



STATE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

2012



PREPARED FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 2012 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce & Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance

2012 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance, collectively representing nearly 2,600 businesses, are dedicated to serving their members and communities by advocating and supporting the economic business interest of the region.

The Chambers' 2012 legislative agenda is produced by members of their Legislative Affairs Committees and approved by the Board of Directors of both Chambers. This document outlines the Chambers' positions on critical issues affecting our businesses and the business community.

THE CHAMBERS' KEY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2012 ARE:

- **Transportation**
- **Tourism**
- **Education**
- **Passenger & High Speed Rail Service**
- **Small Business Development Center**
- **Illegal Immigration**
- **Uniform Taxation**
- **Workforce Development**
- **Minimum Wage**
- **Growth & Development**

TRANSPORTATION



SUPPORT revenue streams that are (1) broad based, long-term, simple, efficient to collect, (2) sourced from all ultimate consumers including those in-state, out-of-state, wholesalers, retailers, and users of products and services moved over the transportation grid, (3) designed to encourage smart transportation grid use and development and (4) enabling everyone to pay their fair share.

SUPPORT revenue streams dedicated to the Hampton Roads Transportation Project Priorities for the 2034 long-range transportation plan.

OPPOSE fees designated to fund transportation that disproportionately target the business community.

Transportation remains a critical priority for businesses throughout the Hampton Roads region. Of equal importance, transportation is crucial to the mission and performance of the 50+ military and other federal activities in Hampton Roads. Another significant source of pride and revenue for Virginia comes from its robust ports.

Congestion caused by current transportation conditions is placing Williamsburg and Virginia Beach, two of the premier tourist destinations in the Commonwealth, at risk. Visitors to our area are confronted with lengthy delays, causing many of them to consider not returning for future vacations. The I-64 corridor must be addressed in any transportation solution for Hampton Roads.

Transportation networks and infrastructure improvements are important to the future growth of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Virginia serves as an intermodal collection point for containers from West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Northern Virginia and elsewhere. The Port of Virginia (located in Hampton Roads) is the state's leading agency for international transportation and maritime commerce, charged with operating the marine terminal facilities through which the shipping trade takes place.

A multi-modal system approach on regional and state levels can help to enhance the region's business community and economic development opportunities. Businesses throughout the region depend on a diverse transportation network to remain competitive in the global economy. Businesses throughout the Commonwealth need a seamless system of highways, mass transit, railroads, seaports and airports to conduct business efficiently, to expand, to prosper, and to create jobs. The efficient movement of people, goods, and services is essential to maintain our favorable business climate and quality of life.

All forms of transportation have a role to play in serving the needs of our citizens. Additionally, current levels of congestion outside and within our region are already placing visitor experience at risk, thereby threatening the future of our tourism economy.

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance recognize transportation issues as central to its ability to maintain a healthy business climate. With all business: be it the military, the ports, retail, wholesale, manufacturing and other myriad of businesses, the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance believe it is important for employees to be able to get to and from work efficiently. It is important for customers to be able to access businesses. It is important for suppliers to be able to deliver goods and services without adding unnecessary costs arising from waste from transportation congestion.

Transportation is the lifeblood of the economy, and for years the region's business community has been concerned about the state having sufficient revenue to maintain and improve roads and other modes of transportation.

The nearly 2,600 businesses of the Chambers believe transportation is a state-wide problem and should be dealt with on a state-wide basis. Sustainable long-term funding for transportation is still necessary on a state-wide basis for the Commonwealth to remain competitive and to sustain our significant military and federal presence.

For the better part of a decade or more, the Virginia General Assembly has been unable to produce any meaningful long-term funding solutions for transportation. It appears that Virginia elected officials generally agree there is a need, but are unable to agree on appropriate funding mechanisms. It is time for each member of the Virginia General Assembly to demonstrate leadership for Virginia, not one's party, by ending partisanship on this critical issue. The Chambers encourage all elected officials in Virginia to provide appropriate funding for this key infrastructure.

TOURISM



SUPPORT continued and increased investment in tourism at the local and state level and innovation and expansion by the tourism economic driver of our area including both our major attractions and other entrepreneurial initiatives. We believe that the best way to achieve that investment is through additional offerings at our current attractions, particularly those that extend the tourism season and through the creation of a business climate that welcomes new and different tourism options.

