



## **Legislative Agenda**

*Approved by the Board of Directors  
November 10th, 2020*

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## President/CEO Message

November 10, 2020

Dear Chamber Member:

The Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce prides itself upon being a 5-star accredited Chamber, as certified by the United States Chamber of Commerce. This is a prestigious honor that is only received by 1 percent of Chambers of Commerce nationwide.

One of the main criteria to be an accredited Chamber of Commerce is to be involved in Government Affairs and Political Action. This document, the Chamber's Legislative Agenda, is the roadmap for our political and government affairs strategy. It outlines what we believe, who the representatives are we communicate those beliefs to, and by what methods we plan to communicate those beliefs.

This document is approved annually by the Board of Directors to give staff the guidance they need to advocate on your behalf with our local, state and federal officials. Please take the time to read through the following plan to learn about the Chamber's political plan for 2021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle Borja". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".

Danielle Borja, MBA  
President/CEO  
Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce

## Board of Directors

The Board of the Directors of the Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce is made up of Chamber members, who comprise the leadership of businesses from the cities of Agoura Hills, Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village. They are elected by the membership of the Chamber annually to represent the interests of the entire membership.

### Executive Committee



**Chair**

**Tom Cohen**

Partner

Cohen, Begun & Deck LLP



**Danielle Borja**

*President / CEO*

Greater Conejo Valley Chamber  
of Commerce



**Chair Emeritus**

**Don Philipson**

CEO

ePro Marketing



**Chair-Elect**  
**Natalie Yanez**  
Realtor  
eXp Realty



**Chair Emeritus / Secretary**

**Matt Midura**

Associate VP for Integrated  
Marketing and Communications

Pepperdine University



**Treasurer**  
**Jill Haney**  
VP / Branch Manager  
**Montecito Bank & Trust**



**Director At Large**  
**Elaine Salewske**  
Director of Responsibility  
Takeda Pharmaceutical



**Director At Large**  
**Lisa Safaeinili**  
Executive Director  
**Westminister Free Clinic**



**Ed Sahakian**  
Chief Lending Officer  
Ventura County Credit Union

## Directors



**Adam Antoniskis**

Sr. Manager, Property  
Management

The Oaks Shopping Center



**David Barnett**

Director of Sales & Marketing  
Hyatt Regency Westlake



**Steve Bertram**

Senior Vice President, Global  
Human Resources

Atara Biotherapeutics



**Redonna Carpenter-Woods**

Senior Vice President

Bank of America Merrill Lynch



**Captain Jeff Chism**

Naval Base Ventura County



**Monique Corridori**

Director, Professional Learning  
Services  
Corwin, A SAGE Company



**Stacy Diaz**

Executive VP Human Resources  
PennyMAC



**Mike Dutra**

President  
Candu Graphics



**Darla Everett**

Senior Manager, Corporate Affairs  
Amgen



**Kinsie Flame**

Co-owner  
Jacob Flame's Tang Soo Do  
University



**Johnathan Franklin**

Community Affairs &  
Engagement  
Los Angeles Rams



**Eva Gomez**

Director of Annual Giving and  
Special Gifts  
CSU Channel Islands



**Jason Herbison**  
VP Employee Benefits  
HUB International



**William Koehler**  
Attorney at Law  
Law Offices of William D.  
Koehler

**Javier LaFianza**  
Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership



**Mark La Valle**  
Owner  
Hatch Café & Market

**Austin Manning**  
Chief Operating Officer  
Los Robles Health System



**Andrea McClellan**  
Development Director  
Boy Scouts of America  
Ventura County Council



**Dianne McKay**  
President  
Mustang Marketing

**Douglas Messner**

*Branch Manager and Vice  
President*  
Ameriprise Financial



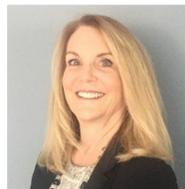
**Eddie Moore**  
Chief Development Officer  
Oaks Christian School



**Marja Price**  
Property Manager  
Janss Marketplace



**Milla Shaposhnik**  
Vice President Branch Manager  
Union Bank



**Candice Shehorn**  
Owner  
Key Pointe Asset Management,  
Inc.

**Kimberly Tharpe**  
VP – Center Manager  
Citizens Business Bank -  
Camarillo



**Ryan Van Ommeran**  
Associate Vice President of  
Planning and Services  
California Lutheran  
University



**Felix Wang**  
General Manager  
Best Western Thousand  
Oaks Inn



**Joe Weber**  
Area Vice President, Sales  
Chatsworth Products, Inc



**Sepideh Yeoh**  
Speaker, Author, Coach  
Un1tee

## **Development Process**

A thorough process has been established to draft and approve the Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce Legislative Agenda.

### **Input from other organizations**

Since the Chamber of Commerce by definition doesn't operate in a silo, and to ensure that our mission, where possible overlaps with the missions of our allied organizations, the Chamber of Commerce solicits input. There are many methods used to solicit input:

- Input from educational institutions (California Lutheran University, Pepperdine University, California State University Channel Islands)
- Input from local industry leaders (Valley Industry and Commerce Association, Thousand Oaks Boulevard Association, Ventura County Economic Development Association)
- Input from Chamber industry leaders (United States Chamber of Commerce, California Chamber of Commerce, Western Association of Chamber Executives, Chambers of Commerce Alliance of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties)

### **Staff Development of Draft Plan**

After receiving input from various stakeholders, the Chamber of Commerce staff, under the guidance of the President/CEO and the Chamber of Commerce Board Chair, develop the draft Legislative Agenda.

### **Approval by the Board of Directors**

The Legislative Agenda is submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. This typically happens at the annual Board of Directors retreat. The Board of Directors reviews the Legislative Agenda, makes changes and approves the agenda.

