

2009 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



TRANSPORTATION

- A balanced plan to fund (a) I-73; (b) I-74; and (c) a southern evacuation route. Support fully-funded highway reauthorization bill in Congress with incentives for states to use alternative revenue sources, such as tolls and non-public funding, by leveraging federal program funding. Support tolling new roads & creation of public-private partnerships to leverage private capital for major infrastructure projects. Support dedicated state revenue streams and sufficient bonding capacity to provide for a likely state match needed to fund interstate projects.
- Pursue (a) funding for expansion of current airport capacity; (b) completion of Harrelson Blvd; and (c) Port of Entry status for airport operations.

TOURISM PROMOTION

- Fully-fund the 2-for-1 destination-specific matching tourism promotional grant with recurring funds.
- Support the Travel Promotion Act which will create a public-private partnership designed to promote U.S. tourism to foreign travelers and would also be used to communicate changing security policies/procedures to foreign travelers. The promotional program would be funded by private industry with matching funds created through a fee charged to foreign travelers.

BEACH PROTECTION

- Fund beach renourishment.
- Fund deep water ocean outfall projects.

EDUCATION

- Meet or exceed needs-based funding local post-secondary educational institutions, specifically Coastal Carolina University & Horry-Georgetown Technical College.

HEALTHCARE / WORKPLACE

- Meaningful reform to the South Carolina Medicaid system.
- Enabling legislation to allow trade associations and chambers of commerce to offer fully-funded and partially-funded healthcare benefits to small businesses.

ENERGY

- Support comprehensive energy plan to ensure energy independence in our future and optimize cost-effective use of renewable and alternative energy sources, while ensuring efficient delivery of energy needs to our region and our state in the foreseeable future. Tax breaks designed for large, multinational oil companies should be revised to incentivize efficient delivery of alternative energy sources.
- Support of exploration and study of offshore drilling for natural gas off the coast of South Carolina at a distance that minimizes risk to the coastal environment, coastal tourism and our local real estate economy, provided that a portion of revenues are returned for beach renourishment and tourism promotion.

EMPLOYMENT

- Support expansion of seasonal worker provisions within the H-2B Visa program to exempt prior student workers for hiring to fill verifiable, low-paying, seasonal jobs that will otherwise not be filled.
- Extend the E-Verify system of employment verification, allowing businesses to efficiently adhere to the state's new employment laws designed to curb illegal immigration.

