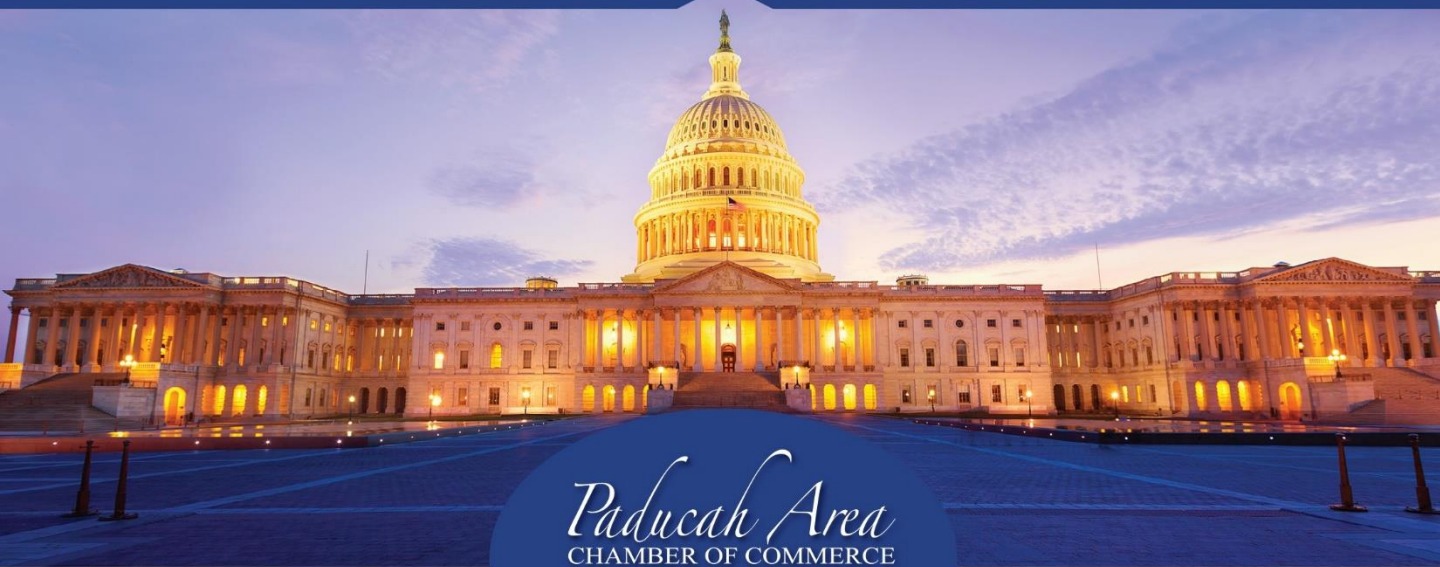


# 2021 FEDERAL PRIORITIES



## Community Priorities

Barkley Regional Airport  
Department of Energy  
Infrastructure Investments

## Other Positions

Travel/Tourism  
Education/Workforce  
Business/Commerce

The Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce is the region's largest business advocacy organization representing approximately 900 businesses and an estimated 30,000 employees. As an investor-driven organization, the Chamber serves as the VOICE of the business community and presents a united effort on our community's behalf.

2017



**CHAMBER OF THE YEAR**  
Presented by the Association of  
Chamber of Commerce Executives



# KEY LOCAL PRIORITIES

## Department of Transportation – Federal Aviation Admin. New Terminal Project for Barkley Regional Airport:

A groundbreaking is expected to be held this fall for the construction of a new terminal for Barkley Regional Airport. The Paducah-McCracken County community, the Paducah Chamber and the four state region served by the airport are appreciative of the support received from the Federal Aviation Administration to assist with funding this project. The assistance from FAA helped launch our efforts to also secure funding from the Commonwealth of Kentucky and both the local city and county governments.



Artist renderings of new Barkley Regional Airport Terminal

### Airport Improvement Program (AIP):

We respectfully request the waiving of the 10,000-passenger minimum requirement to receive entitlement funds and that we be granted the full \$1 million entitlement for FY '22. This would allow vital airfield work to be performed including beginning design of the rehabilitation of our main runway and demolition of the current terminal building, clearing the way for of future economic development.

