

# **BPA Policy 250-4 (Formerly BPAM 157)**

## **Guidelines for Congressional Hearings Preparation**

### **Enterprise Services – Public Affairs**

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## 250-4.1 Purpose & Background

BPA is periodically called upon to provide testimony at Congressional hearings on topics involving activities in all BPA program areas. Being fully prepared for these hearings often requires a great deal of work in a short period of time from a variety of BPA organizations.

Being fully prepared for a Congressional hearing depends largely on how much time is available to plan, write, and review testimony. Therefore, it is crucial that any informal notice of a hearing at which BPA will be asked to attend be used to initiate preparations for the hearing.

This policy provides a general description of the roles of the offices involved in the Congressional hearings and lays out the steps to be taken in preparing for Congressional hearings.

## 250-4.2 Policy Owner

BPA's Administrator, in collaboration with BPA's EEO Officer and the Office of General Counsel, has responsibility for periodic review of this policy, and for developing standards and procedures for implementation of BPA's Congressional Hearings Preparation program.

## 250-4.3 Applicability

All employees and contract personnel who may be involved in preparations for Congressional hearings.

## 250-4.4 Terms & Definitions

None.

## 250-4.5 Policy

Recognizing the short notice that is often provided, the objectives of these guidelines are to ensure that:

1. BPA prepares testimony that is responsive to the concerns of those calling the hearing.
2. BPA witnesses are fully prepared on the issues and questions that may arise and are aware of the background of the committee members.
3. Necessary follow-up activities occur in a timely manner.

## 250-4.6 Policy Exceptions

None.

## 250-4.7 Responsibilities

A. **The National Relations Office**, located in Washington, D.C., is the primary contact point for Members of Congress, their staffs, and the committee members. As a result, the

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National Relations office is most often the first to learn about a pending Congressional hearing involving BPA. The National Relations Office:

1. Ensures that the Chief Public Affairs Officer, the Regional Relations Manager, and affected program offices are notified of the hearing as soon as possible.
2. Performs analysis of Congressional concerns.
3. Recommends and implements legislative strategy.
4. Provides input on the substance of BPA testimony.
5. Identifies potential issues and questions.
6. Provides input on, and implements, the strategy for hearing presentations.
7. Obtains clearance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Department of Energy (DOE).
8. Develops and arranges itineraries for witnesses' travel to Washington, DC.
9. Coordinates Washington, D.C. press contacts with input/advice from the Policy Communications Manager.
10. Briefs U.S. legislators, their staffs, and executive officials.
11. Attends hearings and notes all follow-up requests.
12. Obtains hearing transcripts.
13. Obtains clearance on revised transcripts.

**B. Regional Relations:**

1. Coordinates preparation efforts at BPA headquarters to ensure that the steps described are carried out as smoothly and efficiently as possible.
2. Prepares hearing testimony.
3. Establishes BPA's internal schedule for hearing preparations.
4. Develops draft testimony for program office(s) and executive review.
5. Edits and collates the briefing book and related materials as requested.
6. Develops final technology.
7. Analyzes Congressional concerns.
8. Identifies potential issues and questions.
9. Provides input on the strategy for hearing presentations.
10. Informs offices of hearing developments.
11. Produces the hearing book for the Administrator and DOE as needed.

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12. Participates in development of witnesses' Washington, DC, itineraries.
13. Coordinates transcript review and other follow-up activities.
14. In those instances when Congressional hearings are held in the Northwest, the Regional Relations Office assumes the logistical responsibilities that are usually performed by the National Relations Office in Washington, D.C. Those responsibilities may include arranging for hearing rooms and times, developing itineraries for witnesses, attending hearings, and noting follow-up requests. The National Relations office will, in all cases, provide advice and review on hearing strategy and documents.

