

Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee



The mission of the Government Affairs Committee is to:

- ◆ Understand local, state and federal legislative, policy and regulatory matters affecting businesses;
- ◆ Develop and recommend to the Board advocacy positions on relevant issues; and
- ◆ Clearly communicate the Chamber's positions to its members, elected officials and the community at large.

Virginia State Officials

Governor Ralph Northam
Lt. Governor Justin E. Fairfax
Senator Mark R. Warner
Senator Tim Kaine
Congressman Bob Good (Elect)

SML Area State Legislators

Senator Stephen D. Newman
Senator Frank Ruff
Senator William M. Stanley
Senator David Suetterlein
Delegate Kathy J. Byron
Delegate Charles Poindexter
Delegate T. Scott Garrett
Delegate Christopher T. Head
Delegate Terry Austin
Delegate Les R. Adams

2021 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

With more than 650 members, the Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce (SMLRCC) provides information, support and advocacy for the region's business community. It serves Bedford, Franklin, and Pittsylvania counties.

Additionally, the Chamber operates a state-certified Visitor Center at Smith Mountain Lake.

The organization's mission is to promote tourism and grow business in the region.

SMLRCC spearheads the business community's involvement in public policy issues. State and local issues directly impacting the lake region's economic vitality are the focal point of the organization's annual Public Policy Agenda.

In order to represent the local business community with a unified voice, policy issues of greatest interest to the Chamber's members are annually identified. Those for 2020 are presented on the following pages.



**VIRGINIA IS FOR
LAKE LOVERS™**

Dedicated to promoting tourism and growing business for its members and the community, the SMLRCC supports:

Business and Tourism

- ◆ Creating a SML Community Center that will expand economic growth in the area by providing a venue for events to attract tourists, businesses, and residents.
- ◆ In this economic environment, sustain the budget of Virginia Tourism Corporation and the Virginia Mountains Region.
- ◆ A cautious approach to significant legislative and regulatory changes, e.g., to the minimum wage and paid family leave, that could slow the economic recovery and job creation.
- ◆ Virginia's Right To Work (RTW) status works to oppose laws or regulations that undermine Virginia RTW status. This RTW status has been and continues to be a reason businesses chose to relocate, with commensurate increases in employment levels, here as opposed to other states.

Protecting the Lake

- Safeguarding the lake against non-native, harmful plants and animals. More resources should be dedicated to educate boaters from surrounding states, e.g., billboards at high-traffic entry points, to prevent zebra mussel infestation into Virginia's waters.
- Ensuring government oversight to preserve the pristine quality and quantity of water inflows to the Lake with respect to the Mountain Valley Natural Gas Pipeline Project.

Economic Infrastructure

- ◆ Supporting local government/private industry partnerships to rapidly make the region more broadband competitive.
- ◆ Expand recreational opportunities such as hiking and biking trails.
- ◆ Increasing investment in career and technical (CTE) education in K-12 to promote job creation in the region.
- ◆ Expanding secondary education and other state-level initiatives in trades creating a more comprehensive, unified system of publicly funded employment training services.
- ◆ Requiring the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to add the rights of private property owners to the list of factors considered when issuing and enforcing hydropower project licenses.

Transportation

- ◆ Supporting establishment of an Amtrak stop in the Town of Bedford.
- ◆ Increasing funds to improve Central and Southwestern Virginia's highway infrastructure, including:
 - ◇ Improvements to the safety and traffic flow on State Route 122, the only north-south artery for our region, between Rocky Mount and Bedford; and
 - ◇ Construction of I-73.
- ◆ Including "peak tourist season" road use as part of economic development measures in VDOT SMART SCALE scoring.