### Essential Air Service (EAS)

**Funding:** Supports full funding of the EAS program. This program has provided Western Kentucky an economically vital link to the National Air System (NAS) for over a decade. Before 2020, we were proudly home to one of the ten lowest subsidies in the program, a testament to its effectiveness and importance. During the pandemic, it became more vital to us than ever before, by preventing the interruption of commercial air service from Paducah, which would have severed this essential connection.



We ask that the U.S. Department of Transportation continue to fully fund this critically important program, to both facilitate regional recovery efforts and, in conjunction with the new terminal, provide Paducah and the region a stronger foundation for a successful future.





# KEY LOCAL PRIORITIES

## Department of Energy

To advance the cleanup of the Paducah (KY) DOE site, we request a continuation of funding of approximately \$315 million, which is equivalent funding from FY20 and FY21.



**Agency Request:** U.S. Department of Energy > Office of Science > Environmental Management > Uranium Enrichment Decontamination and Decommissioning Fund

The Paducah Chamber requests for FY 22:

- Approximately \$315 million for the Paducah, Kentucky, DOE site, located in McCracken County, which is equivalent funding for the Paducah site from FY20 and FY21. Funding would help fulfill the Environmental Management’s (EM) Strategic Vision to complete deactivation work at the C-333 Process Building, one of the four large process buildings at the site. This funding will also facilitate dismantling the remaining switchyards, which could be recycled through Paducah Area Community Reuse Organization (PACRO).
- \$2 million in grant funding to prepare and better understand our future plans and goals for reindustrialization of the entire site and for the Paducah community to be appropriately prepared to develop a plan for future re-industrial needs.
- Additionally, the Chamber *supports* funding to launch a depleted uranium disposal project as long as the funding is above our original request of \$315 million for fiscal year 2022 for the Paducah DOE site.

Contractors at the Paducah DOE site participated in a pilot project in early 2021 for the first shipment of six (6) processed DUF6 oxide cylinders to an approved disposal site via modified railcars and determined the viability and safety of the project. Currently, there are 3,800 cylinders converted and ready for transport. Conversion and disposal of the approximately 46,000 cylinders on site will be a multiple-decades-long project. The community supports beginning this project as a compliment to the cleanup work currently on-going at the site.

Finally, as contracts for the site are considered, we ask for long term contracts to be awarded and expectations of community support to a part of the contract.

Cleanup is now projected for 2065. Our community continues to strive for completion before this date.

The Paducah/McCracken County community appreciates the continued support for the Paducah Department of Energy (DOE) site. We are especially appreciative of the increase in funding of \$40 million in FY 2020 and \$42 million in FY 2021. This increased spending level has allowed for more work to be accomplished as well as additional critical infrastructure needs at the site.

# Infrastructure Investments

The Paducah Chamber *urges* the Kentucky federal delegation to continue long-term funding solutions to strengthen critical infrastructure for economic development, public safety and workforce development.

Having dependable infrastructure including air, roads, bridges, railways, waterways, broadband and public transit systems, is critical to Kentucky's economic vitality. Maintaining adequate funding for transportation infrastructure remains an issue of concern at both the state and federal levels of government.

## Inland Waterways

Inland waterways is a major component of the economy and employs thousands of workers from Paducah, McCracken County and the surrounding area.

The Paducah Chamber supports federal funding for critical water infrastructure improvements necessary to promote inland waterway commerce; maximum additional funding for lock modernization; and opposes additional taxation, tolling, lockage fees or other changes for the users of the inland waterway system; and supports Operations and Maintenance of the Inland Waterways Transportation System remain a fully Federal responsibility.

**Water Infrastructure Bill:** *Supports* bipartisan efforts in Congress to appropriate \$16.3 billion in funding for water infrastructure projects. Our levees, dams, inland waterways, and ports protect hundreds of communities, support millions of American jobs, and generate trillions of dollars of economic activity. With at least \$3 billion of the \$16.3 billion provided for on-going and new construction on Inland Waterways projects.

