



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

2025

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GREATER SPOKANE VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

We are the catalyst for building relationships, driving collaboration, and championing opportunity in the Greater Spokane Valley.

Presented by



SCHWEITZER
ENGINEERING
LABORATORIES

BUSINESS CLIMATE We work to create a vibrant business climate that promotes innovation and allows business to thrive. A healthy business climate is vital to ensure that our region stays competitive, sustainable and attractive to future business. We support legislation that promotes economic growth, develops a strong workforce and reduces the tax and regulatory burden.

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE We work to maintain and develop infrastructure systems that power economic growth. We promote growth by supporting projects that preserve existing infrastructure and development, while strategically increasing capacity to drive economic development. We support legislation and infrastructure investments that optimize development opportunities through increased accessibility, reliability and safety, while retaining local control to meet the unique needs of our communities.

QUALITY OF LIFE We work to enhance our vibrant community with diverse opportunities to live, work and play. We are committed to maintaining a high quality of life for individuals and families in our area through community initiatives, as well as advocating for citizen access to housing, entertainment and a healthy environment.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE We support an education system that meets the workforce demands of our region. Investment in education increases the opportunities of our students and meets the needs of our business community. Developing a skilled workforce of the future depends upon a robust education system that serves students of all ages. We support a fully-funded education system with clear and challenging academic standards, expanded options that are innovative and affordable, and a system that operates with accountability, efficiency and transparency.

HEALTHCARE We work to develop access to robust services that improve the health of our community. Expanding access to health care and the resources needed to identify and address public health issues is vital to a strong economy. We support legislation that improves access to physical and behavioral health services and strengthen the healthcare workforce.

Top Legislative Priorities



Our Top Priorities represent those that we believe will have a great and lasting impact on our region. These priorities will increase economic opportunity, improve the quality of life, and enhance the vibrancy of the Greater Spokane Valley.

Business Climate

Building a Resilient Energy Future

We support streamlining permitting, upgrading transmission infrastructure, reducing compliance burdens, and securing resource adequacy. A study of utility cooperatives is essential to address rising demand and grid challenges from EVs, data centers, and new technologies.

Healthcare

Mergers and Acquisitions

We support hospitals' ability to pursue mergers and affiliations without government interference. These partnerships enhance care quality, expand access, reduce costs, and preserve vital services in underserved communities, ensuring patients statewide receive the care they need.

Education & Workforce

Materials, Supplies, & Operating Costs (MSOC)

We call for increased MSOC allocations to local school districts to match rising costs for essentials like insurance and utilities. We support inflation-adjusted funding and formula updates every four years to help districts operate effectively within state-provided resources.

Business Climate

Minimum Wage

We believe the state should overhaul L&I's minimum wage threshold calculations by exempting nonprofits and small, locally owned businesses, improving predictability, creating an entry-level training wage, and considering regional factors to ensure fairness and growth.

Development & Infrastructure

North Spokane Corridor

We urge the legislature to protect and maintain all currently committed funds dedicated to the North Spokane Corridor to ensure on-time completion, fulfill decades of planning and investment, and deliver the promised mobility, safety, and economic benefits to our community.

Quality of Life & Community

Growth Management Act (GMA)

We strongly support amending the GMA to empower local governments, prioritizing flexibility to expand Urban Growth Areas and increase home ownership opportunities. We also support extending Spokane County's comprehensive plan deadline to 12/31/2026.

Additional Priorities

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Create a dynamic business climate that promotes innovation and allows business to thrive.

