

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR (LTE) INFORMATION

### On writing LTEs:

*Letters to the editor can be submitted by anyone, though not all letters that are submitted will be printed. Your letter should offer a personal opinion on a specific issue that has (or has not) been **recently** covered by the outlet.*

- Because newspapers have limited space, they are more likely to look favorably on an LTE that is shorter than the word limit (typically 150 words, but **check your paper's guidelines**) rather than one that is just at the limit; this means that you will need to make your main point in the first two lines and support it with succinct examples.
- Do make sure that you include at the end of your letter your personal information (title, university or other affiliation, means of contact, physical address) to add weight to your opinion and allow the newspaper to reach you. **Please also mention your AGU affiliation!**
- Please include relevant specific examples related to your work or local connections to the issue.
- If your LTE is published, consider sending it with a cover note to your legislator.

### A framework for an LTE is as follows:

#### *Beginning:*

- [Strong statement /argument in introduction:] Contrary to what [X argued in Y article], the space-weather research at [Z] is critical to maintaining the technology and information network we rely on for [details]. OR: Your excellent article [TITLE, XX DATE] on [X topic] illustrated the importance of [including storm-surge research into building and zoning plans to maintain a safe community and protect our homes and safety].

#### *Body:*

- [THIS IS VERY SHORT—give one or two specific examples, ideally related to something **local and timely**]. EX: [Storm surge after XX event in the area not only flooded/destroyed homes/businesses along YY route but caused (power outages, erosion, etc.) that took (days, weeks, months) to repair. To ensure a stronger infrastructure for the future, the research on (extent of storm surge/vulnerable areas/etc.) must be supported and incorporated into (plans, policy, actions).]

#### *Conclusion – Call to Action:*

- [Reiterate your message, and include a strong statement/call to action—why should people care? What should they want to do or want to see others do after they read this letter?]

### Example Template:

Debate over the nation’s budget continues to rage on both sides of the aisle, but there has been little serious discussion of the severe impact proposed cuts to scientific programs and research will have on our economy, not to mention the safety and welfare of all Americans.

For example, in the *[DATE AND/OR TITLE]* story, *[Insert an example, either positive or negative, from the outlet’s recent coverage (within one to two days of your letter) of the current budget debates—e.g., a story that talks about proposed cuts to healthcare and defense spending, but that does not mention the cuts that pose direct threats to Earth and space science or research and development, such as the Joint Polar Satellite System or NSF grants]. This entire paragraph should not be longer than 60 words.]*

Much of the economic growth we have enjoyed since World War II is the result of investments in science and technology. What kind of legacy will we be leaving our children and our grandchildren if we fail to maintain that same level of leadership today?

We need to reduce the national debt, but doing it by sacrificing programs that protect public safety and national security, create jobs and support global competitiveness is a mistake.

Sincerely,

*[NAME]*

Member, American Geophysical Union

*[TITLE & COMPANY OR OCCUPATION]*

*[ADDRESS – Must be within the outlet’s ‘reading area’; preferably home, but work is OK]*

*[PHONE NUMBER – Should be one you can be reached on quickly, in case they need to contact you with questions. Cell is OK]*

*[EMAIL ADDRESS – Should be one you check regularly, in case they need to contact you with questions.]*