



2023 GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AGENDA

I. QUEBEC-NEW YORK / BORDER --

- 1) We support the full return of normalcy at the U.S. – Canada border.
- 2) We must support, promote and defend the growing value of the U.S.-Canada economic relationship in all of its forms, strongly differentiating the increasingly integrated U.S. and Canadian economies from all other international trade relationships. We support generally all actions and policies conducive to broadening and deepening connectivity between the U.S. and Canada.
- 3) We remain fully committed to the vision and spirit of a "Port of Excellence" at our region's New York- Canadian border, supporting excellence in terms of facilities, technology, staffing, policies and the general maximization of fluidity by all means of transportation at all legal crossings.
- 4) We support the finalization and prioritization of new border crossing facilities at Rouses Point.
- 5) We seek commitment by both the U.S. and Canadian governments to the maximum feasible harmonization of regulations, immigration laws, procedures and requirements impacting cross border shipping and movement.
- 6) We call for bi-national implementation of a pre-clearance approach to Amtrak passengers between Montreal and New York City, including the finalization and implementation of plans for a U.S. Customs & Border Protection operation at Central Station in Montreal.
- 7) We oppose any transfer of northern border personnel and resources to the southern border.
- 8) We support continued progress toward the rehabilitation of the Ogdensburg international bridge.
- 9) We oppose new "Buy American" mandates in the U.S., at the federal or state level, which do not exempt Canada. We similarly oppose the imposition of tariffs on Canadian goods by the President, using the inappropriate pretext of national security.
- 10) We actively encourage and support bi-lingualism (English and French) for federal border related officers on the border with Quebec.
- 11) We remain opposed to any new exit controls at our shared border that would delay or impede border fluidity.

II. FEDERAL --

- 1) We oppose federal tax increases including any reversal of modified corporate and personal tax reductions enacted in 2017.
- 2) We support reversal of the elimination of State and Local Tax deductibility.
- 3) We support the principles of free trade, including the continued negotiation, approval and implementation of free trade agreements by the U.S., both bi-laterally and multi-laterally.
- 4) We generally support Immigration Reforms as developed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. This includes new provisions for temporary workers, restoration of HB-1 and other employment

related visa levels, and the avoidance of new fees or restrictions on various work visas including L-1's.

- 5) We generally support the positions of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce with regard to federal health care/health insurance reform or changes. We oppose variations of "Single Payer" at either the federal or state levels, supporting the preservation and enhancement of choice, competition, and innovation.
- 6) We oppose new federal mandates and regulations on employers.
- 7) On matters related to climate change, we generally support the positions and advocacy of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, including adherence to the following core principles:
 - a) Preserve American jobs and competitiveness of U.S. industry.
 - b) Provide an international, economy-wide approach, including developing nations.
 - c) Promote accelerated development and deployment of greenhouse gas reduction technology.
 - d) Reduce barriers to the development of climate friendly energy sources.
 - e) Promote energy conservation and efficiency.
- 8) Support for enhanced access to abundant supplies of clean, renewable energy in Canada including Quebec hydro-power,
- 9) We oppose Card Check, which would diminish current reliance on secret ballots for unionization.
- 10) We oppose "living wage" mandates at all levels.
- 11) We oppose any actions by the National Labor Relations Board to diminish the existing balance and fairness in employer-employee relations.
- 12) We support federal and state action to enhance access to affordable child care as a crucial workforce issue.
- 13) We support major federal investments in infrastructure, to include surface transportation, rail, airports, mass transit systems, and closing broadband and cell service gaps.
- 14) We support the positions and advocacy of Farm Bureau on behalf of agriculture generally and dairy farming in particular.
- 15) We call for set asides or other measures for federal Economic Development Administration funding programs to enhance opportunities for rural regions like the North Country vs. preferences for metro regions based on competition and program criteria.
- 16) We support full continuation of the Essential Air Service Program, and of restored eligibility for EAS airports for the Small Community Airports marketing grant program.
- 17) We support full funding of the new 5-year surface transportation bill with robust funding for rail and bus transportation.
- 18) We support full funding of federal workforce development programs as a vital component of the economy.
- 19) We support continued reauthorization and funding of the Export-Import Bank.
- 20) We support urgent actions at the federal and state levels to address the growing challenges of rural health care in the North Country, particularly as they relate to reimbursement/payment policies and schedules, and the resulting impact on the sustainability of rural health care services and on the recruitment and retention of practitioners.
- 21) We generally support measures conducive to supporting and securing the long-term future of Fort Drum.
- 22) We support federal action to make Plattsburgh International Airport a full Port of Entry for Customs, relieving the airport of current "user fees" to support U.S. Customs operations there.

