



HILTON HEAD ISLAND-BLUFFTON
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2019 Business Advocacy Agenda

Mission Statement

Advance the common interests of our membership, stimulate the expanding regional economy and enhance the quality of life for all.

“Nothing is bigger than Small Business” – U.S. Chamber of Commerce

2019 State Legislative Agenda

Education & Workforce

Act 388: Advocate for reform of the current Education Funding Act formula that is based upon a tax paying ability index that was altered in the 2006 property tax restructuring act.

Support state legislation which would include average wage rates in the formula for calculating tax paying ability as used to determine state allocation for public education funding.

To encourage funding of the Technical College of the Lowcountry for certificate programs related to job skills training in specialized areas.

Support the University of South Carolina Beaufort request for \$25M capital appropriation to construct the first Academic Building constructed for USCB by the state of South Carolina. USCB’s rapid enrollment growth serves South Carolina families from the USCB square feet of academic facilities per student is below the state standard by 21% and below the comprehensive average 32%

Support the University of South Carolina Beaufort’s requests of \$400,000 increase in recurring funding to address South Carolina’s extreme shortage of Nurses by funding by doubling the number of B.S. in Nursing graduates And address the shortage of STEM high school teachers by doubling the number of STEM secondary teacher graduates.

Support change in parameters and processes for the Qualified Allocation Program and SC Housing Tax Credit Program to ease the burden on developers to apply for tax credits to develop affordable housing.

Transportation/Infrastructure

Closely monitor the deepening and development of port facilities in Charleston and Jasper Counties as to the effects on economic development and the environment.

Environment and Energy

Support state legislation to allow consideration of local sales tax funding by local referenda for established Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Programs, without predetermination of properties to be considered for acquisition, combined with a more comprehensive strategic plan for purchases.

Support the protection of the Okatie and May River and implementation of the May River Watershed Action Plan.

To support legal efforts against the federal government that would block seismic testing and drilling off the coast of South Carolina.

Insurance

The Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce supports lawmakers in their efforts to protect property rights and provide property owners and businesses adequate time and data to analyze potential repercussions from movement of the jurisdictional lines. The proposed changes may dramatically and negatively impact the state's economy by way of lower property values, decline in new sales and construction, and availability of insurance. Additionally, the proposed changes do not account for the beach and coastal damage inflicted by Hurricanes Matthew and Irma.

Tax Policy

Support review and seek appropriate changes to the 2006-passed property tax restructuring act (Act 388) to improve the inequity between owner occupied and non-owner occupied property.

Tourism Promotion and Funding

Support efforts to expand the 2-to-1 local match fund for state tourism grants. Continue to participate in the new public-private state tourism grants for marketing and product development.

Support both the local and state government efforts to collect appropriate accommodation taxes from individually rented home and villas through such online sites as Air BnB, VRBO and Craigslist.

Transportation

Support and advocate for the vitality and safety of both the Hilton Head Island Airport and the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport before federal, state, and local officials.

Water

Support SC DHEC's proposal to update its wastewater design and construction regulations to reflect significant reduction in per capita water use over the past 30 years



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2019 Local Agenda

Coligny Redevelopment

Support the Town of Hilton Head's efforts to redevelop the Coligny Beach area as to create increased parking and a green space for tourists, spur growth for retail in the area, all while being sensitive to the surrounding residential community on its desire for smart, planned growth.

Transportation/Infrastructure

To advocate for infrastructure improvement and investment on the local and state level for safety, as well as a driver for economic development. Investing in infrastructure should be matched with forecast business and population growth and measured in terms of potential economic growth and job development in certain focus areas. There is also support for reforms to the Department of Transportation and the State Transportation Infrastructure Bank for increased transparency and spending prioritization.

Support & advocate for the use of the (1%) Transportation Sales Tax Referendum approved by voters in November 2018, for the best use of safety and transportation improvements needed for the 278 corridor.

Support a public-private partnership for landscape and maintenance of the Highway 278 corridor

Airport Expansion, Air Service and Security

Support managed growth of the Hilton Head Island Airport that includes infrastructure improvements, recruitment of future air service and encouragement of existing, private use.

Strongly encourage swift action by the General Assembly to bring South Carolina into compliance with the federal *Real ID Act of 2005* which will allow for state issued drivers licenses to be used by Homeland Security at airports and federal institutions.

Support and advocate for the vitality and safety of both the Hilton Head Island Airport and the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport before federal, state, and local officials.

Property Taxes/Real Estate

Work to attract new business, grow existing businesses, capital investment, infrastructure improvements as a way to increase property value, while easing property taxes through the growth of other programs that can contribute to revenue needs.

Economic Development

Work with municipalities and county to redevelop aging properties while equally balancing local character, environmental, and economic concerns.

Participate and facilitate the conversation for fiber and IT connectivity in Southern Beaufort Country for business, tourism and educational needs.

Encourage, partner with and support local municipality quantifiable efforts to establish attainable housing as it relates to workforce.

Immigration

Closely monitor Beaufort County's enforcement of the Lawful Employment Ordinance; strongly encourage immigration reform at the federal level not the local level.

Tax Policy

With the state-imposed cap on local governmental operating funds, monitor local effort to increase existing fees or implementing new fees that could increase the cost of business locally.

Tourism Promotion and Funding

To continue efforts on the county level to revise the existing ordinance for ATAX and HTAX allocations to increase funding to the DMO. Support expanding dedicated and recurring funding for destination tourism marketing and matching.

Support both the local and state government efforts to collect appropriate accommodation taxes from individually rented home and villas through such online sites as Air BnB, VRBO and Craigslist.



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2019 Federal Agenda

Environment and Energy

To monitor new federal EPA requirements on emissions' reductions and work with local and state energy providers for clarity and positioning on the requirements.

Health

Support Federal legislation to allow small-to-medium sized businesses to join together in association health plans (AHPs)

Immigration

Advocate for comprehensive immigration reform so individuals do not have to be here unlawfully through improved immigration policy by enacting an immigration work plan with temporary work visas and the an ability for proven workers to obtain permanent work status.

Encourage the reinstatement, as needed, of the H2B Returning Worker Exemption, allowing for the return of multi-year H2B workers who have experience and a desire to continue as part of the US workforce; To relax the cap on the number of workers allowed when needed.

Insurance

Reform the *Biggert-Waters Act* that resulted in large premium rate hikes for federal Flood Insurance in 2014. Encourage Congress to support private insurance as an alternative. Encourage Congress to review the process of using outdated maps and to conduct an impact study.

Support a long-term reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program and any premiums increases should be property specific and should be phased in. Encourage private flood insurance where cost effective. Support flood mapping at a higher resolution with a streamlined appeal process.
