The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and the 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’ 2015 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.
BUSINESS CLIMATE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Position: Support legislation that strengthens Virginia’s competitive standing in the global economy.

Support:
- Post Labor Day start to schools
- Increased resources and diversity for Virginia’s Economic Development incentive programs
- Virginia’s Right to Work laws
- International marketing for tourism and business relocation/expansion
- Policies and initiatives that grow and support small business job creation
- An expansion of domestic travel marketing and tourism infrastructure
- An Unemployment and Workers’ Compensation system that is efficient to all stakeholders

Importance to the Business Community: Economic development initiatives are an essential component of a healthy business environment. Without business and job growth, our celebrated quality of life will be negatively impacted. Legislative policies and actions that provide businesses of all sizes with the tools and talent they need will help increase their competitiveness, and additionally, stimulate growth while continuing to attract new industries to our region. We encourage state-level efforts to ensure our region and state are in the most competitive position possible for future growth through sound, pro-business, job-creating legislation.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Position: Support the Commonwealth’s K-12 public education systems and higher education systems to develop college-ready and career-ready citizens that strengthen Virginia’s workforce. High performing K-12 public education systems drive economic development by growing existing businesses, attracting new employers, and ensuring the workforce to support them.

Support:
- Full funding of early childhood education programs
- 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% of the prevailing cost of education
Support: • State contributions to assist local school divisions with creating 21st century-learning facilities that keep pace with growth in enrollment and new technologies

• Recognizing that students need to be healthy in order to learn, the Chambers support legislation that increases developmentally-appropriate recess time, physical education, and health education in the K-12 setting

• STEM education

• Industry certification/licensure

• Private sector workforce solutions

• Strengthening vocational training

• Private/public partnerships

Importance to the Business Community: Investment in our education system must be of the highest quality for students to compete in today’s global economy. Aligning our educational and publicly funded workforce development systems with business and industry demand is critical to our success. Virginia must have an excellent K-12 education system along with high quality college and university educational systems in order for it to meet the workforce needs of the future.

TECHNOLOGY

Position: Enhance policies that support innovation and job creation in the technology sector

Support: • Favorable tax policies for technology start-up businesses/ventures

• An enhanced entrepreneurship culture

• Private sector partnerships with colleges and universities to increase commercialization

Importance to the Business Community: Technology-based industries and businesses create tremendous growth and opportunity and are essential to competing in an interconnected world. The Chambers promote policies that foster investment in the technology industry.
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**Position:** Support a balanced investment in the Commonwealth’s transportation system that ensures the efficient and effective development of all modes of transportation infrastructure.

**Support:**
- Viable and transparent public/private partnerships
- Port growth and development/multimodal
- Improved and expanded use of technology
- Higher speed rail
- Strategic and expedited use of the new regional transportation revenues to address congestion that affects both business and personal transportation

**Importance to the Business Community:** Nearly 2,600 businesses which are members of the Chambers, believe transportation is a statewide problem and should be dealt with on a statewide basis. Sustainable long-term funding for transportation is essential on a statewide basis for the Commonwealth to remain competitive and to sustain our significant military and federal presence.

MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Position:** Protect and grow Virginia-based military and federal assets through support of targeted military strategic initiatives.

**Support:**
- Veteran job transition
- Marketing of military workforce to potential employees
- Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) related infrastructure investments/land acquisitions
- Increased educational opportunities for military families
- Continued support for cyber security infrastructure

**Importance to the Business Community:** The Department of Defense (DoD) is a leading driver of our economy, serving as the region’s most significant industrial cluster and heavily influencing the region’s economic well-being. The business community stands behind our military personnel and the services and industry which support their activities.
Thanks to our legislators for their dedication and hard work representing our citizens throughout the Commonwealth.
Legislators and regulators affect almost every industry today. Fortunately, Williams Mullen has the unique distinction of having dedicated government relations professionals throughout the Hampton Roads region and the Commonwealth developing relationships with government leaders to provide you with the proper representation you need. This allows us to provide you with the coverage on both sides of the aisle before local and state legislative committees, subcommittees and commissions, wherever they may be. Let Williams Mullen open doors for you and be your voice at the table.
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