

LOUDOUN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PREAMBLE

On behalf of our more than 1,250 members and the Loudoun community we serve, the Loudoun Chamber will advocate for public policy solutions that will lead to a world class quality of life in Loudoun County.

The Chamber's policy positions are based on the following principles, which are necessary to ensure a healthy business climate and a strong community here in Loudoun, and will support the overall success of our member organizations:

- Federal, state and local laws, regulations and tax policies must support a strong, pro-business environment that ensures economic competitiveness and protects the ability of businesses to create jobs and economic opportunity;*
- The Chamber is committed to partnering with like-minded organizations to advocate for the issues and policies that serve the interests of Loudoun's businesses and community;*
- Federal, state and local governments must provide adequate investment in vital assets, such as transportation, technology, energy, water, K-12 education, higher education and workforce development, to meet the needs of a growing economy and population;*
- More of the tax revenues generated by Loudoun's businesses and citizens should remain in Loudoun to serve the needs of our businesses and citizens;*
- Federal, state and local government must be responsive to the needs of the citizens and businesses, and accountable for the funds entrusted to their stewardship; and*
- Loudoun County's business and nonprofit community must have the opportunity to work with government officials at the federal, state and local levels to develop and implement legislative and regulatory policies that will impact the economy and quality of life in our community.*

The following outlines the Chamber's specific public policy positions on the priority issues of its members.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber supports efforts to continue to make Loudoun County, including the incorporated towns within its boundaries, highly competitive in the global marketplace through aggressively promoting the retention and expansion of existing businesses, and by creating an environment that is conducive to the formation and attraction of new ones. Loudoun County has made great strides to becoming a “business-friendly” success story, and it is imperative that a predictable, customer-focused approach be the foundation of how our government operates to build on the County’s success. The Chamber supports increased public and private economic development efforts focused on encouraging business growth and attraction, particularly in targeted sectors, to help grow the County’s commercial tax base and lessen the burden on residential taxpayers. Collaboration between the economic development efforts of the County and the towns within Loudoun is also important to fully leverage our community’s economic potential.

The Chamber supports the Board of Supervisors’ continued investment into the County’s economic development strategy. As part of that strategy, the Chamber believes the County should continue to invest the financial and personnel resources needed to support an aggressive and comprehensive national and international outreach program that leverages the County’s strongest economic assets. These include industry sectors where Loudoun possesses a competitive advantage, and our proximity to Washington-Dulles International Airport and Leesburg Executive Airport, and our nation’s capital.

Rural Economic Development:

The Chamber recognizes that rural business development is essential to the fiscal health of Loudoun County and contributes to the unique character of our community and our economy. Loudoun County receives a myriad of economic benefits from its rural economy in the form of agricultural products, cost avoidance and attracting businesses, residents and tourists. As such, the Chamber supports full implementation of the County’s Rural Economy Business Development Strategy which supports the continued growth and development of Loudoun’s rural economy.

The Chamber strongly supports land use and zoning regulations that allow for a robust and innovative agricultural and rural economy that keeps Loudoun’s farms and rural businesses viable and

productive. We encourage a view of regulation of agribusiness that meets its particular needs for success, including flexibility for use of property for multiple purposes. These rural uses should be accomplished with respect for the historic sites and rural road network in western Loudoun that draws businesses, residents as well as tourists, agritourists and outdoor recreationists to share in the beauty of our County.

The Chamber recognizes the continued support of the Board of Supervisors for the Rural Economic Development Council and values continued support of this organization to shape rural economic development policy.

Economic Incentives and Regional Collaboration Funding:

The Chamber recognizes that there is no substitute for offering a quality product in terms of business location, as emphasized by our positions throughout this document. However, the Chamber supports the strategic and limited use of economic incentives, including tax incentives, by the Commonwealth and local governments in the effort to attract and retain commercial investment.

The Chamber encourages the General Assembly to continue to invest in business incentive programs that recognize the unique needs and challenges faced in northern Virginia, thus encouraging dynamic and growing businesses to invest in Loudoun County. To help create an environment in which Loudoun County can attract and retain top quality companies, priority should be given to reviewing the qualification criteria for Virginia's business incentive programs to ensure Loudoun can qualify for and benefit from these programs. The Chamber also supports continued and increased funding and an efficient process for award and disbursement of those funds from the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund, the Agricultural and Forestry Industries Development Fund and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's (VEDP) programs. The Chamber urges that this funding include a focus on company retention and recruitment that can be utilized in northern Virginia, and recognize the importance of attracting high wage jobs in a way that is commiserate with its current focus on net number of jobs created.

As VEDP goes through its reorganization, the Chamber pledges to work with and support the VEDP in developing and adapting its programs to ensure they encourage businesses with higher paying jobs, as well as generators of local tax revenue, to locate, remain, and grow in Virginia.

As part of the broader effort to diversify Virginia's economy, the Chamber continues to support GO Virginia and its efforts to incentivize greater collaboration among localities, higher education, and the private sector. Maintaining the state's financial commitment to this program is especially important at this time with consideration of sequestration coming back in the near future and the recent drop in state revenues being directly attributable to the flight of high-paying jobs from the state.

At the local level, the Chamber supports the Board of Supervisors allocating funds to replenish the local incentive fund as appropriate.

Business-Friendly Regulations:

The Chamber opposes existing and proposed regulations that have or will have a demonstrably adverse impact on net business and job growth.

In addition, to ensure that Loudoun County's tremendous potential is not diminished, the Chamber opposes arbitrary efforts to limit or suspend growth and economic development. The Chamber urges elected officials to be mindful that excessive and inconsistent restrictions placed on new business development or expansion that do not contribute materially to improving the quality and effectiveness of that development send a negative signal to prospective and existing businesses considering our County as a place to locate and expand. The Chamber supports adherence to all commitments made in the course of any economic development negotiations by both government and the business.

The Chamber fully endorses the mission of the Zoning Ordinance Action Group (ZOAG), which is to make the County's Zoning Ordinance more accurate, consistent and user friendly. Additionally, the Chamber supports ZOAG's continued work to ensure zoning ordinances are kept current to both existing and anticipated market conditions, and to the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Consistent with this aforementioned position, the Chamber believes top priority should be given to review and improvements to the processes for approving development plans, building permit applications, and other related government processes – and the fees assessed - impacting businesses. Existing codes and procedural requirements that do not contribute to meaningful improvement of the application or proposal under consideration must be streamlined or eliminated, and

fees assessed should be consistent with the actual cost to the County to facilitate the process. The Chamber specifically supports efforts to encourage business growth through further streamlining the development review process, annual updates to the zoning ordinance, and regular updates to the community's Comprehensive Plan. The Chamber strongly recommends that businesses in all areas of the County not be overburdened with excessive or unnecessary land use or zoning regulations.

The Chamber also supports an incentive-based approach, as opposed to mandates, to encourage the type of development that is desired in Loudoun County, including programs that incent green or sustainable development without adding additional time and expense to the development process.

Loudoun County Economic Development Authority:

The Chamber supports efforts to fully leverage the capabilities and strategic value that the Economic Development Authority (EDA) has to offer to Loudoun's long-term economic development potential. This includes the EDA's role in advancing workforce housing initiatives in Loudoun and its support for the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development's international business marketing and retention program.

Small Business:

Because of the unique and invaluable contributions that small businesses offer Loudoun's economic prosperity, the Chamber strongly supports increased local and federal funding to support small business infrastructure, programs, and services. The Chamber also supports continued development of business incubators and accelerators in the County that will allow for and encourage collaboration and innovation by providing office space where entrepreneurs and innovators can work together and share ideas, and where small businesses have the opportunity to grow stronger and more quickly.

Non-Profit Organizations:

Non-profit organizations are also an essential piece of Loudoun's economy and quality of life. As Loudoun County's emerging non-profit organizations respond to the increasing needs of a fast growing population, they face a continuous need to educate County government leaders and residents about the critical role they play in the community, as well as the financial uncertainty caused by under-resourced public-sector funding sources. The Chamber is committed to advocating for initiatives that support the success of Loudoun's non-profit community, including: efforts to raise awareness about community

human service needs; promoting opportunities for the public to provide financial and volunteer support; and, supporting efforts within the non-profit community to work with Board of Supervisors to ensure public-sector funding is commensurate with the growth and needs of the County.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

K-12 Education:

The Loudoun Chamber believes that a top performing K-12 education system, both public and private, that equips our students with skills, training and knowledge to become productive lifelong members of our nation's workforce is vital to the future prosperity and quality of life in our community. The Chamber embraces the critical leadership role that businesses and industry leaders play in ensuring the quality of instruction, programs and results from our K-12 schools and workforce training programs. It is critical that the business and education community be active partners to ensure there is a connection between what students are taught, and how they are assessed, with the true workforce needs.

