

H A M P T O N R O A D S

CHAMBER



STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2024

2024 Legislative Priorities

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At the Hampton Roads Chamber, a Pro-Business Environment is defined as laws and policies that support and encourage growth for business.

The Chamber uses the priorities of the business community to prepare the annual legislative agenda.

On behalf of the business community, the Chamber works with elected officials to ensure they understand the impact of proposed legislation.

- Economic Development
- Education/Workforce Development
- Transportation
- Recurrent Flooding
- Energy
- Healthcare
- Public Safety
- Military/Veterans Affairs

Message from Leadership

“The Hampton Roads Chamber Means Business” is not just a tag line we use, it is at the core of everything we do. Our continued focus is on being the voice of business while setting the conditions for businesses to succeed in Hampton Roads.

To achieve this, we focus on advocating for policies and projects that will have a positive impact on business. Our members and staff work with elected officials at the local, state, and federal level to inform them of the needs of the business community.

Our Legislative Priorities publication provides an overview of what we believe elected officials should be focusing on or working to support in order to maintain a thriving business environment. This year's document was created from member feedback as well as issues worked on throughout the year.

The 2024 priorities include the following areas: Economic Development, Education/Workforce Development, Transportation, Recurrent Flooding, Energy, Healthcare, Public Safety, and Military/Veterans. In addition to these categories, we will continue to focus on supporting Right-to-Work laws at the state and national level as well as upholding the Dillon Rule in Virginia.

We look forward to working with our Chamber members, stakeholders, the General Assembly, and the Youngkin Administration to continue to make Virginia and Hampton Roads the best place to do business.

Bryan K. Stephens
President & CEO



Dawn Glynn
Chair





Economic Development

Economic development is the state, local and regional incentive programs and policies that encourage business and economic growth in the Hampton Roads region. The Chamber supports policies that support and address regional issues in Hampton Roads as well as those targeted to specific localities including:

- Continued investment in GO Virginia to promote regional and public-private collaboration to support economic development
- Increase investment in local, regional, and state economic development programs that help to attract businesses to Hampton Roads, and support site-ready funding for localities
- Continued investment in the businesses and transportation networks that support the expansion of the Port of Virginia
- Support policies that protect Virginia's AAA bond rating by supporting sensible fiscal policies
- Support the tourism industry throughout Hampton Roads

Education and Workforce Development



Education and Workforce Development are the foundation to building and sustaining the economy in Hampton Roads. Today's workforce requires a diverse skill set to meet current demands and prepare for the evolution of industries. The Hampton Roads Chamber supports initiatives within Virginia's education system.

- Instruction with a focus on critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration and problem solving
- Local schools providing work-based learning opportunities and partnerships with businesses
- Career and technical training designed to prepare students for careers in high-demand fields
- Support programs that educate students and their parents on career path options beyond the traditional 4-year college degree
- Support for Career Technical Education Centers as well as LAB Schools
- Address the cost and availability of child care and early childhood education to support our workforce



Transportation

Hampton Roads transportation construction challenges are unique due to the high number of water crossings. Companies depend on a variety of modes of transportation to conduct business. The Chamber supports policies, and continued financial investment by state and local governments to maintain and support our unique transportation network as well as:

- Support for the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) Project Prioritization and programming of funds, and the Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission's (HRTAC) strategic efforts to create project readiness and contract for project construction
- Continued state funding for the Hampton Roads Transit Authority (HRT)
- Funding for secondary road improvements to support the public and private sectors



Recurrent Flooding

Recurrent flooding has an impact on the region. Mitigating this is important for economic growth and retaining our military bases. The Chamber supports policies that supply continuous management and revenue streams to combat recurrent flooding and the impact of sea-level rise.



Energy

Affordable and reliable energy is a critical component of our economy and our national security. The Chamber supports an all-of-the-above approach to satisfy the increasing energy needs. These include traditional sources, nuclear, natural gas, hydrogen, and renewables.

As home to the Offshore Wind industry on the East Coast, the Chamber supports this industry and the suppliers that maintain the wind farms.



Healthcare

A healthy workforce is necessary for economic success and business growth. Making healthcare an affordable option to offer employees is key, especially for small businesses. The Chamber supports policies to maintain high quality, safe, and affordable healthcare, including:

- Healthcare policy that keeps costs on service and prescription drug prices low
- Supporting hospitals and medical facilities in the Hampton Roads region to ensure there is sufficient access for patients
- Funding and maintaining programs to help those with mental illness or behavioral health challenges



Public Safety

Growing violence in and near businesses in Hampton Roads has presented enormous challenges to many businesses. The Chamber supports policies that help businesses protect their employees.



Military and Veterans Affairs

The Chamber continues to support policies that assist active duty members of the military as well as veterans and their spouses. Policies to retain veterans in the area and transition them to civilian employment are one of the priorities for the Chamber.



Other Priorities

Protecting Virginia's Right-to-Work Status

- Guaranteeing that no person can be compelled, as a condition of employment, to join or pay dues to a labor union
- Assuring that employees will not be coerced or intimidated into joining a union
- Assuring that employers will not base employment on an employee's union status

The Dillon Rule

Protect the Dillon Rule to ensure local governments may only act in those areas authorized by the General Assembly. This is important to protecting businesses from a patchwork of inconsistent policies and regulations from one jurisdiction to another.

Strategic Partners



Chamber Websites

- www.hrchamber.com (Hampton Roads Chamber)
- www.vachamber.com (Virginia Chamber)
- www.uschamber.com (United States Chamber)

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Means Business