



**GRAYS HARBOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
GOVERNMENT POLICY OBJECTIVES
VIII**

PREAMBLE: We believe that while government is necessary, it must be limited, effective, and responsive to the people.

AGENDA 1

***BUILD A STRONG ECONOMY FOR ALL OF
WASHINGTON STATE...***

I. RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is unequally distributed across the state with more than half the population and more than 60% of the jobs in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties. Personal income growth in Washington's other 36 counties has consistently fallen behind since 1975. The Grays Harbor Chamber of Commerce works with our elected officials on behalf of our businesses and communities to improve opportunities here.

- Put Washington government to work assisting relocation of businesses moving from urban areas, with un-affordable housing and congested highways, to rural areas of the state.
- Increase the Community Trade & Economic Development's resources to promote rural economic development.
- Enable public-private partnerships whenever and wherever possible to achieve economic development goals.

II. INFRASTRUCTURE

Inadequate infrastructure is a barrier to business development.

- Expand investments in public infrastructure to enhance economic development and job creation. A long-term sustainable funding-source for the highly successful Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) law is critical for rural economic development.

TRANSPORTATION: Develop and implement an integrated strategy for a transportation system for the efficient and safe delivery of people, goods, and services throughout Grays Harbor.

- Improve traffic flow and safety throughout Grays Harbor, particularly, eliminating traffic congestion in Aberdeen and Hoquiam. Create means for financing local transportation issues.
- Reform the transportation system by: accelerating decisions, controlling costs, streamlining existing funding sources, simplifying regulatory requirements and achieving significant improvement in transportation management.
- Continue investments in freight rail improvements and safety programs in rural communities.
- Support the 520 Pontoon Construction Project location in Grays Harbor.
- Support incremental US-101 Truck Route Alternative Improvements. Included are the short term Port Cities Operational Improvements Project; the Olympic Gateway Mall Access Improvements and Emergency Response Access; Intelligent Transportation Systems; Improve Port Industrial Road Plan for Rail Movement through Aberdeen and West and North Hoquiam, and the Hoquiam River Bridge.

III. PERMITTING

- Create an efficient, uniform, one-stop permitting and compliance process for all sectors of the economy in the style of WorkSource Centers.
- Require consolidation of and concurrent permitting and appeals.
- Eliminate federal, state and local duplication. Establish objective requirements and eliminate subjective decisions by agencies. Empower local government decision-making on land use issues.

- Improve consistency in the application of local, state and federal requirements.
- Improve cooperation by DOE, F&W, DNR, DOT, and CTED to implement economic development strategies in a timely manner.
- Require a set time-frame for all permitting and limit appeals.
- Modify the Growth Management Act to allow more local control and allow counties to opt out.

IV. INDUSTRY

FORESTRY: Support the changing forest products industry.

- Support exemptions for small landowners and flexible implementation of Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP).
- Support the Department of National Resource's (DNR) open public process and use of science in developing its Sustained Yield.
- Support the DNR's process for securing assurances from the federal government that all forest practices activities in compliance with the state forest practices rules and administrative program will satisfy federal requirements under ESAS for aquatic species.
- Support the reduction of the risk of catastrophic wildfires and improvement of forest health by actively managing forests.
- Support a salvage timber program for dead, down and diseased timber from all forestlands.
- Consolidate and coordinate laws governing forestry, fish and wildlife.

FISHING:

- Aid and support the fishing industry in finding ways to advance fish enhancement, with greater emphasis on rearing more fish destined for ocean release.
- Create legislation to require hatchery fish be counted for the purpose of establishing fish population.
- Protect fish populations from predator species and control the population of fish killing species to areas where fish are or may be listed.
- Reduce the harbor seal and sea lion population that threaten fish viability in Grays Harbor.
- Protect and support the commercial and sport fishing enterprises on the coast.

TOURISM: Support the growing tourism industry.

- Increase the state's tourism marketing budget. Sell Washington tourism to the state, nation, and to the world.
- Recognize the economic benefit of the film industry by creating an environment conducive to the production of movies within the state.

