



The Insider

National Elevator Industry, Inc.

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Securing Legislative Success – A Case Study from Hawaii

There is no magic formula that guarantees success in the legislative policy arena. Relationships, timing, political pressure, industry participation and many other factors can influence whether efforts will be successful or fall short. In 2012, all the elements of a winning strategy came together, and The National Elevator Industry, Inc. (*NEII*®) was able to secure a significant legislative victory and increase the safety of the riding public in Hawaii. This is our story.

The Challenge:

Last year, the *NEII* Government Affairs Committee (GAC) was alerted by its respective local field representatives of serious state inspection delays that were significantly impacting building permits and customer schedules. Compounding the problem, the state's elevator division was struggling amidst recent leadership changes and budget constraints. *NEII* knew that by taking a proactive stance on the issue, it could create a solution that would meet industry needs and ensure the safety of the riding public. So how did we get it done? In a word: collaboration.



The Solution:

First, we needed to focus the efforts of the local member-company representatives who were trying to tackle too many issues at once. Representatives from member elevator companies, the union and other stakeholders formed a working group to prioritize industry concerns and organize the team's efforts. *NEII* also hired a local lobbyist to manage the Working Group and help develop *NEII*'s collective strategy.

The Industry Working Group met with the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) in June 2011 to raise key issues and voice concerns about the inspection delays. This dialogue allowed regulators and the industry to discuss their perspectives, which helped the Director recognize key problem areas within the Elevator Branch. The group continued meeting over the next several months so all participants could better understand the root cause of the challenges the various stakeholders faced and, ultimately, discern the potential impact on public health and safety.

After extensive discussions, all participants agreed that greater funding was necessary to support much-needed programmatic changes within the Hawaii DIR Elevator Branch. The Working Group outlined a plan that included a million

dollars in seed money, dedicated funding to provide ongoing program support, increasing inspection fees, new authority for additional positions with competitive salaries and several other components.



But *NEII* knew that passing such a comprehensive bill in tough economic times was going to be an uphill battle, and we couldn't do it alone. It was critical for the industry to have the support of DIR before moving forward. Together, DIR and the industry drafted a bill and developed the legislative strategy. We agreed on how to focus our education efforts, what arguments would sell the plan, and which legislators to target.

Additionally, *NEII*'s lobbyist had established relationships with the "right" legislators and secured an introduction of our bill by the two highest ranking legislators - Senate President Shan Tsutsui and House Speaker Calvin Say. The lobbyist navigated the legislative process effectively, making sure our bill was being considered by the appropriate committees and had a broad coalition of support available to testify and submit comments as needed.

The team also anticipated potential opposition and worked to neutralize it. The coalition of support included building owners and member-company representatives to negate any concerns about fee increases; union members to demonstrate agreement between labor and management; state government agencies to affirm that the remedies set forth in the bill were necessary and appropriate; and, stakeholders from the tourism, medical and other industries to show that this issue had broad interest for various sectors of the state's economy.

The Result:

After much collaboration, long hours, numerous meetings and legislative hearings, *NEII*'s bill passed the legislature and was signed into law – Act 103 – by Governor Neil Abercrombie on June 1, 2012. The experience in Hawaii demonstrates that working together, industry stakeholders and policymakers can define problems, identify solutions and secure results that benefit all parties. But most importantly, such an effort is considered a victory because the safety of the riding public has been ensured.



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