



**2014-2018**

**POLICY AND  
POSITION STATEMENTS**

This manual is a record of policies and positions taken by the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce over the past five years, and is current through December 2018.

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**MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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# **LEGISLATIVE AGENDAS**

**2014**

**2015**

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## 2014 State Legislative Agenda

The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

### Critical Issues

1. To relieve growing congestion, advocate for final site selection and funding of the proposed I-10 Mobile River bridge and Bayway widening project from the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.
2. To support growing workforce needs, maintain funding levels that allow for education and job training programs that prepare current and future workers for technical positions in existing and future Alabama businesses and industries; and oppose the repeal of Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards.
3. Establish state-guaranteed, zero-interest small business loans available immediately following a federally-declared natural disaster, such as a hurricane, flood or tornado, to bridge the time until insurance claims are paid and other disaster relief funds or financial assistance can be acquired.
4. Seek legislation to encourage even greater reforms in property insurance to ensure the availability of market-driven property and flood insurance coverage at competitive pricing so that individuals and businesses can find reasonable and available protection for their homes and businesses.
5. Support and encourage balanced and inclusive pro-business practices and procedures that encourage development and growth within the city of Mobile and Mobile County; encourage fair and expeditious permitting practices for both local and out-of-town investors.
6. Encourage the Governor to explore existing and future options for funding Medicaid expansion in Alabama.
7. In order to preserve jobs and economic growth, remove barriers that can derail energy projects and reduce overly burdensome regulations that create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.
8. Ensure that all projects and initiatives funded by the RESTORE ACT provide for long term environmental restoration and/or economic recovery to Alabama's coastal region. All approved projects and initiatives should adhere to a sound, scientific framework of analyses, an economic benefit assessment and a method of accountability.
9. Continue to support efforts to maintain federal military contracts with Mobile area based companies, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Littoral Combat Ships and Joint High Speed Vessels.

10. Continue to advocate for adequate federal funding levels for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District to support annual operations and maintenance dredging of Mobile area waterways, including the Port of Mobile, Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels.
11. Support a comprehensive, federal energy policy that increases the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment, promotes comprehensive energy conservation and encourages research and development of clean and alternative energy sources.

## **Legislative Action**

1. In order make Alabama more competitive with other Southern states, support economic development legislation that includes an incentive structure based on job creation and the investment of capital; and when appropriate, a sales tax exemption for the purchase of machinery.
2. In order to enhance K-12 preparedness and ultimate success of students reaching accountability measures, support increased funding for certified pre-kindergarten programs in Alabama.
3. Support appropriate levels of funding in the FY 2014-15 education budget to allow for the implementation of the Alabama Board of Education's PLAN 2020, along with proven education initiatives such as Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative, Career and Technical Education Initiative and dual-enrollment programs.
4. Enact the Alabama Taxpayers' Bill of Rights II, an update and expansion of the original landmark legislation enacted in 1992, which extends the appeal deadlines for taxpayers.
5. Support legislation that creates the Alabama Tax Appeals Commission as an independent state tax agency to oversee the tax appeals process and take the tax appeals decision authority away from the taxing agency, the Alabama Department of Revenue.
6. In order to enhance the competitiveness of local research institutions, provide support the passage of legislation to provide for a research and development income tax credit parallel to the federal R&D credit, with an extra incentive if a qualified research institution performs the research.
7. Seek amendments to enhance current incentives in order to allow for the sale of state tax credits for the preservation and renovation of historic buildings.
8. Support or assist in the enactment of legislation that encourages investment in early stage, innovative, wealth and job creating businesses that will remain headquartered, along with the majority of its workforce, in the state of Alabama.
9. In order to protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace, oppose any legislation that would keep an employer from restricting unauthorized firearm possession on company property.

10. Support fair trade initiatives and agreements designed to increase access to global markets, including reducing trade and tourism restrictions with Cuba.
11. Reform federal immigration policy to strengthen our national security, including increasing protection of our borders, while providing a supplemental workforce for American businesses and industry; ensure the continuity and expansion of H-1B, H-2B and L-1 visas for professionals and highly-valued workers.
12. In order to access increased federal funds for medical care of the elderly, support legislation that allows Programs for All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) to contribute to the Alabama Healthcare Trust fund.

### **Policy Statements**

1. Seek increased state and federal support and funding to address transportation infrastructure needs including the completion of the four-laning of U.S. Highways 98 and 45, a western Mobile bypass, improved access to Mobile Regional Airport, and improvements at Brookley Aeroplex.
2. Support fair and equitable tax reform to stimulate business growth and development; ensure that taxes and tax reform are applied fairly, without levying a disproportionate burden on individual segments of Alabama's economy.
3. Seek support for legislation that allows for the protection of manufacturers from frivolous plaintiff law suits due to noise and/or other minor nuisances.
4. Support existing eminent domain statutes to maintain economic development and quality of life initiatives, such as new manufacturing facilities and industrial/commercial parks as well as the revitalization of blighted areas, public housing and green space.
5. Support infrastructure project funding and legislative initiatives that improve the prospect of future economic success, including improvements to the port, airport, rail, water, sewer and industrial site infrastructure as well as strategic transportation infrastructure needs.
6. Advocate for stable sources of adequate funding for all state-directed public education initiatives to ensure an increase in student achievement and a fundamentally well-rounded education.
7. Support the review and repeal of unnecessary regulations and seek greater reform, efficiency and accountability in federal, state and local government.
8. Seek to protect the current worker classification of independent contractor as an integral part of the courier and real estate industries.
9. Simplify and reform the 1901 Constitution of the State of Alabama, including the opportunity for counties to choose "home rule" and provide the governor with line-item veto powers.

## 2015 Legislative Agenda

Serving as a progressive advocate for business, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages work at all levels of government to stimulate jobs; supports non-regressive sources of revenue without levying a disproportionate burden on any individual segment of Alabama's economy; seeks efficiencies in government and protects fundamental public services. The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Mobile's economic development partners have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

### Economic Development & Tax

1. Maintain federal military contracts with Mobile area based companies, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Littoral Combat Ships and Joint High Speed Vessels and the future small Surface Combatant ships, as well as Ingalls Shipbuilding's LHA/LPD Amphibious Assault Ships and Coast Guard cutters.
2. Make Alabama more competitive with other Southern states by passing economic development legislation that encourages job creation and the investment of capital by making statutory incentive programs more usable and applicable to new and expanding business.
3. Continue the growing investments in the renovation and rehabilitation of historic buildings, by extending the Alabama Historic Tax Credit beyond the 2015 expiration date.
4. Support local small business and provide a level playing field for all retailers through the collection of state and local sales tax from all online transactions.
5. Increase access to global markets through fair trade initiatives and agreements, including the continued funding of the Ex-Im Bank, approval of federal Trade Promotion Authority and the reduction of trade and tourism restrictions with Cuba.
6. Encourage balanced and inclusive pro-business practices and government procedures that encourage development and growth within the city of Mobile and Mobile County; encourage fair and expeditious permitting practices for both local and out-of-town investors; and support the further analysis of local and regional tax reform.
7. Re-align taxes and regulatory fees paid to the Public Service Commission to better reflect the actual costs of performing necessary day-to-day functions of affected state agencies.

