

2015 Capital Region Business Advocacy Resource Guide



**CAPITAL REGION
CHAMBER**



VISION

At the Center of New York's Tech Valley is the Capital Region, known for its thriving economy and vibrant quality of life.

MISSION

Be a catalyst for growth and prosperity for our members and the Capital Region by providing leadership, advocacy and resources.

LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY

Regional advancement: Be an impetus and resource to foster a regional perspective for the Capital Region community to realize its full potential.

Public policy: Be an advocate for policies and projects that will improve the business climate and enhance the economic vitality of the region.

Dear Valued Stakeholder:

Through engagement at all levels of government, the Capital Region Chamber has established its reputation as the primary advocacy resource for our members, the community, and key decision makers. In a concerted effort to promote policies and projects that will improve the business climate and enhance the economic vitality of the Capital Region, the Chamber is pleased to present its 2015 Business Advocacy Resource Guide.

Within the Resource Guide, you will find our Advocacy Agenda which reflects both the diversity of the Chamber's membership, as well as the broad public policy issues confronting the Capital Region and New York State, a directory of elected officials, session calendar, along with help suggestions when communicating with public officials. Throughout the legislative session, we will encourage pro-business initiatives and work against legislation that could be harmful to our community and its economy.

To help advocate or to discuss any public policy issues, large or small, please contact myself by calling 518.431.1424 or email at meagan@capitalregionchamber.com.

Thank you for working with us to secure the Capital Region's future!



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark N. Eagan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Mark N. Eagan, CCE
CEO



Follow me on Twitter!
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2015 CAPITAL REGION BUSINESS ADVOCACY AGENDA

Taxes/Regulations

Continue the emphasis on making New York State and the Capital Region more competitive through mandate relief, responsible stewardship of local finances, and reducing state and local regulatory and tax burdens.

- Support broad-based tax reform.
 - Reduce burdensome, outdated, and complex business taxes.
 - Accelerate estate tax reductions.
 - Urge significant property tax relief and that municipalities keep budgets within two percent property tax cap.
- Oppose prevailing wage mandates on private projects that receive public funds or financial assistance.
- Support business-backed Tort Reform legislation.
 - Amend the Scaffold Law, which imposes absolute liability on employers and property owners when construction workers are injured in elevation-related accidents, regardless of whether the worker refused to use safety equipment or was impaired by drugs or alcohol. This archaic law, long since repealed in every other state, adds thousands of dollars to the cost of new buildings and prevents economic growth.
- Support further reforms and improvements of the workers' compensation system such as modernizing the rating system through which schedule loss-of-use awards are determined by updating applicable medical treatment guidelines and eliminating or modifying the indexing of maximum weekly benefits to control growing program costs.

- Oppose unfunded state mandates on local governments.
 - Repeal Wicks Law, which subject school districts and other local governments to separate plumbing, heating, ventilation, air conditioning and electrical contracts, significantly increasing project expenses from 8% to 30%.
- Support Taylor Law reforms to encourage public employers and employees to work together to achieve labor contracts that are equitable.

Employment

Growing private sector jobs is key to the Capital Region's economic future. Regulations have a significant impact on a company's competitive position in attracting and retaining high-quality personnel. We must encourage job growth and state and federal governments to pursue pro-employment policies.

- Support efforts to strengthen the region's ties to the advanced materials, bio/life sciences, clean-tech/energy, homeland security/defense, information technology and nanotechnology/semiconductors industries.
- Support federal immigration reform.
 - Increase the availability of temporary, skilled worker (H-1B) visas.
 - Increase the availability of permanent resident visas (green cards) for STEM graduates and workers.
 - Create new startup visas for immigrant entrepreneurs who launch businesses in the U.S. and meet certain employment and financing goals.

- Support the expansion of tourism sector to expand economic opportunities.
- Support measures that would bring the unemployment insurance trust fund into solvency by achieving timely and affordable repayments. Avoid shifting additional tax burdens to stable employers.

Downtown

Thriving downtowns and urban business districts are essential to the long term economic health of the Capital Region.

- Support enhanced historic rehabilitation tax credits.
- Adopt an asbestos remediation tax credit, to promote the redevelopment and reuse of existing, underutilized properties.
- Extend the brownfield remediation and redevelopment tax credits; reform the brownfield program to include certain superfund and RCRA sites, and to expedite review and approval of remediation projects.
- Support integrated policies that support urban redevelopment, including transit and mobility options that include bike and pedestrian enhancements.
- Ensure the availability of capital from both conventional and unconventional sources to attract investment for housing, retail, business expansion, mixed-use and other downtown projects.

Healthcare

As healthcare costs and confusion rise, many employers and working families continue to experience difficulties seeking coverage. The

Chamber remains a trusted source for health insurance, meeting the needs and seeking reforms for individuals and small businesses.

