



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF CAPE CORAL

Legislative Initiatives 2025

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral is to Champion For Business and Advocate For Community within the City of Cape Coral. We believe it is our responsibility to support issues that create a positive economic impact now and for future generations of Cape Coral residents, and

WHEREAS Cape Coral is the third largest Florida City in land mass, 8th largest by population, with more than 400 miles of canals, and 27 Miles of shoreline.

WHEREAS Florida has a representative form of government, whereby citizens authorize their elected officials to represent their individual interests.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS the following Lee County and City of Cape Coral Legislative Initiatives:

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS legislation that designate resources solely for the unique problems facing pre-platted cities and provides property owners and local governments additional tools including funding with which to address challenges posed by antiquated subdivisions.

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS retaining the full amount of dedicated documentary tax revenues to fund state and local affordable housing programs.

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS Legislation that will strengthen and protect the rights of Florida citizens to govern themselves under the municipal Home Rule powers conferred by the Florida Constitution.

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral DOES NOT SUPPORT Single Member Voting Districts for Municipal or County Elections.

Insurance Reform and Disaster Claims

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS

Homeowner & Flood Insurance Regulation: Legislation that will provide viable alternatives to our current insurance affordability issues.

Disaster Claims: Legislation prohibiting insurance companies from cancelling an existing policy while a disaster claim is still open. In the wake of Hurricane Ian, many homeowners and business owners were cancelled by their insurance companies prior to their claims being closed. Insurance companies will not write a policy on a property with an open claim and those owners seeking disaster loans are being denied for having no insurance coverage.

Emergency Management, Hurricane Recovery and Resiliency

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS

Continuing State financial assistance to help Lee County recover from multiple hurricanes in recent years. While still rebuilding from the catastrophic devastation wreaked by Hurricane Ian, the County has suffered impacts from hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton. Lee County appreciates its vital partnership with the State of Florida and seeks to further strengthen joint hurricane response and recovery efforts.

Appropriating \$5 million to design and construct hardened traffic signal poles that were damaged by Hurricane Ian but not funded by Federal Highway Administration.

Appropriating \$5.75 million to further harden the primary mass shelter and interagency staging area for emergency response resources in Lee County. Hertz Arena has been activated for ten disasters since 2004 and provides easy access to residents throughout Southwest Florida and beyond.

State and federal resiliency efforts to identify and address vulnerabilities to public infrastructure and public safety through continued funding of planning and capital improvements.

Additional funding for statewide emergency management systems and initiatives, including emergency notification systems, coordination platforms, and communications infrastructure.

Transportation

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS

State Road 78/Pine Island Road Widening - State Road 78, also known as Pine Island Road, is a critical evacuation route and transportation corridor in Lee County, connecting Cape Coral, Matlacha, Pine Island, and surrounding communities. With increasing population growth and extreme weather events, the current roadway infrastructure is insufficient to ensure safe and efficient evacuation during hurricanes and other emergencies.

Cape Coral I-75 Interchange/Exit -Cape Coral is one of the fastest-growing cities in Florida, with a population exceeding 220,000 residents and continued economic expansion. However, its limited access to Interstate 75 (I-75) presents significant challenges for residents, businesses, and emergency services. The construction of a dedicated I-75 interchange serving Cape Coral is critical to ensuring continued economic growth, enhanced safety, and improved transportation efficiency. We urge Florida state legislators to support funding and development for this vital infrastructure project.

Priority transportation projects include interstate and bridge improvements, rail, and major highway and aviation projects that support the regional economy and legislation that preserves local transportation planning control and provides equitable funding among municipalities. Focus on multi-modal transportation design, emphasizing enhanced safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Infrastructure

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS

Waste-to-Energy Program – Funding the Municipal Solid Waste-to-Energy Program to provide financial assistance grants and incentive grants to counties that operate municipal solid waste-to-energy facilities. Created in 2022, the \$100 million/year program has not yet been funded.

