

Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce Legislative Agenda 2025

DNREC ACTIVITY

In the last session, DNREC initiated the introduction of several pieces of legislation that had the potential to negatively impact our business community. The passing of these bills would have placed a heavy burden on the shoulders of business owners, large and small, and significantly increased the cost of doing business in our region. While the CDCC understands the need to protect the state's natural resources, we stand opposed to unnecessary costs for our area businesses.

The first statement in the Mission of DNREC talks about engaging ALL stakeholders to ensure the wise management, conservation and enhancement of the State's natural resources. In addition, one of DNREC's 5 core values is customer focus. We are hopeful that, as DNREC carries out its mission under a new leader, the voice of the business community will be heard as one of those customer stakeholders, and measures can be taken to protect the environment while still allowing businesses to grow and thrive as they contribute to the economic well-being of the community.

ADVANCED CLEAN CAR II PROGRAM

Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) has adopted the Advanced Clean Car II (ACC II) program, which aims to reduce pollution from light- and medium-duty vehicles but will cap the zero emission vehicle requirement at 82%. While the CDCC understands the issues related to the protection and preservation of our planet, we remain deeply concerned about this mandate and its timeline. The impact of the mandate across the business community (both large and small businesses) will be significant. This government regulation, when implemented, will drive up costs, will create disruption within the car and truck industry, will disrupt technical education for automotive technicians, will add time and inefficiencies to the service industries (waiting times to charge vehicles), increase food costs, dramatically expand gas station's footprints to accommodate more and more charging stations (if available), will severely tax the electrical grid, and more.

The CDCC believes that this kind of change should **not** have been initiated outside the purview of the General Assembly, but should absolutely require the Assembly's consideration, vote, and final approval.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND REGULATORY REFORM

The CDCC is anxious and excited to welcome new companies into our area to do business. We have so much to offer! It remains imperative that we create processes that remain effective, but do not hinder growth. Time is money. Companies who discover that other states offer permitting and other inspection processes that take less than half the time of ours will simply decide to locate elsewhere. That is not the outcome we desire! If we, as a state, are serious about business attraction, we **MUST** introduce regulatory reform that reduces the time between applying for permits and when actual construction can begin. Creating a business-friendly climate that welcomes new businesses into our area will have a positive impact on the economy and on our ability to sustain a community that offers a great place to live, work, and play.

PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE – additional changes

The CDCC continues to work with government officials (Chris Counihan/DOL) to ensure the implementation of the Paid Family Medical Leave Act will not restrict businesses from growing and expanding through the hiring of additional

employees. The CDCC also believes it is critical that the regulations around this legislation are consistent, practical, and as cohesive as possible for the businesses to incorporate into their current employee benefit practices.

The CDCC felt that the implementation of PFML should have been delayed until the infrastructure necessary to accurately and efficiently implement it was created, tested, and ready for use. This did NOT happen and what we are hearing from our business members is that necessary forms are not available, mistakes have been made on the amount of tax charged, and they are unable to get their questions answered.

The CDCC is advocating for several changes in the legislation that would greatly benefit the Central Delaware Business Community:

- Expansion of the exemption group (currently 0-9 employees) to 0 – 20 or even 50 employees;
- The CDCC would also ask lawmakers to consider modifying the length of leave (12weeks) as well as the point at which employees become eligible (number of hours).
- Finally, the CDCC feels that the State needs to modify its website/portal so that it is truly user-friendly and does a better job of presenting information and answering pertinent questions.

CORPORATE STRUCTURE CONCERNS

The CDCC believes that lawmakers must take steps to preserve Delaware's corporate franchise system of laws and do whatever it takes to ensure the strength and longevity of the state's court of chancery.

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS PERTINENT TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- A rumored bill to raise minimum wage to \$20 per hour;
- A rumored bill to create yet another protected class that covers obesity and aging;
- The potential return of Sick & Safety Leave right on the heels of the implementation of paid leave;
- The potential return of the Homeless Bill of Rights and its impact on area businesses.