

Chamber Mission

The mission of the Beckley-Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce is to build a vibrant community through programs of advocacy, public awareness, and policy development.

Government Affairs Division-Key Objectives

Communicate to elected officials our positions on legislative issues; offer assistance in monitoring good business legislation; to generally be the liaison between government and the business community in matters where governmental decisions affect business in our region, state, and nation. Legislative Positions are available at www.brccc.com

Civil Justice Reform

The Chamber supports civil justice reform that will restore balance and fairness to all citizens of our State, and which will create a business climate needed to attract new business venture capital and to support existing businesses.

Education

Education Positions are available as a separate brochure at the Chamber office or online at www.brccc.com.

Energy

Coal fired electrical generation is one of the least expensive method of producing electrical power. Low cost energy has been one of the chief drivers of the economy and the standard of living in our country.

The precipitous recent decline in the coal industry and the consequent detrimental effects of this severe loss of income are evident across the entire spectrum of business and education in our area. The United States is blessed with some of the world's outstanding coal reserves. At this time – when the United States is among the world's leading oil and natural gas producers – it is prudent to continue and to accelerate research into clean coal technology.

The Chamber supports continued research into clean coal technology, and supports a national energy policy that will continue to make low-cost coal-generated electrical power one of the pillars supporting our nation's economy and our standard of living.

Environment

Southern West Virginia is blessed with abundant natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities, and those blessings have been the catalyst for a thriving tourism industry. The Chamber recognizes that the sustainment and continued growth of our tourism industry is contingent upon the protection and preservation of our environment. Toward that end, the Chamber supports the enforcement of laws that prevent or

retard the despoliation of our environment by unregulated garbage and litter, by improperly treated sewage and industrial discharge, and by improperly reclaimed industrial sites.

Government Modernization

The Chamber recognizes transformative change is taking place in West Virginia's economy. Erosion of our tax base from the decline of our natural resource industries coupled by the inability to diversify our economy have created substantial revenue deficits at all levels of government in our state. These circumstances create many challenges delivering government services moving forward. The Chamber supports public sector policies which promote and enable the modernization of government at all levels. West Virginia has tremendous opportunity to benefit by implementing efficiencies that have already taken place in both the business world and neighboring localities. Government modernization can create an atmosphere in which our citizens receive services faster, cheaper and better. While at the same time, modernization promotes a pro-growth economic climate.

Highway and Infrastructure Funding

The Chamber recognizes the critical role of highways and infrastructure in establishing the foundation for a vibrant economy. Recent studies have documented inadequate funding levels to sustain our existing highway network while making new investments in priority roadways, water, sewer, and broadband projects infeasible.

The Chamber supports sustainable funding solutions for WV roadway and other infrastructure. Solutions should incorporate recommendations of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation and be structured to strategically leverage funds from the Federal Transportation Bill. The Chamber acknowledges that new revenue sources will be part of the solution. However, we also advocate that state leaders must recognize modern realities and pursue policy reforms which embrace both proven alternative approaches and new innovation, which make roadway and other infrastructure construction, operation and maintenance more timely and cost efficient.

In recognition of the funding challenges, we believe the removal of tolling ability on the WV Turnpike is imprudent. This populist proposal is shortsighted and will only exacerbate highway funding issues, reduce maintenance, and thus reduce safety on this important roadway. While we support sustaining tolling ability, we advocate for reforms to ensure toll revenues can be dedicated and leveraged to support the infrastructure needs within the counties contiguous to the existing toll road.

Public Employees Collective Bargaining

The Chamber strongly opposes any legislation that mandates taxpayer-funded entities to enter into collective bargaining agreements where wages, hours and working conditions are discussed.

Redistricting

The Chamber believes voters should pick their representatives and representatives should not pick their voters and calls for the Legislature to establish an independent redistricting commission ahead of the 2020 census. This commission should be charged with the drawing of legislative districts that allows for the drawing lines in a non partisan manner that to the greatest extent possible respect and align with county borders, municipalities and magisterial districts and communities of similar interest.

Substance Abuse

While the Chamber recognizes and supports the many steps that have been taken by the Legislature to address this issue, in particular the area of prescription drugs, more work is needed. Substance abuse, legal and illegal, is killing West Virginians and West Virginia's future. Funding for treatment and recovery is a critical need that must be addressed if West Virginia employers are to be able to find productive workers that are drug free.

Tax Reform

The work of Joint Select Committee on Tax Reform should continue and to look at ways to ensure that the taxes on citizens and businesses are fair and competitive with neighboring states and provide for stable and predictable sources of revenue for government. Any reforms proposed must be carefully planned so they do not significantly harm education and/or essential local government funding.

Turnpike Tolls

During the most recent fiscal year the West Virginia Turnpike generated approximately \$90,000,000 in toll revenue. The overwhelming majority of this toll revenue is spent on the maintenance of the West Virginia Turnpike. In addition, more than four million dollars of this toll revenue is spent to defray the cost of West Virginia State Police patrols of the West Virginia Turnpike. A significant portion of these toll revenues (76%) were paid by out-of-state or commercial travelers. Without these toll revenues the State would have to spread its already overstretched highway dollars to cover the maintenance of the 88 miles of the West Virginia Turnpike, in addition to maintaining the balance of the state road network, and also would have to find more than four million dollars to maintain the State Police at its current level of funding.

