



## **Prince George's Chamber of Commerce 2006 Legislative Policy Agenda**

### **Intro**

The Prince George's Chamber of Commerce has compiled a comprehensive agenda for the 2006 Maryland General Assembly Legislative Session. The Chamber will labor vigorously to support legislation to protect the County's current and future economic health. Our policy agenda enumerates longstanding goals of enhancing commerce, economic development, public safety, Prince George's County Public Schools, healthcare, and transportation projects.

### **Economic Development**

#### **Quality Residential Development**

The Chamber recognizes the linkage between new residential growth and economic development. Therefore, the Chamber supports efforts to encourage quality residential development in the County. Specifically, residential growth around our metro stations and established communities is encouraged. Also, high quality responsible growth in the remainder of the County should be encouraged.

#### **Commercial Investment / Smart Growth**

The Chamber supports state funding that attracts commercial investment, business expansion and stimulates the development and market of Class A office space. The Chamber supports the reform of plan review and the permit process to encourage economic development. The Chamber supports responsible growth that meets zoning and other land-use requirements.

#### **Business Development and Procurement**

The Chamber supports State efforts to provide opportunities for small businesses to be involved in the State's procurement process. The Chamber encourages the County to implement procurement programs that give special consideration to small and local businesses.

## **Education**

### **Prince George's County Public Schools**

The Chamber supports legislative efforts that support and encourage decreased class size, new school construction and improved test scores. The Chamber also supports the full funding of all current and new grants that support public education. Finally, the Chamber supports the increase of funding to support trades in public schools.

### **Adequate Funding for Higher Education**

The Chamber will support legislation that: assures adequate funding of student financial assistance programs; supports and funds the Prince George's Community College and Work Force Development programs; and fully funds the University System of Maryland capital budget request.

## **Health Care**

### **Reforming Existing Law**

The Chamber will support efforts to maintain and enhance medical malpractice law reforms including amending the Health Care Commission's regulations to increase the deductible for small groups.

### **Controlling Costs**

The Chamber will support legislation that allows small businesses to create groups or coalitions to take advantage of large group rates to help them minimize the impact of escalating costs.

## **Public Safety**

### **Local Law Enforcement Efforts**

The Chamber supports federal, state, and local initiatives that will reduce crime, support homeland security efforts and improve the quality of life in Prince George's County. The Chamber also supports and encourages increased staffing of public safety positions, including the hiring and training of additional police officers. The Chamber also supports initiatives that reduce car thefts and crime at commercial centers.

### **Regional Law Enforcement Efforts**

The Chamber supports efforts to increase policing across county borders to include federal, state and locally funded initiatives that aid homeland security efforts.

## **Transportation**

### **Woodrow Wilson Bridge**

The Chamber supports the identification of alternative revenue sources such as user fees to fairly reimburse Maryland and Virginia for their investments in this \$2.5 Billion project.

**Inter-County Connector**

The Chamber supports the completion of the Inter-County Connector (ICC) in accordance with the Approved Master Plan which terminates at Interstate 95/US Route 1.

**Purple Line Light Rail**

The Chamber encourages the State to give high priority and more funding for the Purple Line Metro route from New Carrollton to Silver Spring.

**Energy****Deregulation**

The Chamber supports initiatives to encourage voluntary energy conservation and energy efficiency. It also supports initiatives that protect residential and small business consumers from volatile electricity prices. It opposes efforts that reverse or impede the continued development of a deregulated electricity environment in Maryland.

**Natural Gas**

The Chamber recognizes the need for additional gas storage in the region to support continued growth and mitigate rising energy costs. The Chamber supports construction of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) storage facility that will address the forecasted supply shortfall by 2008 in a manner that is safe, reliable, and economical.