



2015 Legislative Priorities/Agenda

Transportation Issues

- The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce recognizes the importance of our transportation system in relation to public safety, health and welfare as well as the economic impact on our tourism, boat building and commercial fishing industries. The Outer Banks transportation system includes roads, bridges, inlets/waterways, and pedestrian walkways. Without adequate means of transportation people cannot reach their destinations, goods cannot be delivered in a cost effective manner, and public safety is at risk.
 - NCDOT STIP (Strategic Transportation Improvement Program) Funding Formula – Ensure adequate funding for critical projects in Division I including bridges and inlets/waterways.
 - Bridges: The Outer Banks chamber of Commerce supports the projects that include the replacement of the Bonner Bridge, the construction of a permanent bridge for Pea Island, and the long-anticipated Mid-Currituck Bridge project.
 - NC 12: The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce supports the ongoing efforts to find a more permanent solution to the issues along NC 12 on Hatteras Island, specifically the Mirlo Beach area. Focus also needs to be placed on the portion of NC 12 running through the area in Kitty Hawk prone to over-wash.
 - Ferry System: The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce recognizes the importance of the Ferry System for continued access to and from Hatteras Island and Ocracoke. This system is also a vital transportation link in times of disaster and limited or no road access on NC 12 South.

Inlet Access

- The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce supports the need for a solution to the issues affecting access and dredging of our inlets that provide a vital lifeline for the residents of Dare and Hyde Counties. Oregon and Hatteras Inlets are crucial to the economy of Dare, Hyde, and Currituck Counties and the surrounding region. The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce continues to support its request that State and Federal agencies appropriate ongoing funding to maintain safe and reliable access as a matter of economic necessity and public safety.
- The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce also supports the efforts of the Oregon Inlet Task Force as it continues to look for solutions and funding to alleviate the issues at Oregon Inlet.

Environmental Issues

- Beach Re-nourishment: The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce continues to support solutions that address erosion problems on our beaches including beach re-nourishment. With an economy that depends on tourism our beaches are one of our strongest assets.
- Offshore Oil Drilling: The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce continues, as it has for the past 15 years, to oppose offshore drilling for oil and natural gas. Potential benefits to the coast of North Carolina are few, if any, but the risks and associated impacts could be devastating to our area and our tourism driven economy.
- Wind Field Farms: The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce is in favor of clean, alternative energy. The Chamber supports wind farms as long as these are located at a minimum of 32 miles off the coast.

Insurance Issues

- Flood insurance: The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce is opposed to programs or changes that increase the National Flood Insurance Program premiums. These increases will have a detrimental impact on our local economy.
- Homeowners Insurance: As the largest business organization in the Outer Banks, the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce is opposed to the North Carolina Rate Bureau's proposed increase to homeowner's insurance rates. This proposal represents a 30% increase in insurance rates in 18 eastern North Carolina counties including ours.
- Healthcare: Government should build on the strengths of market-based employer-sponsored systems or purchase pools to obtain stable premiums while enacting reform to lower costs, improve quality and access and build a more value-driven system. The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce supports working towards implementation of initiatives that will provide the insured with sustainable benefits for the future and provide business with predictability in the cost of employee benefits.

Sales Tax Redistribution

- The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce opposes any change to the current sales tax distribution formula for the state. In the tourism economy that exists along the Outer Banks with a small year-round population, the costs associated with support services for our tourists include added expenses for fire, rescue, medical/hospital, trash collection, and more. To tamper with the revenue received from sales and used for these services could jeopardize our ability to continue to attract the same level of tourists to our area thus impacting the overall dollars collected for the state of North Carolina. Out of the 100 counties in the State of North Carolina, Dare County was #4 in travel expenditures, generating over \$953 million and over 11,500 jobs.