

Our Chambers jointly support legislation that will:

Educate Our Region's Future Leaders

(Education)

Public Education: NCEAC requests the General Assembly to show a commitment to professional pay for educators, including veteran teachers. Without professional pay, rural Eastern North Carolina counties are at a greater disadvantage in teacher recruitment and retention.

Community Colleges: NCEAC requests investments in workforce training, including a start-up fund for new programs for local industry. Increasing student completion of degrees and certificates requires additional funding for student support services. As with public education, professional salaries for faculty and staff are vital for the economic development of eastern North Carolina.

Enhance Our Region's Landscape

(Infrastructure, Environment, Transportation, Waterways)

Address Transportation Needs: NCEA urges the General Assembly to address transportation plans that promote and enhance growth in Eastern North Carolina and protect the current strategic missions of our military installations. Continue to upgrade Eastern North Carolina highways like US Highway 264/ Future Interstate 587, US Highway 17, and US Highway 70/ Future Interstate 42. Provide for long term planning and funding to maintain our inland waterways for our ports and fishing fleets.

Invest in Broadband: Broadband availability improves quality of life by raising property values and attracting a dynamic workforce. It is important for agriculture and advanced manufacturing. NCEAC requests that the General Assembly explore all options to level the playing field so Eastern North Carolina can compete with other areas of the state that have greater broadband coverage.

Protect Water Quality: With recent regulatory reform efforts, NCEAC requests that the General Assembly take special care to preserve the water quality in our region, particularly in terms of upstream management.

Prevent ENC Flooding: NCEAC urges our legislators to use the knowledge gained in the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd and Matthew to prevent flooding in future storms. We ask that State of North Carolina take the lead and seed an effort to implement physical changes in the form of flood prevention measures to save lives and property along the various waterways in Eastern North Carolina. We encourage the state to consider the upstream management of water flow and its impact on the East.

Grow Our Region's Economy

(Tax Reform, Economic Development, Workforce Development, Small Business)

Sustain a Military Friendly Climate: Provide necessary resources & support for local communities to protect the current strategic mission of military bases in the East. Reintroduce and support the Military Operations Protection Act to protect the training and low-level flight routes around our military installations. Continue initiative to recognize military training towards state requirements and to expand access to institutions of higher education.

Address Needs of Veterans: Eastern NC is home to a larger percentage of active duty military and Veterans than any other region of the state. We encourage the General Assembly to explore state options that would expand medical care for veterans.

Continue Health Care Reform: Continue efforts to reform Medicaid that include a provider led model of care phased in over 5 years and preservation of supplemental payments. Increase the number of North Carolinians with health insurance by increasing Medicaid eligibility standards to 138 percent of the federal poverty level. Preserve Certificate of Need.

Preserve Hospital Sales Tax Exemption: Hospitals do more than their fair share for communities every day. A change to the tax code may cost hospitals about 30 percent of their annual revenue stream. This would cripple their ability to deliver on their mission to provide patient care.

Regional Health Care: Support the Vidant Health and The Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University efforts to integrate known as Project Unify. Provide funding for the expansion of class size at The Brody School of Medicine from 80 to 120 students per year to address the critical need for primary care physicians in NC, particularly rural areas.

Economic Development: Predominately rural Eastern North Carolina is not seeing the economic growth being enjoyed by more urban areas of the state. NCEAC encourages our delegation to make it a priority of the Department of Commerce or the Economic Development Partnership of NC to create and implement a true rural development strategy.

Empower Our Region's Leadership *(Caucus)*

Eastern Region Caucus: NCEAC formally requests that legislators in our region form a "Recognized Joint" Eastern Region Caucus.

Watch List: NCEAC monitors issues on our watch list, and alerts local chambers of proposed legislation that may impact those issues. As a group, we may or may not take a position, but we will encourage our local chambers to provide input from their community to members of the Eastern Legislative delegation or the Governor's office. Our watch list issues for 2017 are:

- East Carolina University
- Brody School of Medicine
- Formula for A-F public school grades
- Potential modifications of House Bill 2
- Issues or appointments during transition in the Governor's office