ENERGY: Create a long-term energy plan for increased generation and transmission

- Expand energy production and diversity; including traditional and renewable energy sources.
- Oppose Bonneville's imposition of Cost Recovery Adjustment Clauses (CRAC).
- Remove Bonneville's surcharges.
- Oppose forcing western consumers to pay to upgrade electricity transmission systems nationwide to send power to distant markets.

AGRICULTURE: Support and promote agriculture as a viable and important industry to our economy.

AGENDA 2

CREATE A POSITIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE...

Which encourages investment in Washington and functions under fair, efficient, consistent, understandable regulations based upon true need with demonstrable benefits.

- I. **There is a place for some regulation** to protect the environment, the consumer, and the workforce, as well as to create a fair, competitive business environment.
 - Remove unnecessary regulations and uncompetitive tax policies, which create a non-competitive business climate in Washington.
 - Support the continued effort to improve Washington's business climate consistent with the studies and recommendations presented to the state by recent special task forces. We appreciate the gains that have been made in the business climate of

Washington State, earning it recognition by Forbes Magazine. A more competitive business climate remains to be made.

- We are grateful for the assistance of our Coastal Caucus and other legislators who understand the need for job creation and a positive business climate in our region.
- Create regulatory reform, which functions under fair, efficient, consistent, and understandable regulations based upon true need with demonstrable benefits. Require regulations to be based on a consensus of science or fact and include clear and concise outcomes. Exempt employers who already provide paid family leave from the new law.
- Lawmakers, not agencies, should create laws. Agencies must implement the intention of the law.
- Regulations must be based on a consensus of science or fact, and shall include clear and concise outcomes.
- Require an economic impact and cost analysis for every regulation. Because it is not the public's business whether a business will be profitable or not; business does have to complete an EIS in applicable cases.
- Produce regulatory equity between public and private sectors.
- Set consistent permit requirement with reasonably set timelines for addressing and reviewing decisions by agencies, with set windows for the appeal process.

II. PROMOTE SOUND TAX AND SPENDING POLICIES

- Washington businesses pay more than half of all state and local taxes. Business taxes in Washington are more than 200% higher than business taxes in Oregon, while household taxes are just 80% as high as those paid for by households in Oregon.
- It is particularly essential that no new programs would be created that will add mandatory expenses.

TAXES

- Increase accountability by making clear to citizens the connection between how tax dollars are spent and outcomes achieved, holding elected and appointed officials to measurable outcomes
- Require that all business tax exemptions and incentives are competitive with neighboring states and apply to all rural areas.
- Preserve existing and increase tax exemptions and incentive programs.
- Preserve manufacturing investment tax credits
- Authorize and expand infrastructure-funding mechanisms that make use of revenues generated by growth, like tax increment financing.
- Do not increase current B&O taxes.

SPENDING

- Encourage local, state and federal agencies to explore ways of sharing resources to expedite delivery and streamline procurement of all services.
- Preserve the integrity of dedicated accounts.
- Eliminate the "spend or lose" policy; allow for a carrying over of a percentage of non-spent budgeted dollars, with taxes lowered accordingly.
- Discontinue government services, which are no longer meeting a substantial need.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of each government service.
- Standardize procurement and contracting regulations to encourage privatization and reduce costs.

III. INCLUDE LOCAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE CREATION OF AND CHANGED REGULATIONS

- Make hearings available to the public in every county impacted by rules.

IV. INITIATIVE PROCESS

- Require that economic impact, cost and funding sources appear on all initiatives presented for signature gathering.
- Retain the requirement that a fiscal impact statement must accompany each qualified initiative in the voter's handbook.

V. EMPLOYMENT And WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Providing quality training for High Demand occupations is critical to meet demands of industry.
- Revise current minor labor laws to afford youth an opportunity to gain work experience and work maturity skills.

- Without penalizing business, continue extended unemployment benefits for unemployed workers displaced due to public policy decisions. Continue funding for training of these workers.
- Support a freeze in the state minimum wage in times of high unemployment
- Provide a funding source for business groups to assist WorkSource to serve the hiring & training needs of business.
- Support the Workforce Investment Act and implement its requirements to elevate business as a primary customer.
- Support creative work force training to meet universal economic development competition.

