

NOVACHamber.org
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LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2022

THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA®



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Dear Chamber Member,

I am pleased to present to you the 2022 Legislative Agenda of the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce. For more than 97 years, the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce has been recognized as The Voice of Business in Northern Virginia®.

This document was prepared by a group of your fellow members, working with our government relations team, and reflects the policy priorities of the Northern Virginia business community for the upcoming Virginia General Assembly session and beyond. It contains the Chamber's long standing, pro-business priorities as well as new priorities generated via the Policy Committee process. The Policy Committee, led this year by co-chairs Kathy Albarado of Helios HR and Laura Linn of Dewberry, met five times over six weeks to produce this Agenda. Your Chamber is proud to be your voice in Richmond and regionally on these issues.

We had historic elections in 2021 which resulted in a shift in party control of the House of Delegates, as well as new statewide elected officials. The business community is optimistic that Virginia will lead the nation in economic recovery, even in the face of challenges on the horizon. Our advocacy in the region and in Richmond will help advance economic growth.

Our advocacy in Richmond this year will be led by Vice President of Government Relations Clayton Medford. Clayton will hold weekly conference calls on Fridays during the General Assembly session. For information and to RSVP for the weekly calls, please email Clayton at cmedford@novachamber.org.

Thank you all for your time and your commitment to the Northern Virginia Chamber.

Sincerely,

Julie Coons

Luanne Gutermuth



Julie Coons



Luanne Gutermuth

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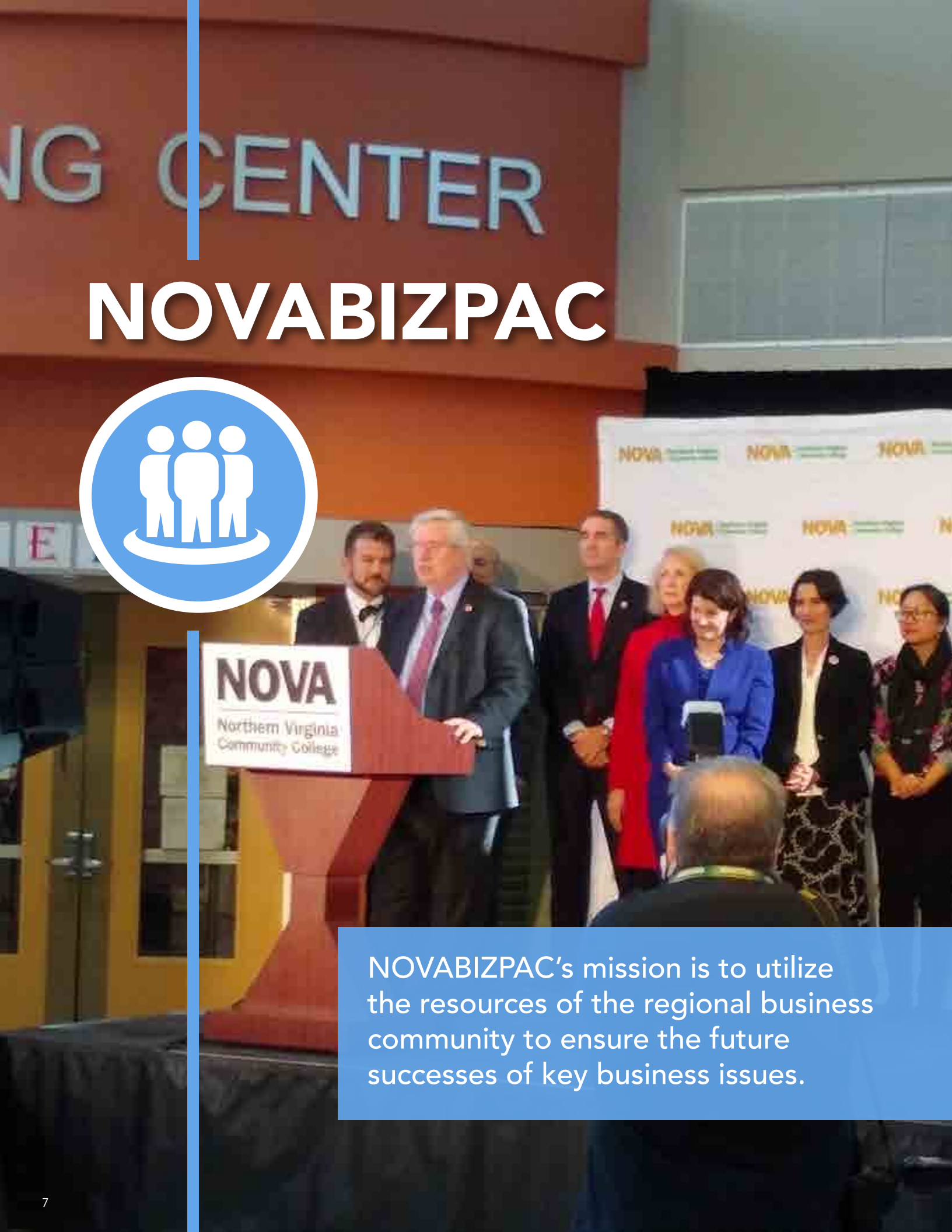
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NOVABIZPAC