- Support affordable and comprehensive access to health insurance and a robust healthcare system without imposing new mandates and/or taxes on businesses or individuals.
- Support reforming the medical tort system to make costs more affordable and predictable.

Education/Workforce Development

A skilled workforce is critical to regional job growth and prosperity. Quality education must be available to students and workers at all levels so they well equipped to enter and re-enter the job market.

- Support policies that expand access to high-quality workforce training programs and early learning programs.
- Support education models to better prepare students for entry into career and/or college.
 - Support efforts to improve science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education.
 - Support expanded access to innovative education models and multiple pathways to graduation.
- Continue to support New York's Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and assessments.
- Support efforts to address teacher quality and retention concerns.
- Support evaluating the government employment and training system to better align resources for employers and job seekers.

- Support increasing funding for community colleges for customized industry training & equipment.

Transportation/Infrastructure

Quality infrastructure is essential for all businesses and residents. Without the proper investment, our economic stability, potential for job growth and competitiveness are threatened.

- Support expansion of Bus Plus (Bus Rapid Transit) in the Capital Region.
- Advocate for reconstruction of Exit 4, providing direct access from the Northway/I-87 to the Albany International Airport.
- Remain a leading advocate for increased flight service and competitive pricing to/from the Albany International Airport.
- Support funding to reduce congestion within the region's passenger rail system, as well as the creation of express trains from Albany to New York City.
- Support upgrading the state's high-voltage electric transmission system in a manner consistent with wholesale energy markets to make pricing more competitive in upstate communities.
- Support the finalization of comprehensive regulations and performance criteria for the use of horizontal hydraulic fracturing which will support natural gas development, resulting in increased jobs and tax revenue for New York State.

TIPS

for Communicating with Elected Officials

- Be brief. A legislator's time is limited. So is yours.
- Be appreciative. Acknowledge previous support and current action.
- Be specific. Don't be general.
- Be informative and factual. Give reasons and provide the supporting materials.
- Be courteous and polite. Treat them as you would want to be treated. Ask for a specific action without being demanding or threatening.
- Be reasonable. Remember it's all right to have a difference of opinion.
- Be realistic. Issues may need to be resolved through compromise.
- Be understanding. Put yourself in the legislator's position to try and understand his/her concerns and goals.
- Be knowledgeable and evaluate issues. The introduction of a legislative bill doesn't mean that it will become law. Don't get too excited about it until you've learned the who, what and why of it.

Ways to Communicate to Your Elected Officials

Letters

Letters are still the primary means to communicate with public officials. They represent voters, are read and elicit responses. Letters can be informal or formal, typewritten or handwritten. Due to security issues, letters to federal officials, in particular, may take a longer period of time to reach the officials.

Office Visits

Call in advance to set up an appointment and explain the nature of your visit. Do your homework and make sure you understand the official's position on a particular issue. You may consider inviting other individuals from like companies with similar concerns, and don't be bashful about inviting the official to your place of business. Elected officials rely heavily on their staff for guidance, information, research and more, so it is important to get to know their staff.

Telephone Calls

Always be concise, and discuss only one issue per telephone call. If the issue is in regard to a particular bill, provide the bill number and state your position. Explain how the bill impacts your business and why you support or oppose it. Make phone calls sparingly.

Email

Depending on the legislator, email can be an effective way to communicate when issues are time sensitive and the need for action is critical. Keep your message short and to one screen, so the official doesn't have to scroll his/her way through the text. Always provide complete contact information in your email, including address, phone and fax numbers and email addresses.

2015 Capital Region Legislative Directory

FEDERAL OFFICIALS

U.S. SENATOR

KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND

478 Russell Senate Bldg. | Washington, D.C. 20510
202.224.4451 | www.gillibrand.senate.gov

U.S. SENATOR

CHARLES SCHUMER

313 Hart Senate Bldg. | Washington, D.C. 20510
202.224.6542 | www.schumer.senate.gov

CONGRESSMAN

CHRIS GIBSON | 19th Congressional District

1708 Longworth HOB | Washington, D.C. 20515
202.225.5614 | www.gibson.house.gov

CONGRESSMAN

ELISE STEFANIK | 21st Congressional District

512 Cannon HOB | Washington, D.C. 20515
202.225.4611 | www.stefanik.house.gov

CONGRESSMAN

PAUL TONKO | 20th Congressional District

2463 Rayburn | Washington, D.C. 20515
202.225.5076 | www.tonko.house.gov

NEW YORK STATE OFFICIALS

GOVERNOR

ANDREW M. CUOMO

State Capitol | Albany, NY 12224
518.474.8390 | www.governor.ny.gov

ATTORNEY GENERAL

ERIC T. SCHNEIDERMAN

State Capitol | Albany, NY 12224
518.474.7330 | www.oag.state.ny.us

COMPTROLLER

THOMAS P. DINAPOLI

110 State Street | Albany, NY 12236
518.474.4044 | www.osc.state.ny.us

2015 Capital Region Legislative Directory

NEW YORK STATE SENATE

SENATOR

NEIL BRESLIN | 44th Senate District
Albany Office | Capitol Rm. 414 | Albany, NY 12247
518.455.2225 | breslin@senate.state.ny.us

