

**Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce
Government Affairs Committee**



The mission of the Government Affairs Committee is to:

- Understand local, state and federal legislative, policy and regulatory matters affecting businesses;
- Develop and recommend to the Board advocacy positions on relevant issues; and
- Clearly communicate the Chamber's positions to its members, elected officials and the community at large.

Virginia State Officials

Governor Ralph Northam
Lt. Governor Justin E. Fairfax
Senator Mark R. Warner
Senator Tim Kaine
Congressman Tom Garrett

SML Area State Legislators

Senator Stephen D. Newman
Senator Frank Ruff
Senator William M. Stanley
Senator David Suetterlein
Delegate Kathy J. Byron
Delegate Charles Poindexter
Delegate T. Scott Garrett
Delegate Christopher T. Head
Delegate Terry Austin
Delegate Les R. Adams

2019 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

With more than 750 members, the Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce (SMLRCC) provides information, support and advocacy for the region's business community. It serves Bedford, Franklin, and Pittsylvania counties. Additionally, the Chamber operates a state-certified Visitor's Center at Smith Mountain Lake and a branch office in Rocky Mount. The organization's mission is to promote tourism and grow business in the region.

SMLRCC spearheads the business community's involvement in public policy issues. State and local issues directly impacting the Lake region's economic vitality are the focal point of the organization's annual Public Policy Agenda.

In order to represent the local business community with a unified voice, policy issues of greatest interest to the Chamber's members are annually identified. Those for 2019 are presented on the following pages.



Dedicated to promoting tourism and growing business for its members and the community, the SMLRCC supports:

Business and Tourism

- Creating a SML Community Center that will expand economic growth in the area by providing a venue for events to attract tourists, businesses, and residents.
- Increasing the budget of Virginia Tourism Corporation and the Virginia Mountains Region.

Economic Infrastructure

- Supporting local government/private industry partnerships to rapidly make the region more broadband competitive.
- Expanding recreational opportunities such as hiking and biking trails.
- Increasing investment in K-12, two- and four-year degree programs as well as Career and Technical Education (CTE).
- Expanding secondary education and other state-level initiatives in trades to create a more comprehensive, unified system of publicly-funded employment and training services.
- Requiring the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to add the rights of private property owners to the list of factors considered when issuing and enforcing hydropower project licenses.

Protecting the Lake

- Safeguarding the lake against invasive animals and plants with regulations and legislation. More needs to be done to educate boaters from surrounding states to prevent infestation by zebra mussels in Virginia's waters. To that end, billboards should be erected at Va. borders urging visitors to "Clean/Drain/Dry" trailered boats.
- Ensuring government oversight to preserve the quality and quantity of water inflows to the Lake with respect to the Mountain Valley Natural Gas Pipeline Project.

Transportation

- Supporting establishment of an Amtrak stop in the Town of Bedford.
- Opposing the application of VDOT's Arterial Preservation Program (APP) as it relates to access to the Franklin County Business Park and the future applications on Route 460.
- Increasing funds to improve central and southwest Virginia's highway infrastructure, including:
 - * Improvements to the traffic flow on State Route 122, the only north-south artery for our region, between Rocky Mount and Bedford; and
 - * Construction of I-73.
- Including "peak tourist season" road use in SmartScale scoring.