



Legislative Priorities

Support for Child Care Construction Tax Incentives

Families in West Virginia are experiencing a child care crisis. In Jefferson County, we found that the average family waits 13.3 months between seeking and finding available child care. A significant contributor to lengthy wait times is capacity. We found that Jefferson County has one child care slot for every 53 residents. In our neighboring county of Frederick County, MD, there is one child care slot for every 27 residents and roughly one-fourth (3 months vs. 13.3 months) of the wait time. We need to drastically increase our capacity. The Jefferson County Development Authority supports increased tax incentives to encourage the development of additional child care capacity and other supports to ensure more families are able to afford child care services.

Support Increased Train Ridership in WV

The Jefferson County Development Authority supports increased efforts to increase the availability of passenger train transportation to and from the County, including on the weekends. Research indicates the highest number of visitors to Harpers Ferry are in the town at 2:00 P.M. on Saturdays. The only public transportation in Harpers Ferry on Saturdays is an Amtrak train that leaves Union Station at 4:05 P.M. We request that the legislature look for ways to encourage train ridership to the State. Looking at using previously awarded Congestion, Mitigation, and Air Quality (CMAQ) federal funds may be a good first step in the process.

Regulatory Review to Encourage Agritourism and Farmland Protection

The Jefferson County Development Authority requests that the legislature establish a commission to review and provide recommendations on regulatory and legislative relief to foster the development and operation of distillery and vineyard agritourism in the State of West Virginia. The commission should be comprised of West Virginia departments of Economic Development, Tourism, and Agriculture; West Virginia University Extension; West Virginia Agritourism Association; a distillery representative; a vineyard representative; a winery representative; the Jefferson County Development Authority; among others. Removing regulatory and legislative hurdles will foster economic development and encourage farmland preservation.

Incentives to Encourage Residential Renewable Energy

The Jefferson County Development Authority encourages the legislature to authorize additional strategies to expand the development and use of residential renewable energy resources, including such community-based programs as were proposed by Senator Patricia Rucker (SB 627) and Delegate Evan Hansen (HB 4561). We also recommend that the legislature ensure residents can receive income for their renewable energy generation. As national economies become more dependent on electricity, residents should be encouraged to supplement the regional grids with home-based energy generation.

Clean Water

The Jefferson County Development Authority supports initiatives to foster clean water for our county's residents and across the state. The Jefferson County Development Authority encourages the legislature to authorize sufficient state funding so that state agencies and local water systems are able to administer provisions of the WV PFAS Protection Act that was enacted in the last legislative session and to take additional action to authorize the remediation of these "forever chemicals" from our water and water systems. We also encourage the legislature to take action to assist in upgrading or replacing aging infrastructure, including leaking septic systems.