8. Support federal immigration reform that will secure our borders, establish reasonable and effective visa policies/procedures, and recognize the need to attract professional and highly-valued workers to the United States.

### **Education & Workforce Development**

1. Increase education funding to enhance k-12 preparedness and the ultimate success of students through the expansion of quality pre-kindergarten educational programs in Alabama.
2. Fully fund the FY '16 Education Budget to allow for the full implementation of the Alabama Board of Education's PLAN 2020, which includes the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards, along with proven education initiatives such as Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative, the Career/Technical Education Initiative dual-enrollment programs, and other innovative and flexible college prep and career-ready programs.

### **Energy, Environment & Infrastructure**

1. Ensure that all projects and initiatives funded by the RESTORE ACT provide for long-term environmental restoration and/or economic recovery to Alabama's coastal region. All approved projects and initiatives should adhere to a sound, scientific framework of analyses, an economic benefit assessment and a method of accountability.
2. Increase the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment, through a comprehensive, energy policy that promotes energy conservation and encourages research and development of clean and alternative energy sources.
3. Relieve growing congestion by finalizing the final site selection and funding of the proposed I-10 Mobile River bridge and Bayway widening project with the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.
4. Support annual operations and maintenance dredging of Mobile area waterways, including the Port of Mobile, Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels by securing adequate federal funding levels for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District. .
5. Preserve jobs and economic growth through the removal of barriers that can derail infrastructure projects and the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.
6. Seek a permanent funding solution for the Federal Highway Trust Fund; support reauthorization of a multiyear surface transportation act that will provide stability to state and local government.

## **Small Business**

1. Assist small businesses after a natural disaster by establishing state-guaranteed, zero-interest small business loans available immediately following a federally-declared natural disaster, such as a hurricane, flood or tornado, to bridge the time until insurance claims are paid and other disaster relief funds or financial assistance can be acquired.
2. Reduce the cost of flood insurance for local business and property owners by encouraging reforms in local and state government that will ultimately increase the credits available through National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) and lower the CRS classification in local municipalities.
3. Protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace by opposing any legislation that would keep an employer from restricting unauthorized firearm possession on company property.

## **Healthcare**

1. Encourage the Governor to explore existing and future options for funding Medicaid in Alabama.
2. Encourage local health care providers to quickly and effectively implement the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act.

## 2016 Legislative Agenda

Serving as a progressive advocate for business, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages work at all levels of government to stimulate jobs; supports non-regressive sources of revenue without levying a disproportionate burden on any individual segment of Alabama's economy; seeks efficiencies in government and protects fundamental public services and infrastructure. The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Mobile's economic development partners have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

### Economic Development & Tax

1. In order to make Alabama more competitive with other Southern states and encourage investment and job growth, enact economic development incentives:
  - Extend the Alabama Historic Tax Credit program beyond 2016 and increase amount of credits issued annually.
  - Create Research-and-Development Tax Credits modeled after the federal R&D credit but with an enhanced credit if the research is conducted by Alabama-based academic or nonprofit research institutions.
  - Expand the New Markets Development Tax Credit program by increasing the individual project cap (currently \$10 million) and the aggregate cap (currently \$20 million).
  - Establish a New Income Tax Credit available to companies with increased cargo volume through any publicly-owned facility located within the Port of Mobile.
2. Curb blight and enhance the development and growth within the city of Mobile by restructuring the existing Mobile Redevelopment Authority with an expanded scope to include residential properties.
3. Maintain federal military contracts with Mobile-area based companies, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Littoral Combat Ships and Joint High Speed Vessels and the future small Surface Combatant ships, as well as Ingalls Shipbuilding's LHA/LPD Amphibious Assault Ships and Coast Guard cutters.
4. Increase access to global markets through fair trade initiatives and agreements, including the continued funding of the Ex-Im Bank, the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP), and the reduction of trade and tourism restrictions with Cuba.
5. Support federal immigration reform that will secure our borders, establish reasonable and effective visa policies/procedures, and recognize the need to attract professional and highly-valued workers to the United States.

## Education & Workforce Development

1. Continue to adequately fund Alabama's Education budget in order to ensure the most up-to-date facilities, tools and services for Alabama students and teachers as well as the expansion of Alabama's First Class pre-kindergarten educational programs to all Alabama four-year-olds.
2. Continue the full funding and implementation of the Alabama Board of Education's PLAN 2020, which includes the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards, along with proven education initiatives such as Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative, the Career/Technical Education Initiative dual-enrollment programs, and other innovative and flexible college prep and career-ready programs; and oppose any legislation or administrative action which deters it.
3. Seek a fiscal year 2017 appropriation for the University of South Alabama that reflects the institution's successful enrollment growth.

## Energy, Environment & Infrastructure

1. Ensure that RESTORE ACT penalties and BP economic damage settlement funds support the long-term economic and environmental restoration in the Alabama coastal counties and that a significant portion of funds are sent to coastal counties affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and not used to make up state-wide revenue shortfalls or debt payments.
2. Adequately fund the Alabama Department of Environmental Management to ensure the continued environmental scrutiny of economic development and industrial expansion projects in the state and to safeguard against the increased cost of EPA involvement.
3. Preserve jobs and economic growth through the removal of barriers that can derail infrastructure projects and the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.
4. Increase the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment through a comprehensive, energy policy that promotes energy conservation and encourages research and development of clean and alternative energy sources.
5. Seek a permanent funding solution for the Federal Highway Trust Fund; support reauthorization of a multiyear surface transportation act that will provide stability to state and local government.
6. Support funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District for the annual operations, maintenance and necessary dredging of Alabama's waterways, including the Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels to increase Alabama's

economic competitive edge to expand existing or secure new shallow port industries and jobs.

7. Continued support to fund the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District Civil Works program in support of the deepening and widening and the annual operations and maintenance dredging of the Mobile Ship Channel.
8. Support the design phase of the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway widening project and partner with the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to actively seek construction funding.

