

GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

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2011 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



**Greater
Haywood
County Chamber of Commerce**

Serving Waynesville, Maggie Valley, Canton & Clyde



The Haywood County Chamber of Commerce 2011 Legislative and Public Policy Agenda represents the Chamber's continued commitment to maintain and grow a strong business climate and exceptional quality of life for Haywood County. The issues in this agenda are based on surveys and briefings from community partners. The Governmental Relations committee determines based upon information received if established criteria is met.

CRITERIA: Do the issues or the actions relate to the Chamber's Mission Statement?

The Greater Haywood County Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of business for the growth and prosperity of our members and community.

- Is it important to the membership?
- Will it attract leadership and membership support?
- Is it a duplication of effort?
- Can it be funded?
- Is it measurable?
- Has the issue been considered by chamber committees or board leadership?

The issues and priorities in this agenda were identified or updated by community stakeholders and the Chamber's membership. Committee members and staff provided expertise and perspectives to evaluate the issues and potential impact on businesses and the community. The 2011 Legislative Agenda was approved by the Board of Directors. The Governmental Relations Committee will monitor the issues on the local, state and federal levels throughout the year.

ECONOMY:

Economic Impact on Business

As the economic crisis continues, many NC businesses are now closed or struggling to survive. It is critical to focus on supporting small businesses (SBs), which create 80% of new jobs.

- Oppose disproportionate tax increases that may place undue burden on SBs.
- Encourage capital investment to help create, retain or grow jobs in our area.
- Ensure that incentives for SBs are not limited by definition of "small business"

Local Capacity Growth

As attention continues to shift toward local capacity, it is imperative to support and promote our area businesses, including efforts to increase awareness by public and private consumers.

Unfunded Mandates

Any shift of responsibilities from the state to county and local government must come with sufficient funding.

EDUCATION:

Haywood Community College (HCC) plays a significant role to help prepare our local workforce, promote small business development, and assist with industry recruitment and retention. With the significant growth in curriculum and continuing education, it is vital that adequate funding be provided to support the increase in HCC instruction and services.

- Fund enrollment growth
- Provide more flexibility for colleges to buy locally.
- Provide incentives/assistance/resources to public entities that are striving to meet new building energy standards (SB 668).
- Ensure a multi-year schedule for any funding reductions to Regional Hi-Tech Center.
- Continue to fund developmental education summer courses.

Public Schools

Minimize the impact of any conflicting mandates during school funding deliberations. (Help maintain traditional funding for teachers by the state.)

REDISTRICTING

Ensure that Haywood County is fairly represented in the redistricting process.

HEALTH CARE:

Burden on Business

Spiraling health care costs curb the competitiveness of all businesses. Legislative initiatives which would allow small businesses especially to provide or enhance affordable health care for their employees should remain a priority.

Medicaid Funding

Hospitals lose over \$1 Billion annually treating Medicaid patients and the uninsured

- Fund indigent health care costs at Haywood Regional Medical Center (HRMC).
- Support NCHA "Hospital Assessment Proposal," which would allow hospitals to partner with the state to acquire additional federal funding.

INFRASTRUCTURE:

Infrastructure Planning (Broadband)

A strong, coordinated effort between government entities and respective agencies is required to address local infrastructure planning. It is especially important for local economic growth to significantly expand and enhance broadband in our area, with associated funding.

Road Maintenance Funding

Oppose any effort to shift road maintenance to local government without associated funding.

Workforce Housing

Ensuring acceptable and affordable living opportunities for the Haywood County workforce is critical to help grow the long term wealth of residents, provide competitive opportunities and expand our local tax base. We must continue exploring and evaluating options that would transition qualified residents into home ownership, with the opportunity to build.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES:

Because protecting the environment is important to our community, it is important to identify and support relevant initiatives, especially those that help accelerate technologies clean up and protect the environment.

- Support "green opportunities" for local business and workforce development, including training programs for "green-collar" jobs.
- Support Federal funding to help protect, preserve and maintain the Smoky Mountain National Park and Blue Ridge Parkway.
- Help protect the pass-through of federal funding to local municipalities for infrastructure improvements (DOT Transportation Enhancement Act).