



Klamath County

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Lead. Connect. Advocate.

Government Affairs Committee

2016- 2019

Public Policy Agenda

Klamath County Chamber of Commerce
2016 - 2019 Government Affairs Policy Agenda

As the voice of business in Klamath County, the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce is committed to keeping Klamath County competitive and improving the business climate. One of the best ways we can achieve this goals is through the legislative process. The Chamber's Government Affairs Committee (GAC), created at the direction of the Chamber Board to advise and take action on legislative issues. The GAC is proud to work on behalf of the membership to advocate for policies and legislation that contribute to the growth and prosperity of Klamath County.

The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce is an issues based advocacy organization and does not support individuals seeking public office through the electoral process.

This policy manual reflects the general positions the Chamber addresses in any given year and allows the GAC and Chamber staff to be responsive to those issues requiring immediate responses.

Policy Agenda Statement of Purpose

The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce advocates for a business climate that is conducive to business retention and expansion, and believes the regulatory environment must be balanced and not burdensome for business.

The agenda is organized into the following categories:

Business Creation, Retention, Expansion and Recruitment

Education and Workforce Development

Environment, Energy and Regulation

Healthcare

Kingsley Field Retention and Expansion

Transportation and Infrastructure

Immigration

Under each category are state, federal and local priorities. To find out more or to get involved in the Chamber's Government Affairs efforts, Sign up through the Chamber's website at www.klamath.org.

Developing the Agenda

Each year, the GAC will identify, monitor and advocate legislative priorities on behalf of the membership and community. The GAC will set priorities for the coming years and develop a Government Affairs Public Policy Agenda to be presented to the membership and Board of Directors for final input and board adoption. The GAC also monitors issues that may uniquely impact the business community in Klamath County. Any Chamber member interested in government affairs can help develop the GAC agenda by forwarding thoughts, ideas or concerns to the Chamber office at inquiry@klamath.org.

Implementation:

Once the agenda is adopted, the GAC and Chamber staff will communicate priority issues to local, state and federal officials through the following means:

1. **Contact with Elected Officials:** The Chamber maintains an active relationship with County and City elected representatives, State and Federal delegations and their staffs. The Chamber meets with appropriate elected officials on an ongoing basis to discuss issues impacting the business community.
2. **Legislative Meetings:** The Chamber will regularly host legislative meetings for local, state and federal elected officials. The legislative agenda will be distributed to all attendees at the event. Those officials not in attendance will receive the legislative agenda by mail each year.
3. **Chamber staff and GAC members will attend local meetings of elected bodies whenever appropriate and act on behalf of the membership**
4. **From time to time the GAC will send surveys, legislative alerts, and calls for action to the membership as appropriate to ask for input, or letters, emails and telephone calls to elected officials on subjects outlined in the policy agenda.**

Process for Public Policy engagement:

The GAC and Chamber staff will generally follow the following process when providing support or opposition for issues of legislative or public policy.

1. Topics specifically defined in the Public Policy Agenda can be addressed by the Executive Director with a letter or phone call as deemed appropriate. The Executive Director can also provide letters of support for members, or partners, seeking grant funding or help from legislative bodies.
2. Support or opposition to topics not defined directly in the Public Policy Agenda will be initially vetted by the GAC for action. The committee can respond appropriately to issues the committee deems are part of its charter and have been generally addressed in the Public Policy Agenda. Letter and media releases under this category will be signed by the GAC Chair. The GAC Chair or Chamber Executive Director will be the contact for any follow up questions.
3. Support or opposition to topics that can be deemed potentially divisive for the membership or board, or topics not addressed in the Public Policy Agenda will be forwarded to the full Chamber Board of Directors for discussion and action.

2016 - 2019 Government Affairs Committee:

Todd Andres, Pacific Power

Dan Keppen, Dan Keppen & Associates

Kelley Minty Morris, Klamath County Commissioner

Tom Mallams, Klamath County Commissioner

Randy Shaw, Coldwell Banker Holman Premier Realty

Greg O'Sullivan, Klamath County Economic Development Association

Stan Gilbert, Klamath Basin Behavioral Health

Jodi Kucera, Mia & Pia's Pizzeria and Brewhouse

Rod Kucera, Mia & Pia's Pizzeria and Brewhouse

Rachael Spoon, State Farm Insurance

Darin Rutledge, Jeld-Wen

John Longley, CAP Commander

Lauren Jespersen, Sky Lakes Medical Center

Steve Vincent, Avista Corporation

Debbie Caldwell, Nibbley's – Caldwell Catering, Inc

Government Affairs Policy Agenda 2016 - 2019

GAC Initiative – A Framework for Rural Economic Success

The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce GAC has held discussions regarding starting an initiative to identify issues relevant to our community, and rural Oregon, to offer potential solutions to those issues. This initiative would be data driven, broadly based, and focused on local impacts. The final product would be a written “framework for success” that would be used to establish directed and cohesive leadership and advocacy on behalf of Klamath County.