#### Small Business

1. Seek more affordable and readily available coastal homeowners insurance through the action steps identified by Governor's Hurricane Homeowners workgroup.
2. Protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace by opposing any legislation that would keep an employer or property owner from restricting firearm possession on company or private property.
3. Support all efforts to decrease workers' compensation medical costs in Alabama by decreasing fraud in unemployment and workers' compensation claims with stronger statutes:
  - Maintain current Alabama laws that support an employer's right to choose the treating physician and second physician in workers' compensation claims.
  - Enact statutes that allow businesses to perform the Workman's Compensation claim checks prior to hire.
4. Support local small business and provide a level playing field for all retailers through the collection of state and local sales tax from all online transactions.
5. In order to avoid excessive and frivolous lawsuits and ensure fully-accessible public buildings and spaces, close the loophole in Title III of the American with Disabilities Act, by providing clearer rules for identifying and correcting ADA access violations and allowing business and property owners the opportunity to address and correct minor ADA infractions in a defined period of time, prior to an allowable civil law suit.

#### Healthcare

1. Encourage the Governor to explore existing and future options for funding Medicaid in Alabama, either through the participation in federal Medicaid expansion or growth of Regional Healthcare Organizations.
2. Seek a permanent funding source for Mobile's Programs for All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and the expansion of such programs across the state in order to

draw down increased federal funds for the medical care of the state's growing nursing home population at a cost savings to Medicaid.

3. Seek an equitable resolution on the Medicare wage index issue so that hospitals in the region will be fairly reimbursed for the services they provide to the Medicare population.

## 2017 Legislative Agenda

Serving as a progressive advocate for business, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages work at all levels of government to stimulate jobs; supports non-regressive sources of revenue without levying a disproportionate burden on any individual segment of Alabama's economy; seeks efficiencies in government and protects fundamental public services and infrastructure. The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Mobile's economic development partners have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

### Economic Development & Tax

6. In order to keep Alabama more competitive with other Southern states and continue business investment and job growth, enact proven and accountable economic development incentives:
  - Renew the proven Alabama Historic Tax Credit program
  - Expand the New Markets Development Tax Credit program by increasing the individual project cap (currently \$10 million) and the aggregate cap (currently \$20 million).
  - Create Research-and-Development Tax Credits modeled after the federal R&D credit but with an enhanced credit if the research is conducted by Alabama-based academic or nonprofit research institutions.
  - Provide an avenue of access to capital for small business, enact Small Business Investment Company Tax Credit for taxpayers that make capital contributions to an eligible Alabama small business investment fund.
7. Maintain federal military contracts with Mobile-area based companies, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Littoral Combat Ships and Expeditionary Fast Transport vessels and the future small Surface Combatant ships, as well as Ingalls Shipbuilding's LHA/LPD Amphibious Assault Ships and Coast Guard cutters.
8. Increase access to global markets through fair trade initiatives and agreements, including the continued funding of the Ex-Im Bank, the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP), and the continued reduction of trade and tourism restrictions with Cuba.
9. Support federal immigration reform that will secure our borders, establish reasonable and effective visa policies/procedures, and recognize the need to attract professional and highly-valued workers to the United States.
10. Preserve jobs and economic growth in all sectors through the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that increase the cost of doing business, create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.

#### Education & Workforce Development

4. Continue to adequately fund Alabama's Education budget, including Alabama's First Class pre-kindergarten, career tech, dual enrollment and other innovative programs, in order to ensure a competitive increase in student scoring, higher graduation rates and competitive college and career ready graduates; maintain high academic standards and expectations for all Alabama students such as those found in the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards.
5. Seek a fiscal year 2018 Alabama budget appropriation for the University of South Alabama that reflects the institution's successful enrollment growth and additional funding to support the implementation of a much-needed emergency medicine residency at USA Medical Center.

#### Energy, Environment & Infrastructure

9. Support the design phase of the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway widening project and partner with the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to actively seek construction funding.
10. Preserve jobs and economic growth through the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.
11. Increase the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment through a comprehensive, energy policy that promotes energy conservation and encourages research and development of clean and alternative energy sources.
12. Continued support to fund the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District Civil Works program in support of the deepening and widening and the annual operations and maintenance dredging of the Mobile Ship Channel; maintain necessary funding for the operation and maintenance of Alabama's commerce waterways, including the Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels.

#### Small Business

6. Continue to enact recommended action steps identified by Governor's Hurricane Homeowners workgroup in order to encourage more affordable and readily available coastal homeowners insurance.
7. Protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace by opposing any legislation that would keep an employer or property owner from restricting firearm possession on company or private property.
8. Support all efforts to decrease workers' compensation medical costs in Alabama by decreasing fraud in unemployment and workers' compensation claims with stronger statutes:

- Maintain current Alabama laws that support an employer's right to choose the treating physician and second physician in workers' compensation claims.
  - Enact statutes that allow businesses to perform the Workman's Compensation claim checks prior to hire.
9. In order to avoid excessive and frivolous lawsuits and ensure fully-accessible public buildings and spaces, close the loophole in Title III of the American with Disabilities Act, by providing clearer rules for identifying and correcting ADA access violations and allowing business and property owners the opportunity to address and correct minor ADA infractions in a defined period of time, prior to an allowable civil law suit.

#### Healthcare

4. Explore existing and future options for funding Medicaid in Alabama, in a way that provides sustainable funding and allows Alabama providers the ability to manage the cost, efficiency, and quality of healthcare provided.
5. Seek a permanent funding source for Mobile's Programs for All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and the expansion of such programs across the state in order to draw down increased federal funds for the medical care of the state's growing nursing home population at a cost savings to Medicaid.
6. Seek an equitable resolution on the Medicare wage index issue so that hospitals in the region will be fairly reimbursed for the services they provide to the Medicare population.

## 2018 Legislative Agenda

Serving as a progressive advocate for business, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages work at all levels of government to stimulate jobs; supports non-regressive sources of revenue without levying a disproportionate burden on any individual segment of Alabama's economy; seeks efficiencies in government and protects fundamental public services and infrastructure. The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Mobile's economic development partners have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

### Economic Development & Tax

- ★ In order to keep Alabama competitive with other Southern states and continue business investment and job growth, continue proven and accountable economic development incentives such as the Alabama Historic Tax Credit program, New Markets Development Tax Credit program, and the Alabama Film Credit. And strongly encourage Members of Congress to keep the Historic Tax Credit in the federal tax code. (*carried over*)
- ★ Maintain federal military contracts with Mobile-area based employers, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Frigate Littoral Combat Ships and Expeditionary Fast Transport vessels and the future small Surface Combatant ships, as well as Ingalls Shipbuilding's LHA/LPD Amphibious Assault Ships, destroyers and Coast Guard cutters. (*carried over*)
- ★ Support fair trade and investment agreements that expand access to international markets, reduce trade barriers, and increase foreign direct investment creating a level playing field to put Mobile area families, businesses, and workers first and improving the overall international competitiveness of Alabama exporters. (*updated*)
- ★ Support all efforts to decrease workers' compensation medical costs in Alabama by decreasing fraud in unemployment and workers' compensation claims with stronger statutes:
  - Maintain current Alabama laws that support an employer's right to choose the treating physician and second physician in workers' compensation claims.
  - Enact statutes that allow businesses to perform the Workman's Compensation claim checks prior to hire. (*carried over - moved from Small Business to Economic Development*)
- ★ **Support the continuation of federal payments to Alabama and Mobile and Baldwin counties from the 2006 Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) in 2018 federal budgets. Under GOMESA, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas receive a share of revenue from oil and gas drilling in federal waters, which helps address coastal restoration, hurricane protection and watershed management programs in coastal Alabama. (*new*)**

