

MBR Competitiveness Agenda—2012 Priority Projects

MBR's member-driven Competitiveness Agenda is based upon the premise that public policy should prioritize investment in the state's competitive advantages—human and intellectual capital, health, and quality-of-life—and refocus on the state's competitive disadvantages—cost, complexity and attitude. The Agenda includes a series of legislative and policy initiatives within this framework, each with different timeframes that require coordination with leaders in government, industry and higher education. From these initiatives, MBR has identified the following five priority areas for 2012, consistent with its mission to strengthen the state's economic vitality with the goal of making Massachusetts a highly-desirable place to do business.

1. Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

Competitiveness Agenda Focus: Investing in Competitive Advantage: Human and Intellectual Capital

Through its leadership in the Tapping Massachusetts' Potential Initiative, the creation of the first statewide STEM Plan, and its role serving on the Governor's STEM Advisory Council, MBR continues to lead the business community to make coordinated investments in STEM projects across Massachusetts. MBR will engage in the implementation of Phases I and II of the statewide Plan, help to align corporate STEM investment with the goals in the statewide Plan, and will again co-sponsor the state's STEM Summit, the 9th Annual signature STEM event in the Commonwealth.

2. Transportation

Competitiveness Agenda Focus: Competitive Advantage & Disadvantage: Quality of Life; Cost

MBR has a proud history of leadership on transportation reform and investment. MBR members signaled their strong support for the Roundtable to assist in the development of a long-term transportation financing plan that improves and maintains the state's transportation infrastructure and sustains long-term economic growth. Working with MassDOT, serving as Chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee, and convening MBR's Transportation & Infrastructure Task Force, the Roundtable will help convene the business community in the conversation on the progress of transportation reform and long-term funding needs.

3. Health Care

Competitiveness Agenda Focus: Competitive Advantage & Disadvantage: Quality & Access of Care; Jobs Engine; High Costs

Massachusetts is a national leader in both access to and quality of health care. The health care industry is also one of the state's most important employers. However, employers continue to struggle with high health care costs and rising premiums. MBR's Health Care Task Force adopted a position paper outlining the Roundtable's framework for health care cost containment based on the principles of consumerism, wellness and health management, and payment reform. MBR will continue to advocate for health care cost containment through the implementation of best practices and managerial experiences of employers and a market-based approach to health care cost reduction.

4. Energy

Competitiveness Agenda Focus: Refocusing on Competitive Disadvantage: Cost

MBR recognizes that Massachusetts has among the highest energy costs in the country, a major competitive disadvantage for companies, particularly larger employers. MBR will form an Energy Task Force in 2012 tapping the significant experience of its members and coordinating with other business associations to work with the Massachusetts Legislature and other state officials to address the high cost of energy in the Commonwealth.

5. Benchmarking Attitude

Competitiveness Agenda Focus: Refocusing on Competitive Disadvantage: Attitude

Massachusetts has the perception of being unfriendly to business, and MBR believes that this perceived negative attitude toward business must be transformed into one of partnership with the public sector. In 2012, MBR will continue its progress with Bentley University to develop a survey of business leaders that benchmarks attitude and identifies ways for policymakers and other leaders to improve both the perception and reality of doing business in Massachusetts.