

Meet your MP

**A Seed Act for Farmers, not Corporations –
Stop Bill C-18!**



Why meet in person?

- To inform as many local MP as possible about our concerns about Bill C-18
- To provide the perspective of family farmers
- To highlight the consequences of the Bill for local constituents (voters)
- To persuade the MP to vote against Bill C-18 and/or convince others to vote against it.

How to set up a meeting

Organize a small group of 3 to 5 individuals to from the riding to meet the MP

Phone or visit your MP's Constituency Office and request a meeting. Contact info is on the Parliament of Canada website under the "Senators and Members" section.

Be prepared to provide your names and the purpose of your meeting (to discuss Bill C-18 and alternatives to it.)

Prepare for your meeting

Bill C-18 is an omnibus bill that affects other agricultural laws, but we will focus on the amendments to the Plant Breeders Rights Act

See the NFU website for the latest information

- Click on the Save Our Seeds page

Focus on the seed aspect of Bill C-18. Learn about

- Bill C-18 and UPOV '91
- Seed saving versus “Farmer’s Privilege”
- Economic impact on farmers, communities
- Implications for the future of farming

Prepare for your meeting

- Learn about your MP's current position on Bill C-18
 - Google the MP's name to see if he/she has spoken or written on the topic
- Learn about your MP's party's current position on Bill C-18
 - Go to the Party's website to see if they have any statements posted there

Research your MP

- Look up the MP's profile
- Look up the MP's own website, debates committee transcripts in Hansard
- Google him/her
- Focus on any statements made about UPOV '91 seed issues and Bill C-18

MP Profiles

Find the MP's profile on the Parliamentary Website at www.parl.gc.ca under "Senators and Members"



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Example

Each tab on the MP's profile for basic information about his or her role in Parliament

Member of Parliament Profile (Current)



© House of Commons

Hon. Gerry Ritz

[Federal Political Experience](#)

Caucus: [Conservative](#)

Constituency: [Battlefords—Lloydminster](#)

Province/Territory: Saskatchewan

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Hill Office

House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Telephone: [613-995-7080](tel:613-995-7080)
Fax: [613-996-8472](tel:613-996-8472)
E-Mail: gerry.ritz@parl.gc.ca
Web Site:* www.gerryritzmp.com/
Preferred Language: English

Constituency Office(s)

1322 100th Street,
North Battleford, Saskatchewan
S9A 0V8

Telephone: [306-445-2004](tel:306-445-2004)
Fax: 306-445-0207

Example

Check out MP's personal website to learn more about his/her individual interests and approach.

Gerry Ritz
Member of Parliament for Battlefords-Lloydminster

Home About Gerry Media Newsroom Issues Events Our Riding Contact Gerry

Marketing Freedom for Grain Farmers in Western Canada
[Read More](#)

GERRY RITZ UPDATES: Canada Welcomes the Establishment of a World Trade Organization Compliance Pan

Example

On www.parl.gc.ca use the “Search and Browse by Subject” tool on the **Debates (Hansard)** page. Enter the MP’s name as a keyword to find out what he/she said in Parliament

CHAMBER BUSINESS HOUSE OF COMMONS



Search Debates
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The **Search and browse** tool is the key to finding information contained in the *House of Commons Debates (Hansard)* and *Committee Evidence* of the 1st Session of the 39th Parliament and onward. Beginning with the 2nd session of the 40th Parliament, information contained in the *Journals* is included in the results.

The publications indexes of the previous Parliaments are available by accessing the section **Select a Session** at the bottom left-hand corner of this page.

The search tool gives you two main options: **Search by keywords** or **Browse the index**. For more information about it, please consult the User Guide.

Search by keywords

Terms
Ritz

Parliament or Session ... 41st Parliament 2nd Session 2013/10/16 -

From (yyyy/mm/dd) 2013/10/16

To (yyyy/mm/dd)

Source
 Debates (Hansard)
 Journals
 Committee Evidence

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Sort by Publication date

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Order Paper & Notice Paper
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List of Reports and Returns
Procedural Information

Related Links
Bills
House of Commons
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International and

Prepare for your meeting

- Meet as a group ahead of time to brainstorm questions and ideas for how to best communicate with the MP.
- Share insights and experience to ensure you use the strengths of all of your group members.
- Develop a list of questions that link Bill C-18 to the specific situation in your riding.
- Make copies of NFU material for the MP to refer to later.



