

Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce

Energy & Environment Priorities

(Adopted 5/12/2015 by E & E Sub Committee)

The members of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce recognize that without a healthy and sustainable natural environment, it is difficult to maintain a diverse mix of business. We also believe that it is equally important that any environmental regulation must be based on sound science, must produce benefits exceeding the regulatory cost and must be workable and easily understood. It is likewise prudent that these regulations actually achieve “real environmental benefits” and do not advantage one sector of the economy to the detriment of another.

We support policies that increase energy supplies, improve energy efficiency and protect the environment.

- America has an historic opportunity to marshal its unrivaled capabilities and resources to develop solutions that will keep our nation secure, our economy growing and our global environment.
- We support an energy strategy that is cost effective and:
 - Increases and diversifies energy supplies from both traditional and renewable sources.
 - Promotes energy efficiency across all sectors.
 - Modernizes and protects energy infrastructure, including electricity grids and pipelines.
 - Reduces overly burdensome regulations that limit investment and imperil competitiveness.
 - Addresses critical shortages of qualified cross sector professionals with innovative policies.
- We emphasize:

Our economy needs all forms of energy and the federal government should allow exploration and production of oil and natural gas on federal land, make investments that enable clean use of coal and adopt policies that enable expansion of emissions-free nuclear energy, while at the same time being protective of the environment.
- We believe:

Environmental issues should be addressed as a function of energy security through a sensible approach that is built on the following core principles:

 - Education: Our conviction is that education is a fundamental requirement for our energy, environmental and economic progress. Both public and private schools should encourage environmentally focused curriculum as do some charter schools across the nation. This should incorporate a renewal of the “trades” and “technical” classes once prevalent in secondary levels. Community colleges and career institutes should be flexible enough to offer “apprentice programs” across the entire spectrum of Technology, Engineering, Science, and Research paths with expanded focus on environmental studies and a U.S. “economic rebirth”.
 - Efficiency: We must encourage stronger action by consumers and producers to use fuel and power more efficiently, whatever that necessitates, considering all energy-environmental-economic aspects.
 - Technology: Government and businesses should promote investment in, and development of, new technologies that expand alternative energies such as wind, nuclear and use of traditional sources (especially coal) more cleanly. Smoke stacks and the environment are not necessarily and do not have to be diametrically opposed to each other!

- Economic Growth: Improving our energy infrastructure will create jobs in all sectors and will help accelerate our economic recovery and begin to build a strong foundation for future development.

To grow our economy and spur job creation, we need a secure and diverse energy supply while incrementally improving environmental performance.

- American economic prosperity is closely tied to the availability of affordable, abundant and clean energy supplies. Our economic recovery will be accelerated by a comprehensive energy strategy.
- Environmental issues, including global climate change, require commonsense solutions that harness technologies, promote economic growth, efficiency and achieve environmental benefits.
- To facilitate the above, we further support:
 - Making Pennsylvania more attractive to investment in environmental infrastructure is key for the Keystone State.
 - Encouraging greater private investment in improvements to our natural gas, electricity, water, sewer, rail freight, mass transit-rail-bus-trolley and telecommunication systems.
 - Streamlining the regulatory process is essential to foster practical requirements that facilitate business competitiveness.
 - Providing long-term regulatory certainty is crucial.
 - Enacting enabling legislation for public-private partnerships (P3s) and promoting consolidation and regionalization of public service providers that manage and protect natural resources including our water and air.
 - Promoting the planning and development of facilities and capacity protecting the environment to meet both current and future needs of the Lehigh Valley.
 - Establishing environmental standards based on sound economic and scientific principles are vital.
 - Encouraging use and development of innovative technologies to meet new and existing environmental needs will generate jobs.
 - Establishing environmental administrative and regulatory programs that provide timely and expeditious, cost-effective, value-added guidance/approvals and avoid duplication of effort or conflicting standards among governmental agencies will always lead to progress and non-waste.
 - Re-establishing CEPs (Community Environmental Projects) funded by penalties/fines so that those funds are directed back to the specific community they emanated from vs. funds being placed in a general State Fund or budget is the right thing to do.
 - Rewarding the specifically regulated community for superior environmental protection and achievement, i.e. expanding on the traditional annual Governors' Excellence Award will reap manifold benefits.