



Member Advocacy Committee

*Created February 2017*

*Committee Purpose:*

*The Member Advocacy Committee acts as a voice for business on legislative, community and economic development issues within Greater Fort Myers through leadership and education.*

Membership Advocacy	1. To create an environment for our Chamber to be engaged in Business issues / opportunities.
	2. To provide a forum for our Members to engage in business issues / opportunities.
	3. Leverage Chamber platforms to communicate position on issues

Past topics

**½ Cent School Tax**

Collaborated with Lee County Chapter of the Florida Restaurant Lodging Association and the Sanibel Captiva Chamber of Commerce on an educational event for our combined members

**#MeToo**

Created an educational event for our members to learn human resources guidelines to prevent this behavior in the workforce. The event included a panel of Human Resource attorneys, specialists and business owners.

Current priorities:

**Water Quality**

Position statement: The Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce advocates for responsible regional, state and federal actions to be taken to restore and sustainably improve the water quality in Southwest Florida as well as safeguard future resources vital to the success of business and the economy.

This year we support the common Legislative Priorities of the SWFL Alliance of Chambers

- We **support** updating and strengthening stormwater standards for urban landscapes (statewide stormwater rule) and agricultural runoff, particularly for nutrient pollution from nitrogen and phosphorus that feeds harmful algal blooms.
- We **support** advanced wastewater treatment to reduce nutrients in reuse/reclaimed irrigation water with monitoring of nutrient concentrations.
- We **support** the establishment of statewide septic tank inspection and maintenance requirements.
- We **support** consistent sustained funding levels to accomplish the Everglades Agricultural Area projects and objective of sending clean water South as quickly as possible and implementation of critical infrastructures projects north and south of Lake Okeechobee.

## **\$15 Mandatory Minimum Wage** - expected on 2020 ballot

The Chamber is holding an educational event on 11/8 at the Broadway Palm Dinner Theater to share information on both sides of this topic.

Position statement: The Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce recognizes the challenge of earning a living wage. We believe compensation should be based on what the local market will bear. Therefore, the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce does not support government mandated minimum wage increases

## **Visit Florida**

Lee County, where tourism employs 1 out of every 5 people, understands the significant impact Visit Florida has on our community. Based on the overwhelming economic evidence in Florida and other states, the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce supports the continued full funding of Visit Florida.

Position statement:

Whereas the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce supports the growth of business for its members and community;

Whereas Visit Florida promotes long term growth for the state of Florida and the invaluable tourism industry;

Therefore, the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce supports the full funding and reauthorization of Visit Florida.

## **Transportation**

We support the common legislative priorities of the SWFL Alliance of Chambers

- We **support** the creation of increased funding and heightened priority for Southwest Florida transportation projects and studies as part of Florida Department of Transportation planning while remaining consistent with existing property rights.
- We **support** Priority transportation projects include interstate and bridge improvements, rail, and major highway and aviation projects that support the regional economy.

## **Workforce Housing**

We support the common legislative priorities of the SWFL Alliance of Chambers

- We **support** developing policies that increase attainable housing opportunities for our community members, including zoning changes to incentivize multi-unit development.

By removing the pre-platted requirements, developers and builders could be incentivized to develop housing that is more affordable for workers.

- We **support** fully funding the Sadowski housing trust funds in the 2019-20 fiscal year.