The Chamber firmly supports policies and systems in which students are expected to achieve at internationally competitive levels of proficiency, particularly within areas of critical need – such as Science, Technology, Mathematics, Engineering, Healthcare and the Arts. To achieve this aim, the Chamber supports policies and practices within Virginia's educational systems that ensure the highest quality instruction, content and learning environment.

To this end, the Chamber supports the following:

- State and federal education funding that more appropriately reflects the full costs of all state and federal education mandates in addition to basic education costs. The Chamber continues to advocate for the reformulation of the state Education Funding Composite Index because it currently places Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) at a disadvantage and does not account for our County's special needs caused by continued enrollment growth, increasing numbers of students for whom English is not spoken in the home, and the added financial burden of operating in the high cost metropolitan Washington, D.C., area. It also fails to accurately reflect the limited revenues local governments' can access to pay for education at the higher percentage required through the current formula;

- Increased state funding for the revised Standards of Quality by three percent per year until the local share of education costs does not exceed 65 percent and the state share is equal to 35 percent of total costs;
- Consideration of innovative strategies, including private-sector funding, to enable availability of pre-K education;
- Full restoration of cost of competing funding for teachers and support staff;
- Funding to enable competitive and innovative compensation, as well as benefits packages, to attract and retain highly qualified teachers;
- Creating a culture that incentivizes excellence, innovation and initiative (beyond standardized tests scores as an evaluation method), that includes meaningful professional development, must be created and fostered within our education system for it to achieve the maximum success.
- Choice for parents between traditional schools and other learning alternatives, and development of incentives to encourage “traditional” schools, teachers and administrators to innovate. With reasonable parameters of space and distance, the Chamber believes every student should be able to choose his/her school and every student should be able to find a school within the County to foster successful individual educational outcomes;
- Flexible policies that enable public school attendance alternatives, such as open enrollment to balance population among schools, and expansion of online education options for in-school and home-school students.
- Providing authority to local school boards to determine its school calendar, including whether it makes sense for the local community to begin the school year prior to Labor Day;
- Continued consideration and use of public charter schools and magnet schools that recognize that not all students learn in the same way or have the same interests, to expand the options available to Loudoun County students. The Chamber believes that local authorization and oversight of the inception, planning and support of public charter and magnet schools fosters cooperation and good will between these schools and school divisions and promotes the success of all students;
- Creation of a Loudoun County Teacher Cabinet to provide an opportunity to actively engage a diverse group of Loudoun County teachers and seek input and innovative ideas from those teachers for consideration either within individual schools, as a pilot program, or system wide. This also provides an opportunity for stronger connectivity and engagement with our teachers and the opportunity to encourage them to share their ideas and successes so that others may

have the chance to benefit from them as well. It also directly supports the development of a culture of excellence, innovation and initiative within our school system.

- We support addressing the teacher shortage in the Commonwealth by refining and developing multiple streamlined affordable pathways into the profession to meet the needs of a variety of individuals.

In an effort to support STEM at an early age for all students and its importance to workforce and economic development, we support projects such as the Children’s Science Center to offer educational opportunities to the citizens and students of Loudoun County. Attractions such as the Children’s Science Center will also be a significant tourist draw and will serve an economic benefit to the Loudoun economy.

The Chamber supports broader use of technology in the classroom, along with adequate professional development for teachers, so that technology can have the maximum benefit for all. The Chamber encourages the school system to seek broader collaboration efforts and exchange of ideas with neighboring school districts as technology takes a greater role in education. With this, the Chamber believes it is also critical that technology infrastructure be available that meets the LCPS’ needs so that all schools and students throughout the County have access to affordable, reliable internet access.

The Chamber believes LCPS, the School Board and the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors must continue to work to implement cost reduction and operational efficiencies within our school system. In addition to supporting efficient use of current resources by LCPS, the Chamber also supports implementation of creative approaches to maximize and supplement traditional education funding, such as:

- Consideration of services currently provided by school system employees that may be outsourced to provide greater efficiency, cost savings, competition and business opportunity in the private sector;
- Consideration of consolidation of County and school functions to achieve increased efficiencies and cost savings;
- Continued and increased partnerships with non-profit organizations and foundations in both funding and programming given the demonstrated success of such programs and the geographic access to additional potential partners; and
- Continued and greater use of school-business partnerships as a way for businesses to provide valuable resources of time, energy and funding to support the schools.

The Chamber also calls on the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, the School Board and LCPS to continue their efforts to work together to outline a new framework for school site selection and land use permitting that streamlines the process and locates new schools in a manner that supports both the education and economic development mission of our community. The Chamber continues to strongly oppose the use of commercially planned or zoned land for school sites, given the importance of preserving this land for future economic development opportunities.

The Chamber supports development of innovative efforts which help enhance Loudoun's traditional K-12 efforts, providing a pathway for Loudoun students to further education or immediate employment in the region's high skill, high demand, and high wage employment sectors. This should include opportunities to complete one or more years of college credit while in high school through dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, industry certifications or a combination of these strategies.

In recognition of the vital link between schools and the region's potential skilled workforce, the Chamber further supports:

- Strong business-education partnerships to develop training programs for specific high demand & specialized industries.;
- Stronger focus on college and/or career readiness for students earlier in their K-12 education experience to better prepare them for success in whatever path they choose; and

The Chamber supports the Academies of Loudoun as a center for career and technical education programs that will create unprecedented opportunities for Loudoun students to innovate and collaborate utilizing robust public/private partnerships.

Higher Education and Workforce Development:

The Loudoun Chamber recognizes the importance of and supports all of the colleges and universities, both public and private, which provide high quality high school dual enrollment opportunities, in addition to undergraduate, graduate and professional education to Loudoun's residents. The existing need for life-long education and training demands a higher education infrastructure that is accessible, both online and on campus, that is dynamically changing to meet the demands of the times and the diverse workforce, and that is supported by adequate state funding, local capital support, loan guarantee programs and other financial means. The Chamber supports positioning the

Commonwealth's public and private higher education institutions to play a full role in shaping job creation in a global knowledge-based economy. The Chamber calls on the Commonwealth's elected leaders to continue investing in state funding for higher education in order to shift some of the burden of funding from students and families. The Chamber believes, however, that any new state investment, must be targeted toward specific goals that will provide the best return on investment for every dollar spent, including:

- *Increasing significantly the percentage of college-age Virginians enrolling in institutions of higher education and attaining degrees or workforce credentials.* Continuing aggressive expansion of the number of high quality certificate programs and associate, bachelors, and graduate degrees awarded in an effort to prepare more Virginia residents to be employed in the diverse knowledge-based economy.
- *Encouraging the creation of high-quality internship experiences (preferably paid) for college students.* College graduates with real-world job experience are at a significant advantage when launching their careers.
- *Targeting new degrees in high income, high demand job sectors.* Virginia's economy will depend on increasing the number of workers able to take on jobs in high demand fields of technology, engineering, science and math, and in areas experiencing shortages, like healthcare, which is particularly important in Loudoun County.
- *Expanding career-specific training at community colleges.* The Chamber has long supported public and private efforts in job-specific training and believes this unique resource should be expanded and enhanced through increased and more consistent state funding and expanded access to certification programs, increased funding for financial aid for those students seeking industry certifications, matching state funding to encourage the private-sector to partner with the community college system to train workers, and an education effort to increase awareness of job opportunities for students achieving industry certifications. Accordingly, the Chamber supports preserving the state funding identified to support the Commonwealth's Workforce Credentials Initiative. Further, the Chamber strongly supports efforts to increase the number of students graduating, transferring to four-year institutions, and/or receiving workforce credentials, with particular emphasis on industry certifications and other credentials that provide a pathway to high-wage, high skilled jobs. To the extent that these ventures could be offered at four-year colleges and universities the Chamber supports that as well.

