

2008/2009 Public Policy Committee

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LEGISLATIVE

STATE

AGENDA

2009

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The Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce's 2009 Legislative Agenda represents the Chamber's commitment to creating an improved business climate and quality of life for our region.

The issues in this agenda are based on surveys and input from Chamber members from our annual survey of the membership as well as the work and recommendation of various volunteer committees and task forces. In May, the Chamber Board of Directors takes all the research and information gathered and sets the priorities for the Chamber through the development of the annual Program of Work. Based upon the four-year Strategic Plan, the Program of Work outlines the focus of the Chamber's programs for the coming 12 months. By identifying the key issues of the membership and reviewing the overall strategic goals, the Board helps Public Policy to begin focusing on issues.

In late summer the Public Policy Committee begins its work for the new program year, often with briefings on various issues followed by discussion as to which issues to add to the annual agenda. The Public Policy Committee is comprised of representatives of various committees, task forces and sectors of the Chamber's membership in an effort to ensure all types, sizes and business interests are involved in the public policy process.

The Chamber's Board of Directors adopted the agenda in November 2008, empowering the Public Policy Committee and Chamber staff to communicate these priority issues to local, state and federal officials.

2009 State Legislative Agenda

Infrastructure

- Comprehensive funding for South Carolina roads for new construction and highway and road maintenance
- State funding to extend the runways at Charleston International Airport/Charleston Air Force Base
- Expansion of the Port of Charleston
- Deployment of next-generation broadband networks

Business Creation, Recruitment, Retention and Expansion

- Modify and expand State Incentives to attract film production
- Tax credits to individuals who provide angel investor funding to knowledge-based businesses
- Adoption of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Workforce Development

- Reform the state funding formula used to fund public education and full funding for public education
- State-wide universal 4-K program
- Funding of the S.C. Education and Economic Development Act/Personal Pathways
- A new nursing, science and math facility and expanded nursing curriculum at Trident Technical College
- Growth in programs and enrollment of the Lowcountry Graduate Center
- Increased state investment in higher education

Energy and the Environment

- The development of a comprehensive state energy policy
- Permitting of Santee Cooper's proposed Pee Dee Energy Campus
- Replacement of the state's school bus fleet to reduce diesel air emissions
- Ensure that State environmental regulations and legislation are based on science, not emotion and are not more stringent than federal regulations
- Adequate state funding for DHEC so that they can process permits efficiently
- Clarification of isolated wetlands regulation to eliminate multiple regulation

Healthcare

- Modify health insurance cooperative to lower the number of years businesses must commit from five years to two
- Medicaid reform as long as it does not adversely affect the cost of healthcare
- Increase the state's cigarette tax to provide recurring funding of Medicaid
- Adequate funding for hospitalization of indigent mental health patients

Hospitality

- Tourism marketing funding at the state level to promote tourism

Regulatory

- Comprehensive tax reform that is balanced, fair to all classes of property and adequately funds the state's needs
- Reform of South Carolina business license regulations

