



BAY AREA

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

People. Partnerships. Progress.

2019 POLICY POSITIONS



SAGINAW BAY WATERSHED

We recognize that the Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay are valuable natural and economic resources to the Bay Area.

We support the promotion of regulations to maintain and preserve the Saginaw Bay and Saginaw River. We support the fight against invasive species that puts restoration, protection and preservation of these lands at the forefront, while increasing shoreline access.

ACTIVITIES & TOURISM

We continue support for advancements to be made to the Saginaw Bay Area that will enhance activities to promote and aid tourism in our area.

We support action plans for activities and tourism in Bay County. Including plans to improve the Saginaw Bay shoreline for public access. As we advocate for improvements to the region's shoreline recreation there will be subsequent benefit for the business community in Bay County.

AGRICULTURE/AGRIBUSINESS

We support the success of farmers and their efforts in sustainable conservation.

With a growing percentage of crops demanded in the last decade, the Bay Area is home to a higher concentration of agriculture than anywhere in the country. We advocate for laws and regulations that strengthen local family farms and advance agribusiness, including open trade and markets for Michigan grown products.

ENERGY

Energy is foundational to a strong economy. We support all forms of cleaner energy and energy efficiency that provides reliability and drives Michigan's economy forward.

The Bay Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes energy as a leading component of long-term economic growth. We must continue efforts to improve accessible and affordable energy.

TECHNOLOGY

We encourage those technological programs that will help to improve efficiency and reliability giving businesses a competitive edge.

As the worldwide reliance on technology grows, every corner of the state needs to stay connected. Connectivity plays a fundamental role in business success.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We advocate for economic development in all sectors. We support policies at the local, state and national levels that will help the Bay Area attract, retain and expand business in the region.

At the forefront of our mission, economic development is a top priority. Our goal is to retain, promote and support our members. Bay County is a great home for any business to thrive with a skilled labor force, quality education and robust natural resources. With the unique landscape of the Great Lakes Bay Region, access through waterways is a prominent factor for trade in the open market economy.

The Bay Area holds special historical significance especially in downtown. The Bay Area Chamber of Commerce will advocate for streamlining and simplifying the development process of historic properties on Midland Street and the business district.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

We support efforts to improve infrastructure in the Great Lakes Bay Region. Without satisfactory infrastructure businesses in the area can suffer.

The Bay Area Chamber of Commerce supports increased state and federal funding for infrastructure improvements, including roads, bridges and water sewer system. Improving and creating easy accessibility to businesses in the community will keep the economy thriving in the Great Lakes Bay Region.

BRIDGES

We support a sustainable, long-term solution for Independence and Liberty Bridges that does not impede continued economic growth and activity.

Independence and Liberty Bridges, operated by the city of Bay City, are in need of more than \$8 million in long-term repairs and maintenance. The Bay Area Chamber of Commerce will continue to work with local, state and federal officials to seek partial funding for these repairs. The Chamber will support solutions that are not overly cumbersome to the business climate in the region and provide certainty to the business community.

HEALTH SERVICES

We support the funding of programs to help members of the community to live a healthy life. While promoting a greater wellbeing we advocate for citizens to cycle back into the labor market.

Mental Health & Substance Abuse

We support programs such as the recent Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018 and Synthetics Trafficking and Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act to help those people with addiction reclaim their lives. Between 1999 and 2015, 20% of men's workforce has declined due to this problem. We advocate for training programs and rehabilitation services of these people to be able to transition in to employment.

Recreational Marijuana

Employers should retain the right to refuse to hire, fire, or suspend those under the influence.

EDUCATION

We support funding and policies in K–12 education, career readiness programs, skilled trade programs, post–secondary education and continuing education to enrich the talent base in our community.

K–12

We support the Marshall Plan to achieve world class curricula in K–12 by creating new classes to fill gaps that are not covered in the current curriculum.

We support Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) education funding as it is important for the future of companies as the hi–tech industry is growing in every field. The goal is train youth for high–skill jobs the community will be looking for in the coming generations.

The Bay Area Chamber of Commerce supports Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs across the region. The goal of CTE is to ensure that 9–12 students have strong academic foundations, as well as specific technical skills so that they may enter and succeed in their chosen career and/or post secondary program.

Post–Secondary

We support a high quality, affordable and accessible post–secondary educational sector which aligns curriculum and training workforce needs.

Affordable Higher Education

We support providing an affordable way for students to receive a post–secondary education. Which increases access for first–generation students and in turn drives economic growth in the community. Making higher education accessible and affordable will keep college graduate rates on the rise in Bay County.

Local programs through collaboration with the Bay Commitment College Access Network and the Bay Area Community Foundation allows students in the Bay Region have access to scholarship funds to be able to receive a higher education.

EDUCATION cont.

Investment in Continued Education and Lifelong Learning

We advocate for the continued education and lifelong learning for those already in the workforce. We support federal and state appropriations which assist with continued workforce development through agencies.

There are opportunities to work with counselors and teachers in school systems to better understand how to aid future generations on the path they choose to embark upon. Additionally, the current Michigan Innovative Teacher Corps allows teachers to have an influence by meeting with policymakers, mentoring new teachers and providing professional development across Michigan.

SKILLED TRADE & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

We support the funding of skilled trades programs, career readiness and workforce development initiatives that help to retain and attract talent to the Bay Region.

Career Readiness

We support financial literacy, leadership and career exploration.

The Bay Area ISD Career Center works with area high schools to offer career readiness and workforce training for the students to have training before leaving high school.

Programs such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) help to prepare students both academically and with skill training in order ready them for the workforce and/or higher education.

In addition, we support innovative efforts to grow the skilled trades workforce during the next decade.