- *Increasing public-private collaboration for university-based research.* Innovation drives the northern Virginia economy. Loudoun businesses need an expanded way to interact with the area's higher education institutions to produce and commercialize original research. The Commonwealth remains one of the few states that do not have dedicated funding for technology transfer. University-based research can only be brought to market quickly if the Commonwealth supports it.
- *Making colleges affordable for low- and middle-income students and families.* The Commonwealth and our higher education institutions must do more to encourage a greater number of students to seek education beyond high school in areas of application to workforce need. The cost of education should not be a barrier to getting a degree. Financial aid is a key ingredient in this affordability challenge. Without increases in state-funded financial aid, access and affordability will remain a problem.
- *Encouraging partnerships among two-year and four-year institutions – both public and private.* In today's economy, encouraging partnerships that build on strengths of various institutions allows for the best use of limited resources. Two- and four-year institutions should be allowed and encouraged to partner in ways that reduce the total cost of degree completion. For example, the Chamber fully supports ongoing funding for programs like SySTEMic Solutions, a collaboration between NVCC, higher education institutions and public schools, which prepares students for careers in STEM fields.
- *Increasing the amount and availability of Community College Transfer Grants.* Enhancements to the established State transfer grant program, particularly for students in STEM fields, helps to increase the rate of bachelor's degree completion for students moving from two-year to four-year institutions.
- *Increasing access to higher education for active duty members of the military, veterans and military families.* Help for programs that provide veterans and their families with access to job training, education programs and credit for documented military training and experience gained during their service is essential for filling job vacancies, especially in cyber security and other IT fields; and
- *Supporting establishing varied pathways for students to earn credits toward graduation and/or career and technical education credentials.* This would allow for a more individualized path to achieving a career and college ready designation at the secondary level. In addition, the Chamber supports added state funding to allow school divisions to adjust their career and

technical education programs to better meet the changing workforce needs within their communities.

With regard to our publicly funded institutions, the Chamber advocates a sustained, long-term program of higher education investment, reform and innovation – embodied in state law – to ensure affordable access for students and to generate strong economic activity, revenue growth for the County and lower social service costs. Overall funding for public higher education institutions remains inadequate to fully address the workforce development needs of our region. The Chamber opposes any action to cap tuition increases as that will only exacerbate the funding reductions, forcing the institutions to limit class offerings and rely more on tuition from out-of-state-students, which would result in less space for in-state students at our Virginia schools. The Chamber believes that each institution must be provided the flexibility to address any fiscal shortages by balancing the needs of mission-critical activities against student affordability. The Chamber continues to support sufficient Tuition Assistance Grant funding, both for undergraduate and graduate students, and notes that a periodic Cost of Living (COLA) adjustment for college and university employees should occur more regularly than in recent years.

The Chamber strongly supports maintaining funding for new, and much-needed, facilities for George Mason University and NVCC.

The Chamber also supports a state budget authorization allowing NVCC to partner on a second Loudoun Campus/Center.

The Chamber welcomes and supports state budget authorization to support ADVANCE, A NVCC Mason Partnership to increase graduation rates and smooth the path to a degree while saving students time and money. The Partnership will work in collaboration with Loudoun employers to adapt and create high-demand programs to fill the region's critical workforce needs.

The Chamber also supports funding for a study to further enhance the quality and availability of a dual enrollment opportunities at LCPS as offered through NVCC.

In addition, we urge the Governor and General Assembly to make the existing program that reimburses institutions when they use their own funds to advance planning for critical capital projects permanent for public four-year institutions and community colleges.

Housing Diversity:

The Loudoun County Chamber supports more robust state and local policies directed at increasing the availability of a wide range of housing options, both rental and for sale, to meet the needs of Loudoun's growing population and workforce. We encourage Loudoun County to adequately plan for a wide range of urban, suburban and rural housing choices to support future economic development and job growth. The Chamber believes federal, state and local programs supporting workforce housing should be utilized and leveraged to the maximum extent practical.

Specifically, the Chamber supports:

- In coordination with the Comprehensive plan, the development of a comprehensive Loudoun County Housing Plan that addresses the need for market rate, workforce and affordable housing throughout the County, and includes establishing goals for workforce housing based on credible demographic studies of needs;
- Adequate maintenance and investment in the Loudoun County Housing Fund, leveraging this fund to provide the highest possible impact;
- Competing for and leveraging funds available through flexible financing and low-interest loans under the Virginia Housing Trust Fund;
- Promoting the use of County-owned vacant or under-utilized land and/or assets to be used or exchanged for the creation of affordable housing units or mixed-use development that includes affordable units;
- Adoption of higher densities in appropriate locations, particularly those areas surrounding and in the proximity of mass transit stations, to enable a greater number of quality housing products at all price points to be available for sale or rental;
- Use of property tax credits, down payment programs, low interest loans, an expedited approval process, and other programs by the County to increase home ownership for low- to moderate-income households;
- Use of the Economic Development Authority (EDA) to investigate alternative project solutions, attract non-profit developers, provide financing alternatives for potential projects, and potentially act as a housing authority;
- Maintain and strengthen Virginia's existing Rental Housing Act as it pertains to the discretion of the housing provider to accept rent subsidies or other public assistance from a political subdivision of the Commonwealth or from the federal government;

- Prioritizing housing affordability as an economic development issue to increase the visibility, prioritization and effectiveness of Loudoun County’s housing opportunity programs through the reallocation of existing resources;

In addition, the Chamber supports reduction of capital facility fees, which inflate the cost of housing to the point of creating a disincentive for businesses to locate in Loudoun County. The Chamber also opposes imposition of the fees for by-right development.

Immigration:

The Chamber supports efforts by the federal government to strengthen national security by providing thorough screening of foreign workers and creating appropriate incentives for legal immigration. The Chamber also advocates that all businesses strictly comply with state and federal labor laws regarding the screening of citizenship documentation provided by employees, to avoid the hiring of individuals who are not lawfully residing in the U.S.

The Chamber advocates that any worker verification system not unduly burden employers, be properly funded, and have a high data integrity confidence factor.

The Chamber also recognizes that immigrants play a key role in the prosperity and growth of northern Virginia, filling key jobs in every sector of our economy and contributing to the rich cultural and intellectual experience that characterizes our region. To remain competitive and grow to meet future demands for products and services, businesses need access to skilled and unskilled foreign workers to fill jobs.

In support of these objectives, the Chamber supports comprehensive immigration reform that will:

- Secure our borders;
- Ensure an adequate supply of workers to support businesses in this region, including a limited guest worker program to fill gaps in our workforce;
- Continue and expand visas for professionals and highly skilled workers, and temporary visas that support seasonal industries, temporary labor shortages, and small businesses;
- Address delays, backlogs, and disruptions in our immigration and border management systems that impede the movement of legitimate cargo and travelers across U.S. borders;

- Resolve the status of undocumented workers already contributing to the economy, provided that they are law-abiding and prepared to embrace the obligations and values of our society, by meeting specific conditions and obligations in order to earn the legal right to remain in the U.S.; and prohibit arbitrary increased costs and administrative burdens for businesses related to immigration issues.

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR ISSUES

The Loudoun Chamber supports legislative and regulatory policies that stimulate economic growth and job creation by allowing businesses to fairly manage their personnel resources without undue government or outside intervention. The Chamber supports allowing free market conditions to determine important labor issues, such as compensation and conditions of employment, and supports all employers meeting their legal and ethical obligations to their employees and the government. The Chamber opposes expanded government manipulation of the workplace, including legislation and regulatory policies that would limit an employer's right to operate during a labor dispute.

Unionization and Right-to-Work:

The Chamber supports Virginia's Right-to-Work law and opposes any local, state or federal laws or regulations that undermine it. The Right-to-Work law permits workers the freedom to choose whether to join a union and has played a historically significant role in the Commonwealth's nationally recognized economic and employment growth. The Chamber opposes all federal legislative or regulatory proposals that undermine the rights of Virginia's workers to secret ballot elections to decide whether to form a union. The Chamber also opposes the creation of micro-unions, which undermine Virginia's Right to Work laws by allowing unions to be formed, not by the preference of the employees as a whole, but rather by each individual department, section or other faction within a workplace. The Chamber opposes through legislative and/or regulatory proposals administratively imposed workplace rules, such as wage levels and work hours, and collective bargaining, in the absence of an agreement between management and employees. The Chamber also opposes the imposition of sanctions; such as fines against businesses for unintentional violations during the union recognition process.

Ambush Union Elections:

The Chamber supports repeal of the National Labor Relations Board's Ambush Election rule which

undermines employers' due process rights, and prevents workers from getting balanced information about forming a union.

