what is going on in the world and they can supply you with a lot of good information.

There are so many important things going on right now in the green industry, and it is up to us to make them happen or not happen. The majority of these issues could affect your business in a big way, and showing your support shows the folks in Washington, D.C., or your local state government that the citizens care enough to speak out about it. Hopefully, the votes will fall in our favor. Happy lobbying!



Learn what you can do to help make a difference in the green industry when it comes to some of the big issues like immigration, tax hikes, energy costs and more.

# LAWN & GARDEN

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