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## Guidelines for letters to the editor of KDN

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From the Ketchikan Daily News [www.ketchikandailynews.com](http://www.ketchikandailynews.com)

By mail: Ketchikan Daily News  
P.O. Box 7900  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901  
By fax: (907) 225-1096  
In person: 501 Dock Street  
By email: [news@ketchikandailynews.com](mailto:news@ketchikandailynews.com) (a signed hard copy is still required)

All letters to the editor must meet our guidelines to be considered for publication: 350 words maximum; no profane language or libelous statements. All letters must be signed by the author. Mailing addresses and telephone numbers should be provided; usually they are used by the editor for verification and are not published.

Letters whose authenticity cannot be verified will not be published. Copies of letters to third parties will not be published, nor will form letters. Telephone numbers will not be included in letters. Mail signed letters to Ketchikan Daily News, P.O. Box 7900, Ketchikan, AK 99901 or fax them to 907-225-1096.

Submissions may be emailed to [news@ketchikandailynews.com](mailto:news@ketchikandailynews.com) – in fact, emailing the letter will speed the process to publication because it does not need to be typed into our system – but a signed hard copy is still required.

Point of View columns, also known as op-ed pieces, have the following guidelines: 675 words maximum, and no profanity or potentially libelous statements. Such columns also require the writer's signature, address, and telephone number, as well as a brief description of the writer.

We attempt to publish all letters. Point of View columns are printed at the discretion of the publishers. The newspaper reserves the right to edit all submissions. Letters become the property of the Ketchikan Daily News and will not be returned to the writer.

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## Guidelines for View Points on Sitnews.org

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From Sitnews.org – visit [www.sitnews.org/feedback.html](http://www.sitnews.org/feedback.html) for complete details.

View Points are an opportunity to comment on news, current events, articles, features, or publish a letter to the editor. Please read the basic rules before publishing an opinion or comment, available on the website above. Here are some excerpts:

Active debate and free speech are encouraged, but remember you are a guest here, and decorum and respectful conduct are not optional but expected.

Viewpoints is intended to be a place where a respectful exchange of ideas and opinions takes place. Sitnews encourages the expression of opinions in a responsible and a civil manner. Enjoy the debates and discussions and lead by example in creating a civil environment of mutual understanding and learning.

It's simple! Just fill in the blanks [on the form online – visit website] and click the submit button to send your opinion or comment for publication on View Points. When you click the submit button, your comment will be sent directly to the Editor. First & last name required for publication. Your e-mail address is also required in order that the Sitnews' editor can contact you if needed. If you do not want your e-mail address published online, select No.

Questions: e-mail the Sitnews' editor at [editor@sitnews.org](mailto:editor@sitnews.org)

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## Sample Letter

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(Date)

Dear (Ketchikan Daily News, SITNEWS, etc):

- **Compelling Introductory Sentence** (Identify the problem that you will address)
- **Relate it to Home** (share personal stories to make your point as appropriate)
- **Present a Solution** (Describe how the project will address the problem—short clear factual points)
- **Call to Action** (Encourage the reader to seek more information, make a call, attend an event, etc.)

Sincerely,

(Name of organization, representative, or individual)

(Address of organization, representative, or individual)

(Phone number – this is typically used for verification by the editor, and is not published)

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## Letters to the Editor

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by H Paul Payne. (Reprinted with permission.)

### Utilize Letters-to-the-Editor and Op-Eds.

If you get a letter-to-the-editor or an opinion editorial published, send a copy of it with your letters to elected officials. This will show policy makers that you are more than casually interested in the issue and that you have credibility.

The letter to the editor is one of the best tools to use in order to get a message out to the public. They are easy to write and every community has at least one newspaper in which you can submit your letter. Sending letters to the editor can help you achieve your goals because they:

- reach a very large audience.
- can be used to rebut information not accurately addressed in a news article or editorial.
- create an impression of widespread support or opposition to an issue.
- are widely read by community leaders and lawmakers to gauge public sentiment about current issues in the news.

The purpose of submitting a letter to the editor is to have it published so that you will influence your targeted primary audience, the readers of

the newspaper. The letters to the editor section of the newspaper is one of the most popular features in many newspapers.

All letters are read by the editors, and may influence them in determining which topics should receive further attention or follow-up articles.

### Elements of an Effective Letter

- At a minimum letters should:
  - a. Identifies the problem in the community
  - b. Refer to the project by name
  - c. Describe how the project will address the problem
- Tell personal stories of how you or your family have benefited.
- Polite, kind letters communicate the best
- Keep your writing clear and positive
- Always be factual—do not embellish
- Create immediacy indicating how our community will be affected
- Focus on one issue in each letter—have a specific message
- Direct people to resources/additional sources of information
- Ask for action from your readers
- Include your signature, address, & phone