



Legislative Priorities

The Shelton-Mason County Chamber makes it a point to be at the heart of important issues like recovery & resiliency, workforce development, quality of life, and civic engagement. We have built strong relationships with business leaders, government officials, and community stakeholders. We represent nearly 400 businesses and nonprofits and more than 6,000 employees. As we examine the challenges that lie ahead, we forward the following legislative priorities:

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR

It is paramount to provide regulatory certainty for employment and labor laws. Recent years have brought forth changes to minimum wage, overtime exempt salary wages, paid and family leave, and more. The creation of the Long-Term Care/WA Cares program and the strain of COVID on the unemployment system present significant challenges. There is a need to balance the wants and needs of employees with the right for employers to operate their business successfully.

INFRASTRUCTURE

It is important that the legislature protect projects such as the SR3 Freight Corridor, keeping it funded and on schedule. We also support improvements related to energy, water, air, transportation, and communications—such as broadband, water storage & reclamation solutions projects that will move our community forward.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Education is an ongoing priority for business. We advocate common sense solutions that address needs at the local level. We also continue to support education programs that prioritize alternatives serving all students, specifically those that focus on career readiness and technical education, such as the Shelton School District's academies. The Chamber also endorses strategies that develop and retain local talent.

RESOURCE INDUSTRIES

We recognize the economic, environmental, and social importance of forest products and aquaculture in our community and across the state. Natural resource policies should be science-based and provide regulatory stability. Because of the impact that resource industries have in Washington State, all discussions about carbon must be science-based and the economic impact taken under consideration when contemplating any legislation. The Chamber embraces the idea that being a responsible business owner requires recognizing the shared responsibility to be good stewards of our natural resources. The Chamber subscribes to the premise that environmental challenges and opportunities must be addressed directly with resolution and veracity.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Legislation needs to be brought forward to address problems with homelessness, untoward behavior, and drug use. The legislature should identify and implement collaborative, solutions-orientated efforts to ensure public safety, mitigate crime, violence, and property damage.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & SUPPLY

The Chamber recognizes the significant need for affordable and workforce housing in order to improve the quality of life for our residents. To address the ever-widening gap between income earnings and housing costs, we support regulation reforms, funding for water storage solutions that address capacity issues, and other solutions that expand housing at all income levels.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

We do not support increased taxes, but particularly oppose B & O, income, and capital gains taxes as well as any tax putting an undue burden on rural communities. An example of this is the "miles driven" tax as many in rural communities have longer commuting distances and limited transit options than those in urban areas. The Chamber encourages state legislators to adopt a budget that promotes a healthy economy, provides for more efficient operations, curbs spending, and allows for businesses to remain competitive in the global market.