How to Comment on Federal Regulations

Before regulations go into effect, federal agencies must publish a proposed rule in the Federal Register and provide the public with an opportunity to comment. Agencies must take those comments into consideration when drafting the final rule. However, regulations are *not* finalized through a majority-rules voting process. Understanding how the regulatory comment process works and what agencies need will help your comment have more impact.

Logistics and Important Reminders

- Comments are due at 11:59 PM Eastern time on the stated deadline date.
- Submitting a comment online via Regulations.gov is the preferred method.
    - If you cannot submit a comment online, mail it following the instructions in the Federal Register.
- On the page where the proposed rule is posted, click the blue "Comment" box to begin the process.
- You may type your comment directly into the "comment" field and/or attach a document with it.
- If you choose to submit your comment as an attachment, you must still enter some text in the "comment" box, which could be as simple as "Please see the attachment."
    - Naming your comment file as "Attachment1_File Name" (customizing the file name to the document and comment opportunity) is recommended so that the comment letter appears first.
- You may also attach supporting documents if you wish, but this is not required.
    - Naming subsequent files as "Attachment2_File Name" and "Attachment3_File Name" etc. is recommended to help documents stay in order.
- You must indicate whether you are submitting a comment as an individual, on behalf of an organization, or anonymously.
    - If submitting on behalf of an organization, please be sure to secure the necessary approvals.
- Your comment will be publicly available and visible to anyone visiting the regulation's docket.

Writing an Effective Comment

- State your personal and/or professional connection to the issue, including any relevant credentials.
    - Agencies give more weight to comments from individuals and organizations with relevant experience and expertise.
- Clearly state the issue(s) within the proposed rule you are commenting upon.
    - You are **not** required to comment on all areas of a proposed rule. If there is a particular element you feel strongly about, you can comment on just that.
    - If commenting on a specific word, phrase, sentence or section, include the page number or other details from the Federal Register document to ensure the agency knows exactly what you're referring to. You can access the Federal Register document by downloading the file at the bottom of the page where the proposed rule is posted on Regulations.gov.
- If an element of the proposal is unclear, note where the final rule needs clarification.
- If you disagree with a proposal, consider proposing an alternative.
    - Agencies may provide options and ask respondents to select one for the final rule, but you may also suggest another option if you feel it would be more effective.
- Provide your reasoning, whether in support of or against a proposal.
    - Agencies more heavily weight comments that provide justification and support.
    - Include qualitative or quantitative data if possible and available.
    - Offer examples of how the proposal would impact you positively or negatively.
- Be concise.
    - You do **not** need to write a long comment letter to be effective.

For more tips on regulatory comments, click the "Commenter's Checklist" link on the comment page.