Joint Employer Standard:

The Chamber supports well-established joint employer standards under the National Labor Relations Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and other federal and state laws that have existed for many years. Generally, these standards permit separate entities to be determined to be a joint employer only if they exercise direct and immediate control over another business's employees, including having the ability to hire, fire, discipline, supervise or direct an individual. The Chamber opposes loosening of these standards such that one employer could be held liable for labor and employment law violations of another employer for which the first employer had no direct control or responsibility.

Unemployment Compensation:

The Chamber supports Virginia's unemployment compensation laws, which provide adequate and temporary financial assistance, at the expense of employers, to employees who become unemployed through no fault of their own. The Chamber opposes the extension of benefits to workers who, through their own actions or inactions, become unemployed, including during an employee strike.

Wage and Benefit Mandates:

The Chamber opposes changes to the well-established white collar exemptions under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), or the Overtime Rule, that would narrow the current exemptions. The Chamber specifically opposes the Department of Labor regulations which increase by more than 100% the salary level required for an employee to be categorized as exempt under FLSA and will dramatically expand the number of employees for which employers will be forced to pay premium overtime rates.

The Chamber opposes Living Wage proposals and other government mandates that establish wage and benefits levels as a condition for obtaining contracts with that government or obtaining a business license.

Because increases in the minimum wage fall disproportionately on small businesses, which are often the least able to absorb dramatic increases in labor costs, the Chamber opposes increases in the minimum wage.

DOL Blacklisting:

The Chamber opposes federal “blacklisting regulations,” that will require federal contractors to disclose what has been very broadly defined by the Department of Labor (DOL) as “violations” of 14 labor and workplace laws as a condition of contracting with the federal government. Information on companies that have labor and workplace law violations, however, is already available without the need to establish this new, complicated, duplicative reporting regime. In addition, this reporting requirement violates contractors’ due process rights by requiring the submission of records of mere citations and allegations that could lead to contracting penalties before a contractor has had a chance to exhaust their due process rights. The reporting requirements in the blacklisting regulations will impose massive new burdens on contractors and subcontractors, as well as overwhelm contracting officers, which will prevent federal contracting from running efficiently. The Chamber supports efforts to reverse this requirement.

Workers’ Compensation:

The Chamber opposes any changes to Virginia's workers' compensation law that would increase costs and regulatory burdens on businesses, or otherwise undermine the law’s existing sound principles and purpose.

Davis-Bacon Act:

The Chamber supports the outright repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires businesses to pay employees in the construction industry government-determined prevailing wages and benefits on federal and federally-assisted construction contracts exceeding \$2,000 in total cost. The Chamber also opposes expanded interpretation of this law to cover minor activities that are ancillary to the overall contract.

Project Labor Agreements:

The Chamber opposes project labor agreements (PLAs) mandated by local, state and federal governments, and other entities, on taxpayer-funded construction projects. Government-mandated PLAs end open, fair and competitive bidding on public works projects by discouraging competition from qualified nonunion contractors and their nonunion employees.

In-sourcing:

The Chamber opposes any federal, state, or local in-sourcing of private-sector labor positions to government-sector positions, unless the function being in-sourced is inherently governmental in nature and/or the in-sourcing decision is substantiated by a bona-fide cost-benefit analysis that shows that efficiencies and documented cost savings will result from the in-sourcing activity. Any such cost-benefit analysis must reflect all true costs associated with both the private-sector activity, as well as the government-sector activity, to include items such as, but not limited to, direct labor costs, fringe benefit costs, retirement costs, overhead costs, general and administrative costs, and any other direct and indirect costs that would be incurred by either party.

Out-sourcing:

The Chamber opposes government competition with private industry and encourages out-sourcing of government-sector contracts and positions when such competition exists.

Background Checks:

Criminal and credit background checks can be a useful tool for employers to protect customers, workers and assets. The Chamber opposes any effort to restrict the ability of employers to use these tools to appropriately screen job applicants.

Independent/Outside Contractors:

The Chamber opposes any initiative which would unduly prevent or otherwise restrict businesses from utilizing the services of independent/outside contractors in full compliance with current Virginia and federal laws. The Chamber also opposes any effort to administratively, by statute or through legal action redefine the term contractor to impose additional wage and benefit costs on employers.

Retention of the Persuader Rule Advice Exception to Protect Employer-Attorney/Labor Consultant**Confidentiality:**

The Chamber opposes efforts to eliminate what is known as the advice exception to the “Persuader Rule,” requiring employers and labor relations professionals, including attorneys, to report indirect activities undertaken to persuade employees to exercise or not exercise their right to organize into unions and bargain collectively to the DOL. The existing exception to the Persuader Rule is critical to

protecting the confidentiality of the attorney-client relationship. Efforts to eliminate this exception would harm an employer's ability to remain union-free by requiring reporting of agreements between employers and their labor relations professionals/attorneys, employers' payments to labor relations professionals/attorneys, and the specific activities the professionals/attorneys are retained to perform. The rule also upsets long-standing labor relations policy by restricting the ability of employers to retain counsel to prepare lawful communications with their employees during union organizing campaigns so their employees are fully informed before voting in union representation elections.

ENVIRONMENT

Loudoun County has long-established, broad and effective environmental protections set out in its ordinances and regulations, including the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance, Facilities Standards Manual and Revised General Plan. Such protections have ensured a thorough and effective network of environmental protections, which has garnered Loudoun County honors as one of the nation's most environmentally sensitive jurisdictions.

The Chamber supports a holistic environmental strategy that is flexible, respects private property rights and the aspirations of businesses, and reflects Loudoun's diverse urban, suburban, and rural land uses. This includes local, state and federal environmental initiatives that rely on market-based incentives, trading programs, and voluntary compliance. The Chamber specifically supports voluntary initiatives promoting conservation, efficiency, and other economically viable business practices.

While the Chamber strongly and consistently supports measures that enhance Loudoun's environment, it believes these measures must:

- Minimize any financial burden imposed on both businesses and residents;
- Advance a Loudoun-specific environmental strategy that is flexible and reflects the County's diverse land uses in its urban, suburban and rural areas;
- Support the implementation of state and/or federally-approved trading programs for wetlands, streams, and storm water mitigation;
- Have a measurable and positive impact, and utilize incentives and proven market-based methodologies to accomplish its stated objectives; and
- Ensure the predictability of Loudoun County's land development application process.

Given the effect that the land development application process can have on a prospective business's site selection decision, the Chamber supports efforts by the Board of Supervisors to fully evaluate the impact of existing and proposed environmental regulations, such as Virginia's Watershed Improvement Plan (WIP), on Loudoun's competitive advantages relative to other jurisdictions. Similarly, the Chamber objects to County duplication of, or involvement with, Section 404 Clean Water Act Permits issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Virginia Water Protection Program Permits issued by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (i.e. collectively known as "Wetlands Permits") as such actions delay approvals and increase costs for businesses without a commensurate environmental benefit.

With regard to the WIP, the Chamber supports reasonable, scientifically-valid efforts to protect the Chesapeake Bay. The Chamber objects to the imposition of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements that will diminish economic development and impose unjustifiable limits on business activities and economic growth in Loudoun County. The Chamber supports a final WIP that achieves the requirements imposed by state and federal governments with the least possible cost and burden to Loudoun's businesses and commercial taxpayers. The WIP also must reflect the input of business stakeholders who will be required to comply with the process and its restrictions, and bear the costs of compliance for years to come.

With regard to the implementation of state-level water management and erosion and sediment control programs through the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ), the Chamber supports regulations that focus on both agricultural and manmade storm runoff and do not impose disproportionate burdens on economic development and redevelopment projects that contribute substantially to Loudoun's tax base. The Chamber advocates stakeholder outreach programs in the development of any storm water or erosion and sediment control regulations and, because insufficient resources can lead to uncertainty and delay for permittees, the Chamber also supports the full funding of DEQ staff to implement said programs. For those jurisdictions which have chosen to administer the Stormwater Management Program locally, the Chamber supports a larger portion of the permitting fees collected being returned to the administering entity.

The Chamber also supports state funding for the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund, which directly supports the Virginia Agriculture Cost-Share programs, including implementation of best management practices that are necessary to meet the Phase II WIP local pollution reduction goals. This additional funding could provide much-needed support to Virginia's rural and agribusinesses.

The Chamber also supports policies that provide appropriate incentives – including, but not limited, to tax credits, development densities, fast track permitting approval and other measures that are competitive with those offered in surrounding jurisdictions – for businesses that invest in environmentally sustainable building designs and systems.

