

2019 Legislative Agenda

Government

The Chamber supports responsible, efficient and effective government and public institutions that operate in a transparent, accountable and fiscally responsible manner.

Infrastructure

The Chamber supports responsible and proactive policy that meets the growing demands on our aging infrastructure. Transportation is a core service of government that is critical for safe, efficient citizen mobility, further economic growth, and facilitating the efficient delivery of goods and services.

- The Chamber supports **proactive and reasonable policy and funding levels that fulfill the growing demands of our aging roads and bridges.**

Economic Development

The Chamber supports results-oriented programs that attract industry development and growth, create a skilled workforce, and promote cooperative city, county, state and private efforts to maintain and attract businesses to the Black Hills area.

- The Chamber advocates for **continued funding and development of the Sanford Underground Research Facility.**
- The Chamber supports the responsible **use of economic development tools such as tax increment financing districts to spur business and housing development.** We believe such **tools should be flexible in order to address the unique needs of South Dakota communities.**

Workforce Development

The Chamber supports maintaining and developing new and innovative workforce development programs that both enhance and retain the current workforce and attract new talent.

- The Chamber supports **innovative efforts and partnerships geared toward the development of affordable home ownership and rental opportunities for our growing workforce.**

Tourism

The Chamber recognizes the significant economic impact tourism has to our area and advocates for legislation that enhances and grows the hospitality industry.

Education

The Chamber supports K-12, post-secondary and higher education as vital components of a strong local economy. Collaborative partnerships between the education system, businesses and other employers are necessary to prepare students to enter the workforce and compete in a global economy.

Taxation

The Chamber supports South Dakota's regulatory and tax environment that attracts business development and growth. The business-friendly environment has proved successful in growing business throughout the state. The Chamber recognizes the need to generate revenue to support basic government needs. Therefore, we support responsible tax policy that generates funds necessary to support essential government services.

Energy

The Chamber supports secure, reliable and advanced energy development and distribution that allows for the production of energy sources, including conventional and alternative forms of energy. We support common sense regulations that allow the continued production and development of cost effective energy for our local businesses.

Health Care

The Chamber supports policies that allow employers to provide high quality and affordable health coverage for employees and their families. Health care coverage remains a top priority for employers and often times one of the biggest challenges facing businesses.

Natural Resources

The Chamber supports responsible and proactive management in stewardship of our natural resources to sustain long-term health and resiliency. The Black Hills is one of our region's greatest economic assets with a thriving timber industry, a global tourism attraction, and outdoor recreation that provides a quality of life for our community.

- The Chamber encourages the federal government to **develop new funding mechanisms and policies that end the process known as "fire borrowing", and increase funds and efficiencies to treat additional acres through forest management activities.**
- The Chamber supports the **pro-active planning, funding, and implementation of comprehensive, landscape scale forest management activities** that reduce wildfire hazards and the risk of another mountain pine beetle epidemic in the Black Hills.

Equality

The workforce challenges facing our business community create an opportunity for employers to embrace the diversity of our growing population. The incorporation of varied backgrounds and talents into the local workforce will aid the expansion of industry and economy. We encourage policies that promote a diverse workforce.

- The Chamber supports **personal driver's license exams by the Department of Transportation to be offered in a language other than English.** We recognize the important economic impact our immigrant population has on South Dakota's workforce and encourage policy that allows people to participate in the workforce in a safe and timely manner.

Agriculture

The Chamber recognizes the significant economic impact of a strong agricultural industry and advocates for equitable policies that support the sustainability and growth of our agricultural producers and businesses that support our producers.

Military

The Chamber supports the continued viability and growth of the military installations in our region as an effective deterrent to global conflict. We support our military men and woman and advocate for policy that honors their commitment to our country.

- The Chamber supports the cooperative initiatives of the local, state and federal leaders **to ensure that Ellsworth Air Force Base is retained as a viable component of our nation's military capabilities.**
- The Chamber encourages policy that recognizes the **significant contributions of military spouses in the workforce and creates efficiencies to make gaining employment timely and cost effective.**