The Beckley-Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce is generally supportive of the continuation of tolls, provided that the toll revenues from the Turnpike are used to subsidize highway, road, or other projects in areas of the state burdened with a highway toll. Citizens of Raleigh and neighboring counties pay tolls in the amount of approximately \$21 million a year – tolls that only rarely impacts residents of other parts of the state. It would be inequitable to subsidize other

portions of the state with tolls paid by southeastern West Virginia residents.

The Chamber recognizes that the loss of these toll revenues would be devastating for West Virginia's highway system. Existing road fund revenues are at best marginally adequate to maintain West Virginia's roads and highways, apart from the West Virginia Turnpike. To burden the road fund with the additional requirement to maintain the Turnpike would be catastrophic. The State is extremely fortunate that 76% of tolls are paid by out-of-state or commercial travelers. Nonetheless, 24% of Turnpike tolls – more than \$21 million - were paid by West Virginia residents - primarily citizens of Raleigh, Fayette, Mercer, McDowell, Summers, Wyoming, Greenbrier and Monroe Counties. Accordingly the Beckley-Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce supports the continuation of tolls on the West Virginia Turnpike, subject to our stated concern regarding the usage of toll revenues.

Reaching your representatives and how the Chamber can help

Make Correspondence Easy

Keep contact information on hand at work, where you probably spend much of your time. Enter fax and phone numbers and email addresses in an easy-to-activate database. Don't struggle: a brief letter of concern can influence as well as a dissertation.

Use the Chamber as a Megaphone

Our Chamber is the region's strongest business voice, representing 700 member businesses. It quickly draws the attention of legislators and other officials.

Use Your Member Influence

Chamber functions provide a forum in which you may discuss public policy with the most influential members of our society. Formally or informally, it's a good way to express your opinion and educate others. Reporters routinely contact the Chamber to discuss public policy issues.

“Call to Action”

Our strongest means of communication is the **“Call to Action.”** During such a call, members immediately begin to fax and email representatives to express their opinions on particular issues.

The Legislative Positions & Guide to Utilizing Your Representatives is produced yearly by the Beckley-Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce. Contact the BRCCC at: (304) 252-7328, 1-877-987-3847, (304) 252-7373 fax,

Legislative Representatives

WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR

Governor Jim Justice

1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
State Capitol Building 1
Charleston, WV 25305

governor@wv.gov
1-888-438-2731
(304)558-2000
(304)342-7025 fax

U.S. SENATORS

U.S. Senator Joe Manchin, III

306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

senator@manchin.senate.gov
manchin.senate.gov
(202)224-3954 Washington, DC
(202)228-0002 fax DC

U.S. Senator Joe Manchin, III
900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 629
Charleston, WV 25302

(304)342-5855 Charleston, WV
(304)343-7144 fax WV

U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito

172 Russell Courtyard
Washington, D.C. 20510

(202)224-6472 Washington, DC
(202)224-7665 fax DC

U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito
500 Virginia Street, East
United Towers Suite 950
Charleston, WV 25304

(304)347-5372 Charleston, WV
(304)347-5371 fax WV

U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito
220 North Kanawha Street
Beckley, WV 25801

(304)253-7853 Beckley, WV

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Congressman Evan Jenkins

502 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

michael.thirico@mail.house.gov
(202)225-3452 Washington, DC
(202)225-9061 Fax DC

Congressman Evan Jenkins
223 Prince Street
Beckley, WV 25801

(304)250-6177
(304)250-6179 fax

Congressman Evan Jenkins
601 Federal St., Suite 1003
Elizabeth Kee Federal Building
Bluefield, WV 24701

(304)325-6800

Congressman Evan Jenkins
845 Fifth Avenue, Suite 314
Huntington, WV 25701

(304)522-2201 Huntington, WV
(304)529-5716 fax

WEST VIRGINIA SENATORS – 9TH DISTRICT

Sue Cline

West Virginia State Senate
216W State Capitol
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Charleston, WV 25305

Jeff Mullens

West Virginia State Senate
203W State Capitol
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Charleston, WV 25305

WEST VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES – 27TH DISTRICT

WEST VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES www.legis.state.wv.us
212-M State Capitol
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, WV 25305

District 27

Joe Ellington
Marty Gearheart
John H. Shott

District 30

Mick Bates

District 31

Karen "Lynne" Arvon

District 28

Ray Cooper
John O'Neal, IV

District 29

Ricky Moye

RALEIGH COUNTY COMMISSION

Linda Epling, Commissioner
Byrd E. White, III, Commissioner
David Tolliver, Commissioner
116 ½ N. Heber Street
Beckley, WV 25801

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(304)255-9146
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MAYOR OF BECKLEY

Robert Rappold
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Beckley, WV 25802-2514

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How A Bill Becomes State Law

STEP 1: PREPARING A BILL

Anyone can propose a bill to a legislator. As many as seven of the 100 delegates and all 34 senators may sponsor. To ensure proper form, it must also pass legislative council or the Office of Legislative Services.