FISCAL POLICY

The Loudoun County Chamber asserts that the time is far overdue to evaluate Virginia’s overall tax structure to ensure it reflects today’s economy and adequately balances government’s ability to fund vital core government services and operations that businesses and residents require, with the goal of maintaining a strong pro-business environment that enhances the County’s and Virginia’s economic competitiveness. Included in this evaluation should be consideration of state allocations to local government that were frozen at the time of the law’s enactment to ensure those formulas reflect current economic reality. With this, the Loudoun Chamber strongly urges elected-government officials to actively engage the Chamber and other business leaders in every stage of consideration and development of any new fiscal policies that impact the business climate – to enable the benefit of a business-like approach to any policy changes and protect against consequences that could come with changes that would negatively impact Virginia’s economy and business success.

At the local level, the Chamber supports development of a comprehensive tax strategy that:

- Carefully considers all available revenue options and then implements the appropriate options, at the appropriate levels, to meet the County’s resource needs;
- Implements a stringent business-like analysis of all County programs and service levels, to effectively align the investment of limited business and residential taxpayer resources with those government operations that serve the most vital interests of the County;
- Assesses all proposed tax policies against the potential impact on Loudoun’s economic competitiveness and quality of life, not just on the revenues that are anticipated; and

The Chamber opposes existing and proposed tax policies that have or will have a demonstrably adverse impact on net business and job growth.

At the state level, the Chamber supports:

- Substantive reform of Virginia’s entire tax system to more closely align the source of the Commonwealth’s tax revenues with the spending priorities of state and local governments;
- Investment in essential infrastructure that is critical to the economic health of the revenue-producing regions in Virginia, including specific support for a rebate of a percentage of the state individual income tax back to the locality from which it was collected to help address this needed investment;
- Additional state funding, as available, being allocated towards economic development;
- Access to more diversified streams of revenue for high growth areas, like Loudoun County, to support the increased costs associated with that growth, such as building new schools and roads, and paying the salaries of teachers and public safety personnel;
- Business-friendly tax policy that considers policies in other states, to enhance Virginia’s competitiveness in national and international markets; and
- Full consideration of the overall economic impact of a business or industry’s presence in Virginia prior to awarding or removing any business sales tax exemption, as well as before considering any other significant change to business tax policy.

In addition, the Chamber supports continued investments in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), the “Rainy Day” Fund, the Federal Action Contingency Trust Fund, and targeted reserve funds as a hedge against any economic downturn, including those resulting from federal spending reductions that have a disproportionate impact on the state economy. With this, the Chamber actively supports efforts to use tax policy, where appropriate, to support diversification of Virginia’s economy, particularly in the defense industry, to enable those businesses and the Commonwealth as a whole, to reverse the impacts of federal sequestration.

With regard to VRS, like many states, Virginia has significant unfunded liabilities in the various state employee and teacher retirement funds. While the General Assembly adopted significant changes to strengthen (over the long term) the VRS, the Chamber urges continued consideration of solutions to address potential future challenges related to the VRS.

The Chamber strongly supports legislation to require that the state place its share of teacher pension liabilities on its financial statements. The County has no control over decisions made with regard to the program and it could have a negative impact on the County’s bond rating to have those liabilities on the County’s financial statements.

At the federal level, the Chamber supports:

- Providing greater certainty to the operations and business planning of federal contractors and to the regional economy by timely passage of annual budget and appropriations legislation. This would eliminate the need for short- and long-term continuing appropriations resolutions and avoid the negative impacts on contractors and on the regional economy of actual or even threatened government shutdowns due to funding lapses. It is imperative that customers of federal contractors be funded via full-year appropriations bills rather than stopgap measures. This will allow agencies and departments to start new programs and to award multi-year contracts, and will provide the private sector with the certainty needed to initiate and maintain new and existing production and services;
- Elimination of sequestration as the default mechanism that arbitrarily cuts spending when Congress and the White House fail to agree on a strategy to reduce the deficit. This is particularly critical because the immediate and indiscriminate nature and limited scope of sequestration cuts fail to address the underlying issues that drive the debt and deficit. In addition, the Chamber is seriously concerned about the severe and disproportionate impact sequestration has on Virginia's economy, and will continue to have unless significantly modified or repealed; and
- Efforts to achieve long-term federal deficit and debt reduction through an informed, thoughtful, comprehensive plan, which may include a phased-in approach to reducing the unaffordable growth in entitlement spending as well as revenue generation reforms that will strengthen the economy over the long term, while not impeding growth in the short term.

GOVERNANCE AND REGULATORY REFORM

In order to effectively meet the needs and concerns of Virginia's businesses and residents, government must operate with a business-minded focus on efficiency, responsiveness and strategic vision that enables government to adjust to rapidly changing economic and political landscapes. To this end, the Loudoun County Chamber supports a regulatory regime at the federal, state and local levels that emphasizes the importance of strong economic growth, while ensuring rules are cost effective and based on valid scientific and technical data. The Chamber asserts that all levels of government should conduct reliable cost-benefit analyses of all proposed regulations and provide a detailed annual

accounting of the costs and benefits of those regulations. The Chamber believes the following policies will help enable a more stable, consistent, business-friendly, and business-focused environment.

Stakeholder Input and Review:

The Chamber strongly advocates that the business community have a central role in the discussion and development of any proposed new or amended law, policy, regulation or other type of local, state or federal government-imposed rule that would impact the cost, operations or growth of business in Virginia.

Privatization:

The Chamber supports efforts to examine the role of all levels of government in providing goods and services in order to determine those which might be provided more efficiently, effectively, and economically in and by the private sector and non-profit organizations, particularly in the areas where services beyond the core functions of government are being provided by government.

Property Tax Assessments:

The Chamber supports establishing and maintaining a fair, transparent and balanced process for determining real estate tax assessments and for taxpayers aggrieved by locally assessed real estate valuations to appeal those assessments.

Property Rights:

The Chamber believes that government laws, regulations and policies should not unnecessarily restrict private property rights, and believes that private property owners should be justly compensated for any reductions in the value of their property caused by government actions.

Best Value Contracts:

The Chamber supports policy reform that provides public bodies with a more time-efficient and value-driven procedure within the competitive negotiation process for professional services.

Easements:

The Chamber supports a reasonable process for facilitating the building of infrastructure through developing properties by providing adjoining properties access and/or connections. The Chamber also

supports efforts to reform Virginia Code § 15.2-1800 to eliminate the public hearing requirement for localities that convey certain site development easements, such as utility easements, across public property as part of infrastructure projects in a locality's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Unfunded Mandates and Policies:

The Chamber opposes the imposition of unfunded mandates or policy positions, particularly those that would require Virginia's or Loudoun County's businesses and other taxpayers to fund the long-term costs of these mandates. To this end, the Chamber supports transparency and the disclosure in the State, Loudoun County Government and Loudoun County Public Schools' budgets of the cost to businesses and taxpayers of all unfunded mandates imposed by the state and federal governments so that the businesses and taxpayers may understand the costs and benefits of those mandates.

Constitution and Statutory Authority:

The Chamber strongly supports the rule of law as a condition for thriving business and economic health. The Chamber opposes administrative overreach by any branch of government that goes beyond the application of statute and the Constitution in a manner that negatively impacts businesses.

The Chamber believes that all levels of government should conduct regular periodic cost impact reviews of all regulations and ordinances to assess the continued relevancy and efficacy of these regulations, with a particular emphasis on eliminating those that unnecessarily hinder job and economic growth.

Initiative and Referendum:

The Chamber opposes any amendment to the Virginia Constitution to incorporate initiative and referendum procedures that bypass the legislature.

Ethics Reform:

The Chamber strongly supports a legal and regulatory framework that requires and clearly defines the highest standards of ethical behavior and accountability for all government officials – whether elected or appointed - and at all levels of government.

While steps have been taken toward reform, the Chamber continues to support the following:

- Continued statutory ethics reform for the executive branch;
- Banning the use of campaign funds for personal expenses; and

- Banning use of public funds by any officer, agent or employee of any government entity for purposes unrelated to the duties of his or her office without lawful authorization.

