



**ATHENS-LIMESTONE**  
Chamber of Commerce

# 2023-2024 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA



## ALCC MISSION

**Serve** our businesses. **Promote** our growth. **Empower** our community

## PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to codify the priorities of the Athens Limestone Chamber of Commerce as they relate to governmental activities.

## PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA OBJECTIVE

The objective of this document is to unify the Chamber's civic voice while amplifying the requests of those in our community at the federal, state, & local levels so long as they align with ALCC's mission.

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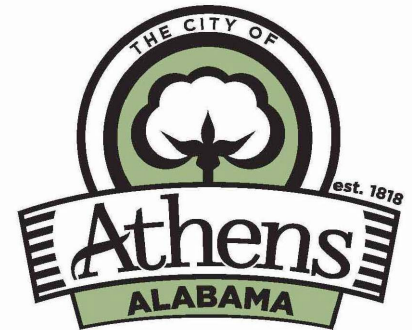
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# PUBLIC SAFETY

## ***Federal Agenda***

- ALCC encourages our delegates to work closely with law enforcement and amplify their successes whenever possible to help combat the media's disproportionate coverage of poor officer behavior.

## ***State Agenda***

- ALCC encourages the state to address the growing mental health crisis in our state
- ALCC supports the distinction between mental health facilities and detention facilities
- ALCC supports state financial aid for adequate mental health facilities
- ALCC supports state level grants for officer specialty training

## ***Local Agenda***

- ALCC supports continued cooperation with Athens City/Limestone County Schools
- ALCC encourages Athens City Council and Limestone County Commission to update law enforcement budgets in proportion to community growth
- ALCC encourages Athens City Council and Limestone County Commission to keep pace with surrounding communities' law enforcement salaries

## ***2023 - 2024 Critical***

- ALCC encourages elected officials at all levels of government to address the issues of officer retention and recruitment, these include:
  - Public perception of law enforcement
  - Compensation and benefits
  - Qualification of candidates

# HEALTHCARE

## ***Federal Agenda***

- ALCC supports federal policies that maintain a competitive healthcare marketplace with regard to both providers and pharmacies
- ALCC supports legislation that ensures the viability of small, privately owned pharmacies in light of their large, multi-national competition

## ***State Agenda***

- ALCC supports legislation that provides low-cost healthcare insurance to small business
- ALCC supports the Rural Hospital Investment Program
- ALCC encourages state officials to acknowledge that Athens Limestone Hospital is the sole acute healthcare provider in the fastest growing county in Alabama
  - ALCC encourages state officials to consider the distinction above any grant selection process
  - ALCC encourages state officials to consider the distinction above during any budget surplus distribution
- ALCC seeks support from our delegation on the construction of a new Athens Limestone Hospital facility
  - ALCC encourages the Huntsville Hospital Organization to prioritize the aforementioned facility

## ***Local Agenda***

- ALCC encourages the Athens City Council and Limestone County Commission to consider the positive impacts of a new regional hospital and ultimately offer their support

## ***2023 - 2024 Critical***

- ALCC supports SB232 that would provide low-cost insurance options to agricultural workers, self employers, gig-economy workers, small businesses, etc.



# EDUCATION

## ***Federal Agenda***

- ALCC supports Federal action to better understand and address the nationwide teacher shortage
- ALCC supports Federal incentives for teachers to pursue National Board Certifications
- ALCC supports Federally funded ESL/ESOL programs
- ALCC supports the standardization of apprenticeship & internship credentials as well as Federal funding for apprenticeship & internship programs
- ALCC supports the national recognition of micro-credentials

## ***State Agenda***

- ALCC encourages the State's ongoing support of dual enrollment
- ALCC encourages the annual evaluation, and increase (if applicable) of dual enrollment funding
- ALCC supports State funding for healthcare professionals working within the school system as required by state law
- ALCC supports state-funded mental health programs and counselors

## ***Local Agenda***

- ALCC supports cooperation between Athens/Limestone County school systems and local law enforcement agencies
- ALCC supports opportunities for collaboration between workforce development programs, Athens/Limestone County school systems, and area business

## ***2023 - 2024 Critical***

- ALCC is requesting government officials at all levels to address the issue of school safety and make certain our schools are given the resources necessary to provide a safe learning environment
- ALCC is requesting the State, once again, consider distributing any budget surplus among institutions of higher learning in the form of a one-time capital improvement request
- ALCC is requesting that state and local governments aide in developing a solution for the urgent need of school bus drivers and adequate means of school transportation for primary and secondary students