The MP's job is to meet with you

- MPs work for you!
- Be courteous and don't threaten or get defensive.
- We offer them the opportunity to understand our views.
- We're also taxpayers, consumers, community residents, voters -- we are citizens.

The MP's job is to meet with you

- Our point of view is not an imposition
- It is the MP's duty to know diverse opinions of constituents
- It is the MP's duty to be familiar with all sides of an issue
- Avoid party politics; don't make an issue of anyone's political party affiliation

When you meet ...

- Know the issue
- Know what you want them to do
- Be early
- Be friendly, polite and patient
- Be personal

Know the issue

- Be clear about points you want to make about Bill C-18 and the action you want the politician to take.
- Use briefing notes and background information provided by National Office.
- Politicians may know only party's position **BUT ... *You can provide them details***

Tell your personal story

- **Personal stories are powerful tools for change**
- ***Personal stories are important, memorable and persuasive.***
 - Talk about why and how seed is important to you
 - Describe how Bill C-18, if passed, would affect you, your family, your farm and your community
 - Tell how a law based upon the NFU's Principles for a Farmers Seed Act would be better for Canada

Know what you want

- Be up front and clear about what you want
 - get MPs to make a commitment**or**
 - explain clearly why they will not
- Consider delivering signed petitions (at least 25 signatures) and asking the MP to present them in Parliament.
- The information gathered here will help us plan next steps – make sure someone in your group is taking notes!



Be friendly, polite and patient.

- Don't get sidetracked or interrupt when MP is speaking
- Remember your objectives
- Gently persist to ensure your issues are discussed

Be early

- MPs are busy; their schedule fills up quickly.
- While you wait ...
 - collect your thoughts
 - organize your materials
 - observe the office atmosphere

Be personal

- Your biggest assets are personal experience and opinion
- Your presence is a chance to make a strong impact on decision-makers who have never met you.
- It is a good sign if the MP takes our issue personally.
- Remember (and note) the positions they take and their reasons for doing so – especially if you think we should meet them again.

The ASK

- **The MOST important thing!**
- **What do you want the MP to DO?**
 - Oppose Bill C-18
 - Influence other MPs to vote against C-18
- **Make the ASK in every meeting**
 - *(Note: Write down the MP's responses.)*



During the meeting

- Listen carefully; don't argue
- Keep things friendly.
- Make the visit memorable.
- Say thank you.



Listen carefully and don't argue.

- Politicians may want to dominate the conversation
- Be polite and try to keep them focused on your issue.
- If you do not have an immediate answer to a question they ask, promise them you will get the answer.



Keep things friendly.

- Maintain a positive relationship with all legislators—they may be in this office or a higher one for decades.
- Avoid non-productive threats and hostile or sarcastic remarks
- Don't create enemies.

Take notes

- VERY important for follow-up and debriefing.
- Note any questions that you were unable to answer so we can follow up.

Make the visit memorable.

- Have your photo taken with them. (Take your digital camera)
- Leave tokens when available, such as pins or buttons.
- Leave print information about your concerns
- Thank them for the visit

Thank you.

- Send a thank you note
- Personalize and end with reminder of their commitment to action, or urge them to do so.
- Offer to provide any additional information along with an invitation to visit your farm or community

Debrief.

- Immediately following the meeting talk over experience with your team.
- Compare impressions.
 - Was it positive?
 - What did you learn?
 - Can we improve future MP meetings?
- Take notes on debriefing session.

Follow up.

- Make sure MP honours commitments made
- If you don't hear anything in a week or so, phone or write.
 - Send that day's photo with a note reminding them of any commitments made
- Tell others about your experience.
- Email or phone the NFU National Office to tell how the meeting went and provide information that could be useful for the campaign.

Questions?

Contact the NFU National Office

- (306) 652-9465; ask for Cathy or Carla
- Email holtslander@nfu.ca

or Ann Slater, VP Policy

- (519) 349-2448 – Ann Slater
- Email aslater@quadro.net

if you need more information.