Non-partisan Redistricting:

The Chamber supports implementation of a non-partisan redistricting process in Virginia. Hallmarks of such a process should include: a detailed process for the selection of a non-partisan commission consisting of no fewer than seven members; the absence of the use of political data or election results in the commission's process; openness of the process to public scrutiny; and ultimate accountability to the electorate through legislative approval by way of an up or down vote of commission recommendations. As a step toward improving the way election districts are drawn in the Commonwealth, the Chamber supports consideration of common-sense criteria as part of the existing process, including the following:

- Respect the existing boundaries of cities, counties and towns.
- Respect the requirements outlined in the state Constitution.
- Ensure, to the extent possible, districts are compact and contiguous.
- Keep communities and neighborhoods together.
- Draw districts without the intent to benefit one political party over another.
- Draw districts without targeting individuals.

Two-Term Governor:

To foster greater stability and continuity in state government operations, the Chamber strongly advocates that the General Assembly approve a Constitutional amendment to allow Virginia's future Governors to seek a second consecutive term.

Staggered Terms:

It remains the position of the Chamber that staggered terms for the Board of Supervisors and School Board would be in the best long-term interests of Loudoun County.

HEALTHCARE AND WELLNESS

The Loudoun County Chamber recognizes the importance of the healthcare industry to the economy and the community. The Chamber supports maximum flexibility to encourage business to provide the

best health insurance options for employees in the free market system. In addition, the Chamber supports appropriate federal and state reimbursement levels that allow primary care providers, specialists, and hospitals to care for patients and reduce the displacement of costs to those who are privately insured.

The Chamber is extremely concerned about the impact of federal healthcare reform legislation on the business community and urges careful consideration of the impact of any further policy changes or regulations developed in this arena. We remain concerned about the regulatory burdens placed on businesses as well as the negative impact the lack of predictability has on the health care market and the economy.

The Chamber supports legislation that stabilizes the insurance marketplace and ensures access to affordable and stable group health insurance for all businesses, including sole proprietors and businesses with few employees, as well as individuals. The Chamber supports legislation that reduces state burdens and provides tax incentives to help small businesses offset the staggering increases in health insurance costs, including incentives that encourage participation in “consumer-driven” healthcare and wellness plans. The Chamber also supports initiatives that: improve quality and lower costs; encourage fair regulation of the insurance market; maintain a robust healthcare insurance marketplace for consumers; expand the use of healthcare data and technology to improve treatment and the patient experience; create an emphasis on prevention, wellness, and personal responsibility; and promote pay-for-performance.

The Chamber also recognizes the important role of behavioral health and substance abuse treatment services in creating and maintaining a healthy workforce. The Chamber supports increased resources dedicated to delivering innovation and improvements to the mental health delivery system that enables individuals and families to access preventative, community-based non-emergency services, while also ensuring the care, safety and support of persons experiencing a mental health crisis. The Chamber also supports efforts to greater leverage private-sector providers in addressing behavioral health needs in the community.

On the issue of Medicaid, the Chamber believes that the following principles should be thoughtfully considered and included in an ultimate solution to reforming Medicaid and increasing coverage of Virginia’s working uninsured population.

The Chamber believes that review and reform of Virginia’s Medicaid system should be ongoing. While some steps have been taken to this end, there is still the need to identify and implement areas of reform to achieve quality healthcare and savings to ensure the taxpayers’ dollars are being spent as efficiently as possible.

The Chamber supports collaborative efforts between healthcare stakeholders, including providers, purchasers, insurers and consumers, to ensure continued innovation, creativity and transformation in the healthcare marketplace. In addition to the priorities noted above, the goals of these efforts should also include the following:

- Effective communication and education of the many changes in the healthcare laws and marketplace to create an informed consumer;
- Expansion of healthcare infrastructure (both inpatient and outpatient) to meet community needs;
- Increase in the supply of well-trained health personnel;
- Enhanced quality, choice, unbiased data transparency, and diminished redundancies and waste in healthcare and
- Appropriate planning for emergency preparedness and public-private partnerships to address pandemic preparedness and support for a robust volunteer Medical Reserve Corps.

The Chamber supports efforts to protect and expand services offered by safety net healthcare providers so all Loudoun’s residents have access to healthcare.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

The importance of good infrastructure to attracting and retaining business can hardly be overstated and the Chamber calls on our elected representatives to recognize this problem as a general matter. We call on our representatives in Loudoun and Richmond to recognize the importance of world-class infrastructure to the growth of our state’s economy as a whole.

The Loudoun Chamber supports managed, thoughtful growth in the County. This includes support for well-planned commercial growth and development that will bring additional resources to the County to help address the infrastructure challenges we face. The Chamber supports use of public-private partnerships and other creative initiatives that will increase the availability of resources to invest in critical infrastructure – including schools, transportation, technology, parks and recreational facilities, water and public safety – to meet the needs of today’s Loudoun County businesses and residents. The Chamber also supports an open dialogue and improved coordination between the business community, County government and Loudoun’s towns and communities on development and infrastructure issues.

Transportation:

The Chamber continues to support sustainable, long-term regional and statewide transportation funding. To ensure new and existing transportation revenues are well invested, the Chamber supports performance-based evaluation and prioritization of projects in the statewide transportation plan focused on existing and new corridors of statewide and regional significance. The plan should include a short list of strategic priorities deemed most essential to the Commonwealth’s long-term prosperity, safety, security and quality of life.

At the local/regional level, the Chamber supports construction of a comprehensive regional transportation grid. The Chamber urges the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (the Authority) to be regional in its approach above all else, and to establish regional priorities based upon its adopted performance-based criteria with greater emphasis on congestion relief. The Chamber further urges the Authority to leverage and invest local, regional and state revenues in regional solutions that move the most people in the most cost-effective manner. The Chamber supports use of debt financing at the state, regional and local levels, accompanied by a dedicated revenue source for debt service, as an important tool to invest in transportation infrastructure. The Chamber also supports continued reforms within the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), use of public-private partnerships, and other innovative financing options.

The Chamber strongly supports the most efficient use of current transportation dollars with greater emphasis on congestion reduction and economic development. The Chamber opposes using revenue from the Transportation Trust Fund for non-transportation purposes. The Chamber also endorses requiring the Highway Maintenance and Operating Fund to be self-sustaining and supports efforts to prohibit transfer of construction funds from the Transportation Trust Fund to make up for maintenance

funding deficiencies. The Chamber supports continued future use of some General Fund money for transportation purposes, given the tremendous transportation needs that still face the Commonwealth and the fact that transportation funding is a core government service that is the state's responsibility to fund primarily. The Chamber also supports the complete restoration of funding to the NVTA by the state budget.

The Chamber supports local transit to serve the major businesses and job centers in the County and the use of advanced technology and integrated communications to improve transit accessibility and help alleviate traffic congestion.

Specific Transportation Projects and Entities:

- **The Bi-County Parkway:** The Chamber believes that construction of the Bi-County Parkway has been delayed too long. The Chamber supports final design and construction of this project in a manner that mitigates impacts and further, the Chamber supports protection of right-of-way which will extend the Route 234 Bypass (the Prince William County Parkway) from the I-66 corridor to Route 50 and Northstar Boulevard-and the Chamber also supports protection of a right-of-way to connect Northstar Boulevard to Route 606. Further, the Chamber supports a process that properly evaluates and compensates property owners around any eminent domain uses connected with the Bi-County Parkway.
- **Western Dulles Airport Access Road:** The Chamber acknowledges the findings of the Western Dulles Access Study conducted by the County in 2015 and encourages the County to prioritize the roadway links that provide the greatest benefit. The Loudoun Chamber strongly urges county and state officials to come to an agreement on these priorities based on the long-term economic development needs of Loudoun businesses, including Washington-Dulles International Airport, as well as the economic and quality of life impacts on surrounding communities and all of Loudoun County. This continues to be critical for economic development, as well as to enable preservation of any necessary right of way.
- **The Metrorail System:** The Chamber acknowledges that if managed properly the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) system is a key part of the future economic growth and success of Loudoun County. The Chamber strongly endorses thorough and

significant reform for Metro in three areas – governance, funding, and operations. With Virginia leading the way to securing \$500 million in annual regional dedicated revenue for WMATA we now expect to see priority in budgets and initiatives to reach and maintain the system at the highest state of good repair and function.

- **Greenway:** The Chamber continues to support graduated tolling and other tolling options along the Dulles Greenway in order to increase utilization of that existing transportation corridor and reduce use of alternative, congested routes.
- **Potomac River Crossing:** The Chamber supports proper funding for repairs and improvements to the American Legion Bridge. In addition, the Chamber supports the identification of right-of-way for and construction of an additional Potomac River crossing in Loudoun County.

