

2021 Legislative Priorities



NORTH MYRTLE BEACH

Our mission is to advance the prosperity of North Myrtle Beach



February 2021

To the stakeholders of Destination North Myrtle Beach,

It is our pleasure to share our legislative priorities for the 2021 Legislative session. You will find our priorities are similar to last years with the addition of COVID-19 related items. Our number one priority remains being committed to ensuring legislation being considered in Columbia is tourism and business friendly as well as supporting our organizations funding base through the accommodations reputation as one of the top vacation beach destinations in the United States.

Destination NMB supports important infrastructure from interstate and state highways to the development of a new state park. We feel the roadways are very important for commerce, economic development, and access for visitors traveling to North Myrtle Beach. Additionally, Interstate 73 and other state highway extensions will provide critical evacuation routes from the Grand Strand in times of emergency. There are other infrastructure upgrades such as Deep-Water Outfalls and stormwater management that remain a high priority.

There have been many impacts from COVID-19 and our small businesses, our own organization, and our city have been severely hit by the impact the virus has had on travel. To recover with a solid ability to remain competitive we must consider recovery funding and relief programs. Liability protection during these unprecedented times are also warranted as operations have been required to adjust and those following the prescribed measure should be eligible for liability protection.

Workforce development continues to be a matter of concern statewide. Destination NMB supports programs, plans, and policies which will help business owners recruit, train, and retain strong workforce with highpaying quality jobs.

Our community does not have a women's shelter and funding for such a facility is necessary. Destination NMB has participated locally to help raise funds for a facility and securing state funds to get this project launched will enable the community fundraising to advance even further.

Along with Governor McMaster and the leaders of every coastal community in South Carolina, Destination North Myrtle Beach remains devoted to our opposition of the exploration for oil and natural gas off the coast of our state. We feel this type of exploration would severely hurt our tourism industry.

Destination North Myrtle Beach is committed to continue our work with the state legislature, our business partners, and stakeholders to ensure North Myrtle Beach continues to be a business and tourism friendly family destination.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl Y. Kilday".

Cheryl Y. Kilday, CDME

President/CEO

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Tourism

1. **Destination NMB will continue to advocate** for “tourism friendly” legislation which will help increase tourism in North Myrtle Beach and along the Grand Strand.
2. **Advocate for** the legislature to enact checks and balances on VRBO and Airbnb class of businesses to ensure these types of rentals are accountable for their operations and proper tax accountability.
3. **Continue to advocate** for a member of the Tourism Expenditure Review Committee (TERC) to be a representative from the Grand Strand.

Infrastructure

1. **Continued Funding for Deepwater Outfalls.** Deepwater Outfalls are extremely important to help reduce the bacteria levels in the ocean waters along the North Myrtle Beach shoreline. These projects extend the outfalls from the shoreline to 100+/- yards offshore to deeper water. Continued construction of the outfalls will decrease the number of swim advisories the City of North Myrtle Beach experiences each year.
2. **Support the Construction of Interstate 73.** Respondents to the Destination North Myrtle Beach legislative Priorities Survey support the construction of Interstate 73 and believe its construction will boost economic development along the Grand Strand. In partnership with other Chambers of Commerce of the Grand Strand, Destination North Myrtle Beach will continue to advocate and support the construction of Interstate 73 as being a prime route for visitors to reach our areas, important for economic development, as well as an important evacuation route during an emergency.
3. **Seek Funding to Extend South Carolina 31 to the North Carolina Border.** Supporting the current efforts to continue to fund the extension of SC 31 to the NC border will help the City of North Myrtle Beach with traffic flow along Highway 17 in the city. By supporting the extension of Hwy 31, we are ensuring visitors to our area will have a less congested route into the North Strand.
4. **Seek Funding to Extend South Carolina 9 to Interstate 95.** The extension of Hwy 31 will also serve the area as an important evacuation route when needed. Additionally, extending SC 9 to Interstate 95 will support economic development to Horry County and provide another direct access point to an Interstate.
5. **Establish a new State Park along the Little River Neck Road.** Destination NMB is very interested in supporting the development of a new state park along Little River Neck Road. The new park will have a positive impact on tourism and travel to the community and increase visitor spending within the entire State of South Carolina.

COVID-19 Recovery and Relief

1. **Destination NMB will Advocate for Recovery and Relief from COVID-19 Impacts.** This is an effort to support small businesses and tourism-based municipalities to ensure that our community emerges from the COVID-19 environment strong. Access to necessary grants and initiatives will enable small businesses and our city to recover fiscally, which is crucial.

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COVID-19 Recovery and Relief, continued

2. **Advocate for Business Liability Protections.** Businesses and employers following the state, federal, and local guidelines for remaining open during COVID-19 should be protected from liability unless there is evidence of gross negligence. South Carolina is one of only a few states in the Southeast that does not have provisions for COVID-19 liability protection.
3. **Municipal Relief and Recovery Funding.** Municipalities, especially those tourism-based economies, need access to relief and recovery funding. Flexibility for the use of tourism related funding through hospitality and accommodations tax dollars may be desirable, if, the marketing initiatives through the 30% accommodations taxes are not impacted.

Workforce Development

1. **The development of a strong, trained workforce continues to be a statewide issue in South Carolina.** This includes trade and skilled labor training. With a well prepared, trained workforce, South Carolina can continue to attract five-star companies and corporations to our state to establish and continue to run their operations.
2. **A reliable statewide rural Wi-Fi/Internet system is essential** to provide education and job training opportunities to potential members of the workforce living in rural areas of the state.
3. **Supporting the continued efforts** for Education Reform in South Carolina will help ensure the state has a work-ready workforce moving forward.

Energy/Environmental

1. **Destination NMB will continue to oppose** the exploration for oil and gas off the coast of South Carolina.
2. **Destination NMB will continue to advocate** for the expansion of wind power opportunities in the state.

Other Legislation to Watch

Based on comments taken from Destination NMB's 2021 Legislative Priorities Survey, here are other items of concern Destination NMB will be tracking:

1. Support the sale of spirits (liquor) on Sundays in authorized retail stores.
2. Tort Reform.
3. Workers Compensation reform.
4. Support statewide education reform.
5. Funding for a Women's Shelter in Horry County.
6. School start date no earlier than the 3rd week in August.