

2018 Federal Legislative Agenda

Public Policy and Organizational Priorities

The Public Policy and Organizational Priorities of the North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, CVB, support and advocate two distinct strategies:

1. Grow our North Myrtle Beach Visitor and Destination Market
2. Diversify the North Myrtle Beach Economy

The following position statements have been adopted by the Board of Directors of the North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, Convention & Visitors Bureau, as priority issues of importance to the business members of this organization. These issues were determined important through the results of a member survey, briefings from statewide and national business associations, and research by staff and the Legislative Committee of the Public Policy Council of the chamber.

This now becomes the 2018 Federal Legislative Agenda and will be presented to our congressional delegation for support and assistance.

Tourism / Hospitality

Tourism / hospitality is the number one industry in North Myrtle Beach, the Grand Strand, and the coast of South Carolina. The chamber's top priority is the effective promotion and marketing of our area as a premier family destination providing quality services to our hundreds of thousands of annual visitors. To ensure this, we are committed to the support of legislation which will help provide a labor force to serve this industry.

We support:

- Efforts of the state's H2B Coalition and National H2B Workforce Coalition in urging congress to extend the H2B Visa program to ensure employers can hire temporary, seasonal workers to adequately staff the region's hospitality industry.
- Legislation that creates an immigration system that functions efficiently for employers, workers, and Government agencies.
- Continue pursuing immigration reform that includes:
 - A legal status for the estimated 11 million undocumented people here, allowing them to emerge from the shadows, thus creating a stable workforce.
 - Improved enforcement to protect our borders while facilitating the flow of trade and travel.
- Support Travel Regional Investment Partnership (TRIP) Act, which provides federal matching funds for tourism promotion through public-private partnerships.
- Urge Congress and the administration to expand the Visa Waiver Program and address delays, backlogs, and disruptions in our immigration and border management systems that impede the movement of legitimate businesses and tourists traveling across U.S. borders.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Our chamber continues to support federal legislation calling for a comprehensive national Transportation and Infrastructure Plan to address the needs of the nation. Such a plan would ensure the effective and efficient movement of people and commerce connecting all modes of Transportation including air, rail, roads, and water and to plan for future capacity as well as address the replacement of aging infrastructure.

We support:

- Funding of I-73 and I-74, a dedicated interstate under various stages of planning and construction, which will connect our coastal region with the nation.
- Federal funding participation for beach renourishment.
- Federal funding for public transportation and mass transportation at the local level.
- Working with the state congressional delegation to improve South Carolina's donor state status, so South Carolina receives more of its fair share of motor fuel tax revenues back from the federal government.

Education and Workforce Development

The Chamber is committed to support initiatives and programs, and the funding necessary for implementation, which will result in a highly skilled, 21st Century workforce. This begins with early childhood education and continues through adulthood. Our nation continues to slip in the rankings compared to other countries worldwide. Changing this course, is the only answer to returning our country to the highest producing, most innovative, and entrepreneurial nation in the world. We encourage government to partner with the private-sector in reaching this goal.

We support:

- Efforts to improve and expand access to quality Early Childhood Education programs through choice, innovation, and quality assurance systems.
- Efforts to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which include accountability; transparency; longitudinal data systems to guide instruction, improvement, and interventions; teacher evaluations, including student data; school choice; and clear and high academic standards.
- Encourage better alignment between high school graduation requirements, state academic achievement standards, and postsecondary entrance requirements.
- Efforts to generate more U.S. graduates with a credential in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) field.
- Employment and training systems driven by the needs of employers based on accurate and timely local labor market data.

Environment and Energy

A national comprehensive energy policy is strongly supported by the North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, to strengthen and assure that our local, state, and national economies are sustainable, competitive, business environments. We also understand the need to protect and enhance our environment as a positive factor in our sustainable development and the growing of our "green economy," through reasonable and balanced measures, while promoting wind energy as a viable source of alternative energy.