**C. Program Offices:** The specific program office involved in the preparation efforts for a Congressional hearing will vary depending on the topic of the hearing. The involved offices are responsible for developing the testimony and other materials necessary for BPA to be clear, accurate, and responsive to Congressional concerns. The program offices:

1. Identify potential issues and questions.
2. Provide input on hearing strategy.
3. In some cases, present testimony at hearings.

**D. General Counsel:** Can have two roles in preparation efforts for Congressional hearings. It reviews the testimony of BPA witnesses and contributes to planning the hearing strategy. In addition, General Counsel may, for Congressional hearings involving legal issues, serve as the program office and be involved in all of the activities listed above for program offices.

**E. Budget Support:** Finance has a special role in the Congressional budget hearings process which is described under separate guidelines. However, for all other Congressional hearings, Finance participates in the clearance process.

## 250-4.8 Standards & Procedures

The following guidelines ensure that preparations for Congressional hearings begin with the first formal or informal notice.

### A. Hearing Notice:

1. A formal Congressional hearing invitation from a committee chairperson to the Administrator is time-dated and copies sent immediately to the Regional Relations Manager and the National Relations office in Washington D.C.
2. When the National Relations office receives notice of a likely hearing, it contacts the Administrator's office, Regional Relations and the pertinent program offices.

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3. Program offices notify Regional Relations when they are informed of a hearing at which BPA will be asked to provide testimony. Regional Relations then reports this information to the National Relations office in Washington, D.C.

**B. Hearing Strategy:** Once notified of a pending Congressional hearing, Regional Relations may, depending on the nature of the hearing, schedule a strategy meeting of all involved program offices, representatives from the National Relations office, and General Counsel. This meeting accomplishes the following:

1. Identifies issues/questions that may arise at the hearing.
2. Identifies the approach for handling those issues/questions.
3. Develops a presentation order or structure.
4. Identifies BPA witnesses.
5. Identifies the lead program office.
6. Identifies Regional Relations, National Relations, General Counsel and program office staff involvement.
7. Coordinates any needed graphics and production.
8. Develops a schedule for preparation.

**C. Strategy session memo:** The results of the strategy session are confirmed by a memo prepared by Regional Relations. This memo serves as the work plan, describing who does what and by when.

**D. Testimony preparation and review:** Following the strategy session, Regional Relations coordinates efforts to gather the necessary information and prepare draft testimony and other related materials.

1. Regional Relations staff coordinates the internal review of all hearing materials.
2. Regional Relations transmits the proposed testimony to the National Relations office for its review and to obtain necessary DOE and OMB approvals.

**E. Hearing Briefing Book:** As necessary, Regional Relations may prepare for each Congressional hearing a briefing book or similar package containing the following materials:

1. Committee invitation.
2. Testimony and summary.
3. Handouts (if needed).
4. Potential questions and answers.
5. Background materials.
6. Biographies of committee members.

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F. **Regional Relations:** Prepares copies of briefing books for each witness. Reference copies will also be produced to be kept in the National Relations, Regional Relations, and appropriate program offices.

G. **Briefing of Hearing Participants:** Depending upon the issues and the need for coordination between the various BPA witnesses, a briefing on the completed testimony and hearing strategy may be held prior to the witnesses leaving for Washington, D.C. The National Relations office will brief the witnesses generally the day before or the morning of the hearing to communicate any recently identified concerns of the committee members.

H. **Additional actions or information requests:** The National Relations Office is responsible for noting any additional actions or information requested by the committee or needed as a part of BPA’s participation in the Congressional hearing. The National Relations office will notify Regional Relations and the appropriate program offices of requested actions or information. Regional Relations will enter the request into the executive correspondence system and coordinate responses with the program office.

### 250-4.9 Performance & Monitoring

None.

### 250-4.10 Authorities & References

None.

### 250-4.11 Review

This policy is scheduled for review in 2016.

### 250-4.12 Revision History

Version	Issue Date	Description of Change
1	11-03-14	Migration of content to new policy format.

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