Business Creation, Recruitment, Retention and Expansion

The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce supports legislation that prioritizes efforts to expand existing business and industry and attract new business, industry and jobs to Klamath County. In particular, the Chamber supports the expansion of growth clusters including; renewable and non-renewable energy production, medical services, natural resources (agriculture and forestry), manufacturing and the hospitality industry.

The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce supports legislation that positively impacts the profitability of local businesses and will actively oppose legislation, regulation and ordinances that negatively impact local business profitability.

The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce will work to foster a culture that promotes and rewards entrepreneurship, local business expansion, new technology development, and job creation.

The Chamber will actively support these efforts through education, advocacy, public relations, and marketing help, and will oppose regulations or efforts that seek to limit such legal and environmentally sound activities in the community.

The Chamber will work closely with local economic development partners to promote programs and initiatives that align with member interests and help local businesses succeed.

Local Economic Development Partners include:

- Klamath County Economic Development Association (KCEDA)
- South Central Oregon Economic Development District (SCOEDD)
- Discover Klamath
- Klamath County Development Corporation (KCDC)
- KCC - Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Klamath IDEA
- City of Klamath Falls
- Klamath County

Priorities include:

- Supporting efforts to reclaim and clean up blighted properties
- Tracking and responding on behalf of members and partners to legislation that increases the cost of doing business i.e., wage increases, unduly burdensome mandated benefits, business taxation legislation, measures, or initiatives, etc.
- Sharing information on potential funding opportunities that support member and partner efforts
- Identifying and responding to policy and legislation that could negatively impact local tourism based businesses and infrastructure

Education and Workforce Development

Klamath County is at a critical stage as it relates to providing the skills, talent and innovation required to drive our economy. Mobilizing the resources and leadership necessary to achieve excellence in academics and career preparation is one of the top priorities of the Chamber. The Chamber will advocate for changes necessary in primary and secondary schools to prepare all students for the careers of the future and work in partnership with organizations focused on workforce development and training.

Partners in Education and Workforce Development include:

- East Cascades Workforce Investment Board
- Klamath Community College
- Oregon Tech
- Oregon Worksource
- Klamath Falls City School District
- Klamath County School District
- KCEDA

Priorities Include:

- Opposing efforts that do not fully fund public education on a fair and equitable basis for all children.
- Supporting the efforts of local organizations i.e., Klamath Promise, focused on improving educational outcomes and building career or workforce pathways for individuals in Klamath County.
- Working with Statewide, regional, and local partners on improving the local workforce through traditional education, certified trainings, mentorships, community awareness, job creator support, and advocacy, to ensure all businesses can find the employees needed for success.
- Working with partners to improve funding for post-secondary schooling in Klamath County and the State of Oregon as a means to improve statewide per capita income and train the workforce of tomorrow with emphasis on fields that are applicable to jobs in Klamath County now and in the future.

- Working with partners to proactively support workforce development opportunities that serve economic development retention and expansion efforts.
- Working with partners to improve funding for post-secondary schooling in Klamath County and the State of Oregon as a means to improve statewide per capita income and train the workforce of tomorrow with emphasis on fields that are applicable to jobs in Klamath County now and in the future.

Environment, Energy and Regulation

The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce will advocate for environmental regulations that encourage and support a growing economy while balancing and protecting the region's quality of life. Environmental legislation should not unnecessarily increase the administrative burden, result in unnecessary regulations, project delays or become cost prohibitive to business or economic investment in Klamath County.

Priorities Include:

- Urging the development of a comprehensive environmental and energy policy that encourages wise use and management of natural resources.
- Working to ensure that Federal and State environmental regulations and legislation are based on widely accepted science, and that economic and community impacts are a legitimate part of any regulation review or new study.
- Partnering with local organizations in efforts to reduce air emissions and improve the region's air attainment status.
- Working with local governments to ensure a positive business climate with a special focus on ensuring business license fees and regulations are not over burdensome to business.

Healthcare & Wellness

The rising cost of healthcare directly impacts business. The Chamber will work to reduce healthcare costs for local businesses and educate the membership and community on healthcare issues.

Healthcare Priorities Include:

- The Chamber will be supportive of the efforts of the Klamath Falls Blue Zones Project to help develop a healthy workforce for members and the business community.
- Opposing any legislation that includes surtaxes on businesses. Additionally, the Chamber supports:
 - Incentives for employers to create wellness plans
 - Medical liability/tort reform
 - The ability to purchase insurance across state lines
 - Adoption of information technologies to establish electronic medical records, decision support mechanisms and claims processing.

