



GREATER READING CHAMBER ALLIANCE

## 2019-20 Pro-Business Policy Agenda

Business Community Advocacy Council Approved 07.12.19  
GRCA Board Approved 08.20.19

The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance will lead, educate, engage, inform and advocate to advance a policy agenda that serves as the voice for business at all levels of government. Our members want to operate in a business environment that allows them to thrive and grow. The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance's policy priorities reach beyond the legislative and regulatory agenda to encompass issues and concerns that have implications on businesses, our community and economy. We urge lawmakers to pursue a public policy agenda that will reinforce confidence among employers, provide resources necessary to develop a talented workforce and enable economic vibrancy for our Greater Reading Region – Berks County. Our member driven policy agenda is outlined below.

### **DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Support the funding of economic development programs that have positive social and economic impact in Berks County. Our economy has evolved and, where appropriate, legislative, regulatory and comprehensive key grant program should be modernized to be more flexible and effective.

### **PROVIDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE**

Economic viability and long-term prosperity for Greater Reading – Berks County depends upon a well-educated and skilled workforce, paired with a healthy talent pipeline that addresses the growing skills gap identified by our companies.

### **IMPROVING THE BUSINESS TAX STRUCTURE**

Pennsylvania's corporate taxes and tax rate continue to put the Commonwealth at a competitive disadvantage. Comprehensive reforms of and reductions in business taxes are still necessary to help stimulate economic development.

### **RESPONSIBLE BUDGET AND GOVERNMENT SPENDING**

We encourage the PA legislature and Governor to work collaboratively towards a performance-based, on-time budget process, without reducing the effectiveness of essential government programs, while understanding that all opportunities for cost-savings and efficient spending should be exhausted before new or higher taxes are considered. Congress needs to manage spending and establish sustainable revenues to deal with debt and not rely on continuing resolutions.

### **MODERN, SAFE, EFFICIENT AND RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Ensure our infrastructure is adequately funded to enable construction and maintenance of our aging transportation and utility systems along with other infrastructure. Modern, safe, reliable and efficient Transportation Infrastructure Systems are a core function of government. Transportation systems and utility infrastructure is vital to attract and retain quality businesses to grow the economy, increase regional and PA competitiveness, and retain/create jobs. Including but not limited to: Transportation, Transit/Mobility, Energy, Broadband and Water/Wastewater.

### **BALANCED LABOR + EMPLOYMENT LAWS**

Changes to labor relations and employment policies are necessary to facilitate a fair work environment and address abuse. Our members support reforms to the unemployment compensation, workers' compensation and welfare systems that focuses on returning injured employees to full health and function. Employers oppose excessive mandates that unnecessarily increase the cost of doing business.

### **AFFORDABLE + ACCESSIBLE BENEFITS**

Berks County employers want to be able to offer workers quality, affordable health care options. We will continue to advocate for reforms to the health care, insurance and medical liability that will improve the system, providing flexibility to encourage (rather than mandate) and promote competition.



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## 2019-20 Business & Community Advocacy Council Policy + Issues Committees

GRCA Policy/Issues Committees play an integral role in the development of the GRCA's legislative priorities, which are intended to focus policymakers' attention on the economic challenges facing Pennsylvania and Berks County and to offer pro-business solutions. These Policy & Issue priorities are reviewed and updated yearly, or as critical legislation is introduced. Policy/Issues Committees meet as needed. We rely on input and recommendations from its Policy & Issues member committees for the development of official positions and policy agenda

### **DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**Priorities:**

- Regulatory Reform, Permit Process & Business Incentives
- Real Estate & Construction

### **PROVIDING SKILLED WORKFORCE**

**Priorities:**

- Talent Pipeline
- Education Requirements Aligned w/ Workforce Requirements
- Apprenticeships, Professional Development & Removing Barriers

### **IMPROVING THE BUSINESS TAX STRUCTURE**

**Priorities:**

- Tax Reform & Incentives

### **RESPONSIBLE BUDGET AND GOVERNMENT SPENDING**

**Priorities:**

- State & Federal Budgets On-time/Performance Based
- Pension Reform
- Smart Growth

### **MODERN, SAFE, EFFICIENT AND RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE + RESOURCES**

#### **Transportation & Transit**

**Priorities:**

- Reliable & Sustainable Funding including HTF
- New Technology, Logistics, Efficiencies & Public/Private Partnerships
- Berks Priority Transportation + Transit Projects (Reading Bridges.net):
  - Route 222N # 1 Priority Road Improvement Project, Major Bridge Projects, 422 Westshore Bypass
  - Reconstruction, Transit: 272 Workforce Corridor (Berks & Lancaster), Greater Reading Intercity Connectivity (bus & passenger rail)

#### **Energy & Environmental Stewardship**

**Priorities:**

- Energy & Utilities Systems
- Energy Alternatives

#### **Water & Wastewater**

**Priorities:**

- Upgrade, Capacity & System Fees/Funding

#### **Broadband**

**Priorities:**

- Access Broadband Service

### **BALANCE LABOR + EMPLOYMENT LAWS**

**Priorities:**

- Labor Policy, Foreign Born Worker Requirements & Immigration

### **AFFORDABLE + ACCESSIBLE BENEFITS**

**Priorities:**

- Benefits, Insurance & Healthcare