

2023 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

DANVILLE PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce represents more than 520 businesses employing approximately 22,000 people in the Dan River Region. The Chamber projects a unified voice on key issues that affect the business community in our region.

Our Chamber believes that the success for both our region and the Commonwealth depends on investments and priorities that stimulate and advance economic growth and prosperity for businesses **of all sizes**. The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests our legislators support the following priorities:

Business Climate and Economic Development

We support initiatives to maintain Virginia's position of economic leadership by growing and diversifying the state's economy through the creation of state financial incentives, technical support, and other assistance that will encourage collaboration on private-sector growth and job creation by business, education, and government in each region.

- Protect Virginia's existing Right-to-Work laws, **as this is a key to attracting and retaining industries and small businesses in the Commonwealth.**
- Support funding for the **Virginia Economic Development Partnership and GO Virginia** to uphold Virginia's standing as a top state for business.
- Ensure rural broadband access, recognizing that **it is an imperative for equitable opportunities related to economic development, telework, telemedicine, entrepreneurship, and education.**
- Reduce the disparate impact that minimum wage increases have on small businesses--especially in retail and hospitality--by encouraging and sharing innovative wage and benefit models that exist across the state for employees. **Promote differing wage increases based on geographic and economic disparities.**
- Support the Governor's Opportunity Fund and other State-directed incentive programs.
- Support existing enterprise zones and the expansion of future zones in the region.
- Promote the integration of small business and entrepreneurship development in statewide economic planning efforts.
- Encourage more small business development financing, venture capital formation, and tax incentives.
- **Prevent the erosion of the mission and the composition of the Tobacco Commission** and ensure that the Commission provides funding for economic development opportunities only to those projects located in the original tobacco region footprint.
- Support the continued development and marketing of large-scale industrial parks, **including, but not limited to the Southern Virginia Megasite at Berry Hill**, which serve multiple jurisdictions and foster enhanced collaboration within a region, specifically through the Virginia Economic Development Site Characterization Program.
- Support continued tax reform that is equitable and broad-based, fosters a favorable business climate, encourages economic development, and promotes prosperity for all Virginians.
- Promote a mix of reliable and affordable energy sources that lead to viable solutions in our region.

- Support for transportation improvements including, but not limited to: upgrading Route 29 to interstate status; **finalizing US Highway 58 as a four-lane highway;** and continuing funding for I-73.

Education and Workforce Development

The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber recognizes that the availability of a technically skilled, trainable labor force is the most persuasive location and expansion factor sought by businesses today. The Chamber supports the development of programs and processes that focus on demand-driven jobs that offer at least a living wage.

- Support increased funding for internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities.
- Mindfully fund a public education system that begins at birth, strengthens the focus on early childhood education and continues through post-secondary education.
- Support the recognition and designation of localities and regions that achieve the “Certified Work Ready Community” goals as established by ACT, Inc.
- Expand funding not only for certified training programs and non-credit workforce training, **but also for FastForward and the G3 program.**
- Support state policy that aggressively tackles the skills gap, especially in the ‘middle skill’ occupations.
- Support stable funding for the Southern Virginia Consortium for Advanced Manufacturing.

Healthcare

The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce supports innovation to transform Virginia’s health care system into a competitive advantage through improvements in population health, cost, access, and quality.

- Support approved plans by the Insurance Commission that allow the creation of Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements (MEWAs), which offer pooled purchasing arrangements for health plans to support health care affordability and accessibility for small businesses and their employees.
- Promote public policy and private efforts to improve individual wellness and population health, including managed care for public health program participants, employee wellness efforts, **continuation of payment parity for telemedicine visits beyond the COVID-19 pandemic,** and community health efforts.
- Support efforts to protect access to quality healthcare in our region and our Commonwealth, including opposing efforts to repeal Certificate of Public Need in ways that threaten patients with higher costs or jeopardize access to care.