The Chamber also supports:

- Completion of the conversion of Route 28 into an eight-lane limited access freeway between I-66 and Route 7;
- Restoration of the Western Transportation Corridor to the County’s Comprehensive Plan and completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Study;
- Expansion of Route 50, and improvements to the collector road network and interchanges in the Dulles South area;
- Improving and re-locating portions of U.S. Route 15 between Leesburg and Point of Rocks, and establishing a new location for the future replacement of the Point of Rocks Bridge;
- Improving and re-locating portions of Route 9 to enhance connectivity with Route 7 and divert interstate traffic from the Town of Hillsboro;
- Upgrading Route 7 to a limited access roadway between Leesburg and Tysons Corner;

Loudoun’s Airports:

The Chamber recognizes the positive economic impact that both Washington-Dulles International Airport and Leesburg Executive Airport have on Loudoun County, and in that light, the Chamber fully supports continued infrastructure investment at both airports.

The Chamber supports development of new passenger and cargo services at Washington-Dulles International Airport, including expansion of facilities to provide for further growth. The Chamber

supports the Airport's efforts to remain cost competitive, both regionally and nationally. In addition, the Chamber strongly supports maintaining and further developing airport-compatible land uses in the areas surrounding the airport to facilitate aviation development into the future, and access to Washington-Dulles International Airport.

The Chamber also supports continued efforts by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) and others to ensure the Authority's transparency and accountability to the citizens of the Commonwealth and the jurisdictions in northern Virginia.

Further, the Chamber supports maintenance of a fully competitive air transportation market place, as well as Federal Air Traffic Control and aviation policy initiatives (including "NextGen" and "Open Skies" bilateral agreements) that enhance the airline and general aviation services available to our region.

The Chamber supports the Town of Leesburg's efforts to support and grow Leesburg Executive Airport by maintaining compatible land uses within the Airport's Area of Influence, in order to protect previous taxpayer investments and maximize the airport's value as an economic development asset. The Chamber also encourages the Town of Leesburg to expand aircraft basing capacity at Leesburg Executive Airport to support economic development activities and support new business arrivals in the Town and the County.

The Chamber fully supports the Town of Leesburg's efforts to implement Customs service at the Airport to support international business operations, as well as their work in support of the Virginia Department of Aviation's Remote Air Traffic Control Towers (rTower) initiative, which will enhance the Airport's attractiveness to business users. The Chamber also supports efforts by the Town to work cooperatively with Loudoun County on taxation and other issues that impact use of Leesburg Executive Airport.

Technology:

The Loudoun County Chamber recognizes the ever-expanding role of technology as a critical enabler for economic development throughout northern Virginia. Loudoun County is home to unique resources that distinguish this area from other locations in a variety of technology fields, including biomedical research, satellite, information technology, broadband, data center operations, and cloud computing and others. Therefore, the Chamber supports public policy initiatives that attract and sustain businesses in these and related industries to fully leverage the opportunities that come with these unique resources.

In recognition of the importance of universal availability of broadband for creating jobs, growing our economy, attracting investment, facilitating telework opportunities, establishing communications infrastructure for public safety, and providing access to educational and training resources, the Chamber supports policies that encourage continued growth of Loudoun's broadband infrastructure. The Chamber encourages investment in the necessary infrastructure to enable cutting-edge wireless and other Internet infrastructure in Loudoun, and supports cooperation between government and commercial interests to maximize deployment of private sector broadband services throughout the County to provide access to all of Loudoun's businesses and citizens.

The Chamber supports the adoption of public policies that encourage continued expansion of private sector broadband services throughout the County, including strategic location of towers to support wireless access (broadband and voice) in the western part of the County.

Energy:

The Chamber supports the energy infrastructure essential to meeting Loudoun's increasing energy needs, consistent with economic development and environmental considerations. Loudoun County has established itself as a global leader for cyberspace and has an economic engine built around communications firms and large-scale data centers, all intensive energy consumers. The County's economic wellbeing is intrinsically tied to affordable and abundant energy, particularly electricity. In addition to insisting upon compliance with all applicable environmental laws and regulations, the Chamber supports maintaining open channels of communication with government agencies, public officials, the media and the public to meet their needs with regard to energy and environmental issues. In addition, the Chamber supports participation with government agencies and others in framing responsible laws, regulations and standards affecting the community, the workplace and the environment in order to continually improve energy diversity, conservation and environmental programs.

Reliable, affordable energy is required to support the needs of business and to sustain the community's high quality of life. The Chamber recognizes that, as the County grows, its energy requirements will increase as well. These additional needs cannot be met by the current sources of energy. The Chamber acknowledges the solution must include a diverse mix of options, including increased conservation and energy efficiency, new sources of conventional and renewable energy, and new transmission and distribution infrastructure. Electricity load growth, particularly for large commercial loads such as data

centers, frequently requires rapid infrastructure expansion to meet the energy requirements of these businesses. The Chamber supports a reasonable and timely approval process for such projects.

The Chamber supports the development of statewide goals for energy conservation and renewable energy sources, consistent with the goals outlined in the soon-to-be updated 2014 Virginia Energy Plan. However, a responsible energy plan for the Commonwealth should emphasize the importance of a reliable energy supply to support the continued development of technology and information-based commerce in Loudoun County, which are so important to our state's economy and future economic growth.

At the local level, the Chamber encourages the implementation of the long-term, County-wide energy plan to include an emphasis on energy generation, transmission and conservation.

While the Chamber supports increased use of economically viable energy efficiency and conservation, it also believes every effort should be made to minimize any additional financial burden that these approaches may impose on both businesses and consumers. The Chamber also believes that every effort should be made to minimize additional financial burdens imposed on businesses and consumers by climate change regulation or legislation. Improperly crafted climate change regulation could have a significant detrimental impact on businesses and consumers alike. The Chamber supports a holistic approach to energy policy, including incentives and proven market-based methodologies, to accomplish the identified goals whenever possible.

The Chamber also supports implementation of the C-PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) program, which is a bipartisan, voluntary local government initiative that allows property owners to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for their commercial, industrial, and multi-family buildings, simply and with no government subsidies.

Public Water and Sewer:

The Chamber believes that access to an affordable water and sanitary systems is important to the recruitment, retention and success of businesses in Loudoun County. Unnecessary extra costs for water and sanitation add to the cost of businesses. To that end, the Chamber supports the following:

- Master planning to help build and maintain water and wastewater infrastructure that is compatible with planned growth and land use policies, including regular evaluation of

demographics, land use activities and water system characteristics, such as flows, pressures and demand;

- Sustainably managing water resources in advocacy of health, environment and quality of life;
- Competitive user and availability charges for water and sewer infrastructure to support economic development and the region's ability to attract and retain businesses;
- Policies and outreach programs that promote water efficiency/demand management as crucial to the long-term viability of water assets, helping business and residents realize the value of water while saving money and protecting the resource;
- Innovative, dependable and cost-effective technologies and partnerships for reclaimed water, as well as public-private partnerships, to assist in economic development efforts and support the national reputation of Loudoun County as the heart of data center activity; and
- State incentive funds that recognize water and sewer as a core infrastructure thus qualifying for funds and that recognize reclaimed water as recycling.

LAND USE

The Chamber strongly recommends that Loudoun County's Comprehensive Plan truly reflects the County's shared vision for the future growth and economic prosperity of our community. To ensure that outcome, the Chamber supports a strong and effective business stakeholder input and review process for the continued improvement of Loudoun's Comprehensive Plan, in part to ensure that land use policies and land use designations reflect the current and future needs of businesses.

The Chamber also advocates that Loudoun County conduct a regular thorough review of its Comprehensive Plan – touching on all components of the Plan – at least every five years in compliance with Virginia law. The purpose of this review and potential revision of the County's Comprehensive Plan, and associated policies and regulations, should:

Make certain that Loudoun's land use categories, and designated land use areas, ensure commercial land inventory is sufficient and responsive to the full complement of current and future market demands;

- Provide maximum flexibility to allow landowners and other businesses to adapt to changing market and economic conditions.
- Provide for airport-compatible uses to protect growth and allow for developing the full potential of Washington-Dulles International and Leesburg Executive Airports.

To this end, the Chamber supports Loudoun County's efforts to conduct outreach leading to strong visions and plans for its premier business corridors. These plans should be market aware, sufficiently flexible to enable responsiveness to the market and should be used to support the highest and best business growth, utilizing best practices to drive such growth.

