



The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce
2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce: Advocating for a More Competitive Regional Economy

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our “Year in Review” – a snapshot of the progress made in 2015 by the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the advocacy arm of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. This past year, we successfully advanced a number of priorities in support of the Conference’s 2015-17 agenda, which is focused on **Connecting People to Opportunity** through three interrelated strategies – **Workforce, Infrastructure** and **Economy and Community**. These efforts at the local, state and federal levels are playing a critical role in advancing the Conference’s overall mission of improving the economy and quality of life in the 10-county Pittsburgh region.

At the **local level** in 2015, we participated in the City of Pittsburgh’s “Welcoming Pittsburgh Advisory Council” to help create a more welcoming, inclusive and diverse city and region for immigrants and newcomers alike. We also led a dialogue on the need for more high-skilled immigrants in our region. Furthermore, we highlighted the importance of the state’s Neighborhood Assistance Program to support the revitalization of underserved communities.

In **Harrisburg**, one of the Chamber’s biggest state priorities in recent years crossed the finish line – the elimination of the uncompetitive Capital Stock and Franchise Tax. And **federally**, working alongside our partners from the Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition, we helped to pass the FAST Act – a \$305 billion infrastructure funding package that will have a big positive impact in the region. The FAST Act also reauthorized the critical Export-Import Bank – a huge victory for exporting firms doing business here.

These accomplishments would not be possible without the hard work and collaborative spirit of our many regional, state and federal partners. In the following pages, you will learn more about the progress made on these and other other issues of vital importance to the Pittsburgh region. We thank you for taking the time to review our 2015 achievements, and look forward to working with you in 2016 and beyond to continue to improve the region’s economic competitiveness and quality of life.

Laura E. Ellsworth

Chair, Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce

Matt Smith

President, Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce



Our Mission

The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce (GPCC), the advocacy arm of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, serves as the 10-county Pittsburgh region's chief advocate at all levels of government to secure public sector investment and legislative and regulatory improvements to improve the economy and quality of life. The enduring contribution of the GPCC is its ability to bring people and organizations together around issues critical to the region's competitiveness and, through a unified voice, effectively convey the needs and priorities of the region to local, state and federal decision makers.

The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce provides regional, state and federal advocacy critical to achieving the goals of the Allegheny Conference's 2015-17 agenda of Connecting People to Opportunity and to improve the economy and quality of life in the 10-county Pittsburgh region.

- Dennis Yablonsky, CEO, Allegheny Conference on Community Development

The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce 2015 RESULTS



Resulting in **Big Wins** for the Region

- Elimination of the uncompetitive Capital Stock and Franchise Tax
- Passage of a \$305 billion federal infrastructure investment package
- Reauthorization of the federal Export-Import Bank
- \$61 million federal budget increase for the National Energy Technology Laboratory (FY 16)

Local Priorities

270,000+ Baby Boomers working here are eligible to retire over the next 10 years. If we do nothing, our region will be short about 100,000 skilled workers to replace them. As part of its priority to make the region a more welcoming and diverse place for immigrants and newcomers, the GPCC participated in the City of Pittsburgh's "Welcoming Pittsburgh Advisory Council." Our participation helped to ensure that the final "Welcoming Pittsburgh" report reflected the interests of regional employers to develop innovative ways to attract and retain more people to our region to build a more competitive workforce.

The GPCC also highlighted the importance of raising the state's Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) tax credit above the current \$18 million cap due to the success of the Allegheny Conference's Strengthening Communities Partnership in participating underserved local communities.

Finally, the GPCC led and advanced the dialogue around the necessity of high-skilled immigration reform to drive our local economy forward.



Brandon Mendoza, the GPCC's government affairs manager, represented the GPCC on the City of Pittsburgh's "Welcoming Pittsburgh Advisory Council."



The GPCC joined City of Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto to announce the new Burns White headquarters in Oxford Development's 3 Crossings mixed-use development in Pittsburgh's Strip District.



The GPCC holds quarterly meetings with members of Pittsburgh City Council. These forums, such as our recent discussion with Council President Bruce Kraus, provide opportunities to collaborate on shared issues of regional importance.



The GPCC joined Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and PA DCED Secretary Dennis Davin at a groundbreaking event for Newbury Market - a \$450 million project in South Fayette Township, Allegheny County.



Brandon Mendoza joined Leon Rodriguez, United States Citizen and Immigration Services Director, and Betty Cruz, the City of Pittsburgh's "Welcoming Pittsburgh" lead for a discussion about the need for high-skilled immigrants to build a more competitive regional workforce.



Lawrence County Commissioner Steve Craig joined the Allegheny Conference's Ken Zapinski for a presentation at the GPCC's First Friday Speaker Series.

State Priorities

Our region achieved a goal the Allegheny Conference, GPCC and numerous other private-sector organizations have been working on for more than 15 years: to improve Pennsylvania's economic competitiveness through elimination of the Capital Stock and Franchise Tax (CSFT). Due to the CSFT, Pennsylvania was one of the few states that taxed both business assets and business receipts or net income. This made the Commonwealth less competitive for job creation and business investment compared to competing states.

The GPCC appreciates the Governor and legislature's support for the elimination of this burdensome tax on job creators. We led the more than 130 businesses and organizations of CompetePA on this issue. CompetePA is a coalition representing more than half the private sector employment in Pennsylvania that works to create a more competitive statewide business tax climate.

