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**2025**

**LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

 **www.vawest.org**

**About VA West**

VA West is a business and legislative coalition comprised of 15 chambers in central, southside, Shenandoah valley, Top of, and western Virginia, representing over 5,000 businesses and covering over 8,000 square miles. VA West supports public policies that strengthen free enterprise and regional collaboration efforts that promote economic development. VA West also supports the vision of Blueprint 2030 & 2035 from the Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

**Membership**

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| Bedford Area Chamber Danville-Pittsylvania County ChamberGreater Augusta Regional ChamberHalifax County Chamber Harrisonburg-Rockingham ChamberLexington-Rockbridge ChamberLynchburg Regional BusinessAllianceMartinsville & Henry County Chamber  | Roanoke Regional ChamberSalem-Roanoke County ChamberShenandoah County Chamber Smith Mountain Lake Regional ChamberTop of Virginia Regional ChamberChamber of the Two Virginias Wytheville, Wythe, Bland Chamber |

**Representation**

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| --- | --- |
| Delegate Jed ArnoldDelegate Terry L. Austin Delegate Jason BallardDelegate Ellen CampbellDelegate Will DavisDelegate Todd GilbertDelegate Tim GriffinDelegate Daniel W. Marshall IIIDelegate Joseph P. McNamaraDelegate James W. MorefieldDelegate Delores OatesDelegate Chris ObenshainDelegate Eric PhillipsDelegate Sam RasoulDelegate Chris RunionDelegate Wendell WalkerDelegate Tommy Wright Jr.Delegate Bill WileyDelegate Wren WilliamsDelegate Tony O. WiltDelegate Eric Zehr | Senator Creigh DeedsSenator Timmy FrenchSenator Travis HackworthSenator Chris HeadSenator Tammy MulchiSenator Mark ObenshainSenator Mark PeakeSenator Bill StanleySenator David Suetterlein  |

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**economic Development & regionalism**

VA West is strongly committed to results-oriented programs that attract investment in technology infrastructure, enhance regional economic development planning and workforce training, and promote cooperative city and county efforts to maintain or attract job growth to the Piedmont, Southside, Southwestern, Shenandoah Valley, and Western Virginia. **VA WEST SUPPORTS**:

* Continued support for additional Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) funding to expand affordable broadband and telecommunication services in unserved areas
* Funding for economic development programs available through the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and GO Virginia, especially as it pertains to site identification and development
* Tax reform measures to strengthen and defend Virginia’s business climate
* JLARC studies as applicable
* Protection of Virginia’s Right-to-Work laws
* Reducing the disparate impact that minimum wage increases have on small businesses--especially in retail and hospitality--by encouraging and sharing innovative wage and benefit models that exist across the state for employees
* Preventing the erosion of the mission and the composition of the Tobacco Commission and ensuring that the Commission provides funding for economic development opportunities only to those projects located in the original tobacco region footprint
* All in on all types and forms of energy. This includes Governor Youngkin’s energy plan

VA West recognizes the vital importance of maintaining and developing new and innovative workforce and job development programs to enhance and attract human capital. **VA WEST SUPPORTS:**

* VECF initiatives and the VBREE coalition
* Initiatives that strengthen connections among students, parents, educators, and guidance counselors of career and technical education (CTE) opportunities and regionally in-demand careers
* Efforts to improve coordination between Virginia’s employers, job training programs, education communities, and decision-making bodies to meet industry, workforce, and student needs
* Innovative strategies to ensure our system of public education remains competitive nationally and worldwide
* Funding for regional career and technical education communities
* Emphasis on science, technology, engineering, math and health (STEM-H) courses in K-12 and Virginia’s colleges and universities, in addition to coursework in areas of business and economics to encourage the next generation of small business owners
* Responsible and safe implementation of recreational marijuana regulations, that includes “lessons learned” from other states and how to mitigate corresponding implications for the business community
* The Virginia Values Veterans V3 program, the Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP) and credentialing opportunities to connect veterans and their families to employers
* Investment in job training, education, and in-demand skills as means to higher earning potential
* Exploration of innovative ways to incentivize developers that produce affordable housing to fulfill workforce needs

**Workforce Development & Education**

**healthcare**

VA West remains concerned about the uncertainty surrounding the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and its impact on Virginia’s business community. VA West believes steps must be taken to limit the shifting of uncompensated care onto the business community and other unsubsidized users of Virginia’s hospitals and health care providers. Additionally, VA West believes in taking steps to ensure future public health emergencies have a less negative effect on our economy. **VA WEST SUPPORTS:**

* The Wise Choice Health Alliance
* Initiatives and additional resources to address the future of mental and behavioral health treatment and public education in the Commonwealth
* Incentivizing domestic manufacture of critical medical equipment and pharmaceuticals to prevent future supply chain disruptions
* Alignment of emergency declarations from the state and federal governments with streamlined and consistent directives to ensure consistent, clear, and fair rules that business owners and employees are able to follow without jeopardizing their businesses
* Monitoring regulatory burden
* Monitoring reciprocity between state lines

Transportation is a core service of government that is critical for economic development and facilitating the efficient delivery of goods and services. The Commonwealth must remain pro-active in meeting the challenge of growing demand on its aging infrastructure. **VA WEST SUPPORTS** a coordinated strategic transportation plan, to include**:**

* The I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan’s (CIP)
* Expansion of Amtrak passenger rail and continued exploration of expansion to Bristol, Christiansburg, & beyond
* A regional intermodal freight facility
* Continued funding and additional VDOT SMART SCALE analysis to meet transportation needs in our VA West communities
* Initiatives to expand air service at regional airports in our VA West communities.
* Funding for construction and improvements to the Southern Connector roadway
* Funding for continued improvement of Route 58

**transportation**