III. NEW YORK STATE --

- 1) We oppose new taxes or fees to address any future state budget deficits.
- 2) We oppose the imposition of any new mandates on New York State employees, following a slew of costly new mandates over the last four years.
- 3) We support the Property Tax Cap and oppose all efforts to diminish or dilute it through modifications or exceptions.
- 4) New York State and the Adirondack Park Agency must provide for the reasonable infrastructure required to establish and sustain comprehensive broadband and wireless/cell service in unserved areas of the Adirondack Park of a quality, reliable nature to support modern communications including tele-education, tele-health, and business. The state must complete its commitment to universal broadband access and to the substantial enhancement of cell service in unserved areas of the North Country.
- 5) We support maximum state investments in the capital needs of the MTA and other state transit systems, with preferences for New York State content in transportation equipment when practical.
- 6) We support full implementation of cost saving reforms to the Workers Compensation program enacted in 2017, 2013 and 2007, as well as further cost saving reforms in the future.
- 7) We support repeal of the Ton Mileage Tax.
- 8) We express serious concerns related to the Farm Labor laws enacted in 2019, and in 2022, and call for strong sensitivity to the fragile economics and unique circumstances of upstate agriculture. We generally embrace and support the agenda of the New York State Farm Bureau.
- 9) We support programs and policies encouraging local governments, school districts and other public entities to identify and implement various forms of shared services, and to pursue mergers and dissolutions where practical.
- 10) We support the doctrine of "employment at will" and oppose any attempt to undermine an employer's right to employ and to terminate employment.
- 11) We support the repeal or substantial reform of the WICKS law.
- 12) We support substantial reform of the Scaffold Law, introducing meaningful determination of fault and contributory negligence.
- 13) We oppose any expansion of State Prevailing Wage requirements, and reform of existing prevailing wage practices to determine the "prevailing" wage in accord with State Labor Dept. data on "average" wages for an occupation in a region versus union wage levels.
- 14) We support a permanent state spending cap, limiting annual rises in state spending.
- 15) Reform the state's new Paid Family Leave and Paid Sick Leave mandates to exempt small employers and make other reasonable adjustments. Impose no further paid leave mandates.
- 16) Review state MWBE goals/requirements related to state grants and contracts, setting goals in alignment with circumstances, demographics and available MWBE subcontractors in each state economic development region.
- 17) We support lowering the thresholds for Excelsior Jobs Tax Credit program's definition of "regionally significant manufacturing projects" to the creation of 10 jobs and a capital investment of \$1 million or more. The current thresholds are 50 new jobs and \$5 million.
- 18) We oppose the use of "wage boards" to enact increases in minimum wages or for other purposes.
- 19) We support permanent extension of the state's brownfield remediation and redevelopment tax credits; reform of the program to include Superfund and RCRA sites; and expediting the review and approval of remediation plans.

