

2022 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

BEAUFORT REGIONAL
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

OUR PRIORITY IS BUSINESS.

The Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce exists to promote economic prosperity to enhance the well-being of everyone in our region. We believe thriving employers are a cornerstone of our region's economy. Advocating on behalf of the Beaufort Region's employers with state, local and federal governments is essential to our mission.

The Chamber encourages elected officials to pursue these public policy priorities and will report to its members on outcomes that align with this agenda.

Public Policy Guiding Principles presented in this document are standing positions that inform the Chamber's advocacy efforts and preferred approach to policymaking. The Public Policy Agenda is updated annually and approved by the Board of Directors.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW THE CHAMBER ADVOCATES FOR BEAUFORT COUNTY BUSINESSES AT [BEAUFORTCHAMBER.ORG/ADVOCACY](https://www.beaufortchamber.org/advocacy)

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Support incentives and market-driven solutions to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing options for everyone in the region.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Advocate for regulatory processes and business fee structures that are clear, predictable, efficient and cost-effective.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Support tax policies and economic development programs that help the region attract, retain and expand businesses and industries that diversify the region's economy and create high quality jobs.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Advocate for the changes necessary in early childhood, K-12 and higher education to prepare all students for the careers of the future and to provide a skilled workforce to support the region's employers.

ENERGY

Support an energy regulatory climate that prioritizes the state's future energy needs with sufficient protections for electric utility ratepayers. Encourage energy generation from a variety of sources to produce reliable, affordable, sustainable electricity for the state's businesses and citizens.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The natural environment is important to our region's quality of place and economic competitiveness. Promote a balanced approach to environmental regulation that embraces responsible stewardship without unreasonably burdening business.

HEALTHCARE

Promote community wellness by supporting policies that ensure access to quality medical care and reduce healthcare costs for business.

HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Support consistent, sufficient investment in product development and tourism marketing to ensure the continued vitality of the region's hospitality industry.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Support comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level that helps businesses attract and retain talented individuals that fuel our globally connected economy.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Make investments necessary to ensure adequate capacity and maintenance of our transportation network and flood protections including roads, bridges, pedestrian and bike facilities, shoreline and stormwater infrastructure.

LAND USE PLANNING

Support coordinated decisions among jurisdictions that promote the efficient use of land essential to economic prosperity.

MILITARY RETENTION & EXPANSION

Advance legislative priorities in the South Carolina Military Base Task Force comprehensive plan, and support policies and investments that promote the retention and expansion of military operations in the Beaufort region.

PORT DEVELOPMENT

Make investments necessary to enhance the efficiency, reliability and capacity of the region's port facilities and support development of the Jasper Ocean Terminal.

TAX CLIMATE

Advocate for a competitive, pro-growth tax climate that ensures fairness, predictability, and compliance while balancing income, property and sales tax levies.

TRADE

Support international trade agreements that are fair, accountable, consistent and that reduce barriers to free and open markets.

FEDERAL PRIORITIES

MILITARY MISSION SUPPORT

- Support timely annual passage of a national defense budget sufficient to ensure force readiness and counter global security threats.
- Appropriate funds to make infrastructure and facilities investments necessary to secure the second century of making Marines at MCRD Parris Island.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Ensure the long-term solvency of the Federal Highway Trust Fund through sustained funding.
- Support investments to expand broadband internet access, especially to rural areas.

TAX CLIMATE

- Support responsible fiscal policy, including entitlement reform, deficit reduction, and debt management.
- Oppose anti-growth tax proposals that disproportionately increase the tax burden on businesses and small business owners.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Advocate for effective implementation and utilization of Opportunity Zones and similar economic development programs.
- Support efforts to mitigate supply chain issues nationally.

LOCAL/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Advocate for policies and zoning that promote a diversity of housing types and price points.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Streamline development processes to increase predictability and reduce time and costs.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Deploy all available resources to support the attraction, retention and expansion of industries that create high quality jobs and support economic diversification.
- Support investments necessary to ensure that the Beaufort Commerce Park is project-ready as certified by the SCDOC Palmetto Sites Program.

HOSPITALITY SECTOR

- Support hospitality sector businesses by maintaining consistent investment in high-impact tourism marketing efforts and diversifying visitor segments.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Maintain and improve existing infrastructure and invest in new infrastructure to protect people, homes and businesses from stormwater and tidal flood impacts.

LAND USE PLANNING

- Carefully balance land use decisions with responsibilities to protect historic, ecological and economic assets.
- Support property-owner rights in context with comprehensive land use plans.

MILITARY RETENTION & EXPANSION

- Ensure that policies and practices are well-coordinated with the region's military installations and support retention and expansion of military missions.

STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce encourages members of the South Carolina General Assembly to act on the following priorities during the 2022 session:

BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Pass Fai Share Liability Reform (joint and several) to increase fairness and improve the state's legal climate
- Explore opportunities to enhance the competitiveness of our state's tax climate, such as reducing the marginal individual income tax rate and rebalancing the property tax burden on businesses.
- Protect the long-standing rights of South Carolina businesses to make employment decisions that are right for their operations.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Fully fund the South Coast Cyber Center's \$3 million initiative to build a cyber security talent pipeline with NSA/DHS Centers of Academic Excellence at USCB and Technical College of the Lowcountry. State funding will leverage existing federal and local commitments to create new job growth for the region.
- Support equitable, sustained funding to institutions of higher education in the Lowcountry

HOSPITALITY SECTOR

- Support hospitality sector businesses by making consistent investment in high-impact tourism marketing by directing resources to local and regional destination marketing agencies.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Fund priority capital investments at USCB to ensure facilities that meaningfully enhance instructional and programmatic capacities.
- Continue to prioritize expansion of rural broadband internet access.
- Explore funding opportunities for infrastructure to protect people, homes and businesses from stormwater and tidal flooding impacts.

MILITARY RETENTION & EXPANSION

- Safeguard military missions at MCAS Beaufort by adopting legislation to ensure that wind energy facilities comply with federal guidelines and do not impact military operations.
- Fully exempt military retirement benefits from state income tax to strengthen our reputation as a military friendly state and grow our workforce.
- Ensure that military families transferring to South Carolina can enroll their children in the public education system prior to arriving in the state with a copy of their orders.