SENATOR

HUGH FARLEY | 49th Senate District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 711 | Albany, NY 12247
518.455.2181 | farley@nysenate.gov

SENATOR

KATHLEEN A. MARCHIONE | 43rd Senate District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 306 | Albany, NY 12247
518.455.2381 | marchione@nysenate.gov

SENATOR

GEORGE AMEDORE | 46th Senate District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 311 | Albany, NY 12247
518.455.2350 | amedore@nysenate.gov



2015 Capital Region Legislative Directory

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

ASSEMBLYMEMBER

PATRICIA FAHY | 109th Assembly District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 452 | Albany, NY 12248
518.455.4178 | fahyp@assembly.state.ny.us

ASSEMBLYMEMBER

PETER LOPEZ | 102nd Assembly District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 402 | Albany, NY 12248
518.455.5363 | lopezp@assembly.state.ny.us

ASSEMBLYMEMBER

JOHN T. MCDONALD, III | 108th Assembly District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 417 | Albany, NY 12248
518.455.4474 | mcdonaldj@assembly.state.ny.us

ASSEMBLYMEMBER

STEVEN F. MCLAUGHLIN | 107th Assembly District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 533 | Albany, NY 12248
518.455.5777 | mclaughlins@assembly.state.ny.us



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ASSEMBLYMEMBER

ANGELO SANTABARBARA | 111th Assembly District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 833 | Albany, NY 12248
518.455.5197 | santabarbaraa@assembly.state.ny.us

ASSEMBLYMEMBER

DANIEL STEC | 114th Assembly District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 940 | Albany, NY 12248
518.455.5565 | stecd@assembly.state.ny.us

ASSEMBLYMEMBER

PHIL STECK | 110th Assembly District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 219 | Albany, NY 12248
518.455.5931 | steckp@assembly.state.ny.us

ASSEMBLYMEMBER

JAMES TEDISCO | 112th Assembly District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 404 | Albany, NY 12248
518.455.5772 | tediscoj@assembly.state.ny.us

ASSEMBLYMEMBER

CARRIE WOERNER | 113th Assembly District
Albany Office | LOB Rm. 323 | Albany, NY 12248
518.455.3727 | woernerc@assembly.state.ny.us





New York State Legislative Session Calendar



January - June 2015

The New York State Legislative Session Calendar establishes a schedule for the 2015 Legislative Session and provides dates important to the legislative process. The Session Calendar is intended to afford Members flexibility in conducting legislative business in Albany and planning activities within their home districts. The Session Calendar will foster orderly and timely consideration of legislation. Unforeseen events may require modification of the Session Calendar.

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| January 7 | 2015 Legislative Session convenes |
| January 12 | Start of sessions |
| January 19 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day |
| January 21 | Governor's State-of-the-State Address |
| February 1 | Final Day for Submission of Executive Budget |
| February 16 | Presidents' Day |
| April 1 | Beginning of new Fiscal Year |
| May 25 | Memorial Day observed |



Indicates session day



Indicates legislative activity/budget hearing

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Government Affairs Committee works with the Chamber's professional staff to help identify and analyze issues, define objectives and make policy recommendations to the Board of Directors.

2015 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairpersons:

Kirk M. Lewis, Schenectady ARC

Richard P. Sleasman, CBRE – Albany

Richard Antokol, Antokol, Reisman & Coffin

Rich Barlette, NYISO

John Calareso, The Calareso Law Firm, PLLC

Nancy Carey Cassidy, Picotte Companies

Bob Davey, TD Bank

Lawrence DeAngelus, Higgins, Robers & Suprunowicz, PC

Steve Ferraro, SaxBST

Kim Fine, Albany Medical Center

Peter Gannon, Arsenal Business & Technology Partnership

Ted Glowa, Volunteer

Nancy Gold, Tough Traveler, Ltd.

Neil Levine, Whiteman Osterman & Hanna

Shelley Lupe, Wade Lupe Companies

David Mahoney, Noble Gas Solutions

Kevin J. McCoy, Marvin & Company, CPAs, PC

William J. Mather, Sr., HMS Agency, Inc.

David W. Meyers, Esq., Meyers & Meyers, LLP

John Mucha, Time Warner Cable

Maureen J. O'Brien-Thornton, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

Kevin O'Connor, FirstLight Fiber

Laura Siracuse, Ballston Spa National Bank

David Smingler, Ellis Medicine

Phillip D. Tiberio, EOS Technologies

Michael B. Whalen, Jr., M&T Bank - Albany

Marcia White, Saratoga Performing Arts Center



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