Speakers Bureau Do's and Don'ts

Don'ts	Do's
• Don't try to convince each person of the total truth and righteousness of our cause in this conversation.	• Remember our goals: to provide information, to present a human face, to begin a dialogue and relationship.
• Reflexively answer each question with your stock response.	• Listen to the actual question, its nuances and pay attention to the questioner [body language, tone, demeanor]; • Take time to think about your response if necessary; • Probe the questioner if you suspect there's a question behind the question. e.g. "Does your concern/question come out of a particular experience you've had?"
• Try to give "facts" that you are not sure about.	• Acknowledge the query as a factual question which you'll need to find out more information; • Promise to get back to the person and be sure to follow up.

• *Try to contradict the questioner's own experience of local opposition of a particular development.*	• *Put the experience in context;* • *Acknowledge that you aren't familiar with all of the facts of that situation;* • *Acknowledge that developers (like everyone else) do make mistakes sometimes.*
• *Present yourself as an expert on every issue related to affordable housing.*	• *Explicitly acknowledge the complexity and long history of the field;* • *Give yourself permission to say "That's a good question. I don't know the answer now."*

• *Claim that every affordable housing development is well-designed, professionally managed, contributes to the neighborhood, and works perfectly.*	• *Acknowledge that the affordable housing movement has learned many lessons over the past decade, including on the importance of good design and quality management;* • *Acknowledge that not all developers have the same level of experience, expertise and funding to do everything they and the community might want them to do;* • *Explain that groups such as EBHO are trying to continually improve the work of housing developers.*
• *Refer vaguely to all developers or all developments.*	• *Speak from your own experience and about particular developments that you know.*
• *Let the education stop with this presentation.*	• *At every opportunity encourage them to go on a housing tour as the best way to understand affordable housing.*

Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NHP)
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