



## **2012 Legislative Agenda**

### **Business Regulatory Reform**

The Chamber recognizes that regulatory and tax policies have a massive impact on the cost and affordability of doing business in South Carolina and the Upstate.

#### ***The Coalition supports:***

- Achieving business-friendly, comprehensive tax reform by overhauling the state's tax code
- Finding a workable solution to funding the state retirement system, which currently diverts funding away from critical need areas
- Streamlining and combining of agencies and different departments within the state to improve government efficiency
- Continued efforts to ensure S.C. remains a right to work state
- Offsetting Unemployment Insurance (UI) loan repayments to the federal government with tax relief to all S.C. employers
- Bringing more predictability to state spending by creating a state spending cap with a budget stabilization fund

### **Economic Development**

The Chamber is an advocate of developing and implementing comprehensive statewide economic development plan that focuses on creating jobs of the future, business retention, and incentives for high-growth companies.

#### ***The Coalition supports:***

- Incentives to support existing business growth and new company attraction
- Legislation that will help attract private capital for promising start-ups while putting S.C. on an even, competitive footing with 25 other states (including N.C. and GA)
- Continued port expansion, including harbor deepening project and a dual rail access solution
- Dedicated funding and stable revenue for maintenance and repair of SC roads and bridges
- Upstate tourism and the creation of a comprehensive SC State tourism and branding plan
- Strengthening intellectual property rights of S.C. companies

## **Education and Workforce Development**

The Chamber believes that life-long education is a driver of economic development. By striving to create a skilled workforce that has the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of businesses in the Upstate, education will become the dynamic force behind business in the Upstate.

### ***The Coalition supports:***

- Initiatives that will help to increase early childhood education and graduation rates, thus providing a more skilled workforce for business and industry in SC
- Initiatives that will help to increase the number of individuals entering and completing post-secondary training or education
- Legislation that provides stable, equitable, and adequate K-12 funding
- Expanded Workkeys programs to better link workers to available jobs

## **Energy and Environment**

The Chamber understands that steps need to be taken to ensure new, innovative ideas are being developed for energy use and consumption that can be utilized without causing unnecessary harm to the environment.

### ***The Coalition supports:***

- A water plan that is basin-specific, provides a foundation for statewide water resources management and the framework for future water resource planning
- Initiatives to insure compliance with EPA air quality standards that promote development without compromising quality of life
- Restore balance to the Pollution Control Act following the Smith Land Company ruling from the South Carolina Supreme Court

## **Healthcare**

The Chamber recognizes that health insurance access and affordability continues to be an issue for businesses throughout the state, especially small businesses.

### ***The Coalition supports:***

- Initiatives to ensure healthcare is affordable for small business
- Employee wellness programs in the workplace to help reduce healthcare costs

\*This Legislative Agenda is driven by results from a membership-wide survey and reflects the Upstate business community's 2012 legislative priorities.