

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS PRIORITIES FOR 2008

The Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce and GBIC are guided by our members and their goals for a healthy economy, a healthy environment and a high quality of life. Our priorities for 2008 are as follows:

Economic Development

- Promote job creation and retention, business expansion and recruitment initiatives
- Encourage the expansion of the green and sustainable economic sectors
- Improve business competitiveness by focusing on energy costs, tax burdens, child care, health care, technology infrastructure, and workers' compensation costs
- Support and sustain economic development programs and services, like the Vermont Employment Growth Incentives (VEGI)
- Work with policy makers to implement the recommendations of Act 43 and implement workforce development programs.
- Support and sustain funding for Regional Development Corporations, regional marketing programs, tourism marketing, workforce investment boards and the Vermont Convention Bureau

Tax and Fiscal Policy

- Reinforce the connection for taxpayers between local education spending; financing and tax rates
- Inform policymakers and the public about the ramifications of moving from a property to income-based form of taxation for education and resist legislative attempts to do so
- Ensure predictable tax and spending policies through fiscal restraint, simplicity and prioritization

Education Costs

- Support changes resulting in cost-effective education resource allocation like student-to-teacher ratios, mandates, resource consolidation and expanded use of technology
- Focus on cost containment and cost drivers in education prior to any change in school financing

Energy

- Ensure that electric energy costs remain affordable for businesses and individuals
- Upgrade the state's electric transmission system and promote cost effective energy efficiency measures
- Support development of a long-term comprehensive energy plan
- Encourage development of electric infrastructure including out-of-state and in-state power generation facilities and resources

Transportation Infrastructure

- Fund and construct the Champlain Parkway and Sections A and B of the Circumferential Highway
- Improve the region's basic transportation infrastructure

Housing/Growth/Development

- Encourage development of a broad range of housing to support the region's workforce
- Promote incentives making it more attractive to develop in growth centers and recognize existing/planned industrial parks as growth centers
- Support housing development incentives that include improvements to regulations and permitting, fee reductions, financial/tax assistance, reduced costs, improved infrastructure and agriculture mitigation policy
- Encourage planning for growth at the municipal and regional levels, and sustain regional planning commission funding

Health Care

- Support the implementation of the Health Care Affordability Act in a sustainable and effective manner while limiting expansion and any additional state funding
- Address the Medicaid deficit and the resulting cost shift
- Continue to invest in the Vermont Blueprint for Health and other prevention strategies

