

# 2020 *Legislative* Priorities

*Little River Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center*



LITTLE RIVER  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AND VISITORS CENTER  
*"Find Your Treasure In Little River"*

## Mission Statement

The Mission of the Little River Chamber of Commerce is to Promote Community Improvement, Tourism, and Commerce by Proactive Leadership and Community Involvement.

## About the Little River Chamber of Commerce

Our primary objective is to make the Little River area an even better place to live, work and play. The Mission of the Little River Chamber of Commerce is to Promote Community Improvement, Tourism, and Commerce by Proactive Leadership and Community Involvement.

We work closely with the local government and elected leadership of Horry County to ensure that the business climate at the community level remains positive and supportive for quality sustainable growth and a thriving economy. The Little River Chamber of Commerce also represents our members for state and national issues and works with both the US and SC Chambers of Commerce to lobby for our local concerns to ensure they are on the state and national radar.

For more information about the Little River Chamber of Commerce & Visitor's Center's services, contact them at 843-249-6604 or [Info@LittleRiverChamber.org](mailto:Info@LittleRiverChamber.org), or visit [www.LittleRiverChamber.org](http://www.LittleRiverChamber.org).



## Economic Development

### Opportunity Zones;

- We fully support municipalities working to take advantage of the federal Opportunity Zones program and encourage government agencies at the local, state and federal level to work to attract private investment to Horry County.

### Investing in Economic Development.

- State and local investment in Economic Development agencies, including the MBREDC and NESAs, is helping attract new and existing industries to Horry County. These organizations have a proven track record and are investing in innovative recruitment strategies.

## Education

### Education Reform;

- State level education reform will help increase school performance and competitiveness.

Prevent moving the school start date for K-12 any sooner into August;

- These efforts would cut into a critical month for the hospitality industry while decreasing tax revenue received by the state. Over 74 percent of parents statewide support the current school start date (third Monday in August) or would like to see it moved post-Labor Day.

### Investments in CCU and HGTC;

- Our local post-secondary education institutions are critical incubators for the future workforce for the Myrtle Beach area.

Support programs at Horry County Schools (HCS) that help students prepare for a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

- HCS boasts several STEM programs that help students prepare for college and careers. These are the future entrepreneurs and business owners of the Myrtle Beach area and they deserve our support and investment.



## Energy & Environment

Oppose seismic testing and offshore drilling of area waters;

- The costs and irreparable damage caused by the smallest mishap in offshore energy exploration far outnumber any perceived benefits.

Cost-effective and comprehensive paths to energy production;

- The Little River Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center supports a comprehensive energy plan that ensures energy independence by optimizing cost-effective use of renewable and alternative energy sources, including nuclear, solar and wind power.

Recycling programs;

- Recycling programs within targeted industries should be sensible, flexible and business friendly.

Regulatory reform.

- Administrative red tape within the federal government makes it far easier to block a project than to see any progress. We support regulatory reform and the federal and state level that ensures environmental protection without needlessly delaying vital infrastructure investments.

## Tax Reform

Eliminate the SC Corporate Income tax;

- Studies have shown that this is one of the least effective taxes in the current state code.

State level tax reform;

- Tax reform in South Carolina is needed to drive new investment to our state. Any reforms must consider testimony from current business leaders from a diverse background on the impacts legislation could have on existing industry.

Make permanent individual and business tax cuts.

- The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act provided a jolt to our national economy. The individual and business rates included in the new law should be made permanent to help American's prepare for the personal and professional financial health.



## Infrastructure

Local, state and federal funding for the completion of Interstate 73 in South Carolina;

- Interstate 73 is a federally permitted project that is anticipated to create over 23,000 jobs in South Carolina and should help evacuations in the event of a hurricane or natural disaster.

Extend S.C. 31 to the North Carolina border;

- Horry County's RIDE III program calls for the extension of S.C. 31 to the North Carolina border, which should help ease congestion for residents on the North End and expand access for new visitors.

Complete the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Southern Evacuation Lifeline (SELL);

- The SELL will help residents and visitors on the South End evacuate inland during a hurricane or natural disaster. RIDE III included the EIS for the SELL in the list of projects.

Continued funding for beach renourishment;

- Local, state and federal partners should continue working together to protect our most important asset: the beach. Renourishment keeps the beaches big enough for beach goers and protects hundreds of millions in real estate.

Invest in stormwater control efforts at the local and state levels;

- Deepwater ocean outfalls and other stormwater maintenance programs help quality of life for our residents and visitors. Other efforts like CheckMyBeach.com are important to educate this audience.

Maintenance of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway;

- Adequate maintenance of the Intracoastal Waterway is critical to enhance commercial and recreational benefits for residents and visitors to the Little River area.

Adjust Passenger Facility Fees (PFCs) to inflation.

- A simple adjustment in a PFC will help airports around the country undertake needed maintenance programs to help deal with the wear and tear that comes with increased passengers.



## Tourism

Support current structure of state and local advertising models;

- Proven, successful programs like the Tourism Development Fee and the Accommodations Tax were created to help expand access to the Grand Strand, which they've done. Tourism related fees/taxes should be used for their intended purpose: to drive tourism and investment in our area.

Increase statewide funding for the Destination Specific Matching Grant (DSMG) program;

- Recipients of grant funding are required to bring in \$2 for every \$1 in state money invested. This program helps bring private investment to South Carolina while also increasing tourism to our state.

REAL ID;

- Support policies at the federal level that offer states additional flexibility in enforcement and implementation of the Department of Homeland Security's REAL ID requirements.

Reauthorize Brand USA;

- For every \$1 spent on marketing, Brand USA adds \$25 to the U.S. economy. This public-private partnership was formed to help promote the U.S. as a destination to global travelers – at no cost to taxpayers.

Support secure travel partnerships with nations that meet security guidelines;

- These partnerships are proven to help increase inbound international tourism.

Maintain Open Skies agreements;

- Open Skies agreements with other nations helps keep the United States on a level playing field for global air service.



## Workforce

Industry specific healthcare plans;

- As the cost of healthcare continues to rise, we'll support broadened use of industry-specific healthcare plans owned/operated by industry trade associations.

Investments in job training;

- State programs like the S.C. Promise scholarship help students earn the skills they need to fill an industry that demands those skills.

Seasonal Visa programs;

- The H-2B, J1 and J2 visa programs help employers in the Grand Strand area fill a workforce gap during busy tourism times. We'll support the returning worker exemption and other initiatives that help make these programs more reliable for the businesses that depend on them.

Ratify the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA);

- This agreement modernizes the 24-year-old NAFTA into a 21<sup>st</sup> century, high-standard agreement. USMCA will lead to mutually beneficial trade, freer markets, fairer trade and robust economic growth.

Safe consumption of alcohol;

- We support the current nationally recognized blood-alcohol limit for driving: 0.08 BAC, while promoting legislation that supports the safe consumption of alcohol at restaurants while not adversely affecting workforce and hospitality industries. Sensible proposals must recognize the diverse nature of the hospitality industry, particularly on the coast and in tourism-based economies.

Service Animals.

- Support increased oversight and enforcement of current use by individuals of the Americans with Disabilities Act to include misuse of service animals.

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