- ★ Support federal immigration reform that will secure our borders, establish reasonable and effective visa policies/procedures, and recognize the need to attract professional and highly-valued workers to the United States. (*carried over*)
- ★ Preserve jobs and economic growth in all sectors through the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that increase the cost of doing business, create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth. (*carried over*)

### **Education & Workforce Training**

- ★ Continue to adequately fund Alabama’s Education budget, including Alabama’s First Class pre-kindergarten, career tech, dual enrollment and other innovative programs, in order to ensure a competitive increase in student scoring, higher graduation rates and competitive college and career ready graduates; maintain high academic standards and expectations for all Alabama students such as those found in the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards. (*carried over*)
- ★ Seek a fiscal year 2019 state budget appropriation for the University of South Alabama that reflects the institution’s successful enrollment growth and increased graduation rates over the past ten years, and additional funding to support USA Health and its specialized health care mission. (*updated*)
- ★ **Support funding to establish a program coordinated by the University of South Alabama to support the needs of communities in Southwest Alabama to recruit, train and retain the more than 5,000 seasonal workers needed for the regions hospitality industry. The program would also focus on placing unemployed young Mobilians in unfilled jobs on the Alabama Coast. (*new*)**
- ★ **Continue to identify needs and support demand-driven strategic workforce training initiatives in south Alabama’s key economic growth sectors, including aerospace, maritime and advanced manufacturing. (*new*)**
- ★ **Support measures to address the growing opioid crisis in Alabama that has detrimental effects on the availability of a qualified workforce, workplace safety and overall community health. (*new*)**

### **Energy, Environment & Infrastructure**

- ★ Support the funding and construction of the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway widening project and partner with the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to actively seek construction funding through **Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA)** Grants and other sources. (*updated*)
- ★ Continued support to fund the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District Civil Works program in support of the deepening and widening and the annual operations and maintenance dredging of the Mobile Ship Channel; maintain necessary funding

for the operation and maintenance of Alabama's commerce waterways, including the deepening of the Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels. *(carried over)*

- ★ **The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports increasing Alabama's investment in transportation infrastructure to sustain and promote economic growth, job creation, quality of life and public safety. The Chamber recognizes that there is a gap between current state resources and what is required to address the highway, bridge, and other road maintenance and capital needs in Alabama today and in the future, specifically for critical needs such as the completion of the four-laning U.S. Highway 98. *(new – position adopted mid-session 2017)***
- ★ **In order to ensure the consistent and bi-partisan management of the planning, building and maintaining of the state's multimodal transportation system and the long-term management of state transportation planning and revenues, the Mobile Area Chamber supports legislation to allow for a board-governance structure and a non-political, board-appointed director of the Alabama Department of Transportation. *(new)***

#### **Small Business and Entrepreneurial Growth**

- ★ **Encourage the creation of a cabinet level position in the executive branch to focus on the creation and growth of small businesses and entrepreneurial development in Alabama. *(new)***
- ★ **Support the growth and development of Mobile's entrepreneurial community and Innovation PortAL's mapping of entrepreneurial talent to meet the growing technological needs of industry with early state funding opportunities such as the State of Alabama Full Sail fund. The Full Sail entrepreneurial fund will provide much-needed programming, skills training and funding for entrepreneurial clients as well as enable the engagement of local industry to identify technological solutions to small business challenges. *(new)***
- ★ **To support the growing 'social enterprises' entrepreneurial demand in Alabama, expand the legal definition of a Limited Liability Company in Alabama's code to include a low-profit limited liability company, or 'L3C' and a Benefit Corporation or 'B Corp', for-profit, social-benefit corporate entity. *(new)***
- ★ **To support the growth and expansion of local restaurants and consumer offerings in the restaurant industry's fastest growing segment, work to achieve the local authority necessary to implement the statewide "Brunch Bill" passed in 2017 that allows for 10:00 am on-premises alcohol sales on Sunday. *(new)***
- ★ **In order to avoid excessive and frivolous lawsuits and ensure fully-accessible public buildings and spaces, close the loophole in Title III of the American with Disabilities Act, by providing clearer rules for identifying and correcting ADA access violations and allowing business and property owners the opportunity to**

address and correct minor ADA infractions in a defined period of time, prior to an allowable civil law suit. (*carried over*)

- ★ Protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace by opposing any legislation that would keep an employer or property owner from restricting firearm possession on company or private property. (*carried over*)

### **Healthcare**

- ★ Support a health provider-driven approach to reforming Alabama's current Medicaid program to ensure access to care, control costs and maximize the return of Alabama's tax dollars to the state. (*updated*)
- ★ Seek an equitable resolution on the Medicare wage index issue so that hospitals in the region will be fairly reimbursed for the services they provide to the Medicare population. (*carried over*)
- ★ Seek a permanent funding source for Mobile's Programs for All-inclusive Care of the Elderly (PACE) and the expansion of such programs across the state in order to draw down increased federal funds for the medical care of the state's growing nursing home population at a cost savings to Medicaid. (*carried over*)

## **2016 Legislative Position – Energy, Environment and Infrastructure**

Ensure that RESTORE Act penalties and BP economic damage settlement funds support the long-term economic and environmental restoration in the Alabama coastal counties and that a significant portion of funds are sent to coastal counties affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and not used to make up statewide revenue shortfalls or debt payments.

### **Philosophy Guiding Project Support**

The mission of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) is to serve as a progressive advocate for business needs to promote the area's economic well-being. The Chamber recognizes that the BP oil disaster was an environmental and economic disaster for our area. Furthermore, the Chamber also recognizes that the coastal environment and its natural resources are a key part of Mobile's economic landscape and quality of life.

As such, Chamber leadership will review suggested uses of RESTORE Act and BP funds for their strategic impact on Mobile's economy. The Chamber of Commerce will advocate for the funding of projects based on the intention of the specific funds.

Specifically, we will prioritize our support of projects based upon their impact on the following four critical elements:

1. Economy – projects designed to have a direct, ongoing and strategic (long-term) impact on the Mobile economy.
2. Infrastructure – projects having positive impact on critical elements of our infrastructure, including stormwater, transportation and the Port of Mobile.
3. Resiliency -- projects increasing the resilience of Mobile, therefore enabling businesses to more quickly and successfully recover from disasters and future extreme events.
4. Environment – projects of environmental importance that increase quality of life.