Transit Station Area Development:

The Chamber supports a safe, reliable, and appropriately managed Metrorail system as a critical component of the County's economy. The Chamber encourages transit-oriented, mixed-use development principles around Metrorail stations that encourage multimodal transit use, reduce automobile traffic, incorporate safe pedestrian and bicycle options, and increase the County's commercial tax base. To provide flexible policies for guiding this type of development, the Chamber recommends the County's adoption of a policy that includes these transit-oriented development principles.

The Chamber supports incorporating compact urban forms of residential development at Metrorail stations to achieve live-work centers, support the County's existing economic development objectives, and provide a mixture of housing types and sizes to enhance affordable and workforce housing opportunities for residents with different income levels. To address transportation infrastructure needs around Metrorail stations, the Chamber supports public-private partnerships between employers, transit agencies, and developers. The Chamber also favors interim development strategies regarding the evolution, repurposing, and greater utilization of existing underdeveloped properties into dense, mixed-use development.

The Chamber encourages harmonious growth of Washington Dulles International Airport and the County by recognizing the current zoning in the Airport Impact (AI) Overlay District, contained in the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance, which forecasts the ultimate build-out conditions of the Airport. The Chamber supports carefully-considered, Airport-compatible residential uses in the vicinity of the Airport.

Proffer Reform:

The Chamber believes that proffer reform legislation that passed during the 2016 General Assembly session may have an adverse effect on development projects and investment in the County. The Chamber encourages the General Assembly to fully evaluate the effects of the legislation and supports efforts to mitigate adverse impacts on development. The Chamber encourages the County and developers to consider additional strategies that would provide flexibility with respect to conditional zoning entitlements and continued private-sector investment.

LEGAL REFORM

The Chamber firmly supports maintaining Virginia's common sense legal system, which has enabled the Commonwealth to achieve its best-in-class economic environment. The Chamber also firmly opposes measures that would increase the burden of excessive litigation and diminish Virginia's competitive position.

In addition, the Chamber supports the prompt appointment of new judges to replace any retiring judges in the Circuit Court and the appropriation of funding for additional judicial positions in the Circuit Court to accommodate the increasing civil and criminal caseload in the Circuit Court. The Chamber believes this will promote the welfare and public safety of the community and promote business stability by ensuring adequate resources are available to reasonably conclude pending court cases.

Business Courts:

The Chamber supports consideration and study of the merits and costs of establishing a business court system in the Commonwealth that would focus exclusively on business disputes. Such courts have been established in at least 27 states, providing a venue where complex corporate lawsuits may be considered, freeing up the general courts for non-business matters. Efficient resolution of complex business cases can be very positive for both the business community and the judicial system, among other things, making a state more attractive to companies when deciding where to locate.

Frivolous Lawsuits:

Frivolous lawsuits cost the U.S. economy \$264 billion per year. Businesses suffer from the costs of

fighting frivolous lawsuits, and consumers and workers suffer as those costs are passed on through higher prices, and lost jobs and benefits. To address this problem, the Chamber supports:

- Preserving the availability of arbitration and other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms that reduce the number of lawsuits and their costs, while ensuring justice is served;
- Class action reform – and opposes efforts to weaken the Class Action Fairness Act; and
- Restoring employers’ due process rights by eliminating incentives for officials, regulators, and plaintiff’s lawyers to file charges against a company – that may or may not have done something wrong – merely to press secret financial settlements on those companies in exchange for dropping said charges.

Alternative Dispute Resolution:

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods and processes, such as arbitration, mediation, and small claims procedures, provide consumers, employees, and other injured parties with an accessible and fair process for obtaining redress for claims and can in many cases avoid the expense and inefficiency of litigation. The Chamber opposes efforts by the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education and other federal agencies to significantly restrict or even ban the use of ADRs.

Data Privacy Breaches:

Currently, American businesses spend on average \$6.5 million to respond to a single data breach, including the price of notifying potentially affected individuals and ensuing legal costs. As the amount of data collected from and about people increases, the number of breaches has also grown. The U.S. has a patchwork of outdated federal laws intended to protect personal information. At the same time, states have passed their own laws, which impose different (and sometimes contradictory) requirements for data privacy. The Chamber supports a standard federal law governing breach notification requirements that addresses real harms and places reasonable limits on businesses’ liability while discouraging meritless suits that simply take advantage of businesses.

False Claims Reform:

The federal False Claims Act and Virginia Fraud Against Taxpayers Act allow the government and private litigants to pursue any government contractor suspected of making “false claims” about their goods or

services to the government. Although well-intentioned, the laws' broad language and/or overzealous enforcement in recent years, have encouraged significant abuse—turning in some cases simple contractual disagreements and paperwork errors into claims for fraud.

The Chamber supports reasonable reforms to restore fairness and predictability and to prevent inappropriate payments; including:

- Providing a safe harbor for companies with robust compliance programs;
- Creating reasonable whistleblower incentives to ensure that legitimate fraud is reported, while curtailing frivolous or nuisance lawsuits;
- Clarifying the use and meaning of “implied certifications”—the doctrine that says a simple, non-monetary error (such as incorrect paperwork by a government contractor) can be used as the basis for a false claims lawsuit; and
- Limiting the government’s power to bar ethical companies and individuals from federal contracts as a method to coerce settlements.

TOURISM AND BUSINESS TRAVEL

The Loudoun Chamber recognizes the quality of life and economic benefits that a thriving tourism destination contributes to Loudoun County. The Chamber also recognizes that tourism and travel does not just occur and that a thriving destination requires marketing, promotion, and tourism coordination and development.

The Chamber supports Visit Loudoun’s continued status as the recognized Destination Marketing Organization for Loudoun County. Because of the economic advantages offered by a robust visitor and conference/meetings industry, from both business and leisure travel, the Chamber supports an integrated, well-funded approach to marketing Loudoun as a visitor destination by Visit Loudoun. We believe that Loudoun’s destination marketing and long-term and sustained funding strategy must place high priority on those activities that generate the most tax revenue, while creating economic opportunities for County businesses with the domestic and international leisure visitor, sports and events, and conference/meetings industry. Indoor and outdoor sporting, performing arts, museums, and multi-purpose venues, in particular, deserve careful consideration to enhance the experience of the

leisure and business traveler, as well as to attract more businesses to the County, especially in off-peak times of the year.

In addition, the Chamber supports inclusion of high-value business sectors and corridors beyond those traditionally associated with tourism in the County's destination marketing strategy. These would include, but not be limited to, educational facilities like universities or training centers that attract large meetings and groups. In addition, the Chamber recommends that Loudoun's strategy target corporate travel decision makers to generate more overnight stays from the County's high value business sectors. The Chamber also recommends continued collaboration and increased coordination and support of marketing efforts between the County, Visit Loudoun and Washington Dulles International Airport to promote existing, and to assist in future-air service development, for leisure, business domestic and international travel.

Given the opportunities to leverage Loudoun's unique tourism assets to benefit business expansion, while generating more leisure trips from the business travel market, the Chamber advocates that Visit Loudoun and the County continue to implement a comprehensively aligned approach to economic development and its visitor/conference/sports marketing that is driven by measurable performance goals and metrics that ensure the appropriate level of accountability.

These should include seeking state partnerships in regional marketing efforts or providing infrastructure that supports an expanded visitor economy.

The Chamber supports efforts to ensure that all regulations, taxes and zoning ordinances are structured to enable tourism to prosper and will help to distinguish Loudoun County as a preferred destination. The Chamber supports the tourism industry's position that favors the use of transit occupancy taxes (TOT) to promote tourism. The Chamber also encourages the County to include the tourism industry, through Visit Loudoun, in exploring options to fund needed infrastructure projects, especially access and transportation expansion.

As the lodging industry evolves to include a wide range of entities, from individuals renting out space in their homes, to traditional hotels and bed and breakfasts, the Chamber supports a level playing field for all entities that provide lodging options to visitors, including Short-Term Online Rental Market

companies. The legal and regulatory environment for this sector should provide for equal tax treatment, transparency and data sharing, adherence to local zoning and safety regulations, and compliance with business licensing.

In addition, the Chamber urges that online hotel room aggregators be held to the same regime regarding tax collection and remittance as others providing such services.

GSA Per Diem:

The removal of Loudoun County from the federal General Services Administration's Washington, D.C. per diem non-standard rate area has resulted in a severe reduction of the per diem rate for the County. The Chamber supports reinstating Loudoun County to the Washington, D.C. Non Standard Area (NSA).