**Additional Fees:** *Opposes* additional taxation, tolling, lockage fees or other changes for the users of the inland waterways system; supports Operations and Maintenance of the Inland Waterways Transportation System remain a fully Federal responsibility.

### **FY 2022 Energy and Water Appropriations:**

*Supports* appropriation of the full amount supportable by the diesel fuel tax receipts deposited into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund. The Inland Waterways User Board estimates those receipts to be \$115 million and should be cost shared at 65% general revenue and 35% Inland Waterways Trust Fund.

**Kentucky Lock:** *Supports* FY 2022 designation of \$162.7 million for Kentucky Lock and Dam which will allow the exercising of options for the project's largest construction contract to date -- Downstream Lock Monoliths. This includes a provision, secured by Sen. Mitch McConnell, requiring the Sec. of the Army to expedite a new authorization level of over \$1.1 billion for the Kentucky Lock project.

### **Invasive Carp Prevention and Control Pilot Program:**

*Supports* legislation authorizing \$35 million for innovative projects and technologies that bolster the management, prevention, and eradication of Invasive Carp. Moreover, the provision ensures that at least five of these projects are undertaken in reservoirs like Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley.

## Paducah-McCracken County Riverport



**Grant Funding for Bulk Cargoes:** *Supports* the Paducah-McCracken County Riverport Authority request for a federal grant from the Department of Transportation Small Ports and Terminals Project in the amount of approximately \$4 million. These funds will modernize bulk commodity handling equipment dating back to the 1960s that have effectively reached their end-of life cycle and as such cannot keep up with projected future cargo activity. This project will benefit a four state region (KY-IL-TN-MO) and support major infrastructure projects currently underway by the Army Corps of Engineers.

The City of Paducah and McCracken County have each pledged \$100,000 towards matching funds for the grant, signaling community support for the riverport investment.

## Railroad

*Supports* increased federal funding for maintaining and improving the safety of railroad infrastructure. Dedicated resources for short line tracks and regional railroads are critical for the sustainability and improvement of multi-modal freight transportation in the greater Paducah area. Specifically, the Chamber *supports* the continuation of The Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program, RAISE and INFRA. These successful programs contribute to targeting emissions and congestion reduction by enhancing rail infrastructure.



Crew sizes have always been and should continue to be handled as part of collective bargaining agreements and not a one-size-fits-all federal mandate. While safety is the top priority of the railroad industry, there is no credible safety data to support the need for crew size mandates, which could impede development and adoption of new safety technologies.

## Public Transit

*Urges* Congress to remove the provision in the INVEST Act that would require Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL) for drivers of vehicles designed to transport eight or more passengers. The majority of transit agencies in Kentucky, including the Paducah Area Transit System (PATS), are presently using non-CDL vehicles which hold between eight and 15 passengers. This would hinder the hiring process and force transit agencies to compete with other transportation companies for CDL licensed drivers.



## Broadband

*Supports* tax exemptions to incentivize expanding and upgrading the nation's wireless and wired broadband networks, and/or broadband buildout grants to aid the private sector in deploying last mile service to unserved areas, or both. In a 21st century global economy, our telecommunications infrastructure is crucial for both business and education industries.

## RAISE grants

*Supports* the continuation of the RAISE Discretionary Grant program, formerly known as BUILD/TIGER grants. Paducah received a \$10.4 billion BUILD grant in 2019 to redevelop its riverfront and expand its port. The continuation of this program is very important to provide funding for infrastructure projects.

## DOE Funding through Infrastructure Investments

*Urges* Congress that if there is an increase in infrastructure funding, a portion of the funding go to the Department of Energy sites, including Paducah's site. The Paducah Chamber joins the City of Paducah, McCracken County, Greater Paducah Economic Development and Paducah Area Community Reuse Organization (PACRO) in asking for this one-time economic boost for the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Environmental Management (EM) program.

# Education and Workforce

**Higher Education Act:** *Supports* federal legislation, including reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to:

- Maintain and/or increase funding levels and modernize Pell Grants to better serve today's non-traditional, low income students and incentivize completion.
- Improve college access and affordability for all students.
- Increase accountability and transparency over federal financial aid and student loan programs.