## **Amendment Eight**

### Ballot Text:

*Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, to declare that it is the public policy of Alabama that the right of persons to work may not be denied or abridged on account of membership or non-membership in a labor union or labor organization; to prohibit an agreement to deny the right to work, or place conditions on prospective employment, on account of membership or non-membership in a labor union or labor organization; to prohibit an employer from requiring its employees to abstain from union membership as a condition of employment; and to provide that an employer may not require a person, as a condition of employment or continuation of employment, to pay dues, fees, or other charges of any kind to any labor union or labor organization.  
(Proposed by Act 2016-86)*

### Summary:

*This amendment reinforces Alabama's position as a right-to-work state in the state constitution. The right of employment, whether a member of a labor organization or not, has been Alabama law since 1958. The amendment would simply add it into the constitution.*

### Rationale:

- *One major component of Alabama's economic development success and growth in the manufacturing sector is its longstanding status as a right-to-work state.*
- *Passage of Amendment 8 will showcase voter support for the right to work without paying union dues and serve as a deterrent to pro-union legislation or promotion in the state.*
- *As the area's lead economic development agency, the Chamber has a long-held policy that "encourages and endorses legislation which enhances interaction between management and the workforce, improving communication, morale, productivity and product quality. " This position clearly calls for healthy labor - management relations in order to negate the need for third party or union interference.*

### Proposed Statement of Support:

*The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce believes that Alabama's right-to-work status is essential in order to remain competitive in the site selection process and continue to grow valuable jobs and a strong economy. The Chamber will continue to call upon elected officials, community leaders and all voters to defend Alabama's Right to work status when necessary. To showcase statewide support and further reinforce right-to-work importance, the Mobile Chamber supports and encourages a "yes" vote to Amendment 8 on the Alabama ballot on November 8.*

**MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION  
2014 TRANSPORTATION  
PAY-AS-YOU-GO REFERENDUM  
Board of Directors Approved on September 25, 2014**

The **MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION** directed the Mobile County Engineering Department to prepare the following Engineering Report for the proposed 2014 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program. The County Wide Projects are selected by the Commission for their benefit to the entire County regardless of which County Commission District they are located.

**PROPOSED APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS**

MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION 2014 TRANSPORTATION  
PAY-AS-YOU-GO PROGRAM FUNDS

\$54,000,000
<u>FEDERAL FUNDS</u>
<u>\$11,700,000</u>
TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING
\$65,700,000

All Mobile County 2014 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program funding itemized in this report is based on the passage of the 2014 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program referendum to be voted on by the voters of Mobile County on November 4, 2014.

The County Wide Projects are selected by the Commission for their benefit to the entire county regardless of which county commission district they are located.

Description of each Project:

- Removal of the existing two lane bridge carrying Padgett Switch Road over Carl's Creek and constructing a new two lane bridge with realigned approaches.
- Removal of the existing two lane bridge carrying Wilmer-Georgetown Road over Big Creek and constructing a new two lane bridge with realigned approaches.
- Paving of a portion of the shoulder and resurfacing Theodore Dawes Road from the I-10 Service Road eastward to the Mobile City limits.
- Reconstruction of a .6 mile segment of Bellingrath Road in the vicinity of Fowl River.
- Construction of a new paved road from West Lake Road northward to Johnson Road South.
- Paving of an existing segment of Glass Road and the construction of a new paved road, thereby creating a connecting road from the west end of Hurricane Blvd to Hwy 188.
- Resurface the road from Celeste Road eastward to Hwy 43.
- Resurface the road from Airport Blvd northward to Tanner Williams Road.
- Pave a portion of the shoulder of Henderson Camp Road and resurface the paved road from Hwy 188 to the south end of the pavement.
- Pave a portion of the shoulder of Ramsey Road and resurface the road from Hwy 188 northward to Old Pascagoula Road.
- Resurface Henry Davis Road from Celeste Road eastward to Broad Branch Road.
- Pave a portion of the shoulder of Dawes Road and resurface the road from Three Notch Road northward to Cottage Hill Road.
- Widen Dawes Road from Cottage Hill Road northward to .1 mile south of Jeff Hamilton Road.
- Pave a portion of the shoulder of Tanner Williams Road and resurface the paved road from Wilmer Road eastward to .2 miles west of Eliza Jordan Road North.
- Pave a portion of the shoulder of Dawes Road and resurface the road from Grand Bay Wilmer Road South eastward to Three Notch Road.

**THE MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SUPPORTS A “YES” VOTE ON THE NOVEMBER 4 REFERENDUM TO ADDRESS CRITICAL ROAD PROJECTS FOR THE COUNTY. THESE PROJECTS ARE PAID FOR BY A PORTION OF THE AD VALOREM TAXES COLLECTED WITHIN MOBILE COUNTY.**

**MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION  
2016 TRANSPORTATION  
PAY-AS-YOU-GO REFERENDUM**

The **MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION** directed the Mobile County Engineering Department to prepare the following Preliminary Engineering Report for the proposed 2016 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program.

**PROPOSED APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS**

MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION 2016 TRANSPORTATION PAY-AS-YOU-GO PROGRAM FUNDS	\$48,000,000
<u>FEDERAL FUNDS</u>	
\$61,680,292	
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING</b>	<b>\$109,680,292</b>

All Mobile County 2016 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program funding itemized in this report is based on the passage of the 2016 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program referendum to be voted on by the voters of Mobile County on November 8, 2016.

The County-Wide Projects are selected by the Commission for their benefit to the entire county, regardless of which county commission district they are located.

Description of each Project:

- Widening of the existing road section to five or more lanes from I-10 to .1 mile north of Old Pascagoula Road.
- Widening of the existing road section to five or more lanes from .1 mile east of Tanner Williams Road to .1 mile east of Schillinger Road North.
- Construction of a new, paved road from .1 mile north of Old Pascagoula Road to Three Notch-Kroner Road.
- Widening of an existing road section to four or more lanes from Athey Road eastward to Forest Hill Drive.
- Widening of an existing road section to four or more lanes from Schillinger Road North eastward to Cody Road North.
- Widening of an existing road section to three or more lanes from Airport Blvd northward to Dauphin Street, a new bridge culvert over Eslava Creek and intersection improvements for the intersection of Dauphin Street/Wimbledon Drive East at South McGregor Avenue.
- Resurfacing of the road from Highway 90 northward to County Farm Road.
- Paving of a portion of the shoulder and resurfacing the paved road from Louis Tillman Road eastward to McDonald Road.
- Paving of a portion of the shoulder and resurfacing the paved road from Half Mile Road northward to Highway 90.
- Resurfacing of the existing paved road from Highway 43 eastward to the End of Maintenance.
- Paving of a portion of the shoulder and resurfacing the paved road from Dawes Road eastward to McDonald Road.
- Resurfacing of the road from Old Howells Ferry Road northward to Highway 98.