SUPPORT marketing of area attributes that provide additional reasons for visitors to come to the Historic Triangle and enjoy Civil War reenactments, artisans, ecotourism, biking, golf, and other forms of sports and recreation.

SUPPORT continuation of current law beginning the school year for public schools after Labor Day. Any effort to begin the school year earlier would affect traditional family vacations and the tourism season.

SUPPORT continued increased in state funding to the Virginia Tourism Corporation for out of town marketing purposes and encourage our localities to set the pace with funding increases.

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance believe that tourism is critical to the well-being of the economy of the Historic Triangle and the Hampton Roads region.

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance support initiatives promoting tourism in the Commonwealth. The Chambers view tourism funding as a wise and prudent investment in one of the state's leading industries that will pay dividends in the form of revenue generated by travelers, vacationers and guests visiting the Commonwealth.

The continued economic vitality and health of the tourism industry is essential to the long-term fiscal condition of both the Commonwealth and this region. The tourism sector of the Commonwealth's economy is comprised primarily of small businesses spread across the state which depend on collective efforts to market the broad array of attractions and destinations. We also support efforts to create a fund for use in developing new tourism products and support infrastructure as a means of maintaining the vitality of Virginia as a destination relative to its competitors. Finally, we believe that the General Assembly has properly created legislation that appropriately establishes the public school calendar and support continuation of this legislation as a means of retaining traditional family vacations and providing necessary workers for this industry.

EDUCATION | K-12



SUPPORT world-class standards of excellence in Virginia's education system by maintaining the current Standards of Quality funding formula requiring the Commonwealth to pay 55 percent of the prevailing cost of education.

SUPPORT policies and practices advancing the principle of accountability for all involved in the educational process.

SUPPORT the efforts of the school divisions and intend to continue to work with them to develop partnerships that will benefit students in our public education system.

SUPPORT efforts to expand secondary education in trades and other non-academic pursuits.

SUPPORT initiatives at the state level to create a more comprehensive, unified system of publically funded universal employment and training services.

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance believe that life-long education is a driver of economic development. By striving to create a workforce that has the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of the business community, education will become the dynamic force behind business in the Commonwealth.

The Chambers support world-class standards of excellence in Virginia's education system. We support appropriate funding necessary to improve all levels of education K-12 through the university levels. We support initiatives to provide quality education and training that enable businesses to achieve their goals via a more skilled, flexible and productive workforce.

We strongly support public school initiatives to expand educational experiences and student success in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subject areas.

We believe the education infrastructure must be of the highest quality for our students to compete in today's global economy. We support policies and practices advocating the principle of accountability for all involved in the educational process, as well as ensuring all students have access to the resources needed to reach high standards including quality physical facilities, equipment and materials, and a sufficient number of well-qualified instructional personnel consistent with student success.



SUPPORT the legislative agendas of the following institutions:

- **College of William & Mary**
- **Norfolk State University**
- **Old Dominion University**
- **Thomas Nelson Community College**
- **Tidewater Community College**

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY

Construct: Integrated Science Center 3

As the College seeks to address the priorities and needs of the Commonwealth, it intends to seek support for the third and final phase of the Integrated Science Center (ISC3). This building will expand the College's capability in cutting edge science as well provide state of the art facilities. In addition, this facility will increase the college's ability to do marketable research, as well we as train scientists to support the Commonwealth's growing economy. This project would be the last major capital project to get underway on campus for the next several years. The approximate cost for this building is \$85 million.

Renovate: Tyler Hall

Support the design and renovation of Tyler Hall, built in 1921 and most recently updated 30 years ago. Proposed renovation work will include replacement of major building systems, modernization of classrooms, and installation of the newest teaching technologies. Project cost is \$16.3 million.

NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY

Capital Requests

Renovate and expand **Hamm Fine Arts Building**. The project requires a complete renovation of the existing 63,400 square foot facility and the addition of 65,000 square feet of new space. This building supports the music and arts programs in addition to several administrative functions. The expansion and renovation of the existing facility will accommodate the expansion required for band practice and fine arts programs. Projected Total Cost: \$46,157,000.00

Construct new Science Building - 120,000 square foot. A new state-of-the-art facility that utilizes advanced instructional technology, research, dry and wet teaching laboratories, classrooms, and lecture halls, conference and seminar rooms, faculty offices, and a reading room/library, student study areas, space for greenhouse; as well as a planetarium. Projected Total Cost: \$52,706,000.00

Renovate and modify **Brown Hall** by renovating A wing, demolishing Wings B & C and replacing them with new structures for mathematics and communications department. Projected Total Cost: \$52,758,000.

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

Chief among Old Dominion University's highest priorities has been its commitment to providing the citizens of the Commonwealth with access to a quality, yet affordable, higher education. In keeping with this critical objective, the University's in-state enrollment has grown by over 4,000 students, or over 20%, over the past six years. Approximately 88% of ODU's fall 2010 enrollment was comprised of in-state students, a full 10 percentage points greater than the statewide average. Since 2004, ODU has added more in-state students than any other public university in the Commonwealth.

As a result of budget cuts from FY2009 through FY2011, state General Fund support for these additional in-state students significantly decreased by over \$36 million, or 30%. For a number of years, ODU has received the smallest percentage of funding of any institution, including the Virginia Community College System. This situation presents the infrastructure and operations of the University with major financial challenges, and has had an adverse impact on the teaching and services provided to our students, as well as our ability to accommodate additional access.

The University's financial situation is further complicated by the fact that 30% of our students are Pell grant eligible, and we have the largest number of actual Pell grant recipients of any of the four-year institutions, regardless of the size of overall enrollments. Thus, affordability remains of critical importance to our students, and their families, and the University has continued to respond to this challenge by keeping our tuition among the lowest in the state - year after year.

A recent *Virginian-Pilot* article, reported that nearly half of ODU's faculty now consists of part-time teachers, more than at any other four-year state university in Virginia, with the proportion of part-time faculty rising from 37% in 2002 to 43.5% in 2009.

The University sincerely appreciates the Governor and General Assembly's acknowledgement of our past good work by providing us with \$11.4 million during the 2011 General Assembly session, yet the University's General Fund shortfall remains at \$31 million and we are still at the very bottom of the state's funding formula. Therefore, ODU's top priority during the 2012 legislative session will be to seek additional resources that will allow the University to further our progress towards hiring additional faculty, especially in the STEM-related disciplines, and strengthening our support infrastructure.

Additional legislative initiatives include:

- A request for additional funds to support the Advance Virginia through 2+2 on-line distance learning initiative, involving 10 predominately STEM and high-demand degree programs. This joint proposal between ODU and the VCCS will expand access to STEM and health care degree programs by creating new online degree programs, reducing time to graduation, and making better use of both institutional and student resources.
- A request for funds to encourage middle and high school students to enter into STEM-related disciplines through our leadership in the Project Lead the Way program. ODU is the designated Virginia affiliate of this national initiative which provides rigorous curricular and other support to middle and high schools in an effort to promote increased participation in STEM-related disciplines and prepare students to become innovative and productive engineers and scientists.

- A request for additional investment in our Center for Bioelectrics which builds upon its past success in developing novel cancer therapies, immunotherapies, and other medical environmental applications that can dramatically improve upon human health and welfare. This investment would result in the Commonwealth and ODU housing the most significant bioelectrics research and commercialization activities in the world.
- Building upon the Commonwealth’s FY2011-2012 investment in Medical Modeling and Simulation, we seek further investment with VMASC and the collaborative efforts of EVMS in this new and rapidly growing field.
- The current success and momentum of ODU’s Business Gateway and new Innovation Foundation with both basic and applied research and commercialization of university and private sector intellectual property, prompts us to seek an investment in an Integrated Business Accelerator in our Innovation Research Park with accompanying technical and business support services for both commercialization and business development programs.

