



Bringing the best together to help Atlanta thrive.

2012 Policy Agenda

Economic Development: Removing Barriers to Economic Growth and Adding Quality Jobs

The Metro Atlanta Chamber continues to focus on job creation, with targeted efforts in the industry sectors where this region holds a competitive advantage. MAC will continue to work with the Governor and legislators to promote a positive business environment in Georgia to grow and produce jobs.

2012 Policy Positions:

- We support the Governor's Georgia Competitiveness Initiative, with an emphasis on the action items MAC recommended; specifically:
 - Enhancement of Georgia's pool of **discretionary incentives** to bring quality jobs to this state and help Georgia keep pace with our fiercest competitors.
 - Adjusting Georgia's **jobs tax credit programs** to encourage job creation in all areas of the state, and promote growth among smaller, newer companies as well as larger, more established ones.
 - **Increased access to venture capital** leveraging state resources; expanding investment in young technology and bioscience firms that are critical to job creation and growth.
 - **Elimination of sales tax on energy used in manufacturing.**
 - **Continued funding for the Georgia Ports Authority's Savannah Harbor Expansion Project** on both the state and federal level.
- MAC also supports legislation that:
 - Maintains and enhances Georgia's climate for **research in the life sciences, and promotes an emerging bioscience sector.**
 - **Encourages global commerce and foreign direct investment in Georgia** and improves our state's standing in the international business community, including making the state a venue for international arbitration.

Transportation: Pass 2012 referenda

Transportation and traffic continues to be a key issue for the metro region. The Metro Atlanta Chamber supports transportation initiatives that are being considered in the Georgia Competitiveness Initiative.

2012 Policy Positions:

- We support passage of all of **Georgia's 2012 regional transportation referenda**, which will provide nearly \$16 billion in new funding statewide, including over \$7 billion for the 10-county metro region over 10 years.
- We support unified, **efficient transit governance** in metro Atlanta that will not adversely impact passage of the metro region's referendum effort.

Education: Prepare students for the workforce

A key component for attracting business to the metro region is to ensure that there is a workforce that is educated and skilled. Indeed, our workforce of tomorrow is sitting in the classrooms of today. To prepare students for college and work, research is clear that we must have excellent teachers and school leaders. To that end, we support measures that strengthen the teacher and school leader workforce. We also support rigorous coursework that gives graduates the foundational education to compete in a global workforce.

2012 Policy Positions:

- We support initiatives and budget items that **strengthen preparation of high school and college graduates** for work in strategic high growth and high wage industries.
- We support **Georgia's Race to the Top** grant, including teacher evaluations and compensation linked to student success.
- We support Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) initiatives in K-12 and post-secondary education that prepare students for work in highly technical industries.
- We support education and workforce issues that are being considered in the Georgia Competitiveness Initiative.



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Water and the Environment: Capture, Conserve and Control Water Resources

The Chattahoochee River is the smallest river in the nation serving as the major water source for a region our size, and North Georgia is 99 percent dependent on surface water. These factors -- combined with severe droughts, various court decisions and endangered species – have produced uncertainty around water supply for our region.

2012 Policy Positions:

- We support the work of the **2009 Water Contingency Task Force** and the implementation of an action-driven contingency plan focused on increasing conservation efforts, capturing our excess rainfall and implementing control measures to efficiently manage our water resources. However, with the passage of the conservation-based Water Stewardship Act in 2010, the funding-driven Public-Private Partnership for Water Infrastructure Act in 2011 and with the ruling by the 11th circuit court, emphasis must remain on capturing and controlling water resources, including developing alternatives for long-term water supplies.
- We support **increased state funding for water infrastructure projects and regional water planning** efforts called for by Georgia's Statewide Water Management Plan. Investment in new water supply projects remains necessary and urgent for Georgia due to recurrent, persistent and intensifying droughts. Georgia is currently experiencing an extreme drought and Lakes Lanier and Allatoona cannot be used alone to provide drought relief to Georgia.
- We support **current law and the DNR permitting process for managing interbasin water transfers**. Georgia will need all water management options in the future, and any further restrictions should be based on facts, DNR recommendations, and the state and regional water planning efforts.
- We support an appropriation of \$250,000 in **state matching funds for the Metro North Georgia Water Planning District**, ensuring long-term water management planning continues for a vital economic region.