

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
- Clearly communicate the Chambers positions to its members, elected officials and the community at large

Virginia State Officials

Governor Glenn Youngkin
Lt. Governor Winsome Sears
Senator Mark R. Warner
Senator Tim Kaine
Congressman Bob Good

SML Area State Legislators

Senator Stephen D. Newman
Senator Frank Ruff
Senator William M. Stanley
Senator David Suetterlein
Delegate Kathy J. Byron
Delegate Wren Williams
Delegate Wendell Walker
Delegate Christopher T. Head
Delegate Terry Austin
Delegate Les R. Adams



2022 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

The mission of the Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce (SMLRCC) is to promote tourism and grow business opportunities within the region.

With more than 650 members, the SMLRCC provides information, support and advocacy for the region's business community.

The Chamber and member businesses all exist due to the beauty, clean water, and attraction to safe recreational activities here at Smith Mountain Lake. Therefore, it behooves us to protect and cherish its natural assets.

The Chamber and member businesses recognize Smith Mountain Lake as a regional economic driver therein supporting and advocating for programs that protect the beauty, pristine water and healthy habitat resulting in long-term viability and sustainability of the lake.

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 2022 are presented on the following pages.

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Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce
16430 Booker T. Washington Hwy # 2, Smith Mountain Lake, VA 24121

Visit [SmithMountainLake.com](https://www.smithmountainlake.com)



VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS®

Dedicated to promotin 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.
- Virginia's Right to Work (RTW) Laws and oppose laws or regulations that undermine our Commonwealth's RTW status. This RTW status has been and continues to be a reason business chose to relocate, with commensurate increases in employment levels, here as opposed to other states.
- The SMLRCC supports measures to assist businesses as we navigate beyond the current COVID-19 outbreaks, including advocating for legal protection for businesses that follow protocols, as well as seeking any financial assistance for businesses negatively impacted by COVID. The SMLRCC also supports gathering data to discover what the recent changes have been to our population and our demographics in the Covid aftermath, and in turn what opportunities or challenges those changes might offer in future planning.

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 SmartScale scoring.

Protecting the Lake

- Protect the pristine water of Smith Mountain Lake by: supporting efforts to monitor water quality and take effective action to reduce nutrient and pollutants from entering the lake; encouraging efforts to minimize erosion and sedimentation; safeguarding the lake against non-native harmful plants and animals.
- The SMLRCC will continue to help promote safe and conscientious watercraft operation for the enjoyment and safety of both watercraft operators, as well as waterfront homeowners. SMLRCC supports educating our resident and visiting boaters and raising their awareness to: conducting safe and responsible activities; understanding their role in potential inoculation of invasive species; consideration and awareness to multi-use recreational activities on the lake; and taking action to reduce wave damage. Safe operation of all type of watercraft is of utmost importance to the long-term success of our region.
- The SMLRCC supports maintaining a healthy fishery for sportfishing species, primarily Striped Bass, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass and Crappies. Increased support for Virginia's Department of Wildlife Resources (formerly Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, DGIF) is considered crucial in maintaining Smith Mountain Lake as a fishing destination.

Economic Infrastructure

- Enhance 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.
- Advocating for home owners with the Regulatory Commission (FERC) to add the rights of private property owners to the list of factors considered when issuing and enforcing hydropower project licenses.
- The SMLRCC supports the work of our localities to enhance infrastructure expansion connections/services and broadband expansion to our region to attract and retain business and residents alike.