



2023 - 2024 Pro-Business Local Policy Agenda

Business Community Advocacy Council 4/14/2023

GRCCI Board 5/3/2023

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 their businesses in an environment that allows them 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 our county and local elected officials, including school boards, 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 local policy agenda is outlined below:

MODERN, SAFE, EFFICIENT AND RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ensure our local infrastructure systems including Transportation, Transit/Mobility, Energy, Broadband, and Water/Wastewater are maintained, reliable, and improved when needed is vital to attract and retain quality businesses to grow the economy, increase regional and PA competitiveness, and retain/create jobs. Our members support expanded opportunities for commuter systems through public and private investment in bus and rideshare capacity and the efforts to restore intercity passenger rail service from Reading to Philadelphia and beyond by the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority.

BALANCING LAND USE & RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

Identifying the best strategy for responsible land use and development that maximizes economic development opportunity while retaining Berks County's rich agricultural tradition benefits everyone. It is imperative that all government entities, businesses, and community organizations within Berks County work together for a shared vision of our future to ensure opportunities are shared equally across the county. Our members support smart growth efforts to increase all types of housing across the county and addressing blight through urban renewal, helping to maintain the local workforce base and attract new residents.

PROVIDING & SUPPORTING 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. Our members are committed to supporting collaborative programs that prioritize existing jobs, skills shortages, apprenticeship opportunities, and talent retraining for jobs of the future. Other priorities include expanding access to English language programs, training for careers in need, and support for expanding access to affordable, quality childcare and elder care to increase workforce participation.

REGULATORY REFORM + LOCAL GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION

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 support working collaboratively with county and local entities to increase economic development while being environmental stewards.

RESPONSIBLE BUDGET + GOVERNMENT SPENDING

We support renewed and increased funding of economic development programs that have positive social and economic impact in cities and municipalities across Berks County. We support the local and county comprehensive planning efforts that support the retention and growth of Berks County businesses and increases housing resources. We encourage all local governments to work collaboratively towards responsible and balanced budgets while understanding that all opportunities for

Edit Date: 4/27/23

cost-savings and efficient spending should be exhausted before new or higher taxes are considered to cover increasing program costs. We also encourage collaboration between governments to produce economies of scale and efficient delivery of services.