Another major GPCC state priority that saw progress in 2015 is state and municipal pension reform. Work remains to realize meaningful reforms, yet 2015 saw the most progress to date on these issues. We look forward to continuing to work on state and municipal pension reform in 2016.



The GPCC conducts regular meetings and conference calls with state policy makers and other stakeholders. We recently hosted Pennsylvania Auditor General Eugene DePasquale for a discussion around the need for municipal pension reform.



Jennifer Beer, the GPCC's senior government affairs director, and Matt Smith, president of the GPCC, joined PA House Majority Appropriations Chairman Bill Adolph for a roundtable discussion and briefing co-hosted by the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. The GPCC works frequently with our partners from the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce on joint policy goals.

GPCC Chair Laura Ellsworth spoke about the need to eliminate the Capital Stock and Franchise Tax at a CompetePA press event hosted by Pennsylvania House Speaker Mike Turzai.



Federal Priorities

Two major GPCC federal policy priorities were accomplished in 2015 with the passage of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act): a five-year, long-term transportation plan and the reauthorization of the critical Export-Import Bank. The FAST Act represents a key accomplishment of the Allegheny Conference's Infrastructure strategy, which is focused on improving systems and structures that support sustainability and opportunity.

The FAST Act, a \$305 billion infrastructure funding package, will make significant investments in our nation's roads, bridges, highways, rail and transit systems over the next five years. Matched with state investments resulting from the passage of Act 89 – Pennsylvania's \$2.4 billion transportation funding package passed in 2013 – we are now on a path toward further infrastructure improvements to enhance connectivity in the region.

Furthermore, the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank represents a big win for our region's exporting firms and their suppliers. Businesses big and small, from Westinghouse Electric Co. in Cranberry to Aquatech in Canonsburg, utilize the Export-Import Bank to compete with foreign competitors that benefit from their own nation's export financing institutions.

The GPCC also advocated for an increase in the the budget of the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) for Fiscal Year 2016. A federal appropriations bill was signed into law at the end of 2015 which will provide an additional \$61 million for NETL to maintain and grow its energy research assets to further innovation in energy exploration and utilization in our region.



The GPCC organizes regular trips to Washington D.C. to meet with members of our congressional delegation on issues important to the region's economy and quality of life. GPCC Chair Laura Ellsworth, City of Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and other GPCC members met with our entire western Pennsylvania congressional delegation including Senators Bob Casey and Pat Toomey, and Congressmen Mike Doyle and Tim Murphy.

Advocating to Pass the FAST Act

Much of the GPCC's federal advocacy efforts are conducted in partnership with the Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition – a multi-state advocacy coalition that the GPCC helps to lead and drive the agenda forward. The collaborative nature of this multi-state partnership was critical to getting the FAST Act passed.

 **36** Chambers of Commerce working together...

Across **12** U.S. States and **2** Canadian Provinces...

Representing a region that would have the
4th largest economy
in the world, with an estimated annual output near
\$6 trillion,
if it were a country ...

Advocating together
with a shared message to reach...
163 federal lawmakers through
in-person meetings, calls
and letters of support

Generating Big Accomplishments...
Passage of the FAST Act:

\$305 billion infrastructure funding package

\$37 billion U.S. exports supported by the Export-Import Bank in 2013
Export-Import Bank reauthorization allows our region to fully maximize its export potential.

GPCC Political Action Committee (PAC)

The GPCC supports officials who recognize the importance of improving the economy and quality of life in the 10-county Pittsburgh region. The GPCC PAC helps to raise our profile among those officials and allows us to engage in robust communication on issues crucial to our region.

GPCC Receptions

We hold three legislative receptions throughout the year with our stakeholders and regional policy makers to help strengthen relationships between our region's business community and elected officials and celebrate our shared accomplishments. The receptions, which take place in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg (in partnership with the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce) and Washington, D.C., are always well attended. We thank all of our reception sponsors. Without their support, these important events could not take place.



GPCC's Monthly First Friday Speaker Series

The GPCC's monthly First Friday Speaker Series invites the region's public affairs community to engage with elected and other public officials on issues important to the region.

Thank you to all of our 2015 First Friday speakers for joining us:

- **Randy Albright**, PA Secretary of Revenue
- **Christina Cassotis**, CEO, Allegheny County Airport Authority
- **Steve Craig**, Lawrence County Commissioner and SPC Chair
- **Betty Cruz**, Deputy Chief, Special Initiatives, City of Pittsburgh
- **Mike Doyle**, U.S. Congressman
- **Michelle Figlar**, Pre-K for PA Campaign
- **Rich Hudic**, CEO, Regional Asset District
- **Jeff Lungren**, Chief Health Care and Immigration Lobbyist, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- **Keith Rothfus**, U.S. Congressman
- **Jake Witherell**, COO, Schell Games and member of the PA Early Learning Investment Commission





11 STANWIX STREET, 17TH FLOOR | PITTSBURGH, PA 15222-1312
TOLL FREE: 1 (877) 392-1300 | PHONE: (OUTSIDE OF U.S. AND CANADA) +1 (412) 392-1000
FAX: (412) 392-1040 | PittsburghChamber.com



Follow us on Twitter
[@GpghCC](https://twitter.com/GpghCC)

The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce is an affiliate of the Allegheny Conference