

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS PRIORITIES FOR 2009

The Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce and GBIC ~ The Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation ~ are guided by our members' goal of a sustainable Vermont economy and way of life within a healthy environment.

Economic Development

- Promote job creation, retention, business expansion and recruitment initiatives
- Develop a vision and strategic plan for the region and state by encouraging entrepreneurship and the expansion of green, environmental and sustainable enterprises, as well as identifying competitive industry sectors for the state
- Support implementation of the Telecommunications Authority plan and regulatory changes
- Improve business competitiveness by focusing on existing systemic impediments
- Sustain and support programs and services like the Vermont Employment Growth Incentives (VEGI), the Vermont Training Program (VTP) and workforce training (WETF) and expand business development programs that provide start up capital and technical assistance to entrepreneurs
- Sustain and support funding for Regional Development Corporations, regional marketing programs, tourism marketing and the Vermont Convention Bureau in order to grow the return on these investments

Tax and Fiscal Policy

- Conduct a comprehensive, nonpartisan, initiative to simplify and modernize our tax system
- Emphasize fiscal restraint, simplicity and prioritization for taxes and spending

Energy

- Maintain affordable energy costs for businesses and individuals
- If found safe and reliable, relicense the Vermont Yankee Power Plant as a bridge to a future grounded in clean, renewable energy sources
- Develop a specific, predictable and transparent permitting system for the development of new in-state power generation and transmission upgrades

Transportation

- Develop a sustainable funding source to maintain, develop, and expand a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system
- Invest in maintaining infrastructure to avoid failures or marginally safe bridges, roads and rail
- Transfer funding for public transit from local to regional taxes reflecting its regional value

Health Care

- Fund existing public health programs fully before expanding programs or coverage
- Support the deployment of information technology in health care, the implementation and funding of the Blueprint for Health and Green Mountain Care while avoiding the creation of new programs
- Contemporaneous with the Global Commitment renewal, review the administrative systems in place to recoup monies owed the state with a goal to achieve 2%-5% efficiency savings
- All savings generated from this study must be used to increase provider fees to reduce rates for privately insured Vermonters

Environment, Housing and Public Works

- The permit process must be transparent, predictable and expeditious while encouraging sustainable and environmentally sound development
- Legislative funding must be directed towards cost-effective point and non-point source remediation efforts in targeted watersheds
- Develop workforce housing through regulatory improvements, fee reductions, financial assistance and infrastructure improvement
- Expand incentives for development in growth centers
- Recognize existing/planned industrial parks as growth centers
- Develop a green enterprise zone program characterized by innovative design, efficiency, and reliance on renewable energy
- Improve local-regional government coordination in order to solve problems that cross borders and are regional in nature

Education

- Develop a statewide vision for an education system that uniformly delivers quality outcomes, invests resources in synch with demographic and enrollment trends and uses resources effectively and efficiently
- Align investment in pre-kindergarten through post-secondary education as well as workforce training to maximize the value to the Vermont economy
- Reinforce the connection for taxpayers between local education spending and tax burden

Tourism and Marketing

- Increase funding for the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing to \$6.8 million annually
- Identify one interstate visitor center each year for capital investment