NOVABIZPAC’s mission is to utilize the resources of the regional business community to ensure the future successes of key business issues.

One of the most influential PACs in the Commonwealth of Virginia, NOVABIZPAC uses the Northern Virginia Chamber’s legislative agenda as its guide as to which candidates to support in Northern Virginia and across the state.

Ensuring that Northern Virginia has a voice in the legislative process, the Chamber established the Northern Virginia Business Political Action Committee (NOVABIZPAC) in 2002 to support Virginia legislators and policymakers who champion a pro-business agenda. NOVABIZPAC is administered by a Board of Trustees composed of Chamber members who are business leaders familiar with the regional business community’s top priorities. NOVABIZPAC receives strategic advice and oversight from the Chamber Board of Directors. Member contributions enable NOVABIZPAC to support worthy candidates and ensure the Chamber has a voice in the policy and legislative process.



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EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE



The workforce development ecosystem in the Commonwealth must be founded on collaboration among all stakeholders, including business, academia, workforce boards and other training providers

Northern Virginia is home to almost 40 percent of Virginia's jobs.

Our thriving regional economy is built upon world-class public school systems and access to a highly educated workforce. The Northern Virginia Chamber believes that the future growth of the Northern Virginia economy, and consequently Virginia's economy, is dependent on meaningful investment in pre-K-12 and higher education. We also support: greater access to high quality early childhood education; innovation in education delivery; aligning the expectations of students with needs of all types of businesses; support for all populations to access education especially veterans and historically disadvantaged people; and a more streamlined, coordinated and demand-driven workforce development ecosystem.

Priority 1: Align support of and requirements for students with workforce needs

Beginning with early childhood education through higher education, Virginia needs a cradle-to-gray focus on workforce readiness driven by the demand for talent in the Commonwealth. The Chamber supports policies that will:

- Ensure the Standards of Learning align with 21st century workforce needs, particularly through dual-enrollment and dual-admissions programs like the NOVA-Mason ADVANCE partnership.
- Improve ability for industry leaders to participate in K-12 classroom instruction.
- Continue to expand STEM-H offerings to students at all levels.
- Allow for more innovation in education delivery, which requires greater flexibility in how the Commonwealth regulates curriculum particularly in higher education.

Priority 2: Create a more streamlined and demand-driven workforce development system that reaches all potential job seekers

- Supports short-term certification opportunities, in particular those administered by the Virginia Community College System like the Fast Forward program.
- Supports GO Virginia and its ability to adequately fund innovative and demand-driven regional workforce development initiatives.
- Supports designing workforce development opportunities to reach all job seekers, including veterans and historically disadvantaged people, new entrants to the workforce, and those seeking greater or new employment due to COVID-related job loss.

Priority 3: Recognize barriers to education persist throughout the Commonwealth

- The need for greater broadband access in Virginia has never been clearer. Students, employees, job-seekers and employers all required reliable, consistent broadband in order to succeed in a more virtual world caused by the pandemic.
 - Continues support for the Virginia Telecom Initiative to bring broadband to unserved areas.
 - The Commonwealth and particularly the Broadband Advisory Council must recognize there continues to be need in Northern Virginia for improved access to broadband. This is not solely a rural vs. urban issue.
- Greater investment in safe, reliable, affordable and equitable mass transit in Northern Virginia will help create a more equitable education system.
- The Northern Virginia Chamber supports Virginia's Historically Black Colleges and Universities and acknowledges Marymount as the first and only Virginia university with the distinction of being recognized as an Hispanic-serving Institution.

