



Greenville Chamber Releases 2012 Legislative Agenda to Support Upstate Businesses

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(Greenville, SC) The Greenville Chamber has released its 2012 Legislative Agenda. Driven by results from a membership-wide survey and input from the Chamber's Legislative Issues Committee, it reflects the Greenville business community's legislative priorities for the upcoming session.

Mark Cothran, the Greenville Chamber's Vice President of Public Policy and lead lobbyist for the Upstate Chamber Coalition notes, "With the state's unemployment rate still hovering at 10 percent, it's imperative that the General Assembly continue to take steps to improve business conditions."

Business Regulatory Reform

The Chamber recognizes that regulatory and tax policies have a massive impact on the cost and affordability of doing business in South Carolina and the Upstate. The Greenville Chamber supports:

- Achieving business-friendly, comprehensive tax reform by overhauling the state's tax code
- Finding a workable solution to funding the state retirement system, which currently diverts funding away from critical need areas
- Streamlining and combining of agencies and different departments within the state to improve government efficiency
- Continued efforts to ensure S.C. remains a right to work state
- Offsetting Unemployment Insurance (UI) loan repayments to the federal government with tax relief to all S.C. employers
- Bringing more predictability to state spending by creating a state spending cap with a budget stabilization fund

Economic Development

The Chamber is an advocate of developing and implementing comprehensive statewide economic development plan that focuses on creating jobs of the future, business retention, and incentives for high-growth companies. The Greenville Chamber supports:

- Incentives to support existing business growth and new company attraction
- Legislation that will help attract private capital for promising start-ups while putting S.C. on an even, competitive footing with 25 other states (including N.C. and GA)

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- Continued port expansion, including harbor deepening project and a dual rail access solution
- Dedicated funding and stable revenue for maintenance and repair of S.C. roads and bridges
- Upstate tourism and the creation of a comprehensive S.C. State tourism and branding plan
- Strengthening intellectual property rights of S.C. companies

Education and Workforce Development

The Chamber believes that life-long education is a driver of economic development. By striving to create a skilled workforce that has the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of businesses in the Upstate, education will become the dynamic force behind business in the Upstate.

The Greenville Chamber supports:

- Initiatives that will help to increase early childhood education and graduation rates, thus providing a more skilled workforce for business and industry in S.C.
- Initiatives that will help to increase the number of individuals entering and completing post-secondary training or education
- Legislation that provides stable, equitable, and adequate K-12 funding
- Expanded Workkeys programs to better link workers to available jobs

Energy and Environment

The Chamber understands that steps need to be taken to ensure new, innovative ideas are being developed for energy use and consumption that can be utilized without causing unnecessary harm to the environment. The Greenville Chamber supports:

- A water plan that is basin-specific, provides a foundation for statewide water resources management and the framework for future water resource planning
- Initiatives to insure compliance with EPA air quality standards that promote development without compromising quality of life
- Restore balance to the Pollution Control Act following the Smith Land Company ruling from the South Carolina Supreme Court

Healthcare

The Chamber recognizes that health insurance access and affordability continues to be an issue for businesses throughout the state, especially small businesses. The Greenville Chamber supports:

- Initiatives to ensure healthcare is affordable for small business
- Employee wellness programs in the workplace to help reduce healthcare costs

Members of the community are encouraged to join the Upstate Chamber Coalition's Grassroots Network to timely session updates from Chamber lobbyists at www.UpstateChamber.org.

For more information about the 2012 Legislative Agenda and Public Policy initiatives at the Greenville Chamber, please contact Elizabeth Edwards, Government Relations Manager, at 864-239-3748 or eedwards@greenvillechamber.org.

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About the Greenville Chamber

The Greenville Chamber is the largest business organization in the Upstate. The Chamber's vision is to build one of the premier business communities in the world by: leading through collaboration, building community prosperity, being the voice of business and enhancing quality of life. For more information, visit www.greenvillechamber.org or call 864-242-1050.

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