THOMAS NELSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Seeking More Faculty and Facilities

Serving More Virginia Students and Veterans

Producing More Virginia Graduates

Thomas Nelson Community College (TNCC) is the largest provider of higher education and workforce training on the Virginia Peninsula serving over 16,000 college students and 36,000 workforce students annually. Over the past six years, TNCC has seen its student enrollment increase by more than 50%, while state funding for higher education has decreased by approximately 27% during the same period. Through 2012, Virginia’s Community Colleges are projected to lose approximately \$105 million in general fund support. As a result, community colleges, along with four-year colleges and universities throughout Virginia, are becoming increasingly reliant on tuition to make-up the difference in the costs of receiving a high quality education and the reduction in state funds allocated for higher education. Thomas Nelson Community College supports the legislative agenda adopted by the State Board of Community Colleges seeking to restore adequate state funding for community colleges in Virginia to enable them to continue to provide world class higher education and workforce training to stimulate and sustain economic growth and development and position the region to compete in a global marketplace. As part of the Virginia Community College System legislative agenda for the 2012-14 biennium, Thomas Nelson Community College is seeking additional state funds to support two capital projects on its Hampton Campus:

- (1) \$14,752,820 to significantly improve infrastructure and renovate three, aging instructional and administrative buildings totaling approximately 60,000 square feet in Diggs, Harrison and Moore Halls; and
- (2) \$14,927,600 to construct a 33,000 square foot Academic Health and Wellness Center to serve students.

TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Funding to support the cost of education for “Top Jobs.”

The Commonwealth has set a goal of awarding 100,000 more degrees over the next 15 years, with greater emphasis on science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and healthcare (“STEM-H”), to place Virginia among the most highly educated states and enhance its attractiveness to business and industry. Virginia’s community colleges enroll three of every five undergraduate students attending the state’s public colleges and universities – those 23 community colleges are essential to achieving the Commonwealth’s “Top Jobs” goals. And with the second-largest undergraduate student body in the state and growing, Tidewater Community College must be a leader if this effort is to be successful.

TCC’s enrollment has doubled over the past dozen years to some 46,000 students in 2010-11, making it the largest provider of higher education and workforce development services in the Hampton Roads region. And more than 1,300 employers across the region used TCC’s services. Yet, state support for TCC and all of Virginia’s community colleges is declining – over the past decade, General Fund support per full-time equivalent student has dropped by 51% in constant dollars, from \$5,106 to \$2,504. This trend cannot continue if community colleges are expected to produce the results expected of them.

Specifically, TCC and Virginia’s community colleges have pressing needs in the areas of human capital and facilities. As demand has increased and state support declined, the proportion of courses taught by full-time faculty has steadily eroded. Currently at 43%, to make a modest increase to 47% in the full-time to part-time faculty ratio across the 23 Virginia community colleges will require an investment of \$11.6 million, of which approximately \$2 million would be allocated to TCC. And, among the top four facilities needs of Virginia’s community colleges, two are at TCC – construction of a Science and Engineering Building at the Chesapeake Campus, where dramatic enrollment increases have caused the addition of 40,000 square feet of temporary space, and renovation of the Bayside Building which currently houses the Virginia Beach Campus library that will relocate into the new Joint-Use Library being built in partnership with the City. Other areas of need for TCC and Virginia’s community colleges include salary increases for faculty and staff who are in their fourth year without raises, increased funding to enhance student success, especially among underrepresented populations, and added financial support to increase access to higher education opportunity for veterans.

INTERREGIONAL PASSENGER RAIL AND HIGH SPEED RAIL SERVICE



SUPPORT the extension of high speed rail service to Richmond/Petersburg and to the Hampton Roads region.

SUPPORT improvement of the quality and frequency of intercity passenger rail service from Newport News to Williamsburg with continuing service through Richmond and Washington D.C.

SUPPORT the application by the Commonwealth of Virginia for funding this critical infrastructure.

SUPPORT a dedicated funding source to assist in funding the operation of passenger rail in the Commonwealth.

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance have long supported improved transportation infrastructure. Hampton Roads is a unique national asset, containing the largest concentration of federal activities anywhere in the country outside of D.C. The region houses operations of 16 departments and agencies of the Executive Branch of the federal government including all five military services. It is home to the nation's largest naval facility, provides primary air defense to our nation's Capitol, and homeland security to our port and seacoast. Dependable, efficient, and cost effective travel to and from the D.C. area is vital to operations.

Hampton Roads is home to major tourist destinations, including the Virginia Beach oceanfront and historic Williamsburg area, attracting nearly five million tourists annually. High speed rail, coupled with a connection to an intercity light rail system whose first phase is complete, will provide a much needed transportation alternative to visitors and will help mitigate growing congestion during the peak tourist season.

