

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF FARGO MOORHEAD

Approved 2008 CCFM Legislative Agendas

Local

Economic Development & Housing

- Support development of consistent policies and practices among local taxing jurisdictions
- Support development of the Northern Tier Network Consortium
- Support expansion of air service at Hector International Airport
- Support expansion of an advanced high-tech regional economy
- Support a half-cent sales tax in Cass and Clay counties to fund economic development and implementation of the GFMEDC strategic growth plan for the region
- Encourage business relationships to promote business access to the fiber backbone for telecommunications
- Encourage efforts to increase the range of housing availability, affordability and livability throughout the metro area

Education, Training & Workforce Development

- Support efforts to increase workforce availability and readiness in our region
- Support implementation of all-day kindergarten and expanded education-oriented childcare.

Energy, Environment & Water Management

- Support policies that will permit additional commercial and residential development while protecting the region's water resources
- Support additional development, use and appreciation of the Red River of the North and riverfront areas

Land Use, Growth Management & Zoning

- Support effective, cooperative land use planning, growth management and zoning policies and practices within our bi-state, metropolitan community and adjacent rural areas
- Encourage development of innovative methods to address waste management

Transportation

- Support regional planning efforts designed to achieve a comprehensive, coordinated and appropriately-funded inter-modal transportation system serving businesses and linking communities in our region
- Support expanded availability of local transit to meet the needs of the community

Minnesota

Economic & Tax Policy

- Support continuation of local government aid program to help fund important local services
- Support dedicating all Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) revenue for transportation with 60 percent of funds distributed for roads through the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund and 40 percent of funds dedicated for transit programs in the state
- Support property tax assessments that are based on market value instead of tax capacity

Economic Development & Housing

- Support legislation that encourages entrepreneurship in the state and improves the state's (global) economic competitiveness, including tax incentives for (venture) capital formation
- Support economic development incentives for Minnesota border counties to create a level playing field with neighboring communities in other states, including incentives for enterprise zones and housing development
- Oppose any action that would restrict the ability of governmental entities to use eminent domain as a tool for public improvement

Education, Training & Workforce Development

- Support adequate, equitable state funding to local school districts while emphasizing responsible planning and expenditures
- Support legislation and other methods of recognizing and rewarding schools that demonstrate superior performance in student performance and financial accountability
- Support efforts to promote comprehensive and sustainable early childhood education, to include Early Language Learners, to ensure school readiness

Energy, Environment & Water Management

- Support legislation that fosters voluntary development and use of renewable energy sources
- Support additions to regional electric energy supply and transmission systems to support Minnesota's growing electric energy needs
- Support legislation that provides for an adequate, reliable water supply for businesses, residents and communities in the Red River Valley
- Support generating electricity from a variety of fuel sources, technologies and power producers as long as there is no reduction in reliability and the retail price for the electricity produced is cost-competitive with traditional sources
- Support efforts to decrease growth of energy demand through efficiency measures

Health Care

- Support statewide efforts to increase access, affordability and choice in health care by establishing new health care delivery models and small-employer purchasing pools
- Support elimination of state-imposed health care taxes: provider tax, premium tax and MCHA assessment, and oppose any increase in current state health care tax rates

- Support repeal of health care mandates that are not cost-effective or that negatively-impact employers ability to provide health insurance as an employee benefit

Labor, Management & the Workplace

- Support maintaining Minnesota's worker compensation system as the exclusive remedy for addressing workplace injuries unless employer negligence is involved
- Oppose any increase in the minimum wage beyond that required under federal law
- Oppose any prevailing wage statute

Technology, Telecommunications & E-commerce

- Support legislation that will enhance telecommunications infrastructure and service in the state while providing a "level playing field" for vendors, customers and communities

Transportation

- Support increased funding for statewide transportation infrastructure repairs/improvements, including inter-regional corridors
- Support preserving the Trunk Highway Fund and using proceeds for highway system needs
- Support development of a multi-modal approach to transportation that includes funding for transit systems in rural (metropolitan) areas of the state

North Dakota

Economic & Tax Policy

- Support an unemployment compensation insurance program that meets unemployment insurance needs in the state, maintains long-term trust fund stability and limits employer contributions to the level necessary to accomplish these goals

Economic Development & Housing

- Support efforts to study the state's business climate, establish a Red River Valley business and technology development zone and possible methods for growing the state's population
- Support legislation that encourages entrepreneurship in the state and improves the state's (global) economic competitiveness, including tax incentives for (venture) capital formation
- Support tax incentives for economic development, entrepreneurs and small businesses
- Oppose any action that would restrict the ability of governmental entities to use eminent domain as a tool for public improvement