Kingsley Field Retention and Expansion

Kingsley Field directly employs approximately 900 people in the Klamath Basin and its direct impact on the local economy surpasses \$86 million. The Chamber will support the ongoing mission at Kingsley Field and proactively partner to seek expansion of the mission and facility.

Land Use and Community Development Planning

The Chamber advocates for the adoption of land use policies that promote growth, and will work with County and City governments to promote better coordination and communications throughout Klamath County. The Chamber will also work to develop more uniform and consistent zoning regulations, and efficient growth oriented community development ordinances throughout the City of Klamath Falls and Klamath County.

Transportation & Infrastructure

Modern, up-to-date infrastructure must be maintained for the region to effectively compete in the global marketplace. Without the ability to move goods and services to customers, businesses cannot compete and succeed. The Chamber will take an active role in supporting funding to build infrastructure in Klamath County that improves our competitive advantage to retain local business and attract new investment.

Priorities Include:

- Promoting a comprehensive regional strategy for Hwy 97 that focuses on moving goods and services in a safe and efficient manner, improving recreational opportunities, increasing tourism traffic, and creating supportive partnerships from Weed, CA to The Dalles, OR.
- Supporting public policies that encourage the deployment of next-generation broadband networks, support rural business and community access to high-speed internet, maintain affordability, and apply consistent regulation to competing technologies and services.
- Supporting the development of a new comprehensive federal plan to address the infrastructure and transportation needs of the nation, to ensure the effective and efficient movement of commerce and plans for future increased capacity.
- Continuing to proactively work to expand low cost air service to the area and position the Crater Lake - Klamath Regional Airport as a major entry point for Klamath County and Southern Oregon.
- Work with tourism partners to ensure all modes of transportation available to visitors are supported and expanded whenever possible.
- Supporting continued, and new, development of infrastructure projects such as, electricity, roads, airports, water systems, pipelines and telecommunications, as foundational to rebuilding our local economy. Our support is not limited to public funding but also to private utilities and investors that will support growth and economic development.

Immigration

The Chamber supports comprehensive immigration efforts at the federal level to ensure a uniform approach and immigration laws that are fair and balanced. These laws must meet the needs of a growing economy and the test of common sense.

Federal Elected Officials serving Oregon

Senator Ron Wyden
Washington DC Address:
223 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510
1.202.224.5244
E-mail: <http://wyden.senate.gov/contact>
Web: <http://wyden.senate.gov>

Local contact information:
1220 SW 3rd Ave., Ste. 585, Portland OR 97204
503.326.7525

Senator Jeff Merkley
Washington DC Address:
B 40B Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510
1.202.224.3753
E-mail: senator@merkley.senate.gov
Web: <http://merkley.senate.gov>

Local contact information:
121 SW Salmon St., Ste. 1250, Portland, OR 97204
503.326.3386

United States Senator

Envelope: The Honorable (Name)

Salutation: Dear Senator (Name):

U.S. Representative Greg Walden

SOUTHERN OREGON OFFICE:
843 East Main Street, Ste 400
Medford, OR 97504
Main: 541-776-4646
Fax: 541-779-0204
Toll free: 800-533-3303

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE:
2182 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Main: 202-225-6730
Fax: 202-225-5774

U.S. Representative (House)

Envelope: The Honorable (Name)

Salutation: Dear Representative (Name):

State Elected Officials serving Klamath County

Governor Kate Brown
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, Oregon 97301-4047

GOVERNOR

Envelope: The Honorable _____ Governor, State of Oregon

Salutation: Dear Governor _____: or Dear Sir/Madam:

Senator Doug Whitsett
District: 28
Capitol Phone: 503-986-1728
District Phone: 541-883-4006
Capitol Address: 900 Court St NE, S-303, Salem, OR, 97301
District Office Address: 23131 N. Poe Valley Road, Klamath Falls, OR, 97603
Email: sen.dougwhitsett@state.or.us
Website: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/whitsett>

STATE SENATOR

Envelope: The Honorable _____ State Senate

Salutation: Dear Senator _____: or Dear Sir/Madam:

Representative Gail Whitsett
District: 56
Capitol Phone: 503-986-1456
Capitol Address: 900 Court St NE, H-474, Salem, OR 97301
Email: Rep.GailWhitsett@state.or.us
Website: <http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/whitsettg>

Representative Mike McLane
District: 55
Capitol Phone: 503-986-1455
Capitol Address: 900 Court St NE, H-385, Salem, OR, 97301
Email: rep.mikemclane@state.or.us
Website: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/mclane>

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Envelope: The Honorable _____ State House of Representatives

Salutation: Dear Representative _____: or Dear Sir/Madam: