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THE CHAMBER FOR REGIONAL PROSPERITY

Infrastructure, R&D, tech growth and workforce top BBA legislative priorities for upcoming year

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – February 28, 2019 – Infrastructure, research and development tax credits, growth of technology companies, workforce development and the reauthorization of the Alabama Jobs Enhancement Act will be top priorities for the Birmingham Business Alliance (BBA) during the 2019 Alabama Legislative Session, which starts March 5.

“The Birmingham Business Alliance is an advocate for policies and issues that will promote job growth in the region,” said Greg Curran, vice chairman of public policy for the BBA and chairman of the firm at Maynard Cooper Gale. “As the lead economic development organization for the region, it is important to continually push for legislation that supports the BBA’s purpose of a better Birmingham, and we will always advocate for issues that will bring about more jobs and more capital investment.”

Click here to view [the BBA’s state agenda](#) and [its federal agenda](#). The agenda focuses on four key areas of interest including economic growth, research and innovation, infrastructure and workforce development.

These are the issues and bills the BBA will be watching closely and advocating for in the upcoming legislative session:

- **Infrastructure investment:** The BBA supports increasing Alabama’s public investment in transportation infrastructure to sustain and promote economic growth, job creation, quality of life and public safety. The BBA supports transportation funding through investment revenues such as a state gas tax increase or other financially responsible investments, reforms and long-term solutions.
- **Research and development tax credits:** The BBA supports a research and development income tax credit parallel to the federal research and development credit, with an extra incentive if a qualified research institution performs the research. The BBA supports efforts to pass incentive legislation that encourages research and development activities that result in job growth and improve our ability to attract new industry in research and development.

- Technology-based economic development: The BBA supports the development of a statewide incentive-based program for high-growth startups and tech companies that will accelerate organic growth of these companies in, and recruitment to, the Birmingham region and State of Alabama. This strategy will increase the state's skilled technology workforce, create an attractive ecosystem that boosts entrepreneurship, attract venture capital and better position Alabama to compete with neighboring states.
- State workforce efforts: One of the BBA's most important ongoing initiatives is to align industry and education and build a skilled workforce to compete in a global economy. The BBA supports state workforce efforts including the implementation of a State Longitudinal Data System, expansion of the state career coach program, and youth apprenticeship legislation that expands hands-on apprenticeship opportunities for students.
- Classification of full-time economic developers: Last year, HB 317 – also known as the Alabama Jobs Enhancement Act – was signed into law. The bill was crucial to guaranteeing that economic development organizations in Alabama can continue their work to attract new business to the state. The act will expire on April 1, 2019, unless the legislature renews it or passes new legislation during the 2019 Session. Jobs, economic prosperity and continued success for the Birmingham region and Alabama are at risk if it is not renewed. The BBA supports reauthorizing legislation that exempts site selectors and full-time economic developers from registering as lobbyists in Alabama.

“Successful public policy is the underpinning of an inclusive economy and a thriving community,” said BBA Senior Vice President of Public Policy Waymond Jackson. “The legislative priorities identified and adopted by the BBA are critical issues to growing Birmingham’s economy through quality jobs and preparing our workforce to meet those opportunities.”

The Birmingham Business Alliance promotes economic growth in Birmingham, Jefferson County and throughout the seven-county metropolitan area. For more information about the BBA visit its website at www.birminghambusinessalliance.com.

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