Water Management Basin Boundaries – Updating boundaries of water basin districts according to hydrological conditions to ensure that taxpayers are contributing to the sub-district that best serves them and that water management districts are providing equitable service to all basins. Implementing the study commissioned by legislature to scientifically determine the boundaries of Big Cypress Basin.

Water Resources & Planning – Creating a recurring five-year water-related work plan and statewide strategic plan. Increased funding for local water infrastructure projects with direction for coordination of the various state/regional entities funding water issues toward local priorities.

Water Wells and Septic-to-Sewer Conversion – Recurring funding for conversion programs designed to move private wells to potable drinking water and private septic tanks to public wastewater collection systems. Greater flexibility for programs that address the costs incurred by residents connecting to sewer and the proper abandonment of septic systems.

Tourism

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS

The continued full funding of Visit Florida in its current form, based on the agency requested appropriations and long-term extension of the current sunset clause.

Legislation that codifies full collection and remittance of the Tourist Development Taxes by short-term rentals and requires a Department of Revenue number, or similar unique property identification number, be included in the short-term rental advertisements.

Workforce Development/Education

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS

Fully funding workforce education programs provided by the state technical college system. We also support legislation that expands, encourages, and incentivizes work-based learning opportunities, including career and technical training, internships and apprenticeships, and post-secondary education.

Initiatives that incentivize childcare providers to offer infant care and non-traditional hours to better serve Florida's workforce; encourage, promote and incentivize at-home providers to become registered childcare providers; and expand access to high-quality, affordable childcare options in Southwest Florida and across the state.

Funding the Upskilling and Workforce Diploma Special Project (Libraries) that provides educational access (at no charge) to adult students seeking to improve their quality of life and job opportunities through completing their accredited private high school education at their local branch library.

Workforce Housing

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS

Continued funding of affordable housing programs for people with low and moderate incomes, including veterans, seniors, individuals with disabilities or special needs.

Using all Sadowski Housing Trust Funds for Florida's SHIP and SAIL program.

Policies that encourage and enable workforce/affordable housing opportunities including high-density mixed-use development. Policies that enable municipalities to be flexible with zoning and permitting processes; policies that cut red tape, eliminate government interference, and reduce building costs.

Funding for local projects that provide workforce/affordable housing for the Southwest Florida workforce and public and private initiatives that offer incentives for planning and building workforce housing projects.

The creation of alternative funding solutions of workforce/affordable housing such as community development corporations or community land trusts.

Residents and Community

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS

Amending the recent legislation requiring condominium associations to fully fund their building maintenance reserves. While well-intended for ensuring structural safety, it has resulted in severe financial hardship for many condominium owners. The abrupt transition from the previous law—which allowed associations to vote on waiving reserves—to mandatory full funding has led to substantial increases in maintenance fees and special assessments. These unexpected financial burdens disproportionately affect elderly residents and those on fixed incomes, putting them at risk of foreclosure and displacement. While the safety and integrity of Florida's condominium buildings must remain a priority, the current policy fails to account for the economic realities of thousands of homeowners who cannot afford the sudden increase in costs. The law must be amended to strike a balance between necessary building maintenance and financial feasibility for residents.

Amending Florida law relating to county and municipal code enforcement to restore the authority allowing a code inspector to act on a complaint submitted anonymously as was the law before the passage of Chapter 2021-167, Laws of Florida.

Environmental and Natural Resources

The Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral SUPPORTS

Legislation that promotes healthy communities and economic prosperity through the protection of Southwest Florida's region's air, land, water and the city's other natural resources and open space:

Initiatives that prevent harmful algal blooms (blue-green algae & red tide), which have a devastating effect on our wildlife, ecosystem, economy, and quality of life. Protect our unique environment and investment in safe and reliable water, reuse water, and wastewater services.

Sincerely,

Donna Germain, IOM, FCCP
President/CEO

Bill Johnson, Jr., IOM
2025 Chairman

As Approved by the Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral Board of Directors