

2021 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

As the voice for business in Catawba County, The Chamber of Catawba County convened a taskforce, made up of business and community leaders, to adopt a legislative agenda for 2021. This agenda was officially adopted by The Chamber's Board of Directors in February 2021. The purpose of this effort is to ensure our business community's opportunities and challenges would be presented directly to our local, state

and federal elected representatives to encourage them to work efficiently and promote policy that advances and protects business in Catawba County throughout the year.

The priorities below will be integral in stimulating economic growth and fostering an environment for business success in Catawba County in 2021 and beyond.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & TALENT SUPPLY

- The Chamber of Catawba County advocates for the local funding support for K-64, a collaborative approach to preparing students to be globally competitive while fulfilling employer needs for present and future talent (www.k64learning.org).

Our priorities regarding the success of K-64 are as follows:

- The Chamber of Catawba County supports the state's priorities to increase our educational attainment as outlined at www.MyFutureNC.org.
- The Chamber of Catawba County supports and advocates for quality workforce development programs such as the expansion of funding for dual enrollment in the Career and College Promise Program, incentivizing the expansion of apprenticeship programs, such as Apprenticeship NC and our local consortium, Apprenticeship Catawba, and expanded funding of workforce credentialing programs and academies such as the Manufacturing, Construction, Hospitality and Furniture Academies.
- The Chamber of Catawba County believes that all students regardless of means should have the opportunity to attend the college or university of their choice, therefore, we advocate for additional support and centralization of North Carolina's higher education grant-based programs, as well as, increased federal funding for the Pell Grant.
- The Chamber of Catawba County supports increased funding for North Carolina's early childhood infrastructure, including Smart Start and the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program, knowing that investments in early childhood education support the workforce of today and prepare the workforce of tomorrow.
- The Chamber of Catawba County understands that education is our top economic development driver, therefore, we recognize the critical and immediate need for capital funding for the renovation of and/or new construction of educational facilities for Catawba County Schools, Hickory City Public Schools, Newton-Conover City Schools and Catawba Valley Community College.
- The Chamber of Catawba County supports state legislation that optimizes our competitiveness as a premier location for military retirees and those transitioning into their next career in the civilian workforce, including but not limited to, full exemption of North Carolina state income taxes on military retirees' military pensions.

COMPETITIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE

- The Chamber of Catawba County supports policies that encourage industrial development for existing Catawba County manufacturers and the recruitment of new commercial and industrial entities of all sizes, and supports state policy enabling Tier 1 and 2 Counties to increase their competitiveness for those projects.
- The Chamber of Catawba County supports policies that encourage small business and entrepreneurial investments.
- The Chamber of Catawba County recognizes that access to global markets is essential for business. Trade relationships provide the opportunity for business to grow, invest and create jobs - exports from the Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton MSA were \$1.7 billion dollars in 2019 (109th out of 392 metros in the US) and have continued to grow steadily. To encourage the growth of area exports and the business investment to support them, the Chamber supports free and fair trade policies and consistent and predictable trade legislation and tariffs.
- The Chamber of Catawba County supports local government efforts to encourage and incentivize the planning and construction of housing units (single and multi-family).
- The Chamber of Catawba County supports creating and maintaining community amenities and programs that are safe, welcoming, accessible and well-maintained in an effort to promote an appealing quality of life that attracts and retains talent and businesses.

TAX & INFRASTRUCTURE

- The Chamber of Catawba County supports tax policies that encourage industrial and entrepreneurial development.
- The Chamber of Catawba County opposes legislation that would reduce local revenues, including the alteration of the current sales tax distribution formula.
- The Chamber of Catawba County supports public incentives that promote and provide accessible, reliable, safe, modern, and affordable utilities and business support infrastructure including, but not limited to, water, energy and high-speed internet.

MEET YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

UNITED STATES SENATORS

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CITY GOVERNMENTS

CITY OF HICKORY

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Hank Guess—*Mayor*
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CITY COUNCIL

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Charlotte Williams—*Ward 2*
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Danny Seaver—*Ward 3*
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David Williams—*Ward 4*
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David Zagaroli—*Ward 5*
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Jill Patton—*Ward 6*
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CITY OF NEWTON

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Eddie Haupt—*Mayor*
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TOWN COUNCIL

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TOWN OF BROOKFORD

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COUNTY GOVERNMENT

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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For a complete list, visit:

www.catawbachamber.org/advocate-for-your-business