



Greater Williamsburg CHAMBER & TOURISM ALLIANCESM

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Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance Focuses on Five Issues in its 2009 Legislative Agenda

Williamsburg, VA — Transportation, tourism, responsible fiscal policy, education and health care/human services continue to be key issues on the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance's Legislative Agenda for 2009. The five legislative priorities, and the Alliance's position on their significance for the business community, were drafted by the Alliance's Government Affairs Committee and approved by its Board of Directors on December 18, 2008.

"These issues, individually and collectively, are critical to the health of Virginia's economy as well as to our members and local businesses," said Dick Schreiber, President and CEO of the Alliance. "The budgetary shortfall facing the Commonwealth makes it all the more important that the General Assembly take into consideration the far-reaching impact of each issue when legislative proposals and budget decisions are being made."

Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance 2009 Legislative Agenda — Summary

Transportation:

Support revenue streams that are broad based, long-term, simple, and efficient to collect.

Oppose increases to the transient occupancy tax that are tied to transportation funding.

Investment in the Transportation System of the Commonwealth must remain the top priority, and Virginia must be positioned to begin work on infrastructure improvements immediately should federal dollars become available.

Tourism:

Support a dedicated revenue stream for the Virginia Tourism Corporation to fund tourism promotion activities.

Support efforts to exempt state agencies that produce revenue and generate the economy such as the Virginia Tourism Corporation from budget reductions.

Fiscal Policy:

Support the use of the Revenue Stabilization Fund to partially meet projected state budget shortfalls.

Oppose any proposed amendment to Virginia’s Constitution that would allow localities to grant up to a 20 percent real estate exemption to owner-occupied residential property.

Education:

A. Workforce Development:

Support the resolution by the State Board for Community Colleges seeking to consider the unique mission of Virginia’s community colleges in meeting the Commonwealth’s economic development objectives and corresponding workforce training needs when addressing Virginia’s budgetary challenges.

Support initiatives to provide quality education and training that enable businesses to attract a more skilled, flexible and productive workforce.

B. Higher Education:

Support the legislative agendas of the following institutions:

- The College of William and Mary
- Thomas Nelson Community College

C. Elementary and Secondary Education:

Support expanding access to high quality preschool programs for at-risk children and other Pre-K initiatives that help future students enter school better prepared to learn.

Health and Human Services:

Support programs that promote voluntary employer-provided health coverage systems.

Support legislation that enables small businesses to pool employee numbers and resources to make health insurance more affordable.

Support the development of employer incentives that promote healthy lifestyles.

Support medical malpractice liability reform.

The Alliance strongly encourages the Commonwealth of Virginia to form a consensus on priorities aimed at improving access, affordability, and quality of health care available to all citizens of the Commonwealth. The 2007 study “Roadmap for Virginia’s Health: A Report of the Governor’s Health Reform Commission” is a good basis for beginning the consensus process.

The Alliance will also present its annual Pre-General Assembly Program on Friday, January 9, 2009 at 7:30 a.m. in the amphitheater at the Crowne Plaza Williamsburg at Fort Magruder. Senator Tommy Norment (R-3rd), Delegate Bill Barlow (D-64th), Delegate Phil Hamilton (R-93rd) and Delegate Brenda Pogge (R-96th) will speak on issues facing the 2009 General Assembly. The event is open to the public. For more information, call 757-229-6511.