Education, Training & Workforce Development

- Support adequate, equitable state funding to local school districts while emphasizing responsible planning and expenditures
- Support continued legislative approval of "flexibility with accountability" protocol/measures for the North Dakota University System
- Support development of Centers of Excellence in the North Dakota University System
- Support efforts to promote comprehensive and sustainable early childhood education, to include Early Language Learners, to ensure school readiness
- Support legislation that encourages innovative programs and funding methods to help employers and communities to provide child care, health care, housing and transportation assistance to employees and local residents

Energy, Environment & Water Management

- Support legislation that fosters voluntary development of lignite coal and renewable energy resources and improves electricity transmission capacity in the state
- Support legislation that provides for an adequate, reliable water supply for businesses, residents and communities in the Red River Valley
- Support efforts to decrease growth of energy demand through efficiency measures

Health Care

- Support statewide efforts to increase access, affordability and choice in health care by establishing new health care delivery models and small-employer purchasing pools
- Support legislation that encourages Medicaid programs to better reflect health care needs, costs and practices in the 21st century

Labor, Management & The Workplace

- Support legislation that provides for adequate funding and long-term stability of the state-administered worker compensation system while limiting employer contributions to the level necessary to accomplish these goals

Transportation

- Support the provision of a comprehensive, safe, multi-modal transportation system and related infrastructure that supports current and future business and community needs
- Support matching of available federal funds for transportation projects within the state

Federal

Agriculture

- Support legislation that promotes food production and safety, expands export markets and encourages a competitive national and global markets system
- Support legislation to stimulate entrepreneurial development in rural communities

Biotechnology, Food Safety & GMOs

- Support nationally-uniform, science-based and cost-effective regulations that provide environmental protections and a safe food supply

Economic & Tax Policy

- Support expanding government contracting opportunities available to the private sector
- Support strengthening federal programs that provide access to capital or spur capital investment within the business community
- Support maintaining the viability of the Earned Income Tax Credit for working individuals and families

Education, Training & Workforce Development

- Support adequate funding and programs that help to provide a contemporary workforce development system for the nation's business community
- Support providing tax incentives for employers that offer basic skills or language training for their workers
- Support federal legislation that recognizes and builds upon state and local initiatives to improve education and helps to ensure that assessments, accountability, teacher preparation, and curricula reinforce and are aligned with high standards

Energy, Environment & Water Management

- Support nationally-uniform, science-based and cost-effective air and water quality standards that balance environmental protection and the needs of communities and industry
- Support efforts that provide for an adequate, reliable water supply for businesses, residents and communities in the Red River Valley
- Support legislation that fosters energy development and transmission and provides for diversity and security of energy resources including wind energy and hydrogen

Health Care

- Support legislation that expands health insurance availability and affordability through both employer-sponsored plans and individual health insurance plans/flexible spending accounts
- Support legislation that reforms federal Medicare and Medicaid programs to better reflect health care needs, costs and practices in the 21st century

International Trade

- Support efforts to expand global trade markets by removing global trade sanctions/barriers
- Support enforcing trade laws to restrict imports that unfairly compete with U.S. products

Labor, Management & the Workplace

- Support legislation that revises immigration laws (consistent with national security interests) to help alleviate worker shortages in certain industries and attract talented students to college
- Support repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act to make it easier for state and local governments to fund federally-subsidized projects and reduce regulatory paperwork costs for businesses that compete for and win these projects
- Support continuation and expansion of the H-1B and L-1 visas programs for professionals and highly valued workers and creation of a carefully monitored guest worker program to fill the growing gaps in America's workforce

Regulatory Affairs

- Support efforts to provide a federal regulatory system that balances protection, fairness and flexibility and considers the cost-benefit of regulations imposed on business and industry
- Support reforms to federal procurement requirements that streamline the acquisition process, ensure a fair and open procurement system and enhance use of private sector sources

Small Business Issues

- Support legislation that would permit small businesses to recover attorney fees and other related costs if they prevail in court or administrative cases brought by government agencies
- Support efforts to continue to reduce federal paperwork burdens on business and industry

Technology, Telecommunications & E-commerce

- Support federal government deregulation of telecommunications to foster innovation and increased competition within the industry
- Support setting the global standard in the U.S. for intellectual property protection by toughening existing laws at the federal and state levels, disrupting the flow of illegal goods into the legitimate supply chain with sophisticated detection and law enforcement efforts, and aggressively prosecuting intellectual property theft
- Oppose legislation and regulations that impose costly and unnecessary burdens on e-commerce or companies that make use of the Internet in their business

Transportation

- Support legislation that promotes investment in transportation infrastructure and streamlines the approval process that delays or prevents transportation safety improvements
- Support efforts to improve national freight systems to move goods to market more quickly