

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS PRIORITIES FOR 2010

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.

Government Effectiveness and Sustainability

- The scope and scale of government spending must match the ability of taxpayers to pay for essential services and consider the long term impacts
- Restructure state government and the legislative process to increase efficiency, reduce costs and enhance customer service through information technology, organizational improvement practices and consistent evaluation of priorities and effectiveness

Tax and Fiscal Policy

- Simplify and modernize our tax system to ensure Vermont has a competitive business environment and encourages, attracts and incents investments, economic expansion and job creation
- Emphasize fiscal restraint, simplicity, equity and prioritization for taxes and spending
- Ensure adequate funding for the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund through modest increases to the taxable wage base and make benefit and eligibility adjustments

Economic Development

- Promote job creation, retention, business expansion and recruitment initiatives
- Develop a strategic plan for the region and state that encourages entrepreneurship and the expansion of sustainable enterprises while 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 which includes permitting
- Sustain and support 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

Energy

- Maintain affordable energy costs for businesses and individuals
- Re-license the Vermont Yankee Power Plant as a bridge to a future grounded in clean, renewable energy sources
- Develop an efficient permitting system for the development of new in-state power generation and transmission upgrades

Transportation

- Maintain, develop, and expand a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system including development of the Western Rail Corridor
- Maintain infrastructure to avoid failures or marginally safe bridges, roads and rail

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

Environment, Housing and Public Works

- The permit process must be transparent, predictable and expeditious while encouraging sustainable and environmentally sound development
- Direct funding towards cost-effective point and non-point source remediation efforts
- Develop workforce housing through regulatory improvements, fee reductions, financial assistance and infrastructure improvement
- Expand incentives for development in growth centers and 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 education system that delivers quality outcomes, matches investments to demographic and enrollment trends and that deploys resources effectively and efficiently
- Reinforce the connection for taxpayers between local education spending and tax burden
- Create a non-partisan commission to recommend K-12 administrative and facility consolidations
- Sustain and support funding for higher education
- Support workforce training that ensures employees' skills match employment opportunities

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