Key Facts

Talent is Virginia's #1 Asset

- FastForward enrollment grew by 236% in 2021, including a 333% increase in Black students, a 263% increase in female students, and a 181% increase in Hispanic/ Latinx students.
- Northern Virginia Chamber's Greater Washington Apprenticeship Network launched in 2021, is creating new opportunities for workers and employers.
- Virginia Talent Accelerator Program on track to be top workforce development program in U.S.
(Source: VEDP)

Tech Sector Continues to Grow but Needs Talent

In 2020 over 450,000 Virginians were employed in tech, representing 11% of the total workforce (3rd highest in the country), and over 200,000 tech jobs were posted in 2020. (Source: Cyberstates)

Virginia Must Continue to Expand Access to Education

A 2020 study found that without expanding access to learning opportunities, the Capital Region alone (Richmond, DC, Baltimore) would face a tech worker shortage causing 60,000 unfilled positions by 2025.
(Source: Greater Washington Partnership)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS CLIMATE



The economic recovery and success of the Commonwealth depends on a competitive, inclusive and diverse economy.

This requires a regional approach to economic development, public-private sector collaboration, and support of innovation and research and development.

Our members are continuing to make the deliberate changes to policies and practices to create an equitable workplace. The Northern Virginia business community supports efforts to reduce racially disparate outcomes of public policies. A more equitable Virginia where all have access to the same opportunities is more competitive, better able to attract and maintain a talented and diverse workforce, and more economically sustainable.



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Priority 1: Support regional collaboration between the public, private and non-profit sectors

- Supports increasing funding for the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), which will promote improved employment opportunities, a broadened tax base, and increased governmental revenues.
- Supports focus on regional economic strategies to guide state and local economic development initiatives consistent with regional growth targets.
- Encourages state support for regional collaborative partnerships like the Northern Virginia Economic Development Alliance.
- Supports GO Virginia which is a critical component to workforce and economic development in the Commonwealth.

Priority 2: Create a more equitable Virginia

- Encourages policy makers to provide support to families in need of childcare to prevent women, single parents and older adults from leaving the workforce.
- Supports meaningful investment in pre-K-12 and higher education, and increased access to high quality early childhood education.
- Supports women- and minority-owned businesses, including through greater access to state procurement opportunities.
 - Legislation that addresses the gap in state procurement opportunities must balance the need to close that gap with the need to promote small business growth through procurement.
- Supports continued investment in broadband delivery and access in all areas of the Commonwealth.
- Supports continued statewide reforms to policing and court practices that reduce disparate racial outcomes.

Legislation that addresses the gap in state procurement opportunities must balance the need to close that gap with the need to promote small business growth through procurement.

Priority 3: Support for entrepreneurialism and innovative industries to help diversify our economy

- Supports the use of economic incentives and performance grants with continued use of objective, definable metrics to enhance the economic competitiveness of the Northern Virginia region as well as the Commonwealth for targeted growth industries.
- Supports policies that grow our entrepreneurial and

innovation economy. This includes support for Virginia employers with major research and development here, efforts to encourage commercialization of research and development conducted at Virginia's colleges and universities, and capitalizing on Virginia's advantages in the unmanned, autonomous systems, and autonomous vehicles industries to promote research and commercialization.

- Supports the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority involving public and private institutions in order to achieve best economic outcome

Priority 4: Maintain policies that support a competitive economy

- Supports maintaining Virginia's status as a right-to-work state and opposes any effort to erode our right-to-work law.
- Supports investment in statewide economic develop programs like the Business Ready Sites program, especially investments that aim to improve conditions in economically distressed areas.
- Opposes new, broad programs supported by increased business taxes, particularly in those sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Supports the efforts of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) to promote the use, accessibility and airport compatible development of Dulles International Airport and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.
- Supports continued investment in freight and passenger rail service, particularly including the replacement of the Long Bridge.
- Opposes any new regulations on home offices.

Key Facts

#1 State For Business As Ranked by CNBC Two Years in a Row

- Virginia needs to lower cost of doing business and cost of living, and invest in infrastructure, to keep top slot.