**Postsecondary Education:** *Supports* higher education funding for research and development grants, and funding that promotes access for more students, regardless of socio-economic background, to attain a high-quality four-year degree.

**STEM/STEAM Funding:** *Supports* preparing the next generation to enter a globalized workforce that has an increased focus on science, technology, engineering, and math, together with art, that are critical to connecting businesses with qualified workers. Education and workforce programs are vital to filling open positions.

**Workforce Development Programs:** *Supports* continued investments in workforce development and reform efforts aimed at improving alignment, flexibility and collaboration among public and private sector leaders to meet employer needs, including support for the Department of Labor's proposal to create an industry-led apprenticeship program and provide more flexibility and support to employers for skills training.

**Financial Aid and Student Debt:** *Urges* reforms to financial aid programs to improve access by simplifying the FAFSA process and increase affordability while incentivizing outcomes. Congress must act to mitigate the negative impact of rising student debt on economic growth and entrepreneurship by ensuring borrowers have adequate flexibility to repay loans and by supporting business-led efforts to reduce educational debt. Policymakers should support employers seeking to help employees pay off student debt and develop continuing education and tuition compensation programs.

# Arts, Travel & Tourism

**As one of nine UNESCO Creative Cities in the U.S., Paducah offers a vibrant arts and culture scene, which generates \$39.9 million in local economic activity. Paducah's Historic Downtown and Lower Town Arts District attract an excess of 500,000 patrons annually. The non-profit arts and culture industry supports 819 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$17.7 million in household income to local residents, and delivers \$3.6 million in local and state government revenue.**

**Arts Funding:** *Supports* the continuation of grants funding that provides assistance to local cultural organizations. Grants in our community from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities have been awarded to West Kentucky Community & Technical College – School of Art and Design, Market House Theatre and the Hotel Metropolitan. These grants also help our community to increase local support for community projects. As a UNESCO Creative City, Paducah recognizes the value of arts and culture as an economic driver and leverages creativity for a sustainable future in the arts, business and education. We recently met with Brent Leggs, a Paducah native and Executive Director of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, to help us tell our diverse Paducah story through African American historic places.

**International Travel:** *Supports* the immediate development of clear, consistent and predictable standards for reopening the U.S. to international visitors. The roadmap should provide clear benchmarks and timetables for lifting travel bans and pursue near-term opportunities like allowing fully vaccinated travelers from Canada, the UK and the EU, to enter the U.S. As the home of the National Quilt Museum of the United States, host to the American Quilter's Society's International Quilt Show in Paducah, and with the recent acquisition of a local paper mill by a Chinese firm and other internationally-owned companies in our area, it is very important that international travel to our country and our community be an easy process.

**Continued Federal Stimulus and Relief Measures for Destination Organizations:** *Encourages* policymakers to support initiatives designed to help communities that rely on travel, tourism and the arts recover more quickly, such as the Hospitality and Commerce Job Recovery Act (S. 477 / H.R. 1346). We applaud relief legislation such as the CARES Act and encourage policymakers to continue to make relief funds available to destination organization businesses<sup>112</sup> until the COVID-19 crisis is fully behind us.

## Business & Commerce

**International Trade:** *Supports* fair and free trade policies that open markets abroad to Kentucky businesses and remove barriers that shut U.S. exports out of foreign markets. Additionally, we *support* the recapitalization of Brand USA through the Restoring Brand USA Act (S.2424 / H.R. 4594), which will help restore about \$4.5 billion in travel exports.

**Opportunity Zones and Similar Investment:** *Supports* making permanent and expanding the New Markets Tax Credit and finding ways to incentivize and encourage businesses already existing within Opportunity Zones to expand and invest additional capital in those areas.



In past years the Annual DC Fly-In, coordinated by the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce, has involved approximately 50 local citizens from several West Kentucky counties traveling to D.C.

In 2020, when we could not travel to D.C., more than 100 were involved with a virtual format.

***Our philosophy is: “We never want it to be said in our state or national capital that we are only noticed by our absence. We will be noted for our presence.”***



[www.paducahchamber.org](http://www.paducahchamber.org)

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