AGENDA 3

PROMOTE REALISTIC ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The Chamber fully supports sensible protection of our environment. We believe the human species is also important and the regulations must be based on common sense and a consensus of science. We support a sustainable Grays Harbor that recognizes the symbiotic value of People, Planet & Profit.

I. WATER AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

- Require governmental regulators to work cooperatively and not adversarially with small businesses.
- Expand the ability to transport and store water to meet both agricultural and urban demand.
- Require expedited permits to be issued to address chronic flooding or erosion.
- Establish state water policy ensuring a water supply adequate to meet the needs of a growing economy and recognizing existing and historical property rights regarding water.
- Support citizens constitutional right to property and require that government:
 1. State the reason for proposed land use regulations.
 2. Identify the full economic impact of the proposed land use regulations.
 3. Consider alternatives and choose the least burdensome alternative that will achieve the objectives.
 4. Compensate landowners when private property is taken for the general good, public use, or otherwise restricted from its regular, highest use due to government regulation. Compensation must be based upon full value of entire property before environmental restrictions were declared.
 5. Require that governments pay property owners or forego enforcement by repealing, changing or not applying restrictions, when certain land use restrictions reduce owner's property value.

II. SHORELINE MANAGEMENT ACT (SMA)

- Seek legislation that results in future synchronization between the SMA guideline review, 'Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) review and Growth Management Act review of critical areas ordinances to facilitate efficiency.
- Support legislation requiring 100% state funding of local SMP updates.
- Support legislation requiring 100% of payment by the state for anticipated costs to local government at least two years in advance of the deadline to update local SMPs.

III. PUBLIC ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

- Keep all public forest roads accessible for use by the public.
- The Legislature shall investigate co-management of recreation sites.

IV. ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

- Revisit the Endangered Species Act in order to:
 1. Establish more flexible and realistic regulations that mandate inclusion of economic impacts and provide options to mitigate this impact.
 2. Allow discretion for federal land managers, where scientific data is uncertain or inconclusive, to use management options which provide for species protection and commodity production.
 3. Provide for incentive based management rather than punitive enforcement of the ESA on private land.
 4. Establish a more pro-active de-listing procedure for recovered species or species listed with incomplete or erroneous information.

AGENDA 4

PROMOTE A STRONG COMMUNITY...

Which creates the highest possible quality of life for our citizens. Quality of life begins with a good job and includes quality and affordable health care, a suitable and affordable home, near good schools, in a safe place, where we choose to live.

I. EDUCATION: Increase education quality.

- Provide quality education in K-20:
 1. Fund all mandates to local schools.
 2. Better prepare students with work-ready basic skills, thinking skills, and attitudes for life-long learning.
 3. Increase the availability and extent of vocational training for all who choose.
 4. Return more funding to local classrooms.
 5. Properly fund and staff school libraries.
 6. Increase emphasis on math and science skills.
 7. Allow students to proceed to the next grade level only when they can meet specified learning objectives.
 8. Require all teachers to periodically re-certify in their core competency area.
 9. Provide extra funds for schools achieving high performance as determined by OSPI.
- Continue to support the Regional Training Center at Satsop Development Park. The Regional Training Center includes a coalition of community colleges, universities, industries, and public agencies.
- Recognize the increasing importance of two-year community and technical colleges.
 1. Fund Grays Harbor College to its total student capacity.
 2. Assure the community college's ability to respond to the needs of the community – especially in funding training and upgrading job skills.
 3. Continue workforce training and re-training in our community and technical colleges, especially those requiring skills retraining.
 4. Support High Demand Enrollment.