- **State Budget** - we support a fiscally sound budget that only funds recurring obligations with recurring revenues, while prioritizing spending on areas that invest in the future, such as education and economic development.
- **Federal Regulation of Artificial Intelligence** - we support a federal approach to any new regulatory framework of artificial intelligence to avoid a patchwork of laws and regulatory uncertainty.
- **Unemployment Compensation** - we believe special federal or state unemployment compensation should not be available to employees during strikes or lockouts if such employees are eligible to work.
- **Prejudgment Interest** - we oppose expanding prejudgment interest to tort claims, particularly with retroactive application. Such policies unfairly burden defendants, inflate costs, and undermine fairness in legal proceedings.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (ERP)** - we oppose broad extended producer responsibility legislation that increases the costs of recycling packaging and products. Before imposing new rules, the state should assess existing programs and leverage the systems in place, mitigating undue burdens on businesses, consumers, and waste handlers.
- **Regulatory and Litigation Costs** - we support refining Washington labor laws to curb excessive 'qui tam' litigation by requiring notice and a chance to cure before lawsuits. Arbitration and mediation should be prioritized to protect businesses from expanded liability and rising legal costs.
- **Energy Security** - we prioritize energy security by protecting hydropower, Washington's top source of reliable, low-carbon energy, and promoting nuclear power expansion for baseload needs. A technology-neutral, innovation-driven approach is key to decarbonization.
- **Clean Buildings Act (CBA)** - we urge the state to amend the CBA to extend compliance timelines and expand pathways, enabling businesses to adopt innovative, cost-effective technologies that align with pollution reduction goals, thereby fostering economic growth and environmental sustainability.
- **Addressing Compliance Costs of CCA** - we support addressing compliance costs of the Climate Commitment Act (CCA) through a straight-line 3% reduction compliance curve, directing transportation fuel revenues to infrastructure, and expanding carbon sequestration with innovations like carbon-capture concrete to meet climate goals while supporting economic growth.
- **"Clean Truck" Regulations** - we believe Washington should abandon the Advanced Clean Trucks rule and instead adopt federal emission standards. The current rule imposes unworkable timelines, skyrockets costs, and risks job losses, while our state is lacking the infrastructure to support zero-emission trucks in regional and long-haul operations.
- **Strategic Tax Policies** - we support pro-growth tax policies and incentives that drive job creation and boost Washington businesses' competitiveness, including credits for capital investment, R&D, & innovation. We support preserving state-shared revenues and oppose statewide personal income taxes.

DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Maintain and develop efficient transportation and infrastructure systems that power economic growth.

- **Broadband Expansion** - we support policies that foster the expansion of broadband technology statewide. By eliminating obstacles, we aim to bridge the digital divide, particularly in rural areas, and create new fiscal tools to support infrastructure development and increase housing access.
- **Maintenance & Preservation** - we support fully funding transportation maintenance and preservation through sustainable state revenue streams and by committing transportation CCA revenue to these purposes. The legislature and WSDOT should uphold commitments, empower local authorities, and address budget shortfalls without hindering travel or commerce.
- **Advocating with Regional Partners** - in the 2025 Legislative Session, we will advocate for a state transportation package that protects existing regional commitments, ensures equitable funding for Spokane, aligns with community-driven SRTC priorities, and preserves targeted investment programs (FMSIB, TIB, CRAB, CERB).
- **Traffic Fatalities and Road Safety** - we advocate for legislative action to enhance road safety and reduce traffic fatalities.

HEALTHCARE

Develop access to robust services that improve the health of our community.

- **Healthcare Affordability Policies** - we support ensuring that proposed healthcare affordability policies are centered on stabilizing prices for consumers and employers by minimizing factors that contribute to rising cost drivers while sustaining access to quality care.
- **Healthcare Cost Transparency** - we support enhancing health care cost transparency and promoting private market competition as the best strategies to empower consumer choice and improve affordability across the healthcare industry
- **Reimbursement Rate for Medicaid Patients** - we support a directed payment Medicaid increase to Medicare levels for professional services. This is an important step to maintain access to primary and specialty services in our state.
- **Healthcare Workforce Enhancement** - we advocate for policies that enhance the healthcare workforce. We support improving educational and training opportunities in the health care field, such as financial incentives for nursing education, investment in community college programs, and other initiatives that assist students pursuing health care careers.
- **Behavioral Health Workforce** - we advocate for increasing the behavioral health workforce by increasing funding in the Behavioral Health Loan Repayment Fund and by signing on to a multi-state compact allowing mental health professionals to cross state lines and work in Washington.
- **Comprehensive Behavioral and Mental Health Systems** - we encourage the state to fully fund and support a comprehensive behavioral and mental health system, including quick access to treatment beds, to serve all areas of the state.
- **Prescription Drug Affordability** - we advocate for reducing prescription drug costs for patients without impeding innovation.

Additional Priorities

QUALITY OF LIFE & COMMUNITY

Enhance our vibrant community with diverse opportunities to live, work, and play.