Our ability to rapidly move both people and freight to and from the region and connect with the marketplace is fundamental to Hampton Roads' future competitiveness. In addition to facilitating the movement of people, improvements in the Norfolk Southern/Route 460 corridor will have the added benefit of enhancing the competitiveness of the Port of Virginia, while fostering the growth of manufacturing and distribution centers along the corridor.

In addition, the Chambers believe that Hampton Roads has insufficient emergency evacuation routes to handle its population, hindered to a great extent by bridge and tunnel crossings on every major corridor. High speed rail will provide a high volume transportation option for moving people more quickly from the area without future congestion limiting highway evacuation routes. In order to keep Virginia competitive in the global economy and provide adequate public safety in the case of a natural disaster, it is necessary to develop a 21st century transportation system. Passenger and high speed rail will reduce fuel consumption, improve air quality, enhance freight service, significantly increase capacity and reliability, enhance visitor traffic, and foster the revitalization of urban areas. The Chambers strongly encourage the Federal Railroad Administration to approve the Commonwealth of Virginia's funding application for funds to construct interregional passenger rail and ultimately high speed rail from Richmond and Petersburg to Hampton Roads.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

SUPPORT the Virginia Small Business Development Center Network's initiative to secure \$1 million in state funding.

The Small Business Development Center of Hampton Roads, Inc. (SBDC) is part of a statewide network of 29 centers under the direction of the state office at George Mason University. The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with Thomas Nelson Community College, operates the SBDC in Hampton Roads. Funding support for the network's operations originally came from the Small Business Administration and was matched by both state and local funding. In 2003, the state eliminated all funding for the SBDC network as part of a budget reduction program. The loss of \$1 million in state funding resulted in a 30% reduction in funding support for operations. While the SBDC has been able to locate some additional



funding partners to help minimize this loss, there has been a reduction in services provided due to this funding cut. The services the SBDC provide are critical to the health and survival of local small businesses that are the fastest-growing employment sector. Restoration of the funding for the state network will result in the local SBDC receiving \$190,000 which will go to restoring services that had been reduced or eliminated, as well as enable it to meet the increasing demand for its services.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION



SUPPORT immigration laws that are fair and balanced.

OPPOSE any legislation that creates undue hardships on employers for verifying worker eligibility.

OPPOSE any legislation that creates overly punitive sanctions on employers who unknowingly hire ineligible workers.

OPPOSE state efforts to further regulate immigration in the workplace, favoring instead a workable federal approach.

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance recognize that our immigration system is broken. The Chambers support efforts towards achieving a resolution in addressing the challenges of illegal immigration. We support the development of a uniform approach. In addition, the Chambers strongly support immigration laws that are balanced and fair. Foreign workers are essential to the growth of the economy and it is imperative that comprehensive reform take into account the enormous contribution that all immigrants have made and continue to make to sustain and further our American way of life.

UNIFORM TAXATION



SUPPORT uniform taxation.

SUPPORT the promotion of tax policies that balance the need to provide for essential services and the need to minimize the relative tax burden on business.

OPPOSE any measure that taxes commercial real estate at a different rate than residential real estate.

OPPOSE the accelerated sales tax.

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance recognize the effects of business costs and tax burdens on businesses as well as the region's challenges in job creation. To encourage economic growth and investment, the Chambers support fiscal tax policies and business cost reforms designed to increase competitiveness and create jobs.

The Chambers also support the Commonwealth of Virginia in efforts to adopt a simple and uniform taxing system. We believe that fair and reasonable real property taxation is necessary to ensure that a level playing field is maintained for businesses throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Chambers support uniform taxation as outlined in Article X of the Virginia Constitution. The Chambers oppose any measure that taxes business at a different level than residential property owners.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



SUPPORT initiatives to create a more comprehensive, unified system of publicly funded universal employment and training services.

SUPPORT initiatives to provide quality education and training that enable businesses to achieve their goals via a more skilled, flexible and productive workforce.

SUPPORT efforts to expand employment opportunities consistent with the quality of life expectations.