Low Unemployment Indicates Healthy Economy But Some Left Out

- Virginia's Unemployment remains below national average despite 11% peak in April 2020.
- But data shows disparity among regions, minorities, women and low-wage workers means more attention is needed to ensure equitable recovery in Virginia.

GO Virginia Invests in Growth

- Since 2017 GO Virginia has awarded more than \$75M to 196 projects around the Commonwealth.

TRANSPORTATION



The Northern Virginia Chamber has always advocated for common sense transportation proposals that enhance connectivity and achieve congestion relief in the region.

With dramatic changes happening now in how we interact with personal and public transportation, the Chamber encourages a forward-looking approach to transportation technologies. The Chamber supports performance-based, prioritized, and cost-effective regional transportation solutions focused on congestion relief, economic development, time savings, equitable access, and enhancing public safety.

Key Facts

Loudoun and Prince William counties are the fastest growing counties in Virginia according to the 2020 Census.

Metrobus ridership is down 40% and nearly 70% for Metrorail, which means more cars on roads.

Between 2014-2025, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority will distribute \$3.1B for local and regional projects.

Priority 1: Supports local, regional and state funding to ensure timely delivery of projects that achieve the Chamber's goal of performance-based, prioritized, and cost-effective solutions that enhance connectivity and deliver congestion relief, economic development, time savings, equitable access, and enhanced public safety.

Projects should consider future-focused, data-driven climate resiliency standards to protect infrastructure and promote positive economic development.

- Supports efforts to protect and restore regional transportation dollars.
- Supports the ability of the Commonwealth to select and approve transportation projects without the requirement of legislative approval.
- Supports the use of a performance-based project prioritization process to identify the most cost-effective regional solutions to 21st century transportation challenges with a focus on enhancing connectivity, congestion relief, time-savings, equitable access, and enhancing public safety.
- Opposes any legislative efforts that would alter the Public-Private Transportation Act's (PPTA) current review and selection process or limit the authority or ability of the Office of Public Private Partnerships to choose projects consistent with state, local and metropolitan transportation plans.
- Supports improved North-South regional connectivity including improvements to the Fairfax County Parkway, Route 28, and a new Western Crossing between Fairfax County and Montgomery County, MD.

- Supports the continued autonomy of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.
- Recognizes that the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are unclear.
 - Companies continue to alter return-to-office plans, keeping the state of working from home in flux.
 - Return to transit will be slow, adding more single occupant vehicles to the roadways.
 - Congestion and connectivity was a critical problem for our region before COVID and will continue to be after.
- Recognizes that transportation solutions should be future-focused and strike the balance between solving problems and over-reacting to current situation.
- Recognizes that on demand travel options including ridesharing is an important component of the transportation network.

Priority 2: Supports investment in safe, reliable, equitable, affordable and efficient mass transit projects and service

- Supports a safe, reliable, and sustainable Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) system, that is efficiently operated, well-governed, and fiscally responsible.
- Encourages the General Assembly to consider the long term operational funding impact of COVID-19 on all mass transit systems that will be felt for years as remote working continues to disrupt traditional commuting patterns, reducing the peak hour demand on transit.

- Supports an integrated regional bus system that serves the entire National Capital Region and is efficient, reliable, affordable and safe.
- Supports efforts to protect Virginia's share of WMATA's regional dedicated capital funding. Additionally, the Chamber supports the federal extension and continued state match of Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) funding for WMATA tied to enhanced oversight and accountability and continuation of existing commuter benefits.

Priority 3: Supports major transportation infrastructure projects that will deliver benefits to employers and families in Northern Virginia:

- Rebuilding and expansion of passenger rail capacity of the Long Bridge.
- Rebuilding and expansion of the American Legion Bridge to increase multi-modal options.
- Building a new Western Crossing between Fairfax County and Montgomery County, MD.
- Investment in the Virginia Railway Express.
- Supports the Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative.
- Fulfillment of existing plans to increase highway and transit capacity on I-66, both inside and outside of the Capital Beltway.
- The completion of WMATA's Silver Line by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

- Investment in projects at National Landing previously identified as regional priorities being advanced as a result of the arrival of Amazon HQ2.
- The creation and funding of a tax incentive to promote electric vehicle usage, for consumers and transit agencies, corresponding with the Zero Emissions Vehicle mandate adopted by the General Assembly.
- Monitoring the efforts of the Virginia Port Authority to attract customers and to respond to global supply chain issues.
- Supports the efforts of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) to promote the use, accessibility and airport compatible development of Dulles International Airport and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.
- Recognizes aviation as a critical component to the region's transportation infrastructure.
- Extending the 495 Express Lanes to I-270 & I-95 in Maryland.
- Supports completion of the DC to Richmond portion of the Atlantic Gateway project, which will unlock the I-95 corridor and build upon the successes of the I-95 Express Lanes.
- The on time and on budget completion of the WMATA's Silver Line.