We support:

- The exploration and development of renewable energy resources in particular wind, solar, and tidal energy as long as the risk is negligible for our tourism and real estate industries.
- Federal guidelines and regulations to support and provide incentives for the North Myrtle Beach community based wind energy program and sustainable energy plan including offshore wind farms.
- A congressional amendment to the Magnuson-Stevens Act, giving immediate relief to our commercial and recreational fishermen.

- Ensure that EPA evaluates the economic impact and job loss in its regulations, as is required by all major environmental laws.
- Advocate for the construction and operation of alternative and renewable energy projects such as wind energy facilities, nuclear power, hydropower, clean coal, solar energy, and geothermal energy.
- Urge Congress to pass legislation to streamline the permitting and appeals process for new energy projects in the United States.
- Renewing and strengthening the long-term viability of the federal flood insurance program, as well as maintaining funding to update and improve the accuracy of flood maps.

Good Government

Many of the problems faced at the local, state, and federal levels, stem from a lack of qualified, experienced, and/or committed candidates willing to seek public office. We believe, as a premier chamber of commerce, that we have a responsibility to help change this by providing non-partisan educational and training opportunities to identify and support qualified candidates at all levels. We also believe in our right and duty to advocate responsibly on behalf of our business members and the community we serve.

We support:

- Aggressive role in candidate recruitment to attract pro-business candidates with general election appeal.
- Opposition towards any attempt to limit business community engagement in the electoral and policymaking arenas at the federal and state levels.

Healthcare

The costs of healthcare to businesses, families, and individuals at the state and national levels has become prohibitive and a detriment to our economy and quality of life. Health Care Reform is critical to the business community and the chamber encourages comprehensive planning and legislation to ease this burden and provide relief to our businesses and our citizens.

We support:

- The fully funded expansion of Medicaid in South Carolina; funds from the federal government would provide 100% funding of Medicaid for SC residents with incomes up to 138% of federal poverty level (about \$31,000 for a family of 4)
- Reform to the delivery and costs associated with healthcare, but opposed to a National Healthcare Program which would disallow consumer choice.
- Continue regulatory work to protect businesses as the administration moves forward with implementation of the current administration's health care initiatives. Pragmatically, through meetings and comment letters, strive to improve implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) to advance regulatory changes that permit flexibility and best serve business needs.
- Work to highlight, delay, improve, and repeal problematic provisions in the PPACA, including the employer mandate, and in particular, repeal of the new definition for full-time employees from 40 hours per week to 30 hours per week; taxes such as the health insurance tax, medical device tax, and the Cadillac tax; as well as other burdens created under the law as implementation accelerates.
- Advocating for Medicare reform, which is integral to preserving the system's long-term viability.

Tax Policy

The most critical need for our country during these challenging economic times is the creation of jobs. Creating government jobs is not the answer. Real job growth is created by the private sector and is our best means of an economic stimulus.

We support:

- Federal tax policy which provides tax relief to small emerging businesses and we oppose business taxes which impose excessive burdens on specific industries and the creation of jobs.

Labor Relations

The North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce believes in the basic tenets of our American democracy and the free enterprise system and the rights of employees and employers and advocates legislation which will equally protect these rights.

We support:

- Prohibiting the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) from ordering any employer to close, relocate, or transfer employment under any circumstances.
- Aggressively oppose initiatives that would upset the balance of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), including union-backed proposals to rewrite National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and Labor Department regulations making it easier for unions to organize employees and restricting employer free speech rights.

Regulatory Accountability

We believe that federal regulations should be narrowly tailored, supported by strong and credible data and evidence, and impose the least burden possible, while still implementing Congressional intent.

We support:

- Increasing public participation in shaping the most costly regulations at an earlier point in the rulemaking process.
- Instructing agencies to choose the least costly option that achieves congressional intent unless they can show a costlier option is needed to protect health, safety, or welfare.
- Requiring on-the-record administrative hearings for the most costly regulations to insure that agency data is sound and that agencies are not relying on self-serving assumptions.
- Restrict agencies' use of interim final regulations.
- Providing for a more rigorous test in legal challenges for those regulations that would have the most impact.