
Amelia Chen***On meeting with Valerie, the Policy Advisor
for the Office of Senator Tarr***

Synopsis of the substance of the meeting: During this meeting, which is our first lobbying session at the State House, we met with Valerie, who seemed to care a lot about the drought issue, as well as other environmental issues in Massachusetts. We started off by introducing ourselves and Gianna started off talking about the drought management problem in Massachusetts, and I explained the Drought Bill as the solution, with our call to action being to ask for a speedy hearing. Valerie spoke to us about the environmental advocacy work that she is a part of and her passion for improving the environment.

Reflection: I think the way that Gianna and I introduced ourselves, the problem, and the bill was very smooth and effective. I was very nervous about meeting with these staffers and speaking with them, and since this was our first meeting of the day I was especially nervous. I was worried that I would trip up on my words or that they would ask us a question I did not know the answer to, but after how smoothly this first conversation went, I felt much more confident for our next meetings of that day.

Valerie was clearly more knowledgeable and experienced about environmental issues than other staffers we met with that day, which is probably attributable to the fact that she has more experience since she is older and talked about working in the private sector before coming back to work at the State House.

I think Gianna and I effectively connected with Valerie because she seemed to also be very excited about the Drought Bill and creating environmental change. I think she admired that we were students advocating for this bill, since at the end of our meeting she gave us some life advice. She told us that if we have a conflict or issue now that we will not care about in five years, then we should not let that issue bother us now. I think she told us this because we connected with her well and she might have found it endearing that we are students.

Something that could have gone better might have been to stay on track on the main point of the conversation more, which is to talk about the Drought Bill. Our conversation got more side-tracked when Valerie started talking about other environmental issues she was interested in – like the plovers (an endangered species) and the excellent water filtration system in Aruba.

I think it was good to talk to her about these things because I think this helped us establish a connection with her, but tying some of the things she said back to the Drought Bill and the drought issue happening in Massachusetts would have worked even better.