TAXES AND REGULATIONS



As the Voice of Business in Northern Virginia®, the Northern Virginia Chamber supports a consistent, simple and fair taxing and regulatory environment in the Commonwealth.

The Chamber believes modernizing the collection and distribution of tax revenue in a way that supports economic prosperity and job creation and recognizes the importance of equitable distribution of burden across industries and regions will lead to economic recovery and growth.

Key Facts

Virginia is in the middle of the pack in the Tax Foundation's Tax Climate Index.

CNBC rankings show Virginia is held back by a high cost of doing business and high cost of living.

Supply chain disruptions are the latest economic challenge to our uncertain near-term future.

Priority 1: Supports tax and regulatory policies that put Virginia in a firmly competitive position in the national and global economy in order to create economic opportunity and prosperity. The Chamber supports a new dialogue on comprehensive modernization of the Commonwealth's system for collecting and expending state and local tax revenue to reduce the unequal collection and distribution of tax revenue in Virginia , while also preserving Virginia's status as a low-tax state for businesses and individuals.

- Encourages the General Assembly to recognize the burden on local governments to raise and spend revenue particular in high income areas like Northern Virginia, and ensuring that our region continues to receive its fair share of tax revenue.
- As personal income growth of Northern Virginia residents continues to outpace income growth statewide, the transfer of tax revenue away from local governments in Northern Virginia to the Commonwealth undermines the ability of local governments to support the growing public infrastructure and service requirements of this highly productive economy.
- Opposes single industry taxes unless the targeted industry expresses its support for the measure.
- Supports conformity with federal tax rules related to the deductibility of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans as Congress intended.
- Supports Virginia continuing to explore greater conformity to federal tax code where federal changes are aimed at economic growth.
- Opposes granting taxing authority to local school boards.

Priority 2: Supports the Dillon Rule which is the foundation of a uniform tax and regulatory environment that encourages regional economic development and growth.

- Opposes any effort to erode or repeal the Dillon Rule to maintain a more predictable business climate across the Commonwealth.

Priority 3: Supports ongoing review of the regulatory environment to ensure efficacy and necessity of existing regulations while placing the burden on government to show need for new regulations.

- As the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to wane, the Commonwealth should conduct a review of the state's workplace safety regulations and conform them to federal CDC and OSHA guidelines.
 - Businesses must be given the certainty that meeting or exceeding federal guidelines is sufficient.
- Use of emergency powers in pandemics must be limited to strict health measures first, restriction of movement last.
 - Emergency powers granted to the Governor by the Constitution of Virginia should be used to respond to a health crisis with health remedies – remedies like contact tracing, rapid testing, use of masks, and social distancing. Restriction of the movement of people, and rapid closures of a large number of businesses, should only be used if health remedies fail.
 - The General Assembly should consider its role in future health emergencies, particularly when executive authority is used to shut down the economy.
- Opposes any new regulations on home offices.

ENERGY



The Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce supports initiatives that promote a diverse, reliable, efficient, and affordable energy portfolio to support a growing economy, while contributing to the Commonwealth's economic development and environmental goals, along with recognizing the priorities of equity and environmental justice.

Adoption of the Virginia Clean Economy Act in 2020 has put Virginia on a path to sustainability, and the business community will continue to be a major stakeholder in Virginia's transition to a clean energy Commonwealth.

Key Facts

The two largest offshore wind farms in the U.S. are planned off the Virginia coast, part of a project 40 gigawatts of capacity on the East Coast by 2035

Commercial electricity rates in Virginia are 40% lower than the national average.

Priority 1: Supports cost-effective, future-focused and data-driven climate resiliency standards, particularly in land-use, design and energy infrastructure to protect infrastructure investments and promote positive economic development

- The Commonwealth must consider the impact of rising sea levels and increased nuisance flooding on public infrastructure. The Chamber supports climate mitigation efforts that are cost-effective, data-driven and utilize the best available science.
- The state should consider a variety of incentives, such as tax credits and design flexibility, in order to make climate resiliency standards more affordable as well as achievable in the near term. Such incentives should focus on outcomes, rather than inputs like materials preferences.

