

Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce

2016 Legislative Policies

The mission of the Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee is to develop legislative positions and propose legislative changes that will benefit Chamber members, preserve a healthy regulatory business climate and promote growth within the Town of Bedford and Bedford County.

THE BEDFORD AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:

- Believes that any state or federal mandates to localities should be fully funded.
- Supports full funding of business-oriented programs such as the Enterprise Zone Program and Governor's Opportunity Fund as an effective means of encouraging investment and creating jobs.
- Supports continued tax restructuring as a primary means of finding permanent, long term solutions to meet our region's and the Commonwealth's growing transportation and education needs.

EDUCATION AND AREA WORKFORCE

We recognize the vital importance of maintaining and developing new and innovative educational and workforce development concepts. We clearly recognize the importance of sustained funding for educational programs (pre K-12) and higher education programs as the foundation of our future ability to prepare citizens for job opportunities associated with our economy, at both local and state levels. Specifically:

- Restoration of state K-12 funding to pre-recession levels (as identified in recent JLARC report)
- Accelerated completion of a broadband network to allow all students access to technology tools regardless of where they live
- Providing laptops/tablets to all students (1:1) at the secondary level
- Local flexibility, within the current laws that govern education (Standards of Quality), so that schools can innovate to improve student learning

TRANSPORTATION:

The HB2 plan is in its infancy and will require some period of time to determine success. We believe continual oversight of this new process is advisable to ensure all transportation challenges in the Commonwealth are addressed in due order.

BACC supports a train stop in the Town of Bedford which would provide our businesses and citizens convenient access and result in increased economic development and tourism.

VIRGINIA RIGHT TO WORK LAWS:

The Chamber urges our Virginia Legislators to continue to support Virginia's existing Right to Work laws.

TOURISM:

The Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes that tourism represents major revenue for the Town of Bedford and Bedford County and provides many jobs in this area. The Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce supports increased funding for the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the Virginia Film Office and the Virginia Commission for the Arts, all of whom provide funding for Bedford Area tourism related entities and activities.

SOUND FISCAL PRACTICE:

The Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce members are concerned with the uneven generation of tax revenue for the Commonwealth versus localities. While more services are being designated for local funding, revenues have declined during this challenging economic time. The Commonwealth's tax code remains outdated and needs reform.

Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce supports:

- Comprehensive tax reform that is equitable and broad-based, fosters a favorable business climate, encourages economic development, and promotes prosperity for all Virginians.
- Reform and/or repeal local business and professional occupancy tax authority.
- Reasonable regulation of businesses including but not limited to Federal regulations and proper influence that does not exceed the authority of government or which imposes only necessarily requirements.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

BACC has great concern regarding the impact of health care reforms, including Affordable Care Act reforms, on the business community and economic prosperity. BACC is committed to working with and through its local representatives to minimize the economic impact of such reforms.