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports a “FOR” vote on the November 8 referendum to address critical road projects for the County. These projects are paid for by a portion of the ad valorem taxes collected within Mobile County.

**THE MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SUPPORTS A  
"YES" VOTE ON THE NOVEMBER 6, 2018 REFERENDUM TO  
ADDRESS CRITICAL ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS WITHIN  
MOBILE COUNTY. THESE PROJECTS ARE PAID FOR BY A 6.5  
MILLS PORTION OF THE AD VALOREM TAXES COLLECTED BY  
MOBILE COUNTY.**

MOBILE COUNTY  
COMMISSION 2018  
TRANSPORTATION  
PAY-AS-YOU-GO REFERENDUM

The MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION directed the Mobile County Engineering Department to prepare the following Engineering Report for the proposed 2018 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go Program.

PROPOSED APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS	
MOBILE COUNTY 2018 TRANSPORTATION	
PAY-AS-YOU-GO PROGRAM FUNDS	\$60,000,000
FEDERAL FUNDS	\$29,329,600
TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING	\$89,329,600

\$30 million in countywide road and bridge improvement projects have been selected by the Commission, regardless of the district or municipality in which they are located. Three of the selected countywide projects will receive matching federal funds, providing a supplement of \$29.3 million for the 2018 program. Also, an additional \$30 million is divided among the three Commission Districts for road and bridge projects within all eleven municipalities and within unincorporated areas of the County.

The Mobile County 2018 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go Program totals \$89.3 million for road and bridge improvements. Funding for the 2018 program will require voter approval in a countywide referendum on November 6, 2018.

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports a "YES" vote on the November 6, 2018 referendum to address critical road and bridge projects within Mobile County. These projects are paid for by a 6.5 mills portion of the ad valorem taxes collected by Mobile County.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
POSITION STATEMENT**

Adopted on behalf of the Board of Directors April 17, 2014

“The mission of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is to “serve as a progressive advocate for business needs to promote the Mobile-area’s economic well-being.”

As the area’s lead economic development agency, the Chamber has a long-held policy to “support and encourage balanced and inclusive pro-business practices and procedures that encourage development and growth within the City and County. The Chamber believes economic investment in our community should benefit the Mobile-area economy in a fair and balanced manner, providing opportunities for our citizens and children for years to come. If local, state and/or federal approvals are required, the Chamber encourages fair and expeditious practices.”

## **VT MOBILE AEROSPACE ENGINEERING'S 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

WHEREAS, Singapore Technologies Aerospace, a division of Singapore Technologies Engineering, established ST Mobile Aerospace Engineering in September, 1990; and

WHEREAS, a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility with special expertise in modifications and engineering services was established at Brookley Industrial Complex to serve the North and South American aerospace markets; and

WHEREAS, the company, now known as VT MAE, received its FFA 145 certificate to perform maintenance on all metal construction large commercial aircraft in January, 1991; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE hired its first direct employee on September 10, 1990, and now employs over 1,000 direct employees, including technical, engineering and administrative personnel, consisting mainly of licensed aircraft mechanics; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE's facilities consist of eight hangars equipped with eight wide-body and ten narrow-body aircraft bays; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE's footprint at Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley (formerly Brookley Industrial Complex) has grown to almost 900,000 square feet; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE has supported 4,626 aircraft maintenance service and modifications since 1991, on Boeing, McDonnell Douglas, Lockheed and Airbus airframes; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE continues to grow its capacity, scheduled to launch its first Boeing 777-300 maintenance program in November, 2015; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE and its employees have contributed to Mobile's quality of life through its support of the American Cancer Society's Annual Chili Cook-off, WKRG's annual Great Toy Drive, Partners in Education, American Red Cross blood drives, and the Worlds of Opportunity Career Expo to name a few.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes and congratulates VT MAE and its employees for 25 years of successful operation and support of Mobile's economy and community.

Done this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 2015

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Frank J. Lott III, Chairman of the Board

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William B. Sisson, President and CEO

**ALABAMA TAXPAYERS' BILL OF RIGHTS II**  
**Statement of Support for HB105 sponsored by Rep. Paul DeMarco.**

*Support legislation to create the Alabama Tax Appeals Commission (ATAC) as an independent state tax agency, headed by a judge selected in a non-partisan manner who has specific training in state and local taxation; and seek passage of the Alabama Taxpayers' Bill of Rights II, an update and expansion of the original landmark legislation enacted in 1992, which extends the appeal deadlines for taxpayers.*

This legislation amends a number of elements that were either not addressed or have not been successful from the original Taxpayer Bill of Rights. Changes to the law are mostly in favor of the taxpayer and include:

- Under current law, an Alabama taxpayer dispute is heard by an Administrative Law Judge that works under the Alabama Law Division. Currently, the Alabama Law Division acts as a department of the Department of Revenue, the party adverse to the taxpayer. While there is no reason to believe that the Administrative Law judge is biased in favor of his employer, (in fact, history of rulings clearly shows his independence), it does give the appearance of unfairness.
- **Alabama Taxpayers' Bill of Rights II** makes the Alabama Law Division, and its presiding judge, an independent body by creating the Alabama Tax Appeals Commission. It abolishes the current Administrative Law Division of the Alabama Department of Revenue and transfers both the personnel and equipment to a newly-formed state agency, under the executive branch. Without such a change Alabama will remain in the distinct minority of states that lack an independent tax appeals tribunal. Alabama received a "D" on the latest State Tax Due Process Scorecard issued by the Council on State Taxation, primarily for this reason.
- In addition to extending the taxpayer's appeal period from 30 days to 60 days, **Alabama Taxpayers' Bill of Rights II** aligns many of Alabama's tax penalties, regulations and statute of limitations to those of the federal tax laws.
- The Business Associations' Tax Coalition, the Business Council of Alabama, the Alabama Society of CPAs, the Birmingham Business Alliance, the Alabama State Bar, Eagle Forum, the American Bar Association, the Council on State Taxation and the National Taxpayers Union have all endorsed these changes. The Legislative Fiscal Office scored last year's version of the bill, HB 427, as revenue neutral.