Priority 2: Supports continued and appropriate use of energy sources such as natural gas, nuclear power, renewable energy, and cost-effective green building construction, as well as transit-oriented development, to help reach Virginia's climate goals

- The Chamber supports new energy infrastructure as well as improvements to existing energy infrastructure in order to maintain affordable and reliable energy sources to help achieve Virginia's economic development and quality of life goals.
- Any energy conservation legislation must be evaluated on a cost-benefit basis and allow for the appropriate amount of energy necessary to run the region's economy, or include assurances that equally reliable and affordable substitute renewable energy will be available.
- New technologies such as biofuels, hydrogen, solar, and wind, should continue to be encouraged in the Commonwealth.

Priority 3: Localities that set local or regional energy and environmental goals above and beyond state and federal goals must take into account the limited power of local governments to achieve ambitious targets

- The Chamber opposes the over-application of land use authority in the service of ambitious energy and environmental goals which will have negative unintended consequences on the economy.
- The Chamber encourages local and statewide policies and programs, such as Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs, that serve as cost-effective incentives to build and maintain a robust energy sources portfolio to enhance Virginia's competitiveness in the global market place.



HEALTHCARE



The Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce and the Northern Virginia business community strongly support efforts by policy makers to promote a healthy Virginia workforce while bringing down the costs of healthcare in the Commonwealth.


We encourage the General Assembly and the Administration to continue to engage with the private sector on dynamic, cost reduction initiatives, recognize the investment of hospitals, health systems, and insurers, and to strengthen its funding commitment in partnership with the private and non-profit sectors.

Healthcare Workforce Experience Major Change

Healthcare workforce in Virginia is grown four-times faster than all other occupations (*Source: Virginia Employment Commission*).

Three Federally Qualified Health Centers in Northern Virginia are designated as having health professional shortages in primary care, dental, and behavioral health care (Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William).

Many factors weighing on healthcare workers – global pandemic, aging population, an aging healthcare workforce, barriers to increasing education, entry level jobs less attractive than other industries, and more.



Priority 1: Support reforms that increase equitable access to health care while lowering costs for consumers and employers

- Supports existing efforts to reduce child and maternal health disparities identified by the Joint Commission on Health Care.
- Supports modifying the existing fee-for-service model to one that emphasizes greater coordination of care through value-based payments.
- Supports streamlined regulatory processes that seek to ensure greater access to care, and initiatives seeking to encourage a robust insurance marketplace, while preserving quality and lowering costs for employers and enrollees alike.
 - Engagement with the health care industry to identify what changes were made during COVID-19 that should remain, and what should revert to pre-pandemic norms.
- Supports continued work on innovation and reduction in unnecessary medical procedures through initiatives like Smarter Care Virginia.

Priority 2: Identify opportunities to support the health care industry rebound from a prolonged pandemic response, specifically in areas of employee fatigue and burnout.

- Encourages policy makers to work with the industry to identify and address growing gaps in the workforce
- Supports broadening partnerships across sectors to grow the health care workforce pipeline

Priority 3: Support maintaining private and non-profit sector delivery of health care

- The Chamber believes the best way to receive adequate and affordable care is through gainful employment, greater competition, improved design of benefits, and private sector innovation.
- The Chamber recognizes that job losses from the COVID-19 pandemic have caused thousands to lose health insurance coverage. The Chamber robust public programs for those individuals who are between Medicaid-eligibility and private, employer supported health insurance.

Priority 4: Support innovation in delivery of medical and behavioral health care services

- Supports increased resources dedicated to increasing access and delivering innovation and improvements to the behavioral health delivery system that closes gaps between existing services with a full array of evidence based, trauma informed services from early intervention and prevention services to crisis and residential services and that enables individuals and families to choose among competitive community-based services.
- Encourages engagement with the health care industry, employers and consumers to identify telemedicine and telehealth service expansion opportunities. Many temporary uses during the pandemic proved to be successful. Engagement should include discussion of retaining and building on those successes, including broader use, reciprocal agreements to allow healthcare professionals to perform services beyond state borders, and expansion of broadband to communities without broadband access.



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