



KENT CHAMBER  
OF ♦ COMMERCE

## 2014 Legislative Agenda

### **Improve Washington's Business Climate**

The Kent Valley is home to the nation's 4th largest warehouse/manufacturing distribution center – whose collective activities comprise 1/8th of the state's entire Gross Domestic Product. With over 4,500 businesses and 78,000 jobs, Kent is an economic powerhouse.

Our primary objective is to retain and increase jobs, while also maintaining our competitive advantage and regional productivity. Located fifteen miles from both the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma, Kent's location leads many manufacturing, warehousing and suppliers to locate here.

- We must safeguard this economic engine by ensuring that the Green River flood levees protect our crucial infrastructure. To do this we focus on:
  - Maximizing land use and creating a partnership and shared vision with local governments that speed up levee accreditation.
  - Promote levee accreditation at the forefront of thought in policy and funding in order to protect our vital assets.
- Timely and efficient permitting for both large and small projects is a top priority. By decreasing unfunded mandates to local governments and eliminating duplicative reports, both the costs and permitting timeline will be reduced. A streamlined permitting process will promote much-needed economic development as we recover from the recession.

### **Transportation & Infrastructure Investment is Critical**

We believe improving our transportation system is essential to keeping and recruiting jobs, to moving the freight that is our conveyor of international trade, and that we must reduce congestion and enhance mobility for the public.

That's why we urge investment in transportation, particularly in Kent Valley, which is a critical component of our state's economy. Kent bears a significant burden in hosting these distributors and manufacturers, in connecting the Valley to the Ports, and in hosting two national railroad lines as they move their freight within the region and across the country. That's why the Kent Chamber fully supports the South Sound Chambers of Commerce Legislative Coalition (SSCCLC) transportation priorities and urges you to vote in favor of and fully fund the South Sound transportation corridor as laid out in the SSCCLC Legislative agenda.

### **Improve Educational Outcomes**

Washington is confronted with a skills gap that threatens our economic future, limits job opportunities, and prohibits employers from finding candidates with the skills necessary to meet their needs. The Kent Chamber recognizes the importance of education and training the next generation. We support K-12, higher education, trade schools, and partnerships to encourage the empowerment of educators and students to lead to a higher level of achievement and graduation rates.