### **USCG Aviation Training Center Mobile 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

WHEREAS, United States Coast Guard Aviation Training Center Mobile (ATC), was officially commissioned on December 17, 1966 as Air Station Mobile; and

WHEREAS, a training section was established at Mobile in 1967, with the primary mission to transition newly designated aviators to the HU-16E and HH-52A and send them to their units as designated co-pilots; and

WHEREAS, in July 1969 Air Station Mobile was renamed the USCG Aviation Training Center and was designated a headquarters unit to facilitate and coordinate the movement of several hundred pilots in and out of Mobile each year; and

WHEREAS, ATC Mobile's facilities consist of 230 acres, and 46 buildings which include two aircraft hangars; and

WHEREAS, ATC Mobile is one of the largest units in the Coast Guard and one of the largest non-industrial employers in Mobile County with authorized personnel of 158 officers, 383 enlisted and 45 civilians, generating nearly \$98 million in payroll impact; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 ATC Mobile recorded 169 Search & Rescue missions representing 683 flight hours whereby 10 lives were saved, 36 lives assisted and \$570,000 in property assisted/saved; and

WHEREAS, ATC Mobile has played a key role in responding to natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, and tragedies such as the Dauphin Island Regatta incident, as well as the BP oil spill that kept our waterways open, they also work together to support Coast Guard missions worldwide; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce expresses its deep appreciation and gratitude for the commitment and sacrifice of the men and women of the USCG to our country and to our local region. The Chamber recognizes and congratulates ATC Mobile for the contribution to Mobile's quality of life by securing our borders, contributing to our local economy, and being a vital part of our national defense for the past 50 years.

Done this 26<sup>nd</sup> day of May 2016

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D. Mark Nix, Chairman of the Board

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William B. Sisson, President and CEO

## **GREER'S MARKETS 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

WHEREAS, in 1916, Autry Greer, founder of Greer's, opened a grocery store in the Northwest corner of Water and St. Michael Streets in downtown Mobile;

WHEREAS, this original store was a pioneer in the "Cash and Carry" food store concept;

WHEREAS, the Greer's store at Water and St. Michael was the first, and for a long time, the only store to advertise prices – these prices were the lowest in town because other stores sold on credit and delivered;

WHEREAS, five generations later, Greer's is still owned by the Greer family.

WHEREAS, Greer's currently operates 33 supermarkets in Alabama, Mississippi and Florida with a Greer's Ace Hardware Express in Quitman, MS and Mobile and employs over 700 people;

WHEREAS, Greer's Team Vision is "To bring added joy well-being and value to people's lives!" reminds all who work at Greer's that they are in the business of serving others;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes and congratulates Greer's on 100 years of successful operation and support of Mobile's economy and community.

Done this 31<sup>st</sup> day of March 2016.

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D. Mark Nix, Chairman of the Board

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William B. Sisson, President and CEO

## **THAMES BATRÉ 125<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

WHEREAS, in 1891, Thames Batré began as a partnership between Gustav Thames and Lloyd Batré;

WHEREAS, even though there is no longer a Thames or a Batré in their ranks, the seeds they planted continue to grow and prosper;

WHEREAS, along the way, mergers brought together the Harry Mattei Agency, Ison Insurance Agency and Beville Insurance Agency, all adding strength, depth and perpetuation to Thames Batré's solid and firm foundation;

WHEREAS, under the thoughtful guidance of today's group of owners and leaders, Thames Batré continues to add youthful talent with creative and energetic ideas, all assuring a future as bright and promising as their past;

WHEREAS, Thames Batré has been selected as a "Best Practices Agency" for 16 consecutive years, one of only 216 awarded in the United States;

WHEREAS, Thames Batré is the only firm based in Mobile, Alabama to receive this designation and one of only six across all of Alabama;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes and congratulates Thames Batré on 125 years of successful operation and support of Mobile's economy and community.

Done this 31<sup>st</sup> day of March 2016.

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D. Mark Nix, Chairman of the Board

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William B. Sisson, President and CEO

**Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce**  
**Statement of opposition to Alabama Memorial Preservation Act of 2017**

As an extension of the Mobile Area Chamber's advocacy purpose to encourage work at all levels of government that stimulates jobs, the Chamber opposes enacting any legislation or regulation that would have an unnecessary or detrimental effect on existing industry, infrastructure improvements or economic development.

The Alabama Memorial Preservation Act of 2017, introduced as SB60/HB99, would prohibit the movement, renaming, relocation, and even the temporary relocation, of any public monument or marker on state, county or city property. Although in certain cases a waiver from the Permanent Joint Committee on Alabama Monument Protection may be applied for, the process could be lengthy and complex. If allowed at all, the waiver procedure could take months, if not years, and dramatically alter the progress of a new industrial development, economic development project, neighborhood enhancement and all other community building projects. The waiver or project may be denied all together and permanently deter the development, prospect or infrastructure improvement.

Given these reasons and guided by advocacy purpose, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce opposes the Alabama Memorial Preservation Act of 2017.

Approved:

February 23, 2017

## **Promotion of Other Organizations' Events**

Though the Chamber desires to promote positive, impactful events in our community, the organization's first responsibility is to publicize Chamber events to help ensure they are productive, well attended, profitable and impactful to the Chamber's mission and annual plan of action.

Requests to promote another organizations' events should be referred to the Chamber's Communications and Marketing Department for their consideration. Additionally, business news and events may be submitted for publication in the Chamber's Business View Weekly e-newsletter, through the Chamber's website, [www.mobilechamber.com/calendar](http://www.mobilechamber.com/calendar).

Approved:

April 20, 2017

## **Volkswagen 2.0-litr TDI Buy Back**

Be it resolved this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of February 2017 that the Board of Directors governing the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce hereby authorizes and approves:

THAT Matthew Hariel, Vice President of Finance, be hereby designated and appointed to act on behalf of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of submitting a claim under the Volkswagen 2.0-liter TDI Class Action Settlement, and completing the buyback transaction along with any and all acts and duties necessary to complete the said process.

Adopted this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of February, 2017.

**Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce  
Position Statement on Trade and Tariffs**

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) has a longstanding history of support for fair trade practices and investment agreements that expand access to international markets and reduce trade barriers. The Chamber calls for trade policies to increase foreign direct investment and create a level playing field to improve the competitiveness of Alabama exporters. The Chamber remains concerned about tariffs which affect raw material such as aluminum and steel. These tariffs could adversely impact our manufacturing sector and impede the ability to recruit new investment to Mobile. Additionally, there could be unintended consequences of retaliation from our trade partners, and damage to our international relationships and port economy.

4/27/18

**POSITION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF  
ENHANCING COMMERCIAL AVIATION IN THE  
MOBILE AREA**

For many reasons including expensive airfares, difficult airport access and limited non-stop flight options, Mobile Regional Airport only captures 53% of passengers in its catchment area. Total enplanements at Mobile Regional are down 28.5% from 1990 (396,393) to 2016 (283,309). In comparison, total enplanements at Pensacola International Airport, Mobile's most direct competitor, are up 81.8% from 1990 (433,766) to 2016 (788,517).

A 2018 Mobile Airport Authority systems study shows that by moving commercial air service from Mobile Regional Airport to the Mobile Downtown Airport, the Mobile area will enjoy increased total enplanements, paving the way for a more robust and competitive commercial air service market that will yield additional direct and non-stop flight options, more low-cost carriers and lower ticket prices. In fact, numerous low-cost carriers have recently expressed interest in providing commercial air service from Mobile Downtown Airport.

