



2022 North Country Alliance Education and Outreach Agenda

*New York is a diverse state.
A “one-size-fits-all” approach is not the best mechanism to affect positive job growth.*

RURAL BROADBAND

The NCA strongly encourages funding for rural broadband and cellular service. There are still great swaths of rural areas that do not have access to high speed, quality, affordable broadband, or cellular service. The services are not comparable to those provided in metropolitan or urban areas. Telecommuting is the new norm, and now more than ever, we need quality, affordable broadband and cellular service in our rural communities.

The **NCA strongly opposes** excessive fees, other charges or mandates, passed on to broadband providers that negatively affect deployment of fiber or equipment to rural areas. These added costs hinder further development in rural areas, and negatively affect the availability of services to these communities. Ultimately, this increases cost to the resident and hinders economic growth in rural communities in the North Country.



WORKFORCE, CHILDCARE & HOUSING

The NCA supports funding and policies currently proposed that promote the development of our workforce, including investment in affordable, quality childcare opportunities and housing options to support our working families. Our ability to adapt to new technologies and in-demand occupations hinges on the ability of our educational institutions, technical schools, and trade programs to provide these programs and services. In addition, there is a dire need for quality and affordable childcare and housing in rural communities to support working families.

Quality, affordable childcare allows those that want to be in the workforce to be able to enter or re-enter the workforce, which is critical during this time of low unemployment in Upstate NY. The lack of affordable housing is having a crippling effect on the economy across the North Country but especially in the Adirondacks.



INVESTMENT IN RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The NCA strongly supports investment for rural infrastructure projects in Upstate on par with investments in Downstate. With federal funds for infrastructure to include roads, water, sewer, airports, and broadband, the NCA strongly advocates for parity in funding to Upstate rural communities as such funding provided to Downstate.

The NCA also **supports** transitioning to renewable energies in meeting the state's goals. We need to continue to invest in existing infrastructure to support the new production being brought online. We also need to promote close coordination with municipalities for the siting and construction of large-scale solar and wind projects. State policies need to support energy resiliency while not burdening costs to the consumer.



CROSS BORDER CONNECTION

The NCA is committed to strengthening what has been called "the most special and integrated economic and social relationship on earth." The U.S.-Canadian economic dynamic continues to be of singular importance to the North Country economy, with continuing border restrictions posing significant negative impacts in sectors as diverse as tourism, manufacturing, retail sales and supply chain functions. With the foregoing in mind, the U.S. and Canadian governments must focus on coordinated planning and progress toward normalization of U.S.-Canadian border crossings.



TOURISM

The North Country Alliance supports funding and policies to strengthen the tourism industry in our rural region. The NCA applauds Governor Hochul's funding for Olympic Regional Development Authority capital improvements. We also support the proposal to require vacation rental platforms to collect sales tax on the short-term rentals they facilitate, as proposed in the budget. The NCA strongly encourages the reopening of the Beekmantown Gateway Information Center.



Attracting tourists to our destinations requires aggressive marketing. The NCA opposes the proposed \$1 Million reduction to the Tourism Promotion Matching Funds program and encourages the restoration of funding to the previous levels of \$3.45 million.

PRISON CLOSURES

While not proposed in the FYE 2023 budget, **the NCA opposes the further closing of prisons in the North Country.** It is difficult to repurpose these facilities, and the economic impact on the communities with closures is disproportionately severe. The NCA welcomes working with state officials to identify reuse/redevelopment opportunities for our facilities and communities, and welcomes any financial assistance to assist local efforts in doing so.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH COUNTRY

The NCA strongly supports a regional approach to economic development. The NCA supports funding for the Regional Economic Development Councils, the Billion Dollar Plan to Assist Small Businesses, and the RESTORE NY and Forward NY programs. Robust, empowered and integrated local development agencies and corporations are the frontline partners for ensuring the successful execution of these state and local community initiatives. Any efforts to erode their powers and effectiveness is detrimental to economic development in the North Country.

NorthCountryAlliance.org
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