



STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2020



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DEAR FRIENDS,

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce is pleased to present its 2020 New York State Legislative Agenda. The primary purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the major issues affecting the Brooklyn business community and make recommendations on how to continue growing our economy for all Brooklynites.

With a focus on promotion, support, advocacy and convening, the Brooklyn Chamber continues to advance economic development across the borough and is a proponent for its member businesses. The Brooklyn Alliance is the not-for-profit economic development affiliate of the Brooklyn Chamber, which works to address the needs of businesses through direct service programs. Brooklyn Alliance Capital is the third affiliate of the Brooklyn Chamber and provides micro-loans to immigrant and minority-owned businesses.

Topping our list of legislative priorities are opportunities for immigrant, minority and women-owned businesses, job-driven training programs to build up a proficient workforce, transportation and infrastructure investment in projects such as the Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX), modernization of our state's power grid along with fostering sustainable and renewable energy and the jobs that support it, and affordable healthcare options for businesses.

This year's legislative agenda would not be possible without the work of the Brooklyn Chamber's Board of Directors, its Government Affairs Committee and the Brooklyn delegation of the New York State Senate and Assembly. And, we would be remiss if we did not thank those who drive all that we do – our members.

Best Regards,
Randy Peers
President & CEO

Ana Oliveira
Board Chair

Antonia Yuille Williams / Gil Cygler
Co-Chairs, Government Affairs Committee



MEET THE BROOKLYN DELEGATION

New York State Assembly

Hon. Peter J. Abbate, Jr.
Hon. Charles Barron
Hon. Rodneyse Bichotte
Hon. Robert C. Carroll
Hon. William Colton
Hon. Steven Cymbrowitz
Hon. Maritza Davila
Hon. Erik M. Dilan
Hon. Simcha Eichenstein
Hon. Mathylde Frontus
Hon. Joseph R. Lentol

Hon. Nicole Malliotakis
Hon. Walter T. Mosley
Hon. Felix W. Ortiz
Hon. N. Nick Perry
Hon. Diana C. Richardson
Hon. Jo Anne Simon
Hon. Latrice Walker
Hon. Helene E. Weinstein
Hon. Jaime R. Williams
Hon. Tremaine Wright

New York State Senate

Hon. Simcha Felder
Hon. Andrew Gounardes
Hon. Brian P. Kavanaugh
Hon. Velmanette Montgomery
Hon. Zellnor Y. Myrie
Hon. Kevin S. Parker
Hon. Roxanne J. Persaud
Hon. Julia C. Salazar
Hon. Diane Savino

TOP ISSUES

FROM OUR BROOKLYN LEGISLATIVE SURVEY

Key Findings: Through the Brooklyn Chamber's Brooklyn Business Legislative Survey, businesses are polled on a variety of topics, from their outlook on the economy to their greatest obstacles to growth. Here we highlight key findings:

TRANSPORTATION



The majority of businesses are not satisfied with the state of Brooklyn's transportation infrastructure. Businesses are strongly supportive of new transit projects that promote interborough and outer borough connectivity such as the Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX) and the Triboro rail line and would like to see more ferry service in New York City.

CLIMATE CHANGE



This is one of Brooklyn business's top issues with 97% of survey respondents reporting that they are very concerned about climate change and the effect it will have on the economy overall. Businesses in Brooklyn are moderately or very concerned about the effect climate change may have on their business in the future.

HEALTHCARE



The current healthcare system is a source of concern for Brooklyn businesses with the majority of survey respondents believing the system should change.

WORKFORCE/SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Difficulty finding skilled workers and the need to upskill existing workers is an urgent business priority for many Brooklyn businesses; a large majority view automation as having a positive impact on their future growth as well as 86% of businesses support efforts by the government to encourage Minority and Women-Owned Businesses to develop and grow.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & JOB CREATION

- **REAP, ECSP and ICAP renewal** – New York City’s boroughs, especially Brooklyn, have been leading the growth of small businesses and new job creation in NYC; the Relocation and Employment Assistance Program (REAP) – (NY-AB 9069 & NY-SB 7293), the Energy Cost Saving Program and Industrial and Commercial Abatement Program (ICAP) are critical to this success. The Brooklyn Chamber is helping to lead a new coalition, the Five Borough Jobs Campaign, focused on securing the renewal in 2020 of these essential programs.
- **Investment in CDFIs/micro-lending programs** – The Brooklyn Chamber operates a federally certified Commercial Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that provides vitally important financing to minority and immigrant entrepreneurs and low-income small business owners. The Brooklyn Chamber supports the Governor’s proposed \$25 million CDFI Fund and urges additional state investment in its own CDFI micro-loan program in Brooklyn.
- **Investment in tourism** – Although Brooklyn has experienced a sharp increase in tourism in the last decade, much of the borough, including our cultural attractions, ubiquitous entertainment venues, diverse culinary and shopping experiences, have not gotten the benefit of this growth. The Brooklyn Chamber, through “The Brooklyn Pass,” has a strategic plan to draw visitors to experience all the borough has to offer so that the economic benefit of tourism is felt borough wide.



