

BROOKINGS

Report

So you want to comment on a regulation? Here's how

Shagufta Ahmed, Shannon Joyce, and Adam Looney Friday, August 10, 2018

Editor's Note:

November 30, 2022: Shagufta Ahmed and Shannon Joyce have been added as authors to this paper to recognize their contributions to its development.

The Trump administration has made its deregulatory agenda clear since inauguration day. The administration's actions have ranged from sweeping rollbacks of major rules that have garnered media attention, to smaller orders and guidance withdrawals instructing agencies to ignore previous rules.

Brookings' has been keeping track of these actions, big and small. While you may have heard of some, such as proposals to roll back the EPA's Clean Power Plan, others have received relatively little attention despite having big impacts on regulation and the federal government's role. These changes have been both lauded and criticized by relevant constituencies.

Whether you support or oppose ongoing regulatory changes, Americans have the right to participate in the regulatory process and to comment on these proposed rules. Agencies are required to solicit, take seriously, and respond to comments from the public, and typically open a comment period of 30 to 60 days after announcing a proposed rule to accept comments. Effective comments can and do influence the rulemaking process.

However, few people take advantage of the opportunity to comment, and even fewer comment effectively. Comments influence rules only to the extent that they bring forth relevant facts, evidence, and insights to rule makers.

So how can you comment on proposed rules?

As current and former civil servants and Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, we've seen both sides of the rulemaking process—both in developing and enacting rules and offering input on how to improve these rules. Through that process, we've gained insight into what is helpful and what isn't, but have also been frustrated that information on how to make a comment is hard to find or unclear. Drawing on advice from colleagues and the experiences of regulatory experts, [this how-to guide](#) outlines why commenting is important, what information is important to include, and how to write and submit a comment.

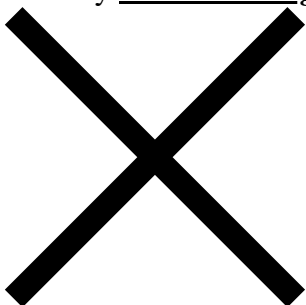
The guide describes what information your comment should include, how to structure your comment, where to find rules under comment, what information is helpful, and more.

Read more on how to effectively comment [here](#).

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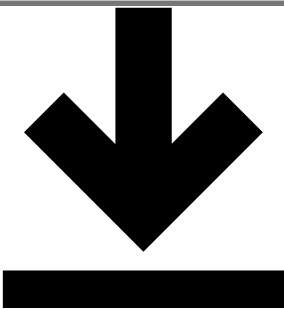
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