- 20) We support differentiation of upstate from downstate in the enactment of state regulations and mandates, particularly impacting employers, and economic development, recognizing the economic differences, per the important precedent of state minimum wages.
- 21) We oppose any new regulations related to notice of working hours by employers for hourly employees.
- 22) In the context of the state initiative to permit farm-based brewing if all ingredients are New York sourced, we oppose any extension of this which might require malting to have been performed in state.
- 23) We support reforms in the Medicaid system designed at moderating and reducing costs, including elimination of the role of counties in financing Medicaid.
- 24) We oppose the enactment of any additional health insurance mandates by Albany or Washington.
- 25) We support the rollback of unnecessary rent restrictions imposed on the upstate housing market.
- 26) Reduce the property tax burden by significantly reducing unfunded mandates on counties, municipalities, and school districts.
- 27) Marijuana legalization must only proceed with appropriate protections for employers.
- 28) We call upon the state to strongly support the emerging electric bus market through active collaboration with Nova Bus, positioning New York in general and Plattsburgh as a national/international center for green bus and transportation equipment.
- 29) We support urgent measures by the federal and state governments to protect employers from the impending substantial increases in their cost for unemployment insurance resulting from the unavoidable impacts of the pandemic.
- 30) New York State must avoid severe Unemployment Insurance cost impacts on its employers stemming from its \$9 billion federal UI debt.
- 31) HERO act provisions must be triggered only in instances of a public health emergency and when its requirements would have a significant impact.
- 32) Climate policy actions that have the effect of increasing energy costs to consumers must be avoided.
- 33) As at the federal level, we oppose any state movement toward a single payer health insurance system. Attention should be focused instead on competition, cost control measures, and seeking to cover the 5% of New Yorkers uncovered.
- 34) We oppose an extended users act which would create liability for manufactured goods vis a vis recycling, driving industry from the state.
- 35) We oppose indexing of the state minimum wage and the loss of the landmark and well justified differential of the state minimum wage between downstate and upstate.
- 36) We oppose legislation to impose "Good Cause" requirements on landlords for evictions.
- 37) We support continued fall funding of the state's Tourism Marketing Matching funds.

IV. REGIONAL --

- 1) We support the Champlain Hudson Power Express Project, and other projects tapping available energy in Canada including hydro-power and natural gas. We support continued extensions of natural gas access in Clinton, Franklin, and Essex Counties.
- 2) We generally support wind and solar energy developments in the region, subject to general support locally.
- 3) We support continued robust federal funding for the Lake Champlain Basin Plan.

- 4) We support robust federal funding for the Northern Border Regional Commission.
- 5) We support the pursuit and development of affordable housing in the Adirondacks, and elsewhere in our region.
- 6) We support the future of the Strand Performing Arts Center and the Strand Center for the Arts as vital assets in support of downtown redevelopment, arts and culture, tourism, and workforce recruitment.
- 7) We support state and federal commitments for the preservation and restoration of rail in the Adirondacks.
- 8) We support on-going studies and planning efforts related to the enhancement of east-west transportation along the Route 11 corridor.
- 9) We support the active pursuit of national and international sports competitions in the Lake Placid region, including all actions required for the 2023 World University Games.
- 10) We support the development of enhanced access to venture capital in the North Country.
- 11) We support continued state investment in the Olympic sports venues in the Lake Placid area.
- 12) We support enactment of a state constitutional amendment to facilitate redevelopment of the former Camp Gabriels correctional facility.
- 13) We call for substantial reform of the property disposal process in New York State for former correctional facilities, including the retention of most contents and equipment and stronger focus on local economies and successful redevelopment.
- 14) We oppose at this time any further closures or downsizing of existing State Correctional Facilities in Clinton, Franklin or Essex Counties, this area having already seen disproportionate share of such actions in the last two rounds of closures.
- 15) We support restored/continued state funding for operation of the Beekmantown Welcome Center, and call for planning to replace the existing facility.
- 16) We generally oppose any efforts by the Adirondack Park Agency and/or other state regulatory agencies to apply new restrictions on private campground operations in the Adirondack Park.
- 17) Continued implementation of the Lake Champlain Basin Plan according to the letter and intent of the plan as agreed to, and in compliance with the guiding principles under which consensus was achieved, including: balance with economic interests and priorities; no unfunded mandates; no new regulations and no new regulatory structure; and emphasis on voluntary action and on local planning, approval and implementation; and the utilization of sound science including meaningful risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis.
- 18) Appropriate federal and state support for research, development and corrective action in response to nuisance non-native species in the Lake Champlain Basin, including but not limited to zebra mussels, lamprey eel control by lampricides and other means, Cormorants, and weeds such as water chestnut and milfoil among others.
- 19) We support the future of Trudeau Institute in Saranac Lake.
- 20) We generally support DRI implementation in Plattsburgh, Saranac Lake and Potsdam.
- 21) We support the Harison Place downtown development project proposed by Citizen Advocates in Malone.
- 22) We generally support the Adirondack issue agenda set forth by the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages.
- 23) We support a constitutional amendment to secure critical emergency communications in Hamilton County in tangent with an expansion of the state forest preserve.