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance support initiatives that create a more comprehensive, unified system of publicly funded universal employment and training services, built upon public/private partnerships that are demand-driven, business-led and locally administered.

The Chambers will continue to work with the Administration and the General Assembly to initiate, support and implement additional workforce reform through strategic partnerships with the Commonwealth's workforce development and services delivery system and the private sector.

Additionally, the Chambers support initiatives to provide quality education and training that enable businesses to achieve their goals via a more skilled, flexible and productive workforce. Virginia employers need a "thinking workforce" with the competencies to advance and innovate to ensure Virginia maintains a competitive economy. Given the accelerating integration of advanced technologies in products and processes and the associated rapid growth of skill requirements in today's workplace, employers want educators to provide them with "trainable" employees. These are individuals with an understanding of theory and applied technology. These are individuals that can read, write, compute and communicate effectively and can readily adapt to changes in job requirements and workplace environments.

Jobs are essential to support the quality of life of any community. Good jobs within our community strengthen our collective ability to survive grow and prosper. We will support efforts to expand employment opportunities consistent with the quality of life expectations.

MINIMUM WAGE



OPPOSE any effort to establish a minimum wage for the Commonwealth of Virginia or any of its localities that is higher than the federally-mandated minimum wage.

On July 24, 2009, the federal minimum wage increased to \$7.25 per hour. Although many advocates of this increase and those favoring an additional increase at the state and/or local levels have valid concerns for those living below, at or near the poverty level, we remain firm in our belief that raising the rate above the federal level would place Virginia's businesses at a greater disadvantage. First, mandated increases in wages will result in increased prices for goods and services, placing Virginia's businesses at a competitive disadvantage in the national and international marketplaces and adding costs for Virginia families. Second, with today's mobile workforce, a substantially higher basic wage in Virginia would send jobs to other states or even overseas. Lastly, in a competitive marketplace, market driven wage rates encourage productivity and provide empowerment for advancement of the workforce. Wages set by legislation discourages workers' competition for higher earnings, development and advancement that would normally be accomplished through continuing or completing education, seeking additional training and personal investment.

The General Assembly and Hampton Roads local governments should also reject proposals to establish local minimum wages, sometimes packaged as living wage requirements. When a local government demands that its suppliers or local businesses pay wages higher than the market would otherwise dictate, or higher than are paid in the next locality, it is picking the pockets of its own citizens to provide the difference.

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



SUPPORT the rights of Virginians to choose where they live, work, and play consistent with the principles of a market driven economy.

SUPPORT regional cooperation among adjoining localities in order to allow for economic development and shared economies of scale in service delivery.

SUPPORT the provision of the needed infrastructure to allow communities to plan for anticipated growth in economic activity.

SUPPORT planning, construction, and maintenance of an improved statewide multi-modal transportation system that is need-based, cohesive, integrated, and interconnected.

SUPPORT the revitalization of older suburban and core city areas through in-fill development and redevelopment.

SUPPORT a comprehensive review of Virginia’s tax structure to ensure that it is equitable, broad based, fosters a favorable business climate, and encourages economic development.

SUPPORT a process that does not impede or restrict the important agricultural and forest economies of Virginia as necessary components of sensible growth.

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance believes that economic growth is both a natural and necessary aspect of a healthy economy. However, growth must be measured against its implications. We believe “balanced growth” involves not only the quantity of growth, but the type and location of growth. To that end, we support public policy initiatives at all levels of government focused on fostering the expansion of the economic strength of Virginia without adversely affecting the quality of life and prosperity of its citizens. These Chambers representing nearly 2,600 businesses support the creation of jobs through the expansion of existing companies and the attraction of new business activity to the Commonwealth.

As the recovery from this recessionary period begins, we believe Virginia has the will and the tools necessary to ensure sensible growth throughout. These resources must work to create a climate attractive for business and conducive to expand business activity by both new and existing companies. The continued growth and development of Virginia is crucial to the success of our region and business communities.

ONGOING LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS

The Chambers’ ongoing legislative positions are:

- **Business Professional & Occupational License**
 - **Certificate of Need**
 - **Health Care**
 - **Collective Bargaining / Public Sector**
 - **Dillon Rule**
 - **Employment Law**
 - **Environmental Regulation**
 - **Gubernatorial Succession**
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BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL & OCCUPATIONAL LICENSE



SUPPORT the reform of the BPOL tax in the Code of Virginia and replacing it with a revenue stream that holds local government harmless and benefits business.

