



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 18, 2015

Wilmington Chamber Announces 2015 Public Policy Agenda

Wilmington, NC—The Board of Directors of the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce approved the Chamber's 2015 Public Policy Agenda at their February meeting. The Agenda includes state and local items that bring focus to the area's need to be more business friendly, as well as support for pressing issues such as ensuring that the Garner Report (Pathways to Prosperity) is appropriately pursued, the film incentive program is expanded, Wilmington Police Department staffing is increased, and a sustainable funding source for beach renourishment is identified.

Items comprising the Agenda were identified by Chamber members as being the most important to the overall economic health of the area. The items were determined through a survey of Chamber members and the work of a Public Policy Committee.

The Chamber will present the Agenda to area representatives to the General Assembly, local elected officials, economic development groups and other decision makers during upcoming meetings. Strategies to move the Agenda forward will be developed from input received during these discussions.

The 2015 Public Policy Agenda is as follows:

2015 Public Policy Agenda for Business

Public Policy Mission: Monitor local and state regulations to identify those that impede job growth. Recommend solutions and encourage elected bodies to act on recommendations.

Economic Development: Continue to monitor progress on initiatives from the Garner Report (Pathways to Prosperity) so strategies that actively encourage businesses and entrepreneurs to remain, expand and/or locate in New Hanover County are undertaken. Support the county and city priorities of:

- Ensuring the addition of water and sewer availability on US 421 from Eagle Island to Pender County.
- Creating a three-county micro marketing alliance of New Hanover, Brunswick, and Pender Counties.

- Making the case for sustainable funding sources to improve the County's economic development infrastructure and identify catalytic programs to use the monies effectively.
- Advocating for the continuation and enhancement of incentives for the film industry.

Special Use Permit: Work to improve the Special Use Permitting process to provide predictability and objectivity to the process to include defined time lines and the ability to easily determine if a company does or does not need a SUP. Ensure that existing industries are protected and not penalized due to rule changes if they grow their current facilities.

Shoreline and Inlet Preservation: Work with other stakeholders to ensure funding for shoreline preservation, beach nourishment, and inlet and river dredging while opposing changes to the current Room Occupancy Tax formula as a funding source.

Crime: Support staffing increases at the Wilmington Police Department so that no more than 60% of an officer's time is spent on calls, thus allowing for community outreach and other effective methods of law enforcement.

Determine crime concerns expressed by companies considering our area and work with elected officials, the district attorney's office and law enforcement to provide mitigating factors if possible.

Medicaid Expansion: Advocate for North Carolina to join the majority of states in expanding Medicaid for low-income residents.

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