NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHAMBER ALLIANCE

POLICY PRIORITIES

ABOUT US

The Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance is a coalition of 19 chambers and economic development organizations representing more than 7,000 member businesses from across northern Michigan. The Northern Michigan Policy Conference brings northern Michigan policy needs to the forefront, providing a venue for business leaders and legislators to come together to develop creative solutions.

POLICY PRIORITIES

REGIONALLY-DRIVEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Focuses on development efforts that are regionally driven to ensure northern Michigan and the U.P. are competitive business environments.

TALENT

Prioritizes workforce initiatives, immigration, and educational programs to draw skilled workers to rural areas and develop and retain local talent.

RURAL PROSPERITY

Emphasizes resilient, connected rural residents, businesses, communities, and natural environments.

LEADERSHIP



Haley Bennett
Director of Government Relations



Nikki Devitt
Chair
President
Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce



Caitlyn Stark
Vice Chair
President
Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce

PARTNERS

Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce
Make it benzie Area Chamber of Commerce
Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce
Charlevoix Chamber
Develop Iosco
Gaylord Area Chamber of Commerce
Lake Superior Community Partnership
Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce
The Petoskey Chamber
Traverse Connect
InvestUP
Northern Lake Economic Alliance
Boyne Area Chamber of Commerce
Cheboygan Area Chamber of Commerce
East Jordan Area Chamber of Commerce
Elk Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Harbor Springs Area Chamber of Commerce
Sault Area Chamber of Commerce

2025 POLICY FRAMEWORK

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Regionally Driven:** Advocate for funding to be allocated regionally, rather than a one size-fits-all approach
- **Support Financial Incentives for Rural Small Businesses:** Advocate for economic incentives that support existing local businesses, emerging startups and early-stage companies.
- **Streamline Business Operations:** Promote policies that simplify and accelerate licensing processes, reducing administrative hurdles and barriers for businesses and entrepreneurs.
- **Improve Overall Business Tax Climate:** Advocate for tax reforms that make rural Michigan more competitive and attractive for businesses.
- **Regional Industry Cluster Development:** Back initiatives that ensure northern Michigan leads innovation in blue tech, outdoor recreation, drone technology, rural health, and advanced manufacturing.

TALENT

- **Develop and Retain Local Talent:** Support increased funding for education and workforce programs such as Going Pro and Michigan Reconnect that enhance skills and training in local communities.
- **Attract Top Talent:** Ensure northern Michigan is an attractive location for skilled workers to relocate and support population growth through Pure Michigan.
- **Support Immigration Policies for Skilled Workers:** Advocate for immigration reforms that attract skilled new Americans to rural areas, bolstering the region's workforce.
- **Invest in Childcare Provider Support Networks:** Advocate for continued funding to build and sustain childcare infrastructure, enabling more parents access to affordable childcare and the ability to participate in the workforce.
- **Develop Rural Healthcare Workforce Initiatives:** Explore student loan assistance and other incentives to attract healthcare professionals to rural areas and telehealth expansion, ensuring access to quality healthcare services.
- **Housing Policy:** Advocate for policies that support housing solutions and regional housing partnerships that address the critical housing shortage.

RURAL PROSPERITY

- **Promote Community-Led Development:** Leverage federal and state funds for local projects that enhance revitalization and placemaking, access to arts& culture, and improve quality of life.
- **Expand Access to High-Speed Internet:** Prioritize broadband expansion, which is essential for education, telehealth, and business operations in rural areas.
- **Advocate for Parity Between Hotels and Short-Term Rentals:** Ensure fair assessment and taxation for short-term rentals, directing investments into local community development.
- **Expand Public Transportation Services:** Develop and invest in public transit to help rural communities access job opportunities. Ensure PA 51 formula is utilized to equitably distribute funds across the region.
- **Support Sensible Energy Policy:** Promote energy policies that keep utility rates low, ensuring cost-efficient and sustainable energy for rural businesses.