Since the BPOL tax was first enacted to fund the War of 1812, Virginia businesses have been burdened by an antiquated flat tax that transformed into a gross receipt tax. The present BPOL tax is patently unfair because it targets business's gross receipts regardless of profitability. Gross receipt taxation is a significant impact upon small to medium businesses and it ignores the taxpayer's fundamental ability to pay such taxes. Furthermore, the tax is unequal and discriminatory because it is only assessed on certain professions.

In 2011, the General Assembly passed three BPOL tax reform bills (HB 1587, HB 1437 and SB 1408) which Governor McDonnell signed into law. HB 1587 allows cities and counties to rebate or exempt the current BPOL Tax for new businesses during their first year of operation. House Bill 1437 and Senate Bill 1408 grants localities the option of charging BPOL taxes based upon actual income (profit) rather than gross receipts and the option to rebate the taxes if the business loses money during the taxable year. We applaud the General Assembly and the Governor for these steps to incrementally repeal the BPOL tax. We recognize that these taxes are significant revenue sources to local governments. Therefore, the Chambers recommend that the General Assembly provide an alternative and broad-based funding source(s) of funds to hold the localities harmless from revenue losses from BPOL reform.

CERTIFICATE of PUBLIC NEED PROGRAM



SUPPORT retention of the Certificate of Public Need Program.

The Certificate of Public Need (COPN) program was mandated in all states by the U.S. Congress under the Health Resources Development Act of 1974. The idea was that regulation was necessary to prevent the costly duplication of health care services in the United States. A number of states have repealed or modified their COPN statutes since the federal government no longer mandates the program. The record is mixed both as to whether COPN effectively held down health care costs but also as to whether those states that eliminated the program have realized any benefit from doing so.

The Chambers believe that great caution should be taken before Virginia considers the elimination or modification of the COPN. We believe there is enough evidence that COPN has restricted increases in health care costs in Virginia and that it has protected our safety net and critical access hospitals thereby assuring that medical care is available to all of our citizens.

Hospitals are required to provide care to every individual who shows up in the emergency room, regardless of ability to pay. Government programs, such as Medicaid and Medicare, reimburse hospitals and physicians at rates far below the costs of treating their beneficiaries. Hospitals absorb many of those costs themselves, but a substantial portion is passed on to large and small businesses in the form of increased health insurance premiums for employees.

The Chambers believe that the COPN program in Virginia should not be eliminated or substantially modified until the General Assembly can guarantee that doing so will not adversely impact access, quality, public safety or the costs of health care to Virginia's businesses.

HEALTH CARE



SUPPORT legislation and programs that assist businesses, particularly small businesses, facilitate the health care needs of their employees.

SUPPORT reasonable market-based efforts to make health care more affordable and available to citizens.

To maintain a healthy and productive workforce and to preserve the quality of life in the Commonwealth, it is imperative to address the well-being and human service needs throughout the region. The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance support reasonable market-based efforts to make health care more affordable and manageable for citizens of Virginia as well as the business community that currently provides health insurance for employees.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING / PUBLIC SECTOR



SUPPORT maintaining the Commonwealth's status as a right-to-work state.

OPPOSE any legislation allowing public sector employees to collectively bargain.

OPPOSE any legislation permitting local governments to enter into collective bargaining agreements, memorandums of understanding or giving any public sector employee the right to strike.

The Chambers oppose public sector collective bargaining. The need for collective bargaining by public sector employees does not exist because sufficient safeguards in the law exist to protect public employees from discriminatory or abusive employment practices. Collective bargaining agreements in the public sector place the taxpayer at the mercy of such agreements, without consideration of the fiscal condition of the local government or the will of its citizens. Allowing collective bargaining by public employees places an unfunded state mandate on local governments, and such measures interfere with the responsibility to balance revenues with expenditures, including wages and benefits for public sector employees.

DILLON RULE



SUPPORT the Dillon Rule.

