

HAMPTON ROADS

CHAMBER



— STATE —
LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES
2023

2023 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 conducts an annual survey of its members to assess the priorities of the business community. These results are used 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 and Workforce Development
- Transportation
- Energy
- Resiliency and Recurrent Flooding
- 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 daily focus is on setting conditions for businesses to succeed and for economic growth.

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 through a survey as well as issues worked on throughout the year.

The 2023 priorities include the following areas: Economic Development, Education, Workforce Development, Transportation, Energy, Resiliency, Recurrent Flooding, Healthcare, Public Safety, Military, and Veterans Affairs. 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



Jim Bibbs
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:

- Support regional economic development initiatives in Hampton Roads
- 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
- Protect Virginia's AAA bond rating by supporting sensible fiscal policies
- Support the tourism industry throughout Hampton Roads
- Allocate budgetary support for Jefferson National Accelerator Facility (JLAB)

Education and Workforce Development

Education and Workforce Development are the foundation to building the economy in Hampton Roads. The diverse workforce needed to support businesses today and into the future depends on our education system preparing students who are moving into high demand careers. These focus areas include:

- Career and technical training designed to prepare students for jobs in high-demand fields
- Encouraging partnerships between K-12 schools and local community colleges
- Building partnerships between the schools and businesses to provide hands-on opportunities
- Support programs that educate students and their parents on career path options beyond the traditional 4-year college degree

Transportation

Hampton Roads transportation construction challenges are unique due to the high number of water crossings. The Chamber supports policies and 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 identify infrastructure projects necessary in the region to support the transportation network
- Continued state funding for the Hampton Roads Transit Authority (HRT)
- Implement construction of the I-64 Gap and efforts to secure the last of the funding necessary to complete the project

Energy

In Hampton Roads, affordable, accessible, and reliable energy is a critical component of our economic success and our national security. The military, port, hospitals, businesses, and the workforce who keep them running depend on it. As the home to Offshore Wind, the Chamber supports traditional as well as alternative sources of energy to maintain a reliable, accessible and affordable mix of energy.

Resiliency and Recurrent Flooding

Resiliency and recurrent flooding have had an impact on Hampton Roads in recent years. Mitigating the impact of flooding is important for economic development as well as retaining our military bases. The Chamber supports policies that supply continuous management and revenue streams to combat recurrent flooding and strengthen efforts to address the impact of sea-level rise.

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 has engaged on legislation allowing organizations to provide health insurance options for small businesses. The Chamber supports policies to maintain high quality, safe, and affordable healthcare including:

- Healthcare policy that keeps costs on services 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/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

Protecting the Dillon Rule Status:

- 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

Chamber Websites

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



2022 Suffolk State of the City

Strategic Partners



**For more information,
please contact:**

**Gretchen Heal,
Vice President of
Government Affairs**

**757-374-4491
gheal@hrchamber.com**

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Means Business