II. HEALTH, WELFARE

- Health care claims are for preventable problems caused by lifestyle choices, businesses that provide incentives for their employees to reduce their risk should be rewarded. The legislature can support health plans that reward responsible customers with lower premiums.
- Promote association health plans that offer a menu of health plans with varying levels of coverage.
- Return affordable health care coverage for all by:
 1. Protecting a competitive free market system that provides a choice of high quality, cost-effective, health plans to business and their employees.
 2. Providing an umbrella malpractice insurance pool.
- Increase incentives for persons wishing to gain self-reliance; increase employment incentives; discourage long-term reliance on assistance.
- Require the workforce delivery system to partner with representatives of the demand side (Business.)

III. PUBLIC SAFETY

- Increase street safety and reduce crime.
 1. Recognize victim's rights.
 2. Implement speedy trials and appeals.
 3. Limit appeals to substantive issues.
 4. Fund mandates to local law enforcement agencies.

It is imperative that our local businesses and professionals continue to be involved in the governing process. The Grays Harbor Chamber will advocate on behalf of our members and inform them of the issues. The Grays Harbor Chamber of Commerce is the oldest and largest business association in Grays Harbor County. Our 650 members employ more than 5,000 men and women in Aberdeen, Cosmopolis, Hoquiam, and the County of Grays Harbor.

THE PURPOSE of the Grays Harbor Chamber of Commerce is “To make Grays Harbor a better place to live, visit and transact business.” We collaborate to create a positive business climate in which business can earn a fair profit, create jobs and improve our quality of life.

THE MISSION of the Government Affairs Committee is “To work to create a positive climate in which our businesses can earn a fair profit and create jobs.”

OUR SHARED VISION...A positive business climate is one in which business, the local community and governments develop a non-adversarial partnership working for win-win solutions.

A HEALTHY BUSINESS CLIMATE will be free of regulations that are redundant and unnecessary for the well being of the employees, the public, or the environment.

A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS CLIMATE will value “*People, Planet and Profit*”

THIS VIABLE CLIMATE is one in which encumbrances, regulations, fees and taxes are not onerous, and do not penalize or prohibit the free exercise of commerce.

A POSITIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE is one in which investment in Grays Harbor is encouraged and rewarded; and in which government’s involvement is efficient, consistent, understandable, and based upon true need with demonstrable benefits.

What We Value As An Organization Sets The Criteria That Directs Our Legislative Program...

“WE BELIEVE deeply in government. We do not look at government as a necessary evil. All civilized societies have some form of government. Government is the mechanism we use to make communal decisions...It is the way we provide services that benefit all our people...It is the way we solve collective problems facing American society today.

WE BELIEVE that civilized society cannot function effectively without effective government

WE BELIEVE that the people who work in government are not the problem; the system in which they work is the problem.

WE BELIEVE deeply in equity – in equal opportunity for all “Americans.” [Above Beliefs quoted from Pg. XVIII REINVENTING GOVERNMENT by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler.]

WE BELIEVE that while government is necessary; it must be limited, efficient, and responsive to the people.

WE BELIEVE in the free, competitive, private enterprise system. History and current events prove no system brings freedom and prosperity to everyone in the society as well as our economic system.

WE BELIEVE in business and industry. Succeeding, prospering businesses pay the way for every program, government aid, and citizens’ livelihood. Without successful business there are no dollars for taxes, nor are there funds to support any government, private, not-for-profit, charitable or humanitarian program. Without successful business there is no capital for wages, food, housing, education, or medical care.

WE BELIEVE in our community. Here, we put people first. Quality of life is an issue of great importance to business and the Chamber. Our neighborhoods must be safe and healthy places in which to live, work, and play. Education, public safety, culture, health care, a sound environment, and recreational opportunities are important in this community.

WE BELIEVE in the responsibility of every citizen. It is our responsibility to provide public policy by participating in government. We must increase responsiveness of government to the needs of citizens, communities and business.

WE BELIEVE It Is Imperative That Our Local Businesses And Professionals Continue To Be Involved In The Governing Process. The Grays Harbor Chamber will advocate on behalf of our members and inform them of the issues. The Grays Harbor Chamber of Commerce is the oldest and largest business association in Grays Harbor County. Our 650 members employ more than 7,000 men and women in “Aberdeen, Cosmopolis, Hoquiam, and the County of Grays Harbor.