Virginia has been a Dillon Rule state for more than 100 years. Retaining it is important to business because it promotes uniformity in tax administration, land use regulation, criminal and civil enforcement, environmental permitting and regulation, employment law as well as many other issues. Without it, this uniformity would not exist among Virginia's localities.

EMPLOYMENT LAW



SUPPORT Virginia's unemployment compensation system of providing adequate and temporary assistance to workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own.

OPPOSE efforts to extend benefits to workers who through their own actions or inactions become unemployed, including those unemployed as a result of an employer lockout or a strike.

OPPOSE legislation to change current Workers' Compensation Policy.

Compared to national averages, Virginia enjoys low workers' compensation insurance rates. While this makes the state attractive to new business and industry, continued rising costs threaten to jeopardize our competitive edge.

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION



SUPPORT broad based federal and state funding sources to meet the expensive cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

On December 29, 2010, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency established the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), a “pollution diet” to initiate actions to restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Despite extensive restoration efforts over the last 25 years, the Bay TMDL program was established in order to attempt to meet the federal Clean Water Act.

The Bay itself is about 200 miles long, home to more than 3,700 species of plants, fish, and other animals. The Bay watershed totals about 64,000 square miles, stretching from Cooperstown, New York to Hampton Roads. Nearly 17 million people live in the Watershed. The TMDL program mandates that Watershed Implementation Plans (WIP’s) be developed by each of the seven states. Subsequently, such regulations will be passed down to local governments and property owners.

The cost to retrofit the region’s urban/suburban storm water systems is in the billions of dollars. However, there are no stable revenue sources at the federal or state levels to fund the complete overhaul of the region’s storm water and wastewater treatment facilities.

Hampton Roads’ businesses and property owners cannot afford the magnitude of these burdensome water quality improvement regulations and the task of cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay must be a partnership between the federal, state, and local governments.

GUBERNATORIAL SUCCESSION



SUPPORT amending the Virginia Constitution so as to allow the Virginia Governor to serve consecutive terms.

The Hampton Road Chamber of Commerce and Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance support legislation that will allow for a Virginia Governor to serve in office for a total of two consecutive terms. We also believe it will improve government operations to have more stability in agency management.



Join the Hampton Roads Business Political Action Committee (HRBizPAC)

Mission

The HRBizPAC works to advance the economy of Hampton Roads metropolitan statistical area. The HRBizPAC is an independent organization supporting incumbents and candidates whose positions are consistent with those of the HRBizPAC and the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce. The HRBizPAC educates the general public and elected officials on issues that will enhance the economic interest of the business community.

About the HRBizPAC

- HRBizPAC is a non-partisan committee that presses for action on issues impacting business, by supporting candidates who share those views.
- HRBizPAC provides an avenue for Chamber members and others sharing the Chamber's views on issues to pool their resources and efforts to impact public policy decisions.

Initiatives

- Help to maintain Virginia's high ranking for business.
- Strengthen the Chamber's position as the "voice of business" in legislative issues for Hampton Roads.
- Assist to create a pro-business climate for all companies.
- Identify and develop issues that significantly impact businesses and the community, then educate the public, elected officials and the business community on those issues, and finally, influence the actions taken by them in dealing with those issues.

Activities of the HRBizPAC

- Trustees will interview candidates, have the authority to make HRBizPAC distribution decisions, organize HRBizPAC special events and participate in "insider" activities.
- Participate in "get out the vote" initiatives.
- Participate in and conduct referendum campaigns and other activities as necessary.
- Endorse candidates and provide direct and indirect financial support.
- Conduct research on issues which impact businesses in the region.

Contribution Information

- To join as a Trustee, minimum contribution of \$1,000 annually is required.
Trustee appointments are subject to approval by the Chamber's Executive Committee.
- There are also some Trustee positions reserved for small business members (employing 20 or less) at \$500 annually.
- Individuals can contribute through their company or as an individual.
- If you are unable to contribute at the Trustee level, please give what you can (i.e. \$100, \$50, and \$25).
- Make checks payable to the HRBizPAC. Mail to 500 East Main Street, Suite 700, Norfolk, VA 23510, Attn: Governmental Affairs
- Contributions made to the HRBizPAC are not tax deductible.

For more information about the HRBizPAC, contact the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce at 757-664-2572.

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