- **Mt. Spokane** - we support \$550,000 in capital budget funding for Mt. Spokane's ADA compliance and asbestos removal. This investment enhances a vital state asset, fostering accessibility, safety, and year-round recreation opportunities. These upgrades strengthen community, tourism, and economic growth.
- **Maddie's Place** - we support Maddie's Place's funding request to sustain critical care for infants exposed to substances in the womb. With state funding, opioid settlement resources, and research partnerships, this essential organization delivers proven outcomes for vulnerable families and strengthens community health.
- **Spokane County Helicopter Unit** - we support Spokane County's \$10M state funding request for helicopter units. The County provides vital search, rescue, and pursuit support across jurisdictions without reimbursement. Funding ensures statewide safety, reduces pursuit risks, and supports life-saving operations without overburdening local taxpayers.
- **Spokane County Stabilization Center** - we support allocating \$3M from the state's opioid settlement to the Spokane Regional Stabilization Center. Combined with \$7M from the county, this funding will complete the expansion, offering critical crisis care and diversion from jail, saving lives and resources.
- **Plante's Ferry** - we support \$1.5M in state funds for Plante's Ferry Sports Complex to enhance access and usability for youth and community sports. These improvements will drive economic activity, support growing recreational demand, and strengthen the region's sports and tourism economy.
- **Partners Inland Northwest** - we support \$6M in public funding for Partners Inland Northwest's facility renovation, creating a regional hub to meet growing demand for food, clothing, and diaper services. This project will improve efficiency, expand rural outreach, and support families and seniors in need.
- **HUB Sports Fields** - we support \$1M in public funding for the HUB Sports Center Outdoor Fields to complete two synthetic turf fields with lighting, and parking. This project will expand year-round sports access, enhance community recreation, and drive regional economic activity.
- **Conservation District** - we support state investment in the Spokane Conservation District's Scale House Market, a year-round farmers market boosting local agriculture, food access, and economic growth. This project will create jobs, support regional farms, and provide fresh, nutritious food to our community.
- **Liberty Lake Municipal Library** - we support state investment to fund Liberty Lake's new library, expanding access to lifelong learning, community gathering spaces, and cultural resources. This project will meet growing needs, foster civic engagement, and enrich the quality of life for Liberty Lake residents.
- **Spokane Valley Cross Country Fieldhouse** - we support \$3.5M in federal funding for the Spokane Valley Cross Country Fieldhouse to elevate the property to a premier venue for regional and national events, driving sports tourism, generating economic growth, and enhancing Spokane Valley's event hosting capacity.
- **Law Enforcement Resources** - we advocate for increased law enforcement and judicial personnel, expanded behavioral health programs, and strict penalties for repeat property and opioid offenders to effectively combat crime and protect businesses in our community.
- **Condominium Development** - we support reducing barriers to condominium development by streamlining permitting, refining litigation standards to curb frivolous lawsuits, and allowing an additional story for parking, storage, or retail to optimize space and enhance community functionality.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

Support an education system that meets the workforce demands of our region.

- **Transportation** - we urge the Legislature to fully fund a predictable pupil transportation formula. We support fixing inefficiencies to align funding with real costs, ensuring districts can transport students safely and efficiently without relying on local taxes.
- **Special Education** - we support closing the funding gap for special education. We believe predictable, adequate funding ensures districts can meet all students' needs while reducing reliance on local levies.
- **Prototypical School Funding Model (PSFM)** - we urge the Legislature to modernize PSFM to address educator shortages by fully implementing staffing enrichment plans. We advocate for realistic ratios that fund substitutes, para-educators, nurses, and counselors to ensure every student gets the support they need.
- **Transition Beyond School** - we support flexible graduation pathways to prepare students for careers, college, military, or technical training. We advocate for stronger career counseling and the development of internships and work-study programs to give students practical experience and connections to local industries.
- **Federal Poverty Rate Calculation** - we support legislation and rulemaking to redefine the federal poverty calculation for students and education funding based on regional poverty levels instead of the national average.
- **Higher Education Affordability** - we support programs like the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship, State Need Grant, and LaunchNW Promise Scholarship, and encourage the state to improve accessibility through affordability.
- **Childcare Accessibility** - we support reducing regulations and barriers for childcare providers to make childcare more accessible and affordable for all families.
- **Financial Literacy Education** - we promote the integration of financial literacy into school curricula to equip students with essential life skills for managing personal finances.
- **Launch NW Pilot Program** - we support a four-year pilot program with \$5M in state matching funds for the LaunchNW scholarship across 10 Eastern WA counties, including a pilot for free community college tuition for graduates of two Spokane County high schools.