

2021 - 2022 Pro-Business State Policy Agenda

Business Community Advocacy Council Approved
GRCA Board Approved

The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance will lead, educate, engage, inform and advocate to advance a state policy agenda that serves as the voice for business. Our members want to operate in a business environment that allows them recover, grow, and thrive. GRCA's policy priorities reach beyond the legislative and regulatory agenda to encompass administrative policies that have implications on businesses, our community and economy. We urge Pennsylvania's legislature and the Governor 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 state policy agenda is outlined below.

INVESTING IN ECONOMIC GROWTH/ RESPONSIBLE BUDGET + GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Renewed and increased support for funding of economic development programs that have positive social and economic impact in Berks County to move past COVID-19 and towards growth. 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 to cover increasing program costs or recovering budget deficits due to COVID-19.

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. State programs should prioritize existing jobs, skills shortages, and talent retraining for jobs of the future.

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 continue to be necessary to help stimulate economic development and assist with recovery.

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. 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. This includes Transportation, Transit/Mobility, Energy, Broadband and Water/Wastewater.

REGULATORY REFORM

The business community needs continued regulatory reform from processes that impede infrastructure and business improvements and exacerbate costs. Permitting reform through increased transparency, consistent decision making, and continued reduction in the time needed to make permit decisions, coupled with limiting costs to businesses through regulatory and permit requirements is key to increasing economic development. Our members oppose the practice of regulatory changes through executive action that seeks to circumvent a collaborative process with the PA legislature.

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, including modernization, 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 including the unnecessary and costly overtime rule changes and drastic and unsustainable increases in unemployment taxes due to COVID.