The estimated net benefit over the next 20 years of moving commercial air service from Mobile Regional to Mobile Downtown Airport is \$235 million for Mobile County; \$1.1 billion for the city of Mobile; \$56.4 million for Mobile County Public Schools and \$451.2 million for the state of Alabama.

Given these reasons, the Board of Directors supports a planning process by the Mobile Airport Authority to further explore the transition of commercial air service from Mobile Regional Airport to the Mobile Downtown Airport.

Done this 28<sup>th</sup> day of June 2018.

**POSITION STATEMENT  
IN SUPPORT OF  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA  
ON-CAMPUS STADIUM**

The University of South Alabama has become a major part of Mobile's economy and provides a multi-billion dollar impact to the Mobile area on an annual basis. The University of South Alabama's continued maturation has grown to the point of needing an on-campus athletic stadium. On-campus athletic events will positively impact expansion of the hospitality industry and tax revenues throughout the city.

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors supports the University of South Alabama's efforts to construct an on-campus stadium, while also supporting the redevelopment and investment in an appropriate facility at the current site of Ladd-Peebles Stadium.

Done this 28<sup>th</sup> day of June 2018.

## **SHEFFIELD SCHOOL OF DANCE 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

WHEREAS: In 1943, Sheffield School of Dance was founded by Mary Lou Sheffield-Noletto; and

WHEREAS: The facility has grown from a small one room facility to a state of the art studio with three locations throughout Mobile / Baldwin metro area; and

WHEREAS: The school serves nearly 500 students of all ages and levels; and

WHEREAS: Over the years, Mary Lou Sheffield-Noletto has touched the lives of thousands of children; and

WHEREAS: The staff of Sheffield School of Dance promises to instill a passion and love for the beautiful art of dance to all; and

WHEREAS: Sheffield School of Dance is the 2016 and 2017 Nappie Award winner for “Best Dance Studio” in Mobile and Baldwin County;

WHEREAS: Sheffield School of Dance has been a member of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce since 1994; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes and congratulates Sheffield School of Dance on 75 years of successful operation and support of Mobile’s economy and community.

Done this 28<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2018.

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Brian Willman, Chair of the Board

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William B. Sisson, President and CEO

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION TO REPRESENTATIVE JAMES BUSKEY**

WHEREAS: James Buskey, a native of South Alabama, was elected to serve the citizens of House District 99 in 1976; and

WHEREAS: James Buskey earned degrees from Alabama State University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of Colorado in Boulder; and

WHEREAS: James Buskey is a retired school administrator from E.S. Chastang Middle School, serves as an organizer and director of the Franklin Memorial Clinic, and is an organizer and former director of the Commonwealth National Bank; and

WHEREAS: James Buskey was instrumental in the passing of legislation which changed Mobile's city government to a Mayor / Council form in 1985; and

WHEREAS: James Buskey passed the Sickle Cell Oversight and Regulatory Commission bill, has been helping to get the appropriation to sickle cell to its present level and is known as the godfather of Sickle Cell in Alabama by the University of South Alabama Comprehensive Sickle Cell Program, and

WHEREAS: James Buskey recently sponsored the Entertainment District bill, which started the current revitalization of Downtown Mobile;

WHEREAS: James Buskey most recently sponsored the Sidewalk Sales bill so alcohol could be served on adjacent sidewalks, as well as sponsoring the Brunch bill, which allows on-premises sales of alcohol on Sunday mornings at 10:00 am; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors expresses its appreciation and gratitude to Representative James Buskey for his leadership and dedication to the betterment of South Alabama and its citizenry, leaving a benchmark of progress that will carry the region to future prosperity.

Done this 16<sup>th</sup> day of August 2018.

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Brian Willman, Chairman of the Board

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William B. Sisson, President and CEO

**Position Statement in Support of  
Deepening and Widening the Mobile Ship Channel  
September 27, 2018**

The Port of Mobile (Port) is a tremendous economic engine, generating over 134,000 direct and indirect jobs, over \$486 million in direct and indirect tax impact, and yielding a total economic value of over \$22.4 billion.

The Port's current channel depth is 45 feet to the tunnels and 40 feet in the Mobile River harbor. Most of the Mobile Ship Channel connecting the Gulf of Mexico to the Port is currently 45 feet deep and 400 feet wide. Larger cargo ships which require additional depth are becoming the norm and the Mobile container terminal is a fast-growing part of the Port's business. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is considering a \$388 million plan to enlarge the Mobile Ship Channel for the Port to remain competitive.

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) has long supported "infrastructure funding and legislative initiatives that improve the prospect of future economic success, including improvements to the port, as well as strategic transportation infrastructure needs" and the Chamber's current legislative agenda calls for "Continued support to fund the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District Civil Works program in support of the deepening and widening and annual operations and maintenance dredging of the Mobile Ship Channel."

Given these reasons, the Board of Directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce fully supports the Corps of Engineers plan to deepen and widen the Mobile Ship Channel to help the Port of Mobile stay competitive and continue to benefit Mobile's economy.

Done this 27<sup>th</sup> day of September 2018

**RESOLUTIONS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
THE MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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The undersigned Matthew B. Hariel, as Vice President of Finance and Operations of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce (the “Chamber”) hereby certifies that the resolutions attached hereto were duly adopted at a duly called and noticed meeting of the Board of Directors of the Chamber on October 18, 2018, and that such resolutions have not been modified or rescinded as of the date hereof.

**WHEREAS**, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, an Alabama non-profit corporation (the “Chamber”), desires to make application to the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (the “EDA”) for a public works grant; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors of the Chamber (the “Board”) believes it to be fair, advisable, and in the best interests of the Chamber for the Chamber to make application for such grant, and if awarded, to accept and administer such grant subject to the terms and conditions set forth herein.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Chamber be, and it hereby is, authorized and approved to make application to the EDA for a grant in an amount up to \$6,384,916.00 including \$4,853,570.00 federal funds and \$1,941,428 matching funds; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that WILLIAM B. SISSON, as President and CEO, be and hereby is authorized and directed to execute and deliver to the EDA all such applications, documents, contracts, instruments, reports, financial information and other forms as he, as such President and CEO, deems advisable and necessary in connection with obtaining and administering said grant; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that, in the event a grant is awarded to the Chamber by the EDA, the Chamber is authorized to accept such grant on such terms and conditions as WILLIAM B. SISSON, as President and CEO of the Chamber, may, in his discretion, deem appropriate; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that all actions heretofore taken by WILLIAM B. SISSON, as President and CEO of the Chamber, in connection with the EDA grant, including, without limitation, the execution and delivery of any instruments or other documents as he shall have determined to be necessary or appropriate in connection with such grant application and administration, are hereby authorized, ratified, confirmed and approved.

Done this 18<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2018.

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Matthew B. Hariel, Vice President of Finance and Operations