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ***Federal Agenda***

- ALCC encourages transparency, cooperation, & accountability from the Tennessee Valley Authority while seeking to meet growing and prospective energy demands

## ***State Agenda***

- ALCC seeks support from the state to develop a plan to lengthen the CSX Railroad bridge over Highway 72 near Jefferson Street
- ALCC, along with the ACA (Aviation Council of Alabama), urges the state of Alabama to increase airport spending to an amount comparable to surrounding states. (ex. Southeastern state avg: \$136m, AL: \$8.5m per NASAO)

## ***Local Agenda***

- ALCC supports the Athens 2040 Comprehensive Plan
  - ALCC supports Athens/Limestone County working towards meeting the demands outlined in the Athens 2040 Comprehensive Plan (pages 76-80)
- ALCC supports zoning that is conducive to sustainable growth and prioritizes quality of life over short-term benefits
- ALCC supports the efforts of Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful
- ALCC supports the offering of reasonable tax incentives to prospective businesses without placing unnecessary burden on existing companies

## ***2023 - 2024 Critical***

- ALCC seeks funding from all levels in the amount of \$30 million for the remodel/addition to Athens State University's Carter Physical Education Center. We believe this request should be given priority considering Athens/Limestone County's lack of proper meeting/event space

# INDUSTRY & WORKFORCE

## ***Federal Agenda***

- ALCC supports the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- ALCC supports continued funding for the Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) initiative
- ALCC supports continued funding for the Alabama Technology Network (ATN)
- ALCC does not support any legislation that would strengthen the bargaining power of labor unions above current levels relative to their employers
- ALCC does not support any expansion of the National Labor Relations Act
- ALCC does not support universal wage updates to the Fair Labor Standards ACT (FLSA). Such updates should be limited by economic conditions in a given geographic location

## ***State Agenda***

- ALCC supports Alabama status as a Right to Work state
- ALCC supports the efforts of the Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association (AAMA) to support the continuity and growth of the automotive industry in Alabama
- ALCC supports the efforts of the Alabama Strong initiative

## ***Local Agenda***

- ALCC supports efforts by the Limestone County Career Technical Center to address the pressing need for skilled labor by industry in Limestone County

## ***2023 - 2024 Critical***

- ALCC is requesting state and local funding for equipment and facility improvements at the Limestone County Career Technical Center based on the Center's impact on workforce in our community

# AGRICULTURE & INFRASTRUCTURE

## ***Federal Agenda***

- ALCC supports Special Use Tax Valuation for agricultural use per section 2032A of the Internal Revenue Code

## ***State Agenda***

- ALCC supports statewide agriscience education programs
- ALCC supports the Alabama FFA
- ALCC supports equitable funding for farm-to-market road systems
- ALCC supports city/county engagement with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System

## ***Local Agenda***

- ALCC recognizes and supports agrotourism as a significant opportunity for Limestone County
- ALCC supports the education, awareness, and advocacy of sharing the road with slow-moving farm equipment and farm-use vehicles
- ALCC supports robust private property rights for parcels designated for agricultural use
- ALCC supports purchasing locally grown commodities

## ***2023 - 2024 Critical***

- ALCC supports continued funding for the Athens Farmers Market
- ALCC supports continued state/federal funding and advocacy for the Auburn University - Tennessee Valley Research and Extension Center

# TOURISM

## ***State Agenda***

- ALCC supports state tax incentives for facilities that are classified as tourist attractions.
- ALCC opposes any additional state lodging tax.
- ALCC supports standardizing tax policy for short-term lodging (hotels, inns, VRBO, Airbnb, etc.).
- ALCC supports the identification of potential sites in Limestone County eligible for the Alabama Historical Commission's historical marker program.
- ALCC supports working in conjunction with the Alabama Trails Commission to identify new opportunities for bike trails, walking paths, greenways, etc. in Limestone County.

## ***Local Agenda***

- ALCC recognizes tourism as a substantial source of revenue for various entities within Athens & Limestone County.
- ALCC supports the ongoing efforts of Athens Main Street.

## ***2023-2024***

- ALCC fully endorses the Singing River Trail effort and encourages our delegation to allocate resources necessary to the Trail's progress.
- ALCC supports marketing the Athens Sportsplex to tournament-hosting organizations as a top-tier venue.