HEALTHCARE & INSURANCE

- **Invest in Brooklyn's healthcare system/institutions** – Brooklyn's safety net hospitals and medical institutions serve more Medicaid patients than any other county in the state. The Brooklyn Chamber urges lawmakers and Governor Cuomo to maintain current levels of Medicaid funding to ensure that all patients, regardless of income, have access to quality care. It is crucial that provider funding levels are protected, and the global cap improved, as the state implements its Medicaid savings plan.
- **Affordable health insurance for small businesses** – Healthcare is one of the top concerns for business owners and employees alike. The Brooklyn Chamber has worked to provide affordable and quality coverage options and assistance to its members, but there is still much to be done to lower costs and increase standards of care.



MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES (M/WBEs)

As we grow our borough's economy and expand opportunity to a more diverse range of small businesses, we must ensure that New York State's M/WBE programs and policies are working to the best of their abilities and offering the appropriate resources. We recommend:

- **Creating uniformity between State and City M/WBE processes** – Currently, NYS and NYC operate separate application and certification processes for M/WBEs, which causes unnecessary confusion and delays for small businesses. We support the idea of one common application for all city, state, and authority contracts in New York State.
- **Expanding opportunities for veteran, immigrant and M/WBE owned business in state contracts** – We urge state agencies to work more closely with on-the-ground business organizations such as the Brooklyn Chamber to proactively identify additional opportunities for public and private contracts and ensuring that M/WBEs can scale through subcontracting and funding opportunities.



ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Invest in green jobs infrastructure and training in Brooklyn** – Brooklyn is poised to undertake an historic new green jobs initiative with the off-shore wind industry coming to the South Brooklyn waterfront, and so it is essential – and incredibly timely – for New York State to now invest in green jobs workforce development and training for Brooklyn residents. The Governor has already proposed \$40 million, with “training for 40,000 clean energy workers” among the goals, and the Brooklyn Chamber urges additional state investment.
- **Stimulate and expand renewable energy in NYS through utility ownership of large-scale renewables** – Overseen by the Public Service Commission (PSC), this legislation would help the state achieve its critical energy and climate goals by facilitating renewable generation and energy storage development. We must support renewable projects for as many providers as possible, including combination gas and electric corporations.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & HIGHER EDUCATION

- **Restore On the Job Training and apprenticeships** – Providing effective training and work-readiness support is the most direct way to support both businesses and employees, and so the Brooklyn Chamber urges the restoration of the On the Job Training initiative and expansion of the Empire State Apprenticeship Program in the FY 2021 budget.
- **Increase TAP eligibility and NYS Opportunities Programs** – Brooklyn is one of our nation’s leading “college towns” and the Brooklyn Chamber is a huge proponent of continuing to build a pipeline between our students and small businesses. Increasing the income threshold for TAP eligibility and growing funding for the Opportunities Programs (HEOP, EOP, CSTEP, SEEK) that offer critical financial aid, academic support services, and mentorship is crucial for underrepresented students to take advantage of quality higher education.



TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Invest in increased public transit options in outer boroughs –**

Traditional commuter patterns, with outer borough residents traveling into Manhattan each morning, have been upended by new job creation in the boroughs and the growth of inter- and intra-borough commuting. New York State must invest resources in the expansion of innovative public transit options in the outer boroughs – which can connect underserved communities and transit deserts to the jobs of today – including the Brooklyn Queens Connector, the Triboro Line rail system, ferries, Select Bus Service and Bus Rapid Transit.

- **Streamline and standardize rules to accelerate small cell siting technology** – We support the establishment of statewide rules as proposed in the Executive Budget to accelerate the deployment of new technology, including the small cell technology that is integral to 5G.

- **Ensure congestion pricing funds are invested outside of Manhattan –**
The congestion pricing system now being developed in Manhattan will generate significant new funding for transportation infrastructure, and it is incumbent on New York State policy makers to ensure that these funds are invested in transit infrastructure projects in all of the boroughs.





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2020 ENERGY SUMMIT & EXPO

MAY 8, 2020

8:00am-3:30pm

New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge
333 Adams St, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Engage with industry leaders, policy makers, business leaders, researchers and energy managers to discuss current trends and cost-effective solutions for cleaner air, sustainable energy, and climate change solutions in New York.

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