RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR CHAIRS FOR CONDUCTING A PUBLIC HEARING

1. **NOTICE.** Verify with Committee Clerk that adequate notice of the hearing has been given to the sponsor and to the public (at least 2 weekends in advance unless a lesser notice period has been approved by the presiding officers.) Notice of public hearings must be posted outside the committee room. Joint Rules prohibit a committee from holding a public hearing for which notice has not been posted.

2. **QUORUM.** Ensure a quorum of the Committee (7 members) is present to start the meeting. A quorum is not necessary to continue a meeting.

3. **CALL THE HEARING TO ORDER.**

   - Bang the gavel.

   - [Announce to the audience:] ***"I am Sen./Rep _____ and will be presiding over this public hearing today of the Joint Standing Committee on _____. The purpose of the hearing is to invite testimony from members of the public regarding proposed legislation that is pending before this committee. The Committee will hear testimony from persons present who wish to speak for, against, or neither for nor against the bill(s) to be heard today. With leave of the Chair, Committee members may ask questions of any person testifying today. Other questions are not permitted. Whether or not you testify, you may submit written testimony to the committee. Please be mindful that testimony is public and is available to all once it is presented. Written testimony will be distributed to committee members and will also be posted on the Legislature's website for viewing by interested persons."***

     "Persons testifying at the public hearing today are advised that the hearing is being broadcast on the Internet and may be heard by persons listening online. If you wish to testify, please state your name, residence and the organization you represent (if any), and sign in at the podium. Testimony will be heard in the following order:

     - ***The Sponsor who will present the bill, followed by any Cosponsors;***
     - ***Those speaking in favor of the bill;***
     - ***Those speaking in opposition to the bill; and***
     - ***Those speaking neither for nor against the bill."***

     "If you have any written materials to accompany your testimony, please give at least 20 copies to the Committee Clerk prior to testifying."

     "There will be no smoking or eating during this hearing, and in deference to others here today, please keep all conversation to a minimum."

     "Today we will hear testimony on the following bills _____."

4. **MOTION TO BEGIN THE HEARING.**

   "We will now begin the hearing on L.D. _____; AN ACT to _____."

- ***[Speak to Sponsor] "I ask that Sen./Rep_____, the sponsor present the bill at this time"...***

- ***"Are there cosponsors who wish to testify?"***

- ***"Is there anyone who wishes to speak in favor of the bill?"***
  (hear testimony of all those in favor)

- ***"Is there anyone who wishes to speak in opposition to the bill?"***
  (hear testimony of all those in opposition)

- ***"Is there anyone who wishes to speak neither for nor against this bill, but wishes to offer additional information?"***
  (hear all remaining testimony)

5. CONCLUDE THE HEARING.

- [Announce to the audience:] ***"All testimony having been taken, this hearing on L.D. _____ is now closed. A committee work session for this bill will be scheduled. Notice of work sessions will be posted outside the Committee room and on the Legislature's website. If you wish to be notified of the work session, check with the Committee Clerk.***

- Bang the gavel.

  [Repeat for each bill to be heard.]

NOTE:

A. You may wish to further specify the order of testimony within each group (i.e., for, against, etc.) by having members of the general public speak first, then representatives of trade associations or other groups, followed by representatives of governmental departments or agencies. This will allow members of the general public, who often have made special scheduling arrangements to attend, to speak first.

B. If there is a large number of people wishing to testify, you may want to:

- limit the time for each person to testify to 3-5 minutes and have them sign up in advance;

- alternate proponent and opponent testimony periodically (i.e., every 15 minutes or half hour) so one group is not left to the end of a long hearing;

- in your opening statement discourage repetitious or irrelevant testimony; or

- distribute a preprinted form on which audience members may write comments in order to avoid lengthy, repetitious testimony.

If this will be the procedure, announce it to the audience at the beginning of the hearing.