This allows staff to communicate the position of the Chamber of Commerce to elected officials with the backing of the entire membership.

## **Distribution to Chamber Members, Elected Officials and the Public**

After the final approval of the Legislative Agenda, the document is sent to all of the appropriate stakeholders including the following:

- It is posted on the Chamber's website at [www.ConejoChamber.org](http://www.ConejoChamber.org)
- It is sent in the Chamber's Weekly View email to the entire Chamber membership
- It is emailed directly to local, state and federal elected officials
- It is sent to the local media via a press release
- It is posted on the Chamber's Social Media

## **Legislative Positions**

These are the legislative positions of the members of the Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce. We will advocate in favor of these positions to promote and grow the 900 businesses in our membership and the tens of thousands of local residents who are employed by our members.

### **Local Government**

#### **Thousand Oaks Boulevard Specific Plan**

We fully supported the approval of the Thousand Oaks Boulevard Specific Plan and the amendments to allow for increased development. We encourage the Thousand Oaks Planning Commission and City Council to approve using housing units available under Measure E for mixed use development in the area of the specific plan.

#### **Business License Fees**

We oppose any increases to the cost to obtain business licenses in our local cities.

### **State Government**

#### **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

We oppose use of CEQA to prevent reasonable development and oppose additional rules that increase the impact CEQA has upon future development.

#### **Climate Change**

We support a balanced approach to climate change; one in which government supports manufacturing while not needlessly harming the environment.

#### **Education**

We support developing strong local public schools that train students for the jobs of tomorrow. We do not support additional efforts to raise taxes for education at the state level, as this is more efficiently done at the local level through property tax measures approved by local voters.

## **Energy**

We support an all of the above approach to energy production: one that includes traditional forms of energy production and renewables.

## **Health Care**

We oppose legislation that will increase the direct costs or indirect costs to provide healthcare for the employees of our businesses. We believe current laws providing paid sick leave to employees is adequate.

## **Information Security**

We support the ability of businesses to request information about their employees, applicants for employment and customers where appropriate for use in their business. We believe that information about employees or applicants is proprietary.

## **Internet/Communications Technology**

We support providing resources and streamlining processes to improve our internet and data infrastructure.

## **Labor and Employment: Classifying Employees**

We support allowing employers to hire independent contractors in lieu of employees when appropriate to allow small businesses to grow and larger businesses to hire for specific projects. We oppose efforts by labor unions and others to increase the number of employees who cannot be downsized at a business owner's discretion.

We oppose future increases in the minimum wage that will hinder businesses ability to maintain their operations or to expand.

## **Legal Reform**

We support efforts to prevent lawsuit abuse, where lawyers and activist groups sue a business and request legal fees as part of a settlement. We oppose allowing lawsuits where there is no loss or victim. We support the use of arbitration to settle legal disputes.

## **Mandates on Businesses**

We support allowing businesses to choose what benefits they bestow upon their employees. We opposed mandating these benefits. We also oppose mandates in business practices that needlessly increase costs for business owners.

**Taxation: Tax Reform**

We support efforts to distribute fairly the tax burden of the State of California. We oppose a sales tax on services.

**Taxation: Attacks on Proposition 13**

We support Proposition 13 and oppose efforts to change the law, including the split-roll property tax.

**Transportation**

We support efforts to increase financing for transportation infrastructure at both the state and local level with an emphasis on the local level. Increases to state taxes are less likely to see benefit to 101 and 23 freeways in Conejo Valley.

**Unemployment Insurance**

We support the existing unemployment insurance program and its current rate levels. We do not support efforts to increase employer rates for unemployment insurance.

**Water**

We want clean water in our communities. We believe the Clean Water Act provides a good balance of safety and increased cost. We support the use of recycled potable water in our water system.

**Workers' Compensation**

We support efforts at the state level to meaningfully reform the Workers' Compensation program and to reduce the already high costs to employers.

## **Federal Government**

### **Health Care**

We oppose legislation that will increase the direct costs or indirect costs to provide healthcare for the employees of our businesses.

### **Immigration Reform**

We support a comprehensive path to citizenship that will allow immigrants of all skill levels to meet the needs of the growing American workforce. We support having programs like E-Verify in place to ensure that employers do not knowingly hire illegal immigrants.

### **Regulation**

We support efforts to reduce the amount of federal rules and regulations generated by federal agencies that hinder economic development.

### **Trade**

We support efforts to make international trade easier for both importers and exporters of goods, including free trade agreements. We support the continued authorization of the Export-Import Bank.

## **COVID-19 Emergency**

The Chamber recognizes that minimizing the spread of COVID-19 is good for business.

We support reasonable restrictions like mask usage and social distancing that allow businesses to safely operate. We do not support mandatory shutdowns of entire industries.

We do not believe that businesses have the ability to carry the financial burden of implementing COVID-19 mandates. We believe that public funding must be made available to help businesses comply with mandates.

We do not believe businesses should be held liable for risk to their customers and employees unless it can be proven that COVID-19 was contracted or spread in the workplace through negligent business practices.

## Summary

As the voice of business for the cities of Agoura Hills, Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village, the Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce intends to use both government affairs and political action to improve the business climate of the Conejo Valley.

Our Board of Directors, elected by the 900 members of our Chamber of Commerce, have approved this document to communicate the needs of our business community and have directed staff and the membership of the Chamber of Commerce to execute this plan.

Through collaboration with our local elected officials, whom we have strong relationships with, we intend to support legislation that benefits business and oppose legislation that will harm business.

## Contact

For more information about the Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce Legislative Agenda, contact Adam Haverstock, Director of Government Affairs & Tourism.

**Adam Haverstock**

*Director of Government Affairs and Tourism  
Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce*

*805-370-0035*

*ahaverstock@conejochamber.org*