



greater
williamsburg
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2023 Legislative Priorities



Letter from the CEO



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Dear Members of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber,

It is my great honor to serve as the President and CEO of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce and to lead its efforts to maintain our mission to “Advocate, collaborate, and create an environment in which business can grow and succeed.” I have been working with our many volunteer members who embrace our mission and put in many hours each month in support of it.

One of the top benefits of being a Greater Williamsburg Chamber member is the advocacy effort that is put forth by staff and membership. I have once again engaged lobbyists who will advocate for our priorities before the Virginia General Assembly during the 2023 session. Emily Reynolds and Mindy Carlin of Access Point Public Affairs will represent us before the Virginia General Assembly. I am pleased to have them working closely with our Legislative Affairs Committee and me as we collaborate with like-minded groups to maintain and grow a business-friendly environment in greater Williamsburg and the Commonwealth.

Upon closing the 2023 Legislative Survey and tallying the results, the 2022 Greater Williamsburg Legislative Agenda has been drafted by the Legislative Affairs Committee, and it has been approved by the Board. The top three priorities as confirmed by the survey are listed below. Each provides examples of what the Greater Williamsburg Chamber would support under these priorities; however, they are not exhaustive lists. As legislation is introduced, it may fall under the priority topics adopted by the Chamber.

Enjoy your holidays, your families, and great success in the coming year.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Banez".

Terry Banez
President & CEO
Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce

Letter from the Committee Chair



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Dear Members of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber,

Another General Assembly Session is upon us! After reviewing responses received from membership to the annual legislative priorities survey, your Legislative Affairs Committee has established the Greater Williamsburg Chamber's 2023 Legislative Agenda. From the results, the Committee was able to adopt the top three priorities of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce.

The priorities chosen by survey respondents are below, containing brief descriptions of the sort of legislation that would fall under them. Once again, our CEO, Terry Banez, has hired Access Point Public Affairs for the General Assembly session. Mindy Carlin, founder and co-owner, and Emily Reynolds will be heading the advocacy effort on behalf of the GWCC. They did a great job last session, and we are so lucky to have them back!

I look forward to continuing to work on behalf of our Chamber in the coming year and thank the many members who have volunteered to assist Terry and our lobbying team during what is sure to be a whirlwind General Assembly session. I am so pleased that they have stepped up to deliver on the mission of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce: "Advocate, collaborate, and create an environment in which business can grow and succeed."

Wishing you all very happy holidays!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angie".

Angie Bezik
Chair, Legislative Affairs Committee
Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce

Thank You to Our President's Circle Sponsors



The logo features the words "Colonial Williamsburg" in a cursive script font.





Education / Workforce Development and Retention

Opportunities that allow businesses to develop and retain the workforce they need are essential to a strong economy. Such initiatives and investment include being able to provide affordable, quality healthcare, availability of a variety of housing choices for employees, and access to a high-quality education system, which are key to not only the wellbeing of the companies, but the vigor of Virginia's economy.

The Greater Williamsburg Chamber supports initiatives and investment that enable collaboration and synergy between K-12, higher education, existing military bases and businesses that need a variety of skill sets to continue to operate and grow.

Business Recovery and Maintaining Economic Strength in the Face of Potential Future Disasters

One of the biggest lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is that there was little preparation to address the multitude of needs across the span of personal, business and government activity. The supply chains were disrupted in a way that hampered the ability to meet basic healthcare needs in a safe and efficient way, and supply chain disruption continues to this day. But pandemic is not the only disaster that can topple an economy. Virginia has generally been safe in the face of weather events (hurricanes, tornados, snow, flooding, etc.) but that doesn't guarantee continued safety. There may be "man-made events" that negatively affect Virginia's economic safety as well.

The Greater Williamsburg Chamber supports initiatives and investment that can enable modeling of potential disasters, recovery from those disasters, and actions that can be taken now to educate and prevent losses like those that occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These may include supply chain disruption, physical and mental healthcare issues, educational losses, financial and workforce challenges for businesses and closures, and housing-related crises.

Technology Infrastructure Development and Investment

The need for high quality technology infrastructure development and investment is also a significant priority. Remote workers and students learned firsthand that insufficient access to the Internet greatly impeded production and learning. To compete with surrounding states, Virginia must provide access to utilities and technology to support mega sites around the Commonwealth. Of particular concern in Hampton Roads, military assets are also compromised when service members cannot communicate quickly and clearly with their commands.

The Greater Williamsburg Chamber supports initiatives and investment in technology infrastructure development, deployment and affordability for the unserved and underserved pockets and large swaths of Virginia's citizens who have no or low connectivity. Additionally, investment and support for innovative technology infrastructure, facilities and organizations, such as the proposed High Performance Data Facility (HPDF) at Jefferson Lab, is critical to enable Virginia to be a "go to" location for commercial and governmental super computing entities; or for a microchip factory to facilitate automobile and other supply chain production.