After a draft is prepared, the sponsor submits the bill to the chamber's clerk, who assigns a number and presents it to the House Speaker or Senate President for reference to a committee.

STEP 2: COMMITTEE STUDY

Small groups of delegates are assigned to standing committees to examine bills in detail. After study, the committee files a written report, rejecting the bill or allowing it, or a committee substitute, to pass with or without amendment or recommendation. Some bills die in committee because of limited time.

STEP 3: FLOOR ACTION

If the committee presents the bill, the clerk will provide a summary on the floor and place it on a calendar for consideration. Toward the end of the session, a rules committee prioritizes remaining bills, adopting a "Special Calendar" for the most urgent.

Your bill will be read three times – first to alert the membership, then for a vote on committee and individual amendments, and finally for a vote on passage. If passed, it will be sent to the opposite house, where the process repeats.

If the second house passes the bill, it will be sent to the governor for approval. If the second house makes changes, the first house must concur. If the houses cannot agree, a conference committee of an equal number of members is named. If the committee reaches an agreement, both chambers must adopt their report and vote again on passage. If it cannot agree, another committee may be named, or the measure may die when the Legislature adjourns.

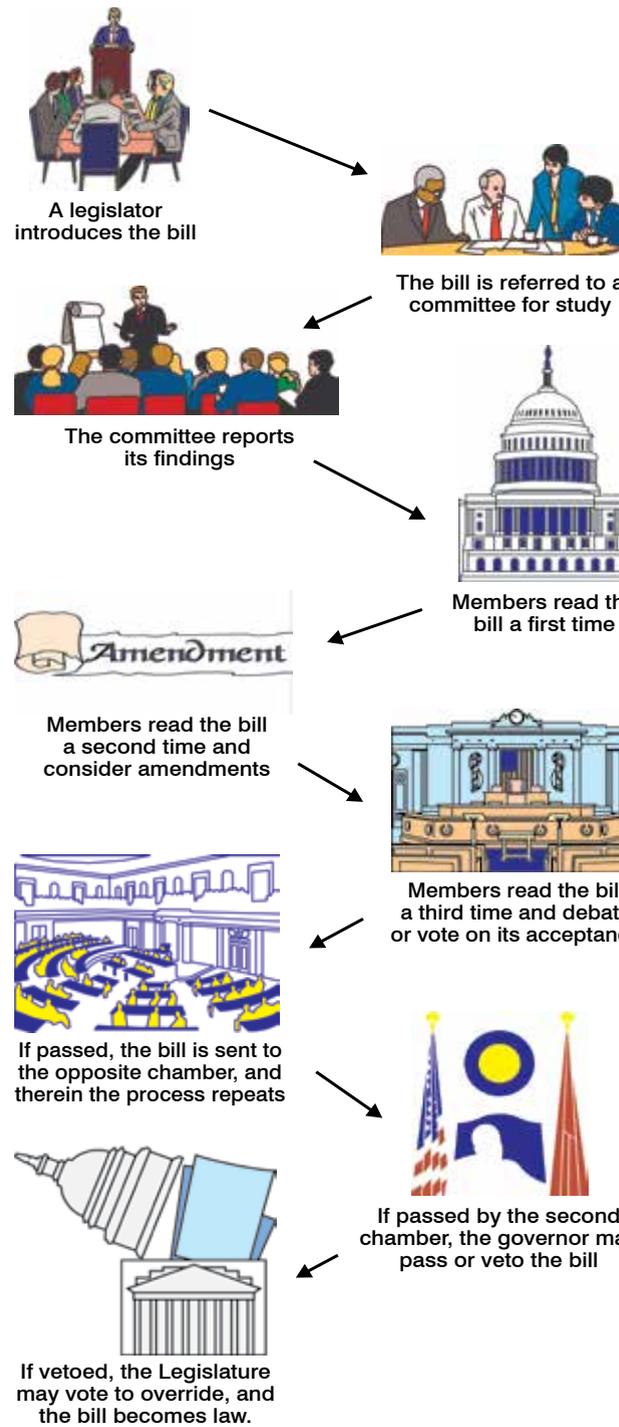
STEP 4: GUBERNATORIAL ACTION

If the bill passes both chambers, the governor has five days to approve or veto while the Legislature is in session and 15 days to act otherwise. (The governor must act within five days on budget and supplemental-appropriations bills, irregardless.)

If the governor does not act, the bill automatically becomes law. If he vetoes, a simple majority in both houses may pass the bill. (A two-thirds majority in both houses is needed to override budget and supplemental-appropriations vetoes.)

District 32

Kayla Kessenger
Shirley Love
Tom Fast



Monitoring Your Bill

The Legislature's Reference & Information Center provides ready access to bill status and calendars for both houses and can provide copies of bills. For information, call (304) 347-4836, or visit www.legis.state.wv.us

legislative positions

and guide to utilizing your representatives

