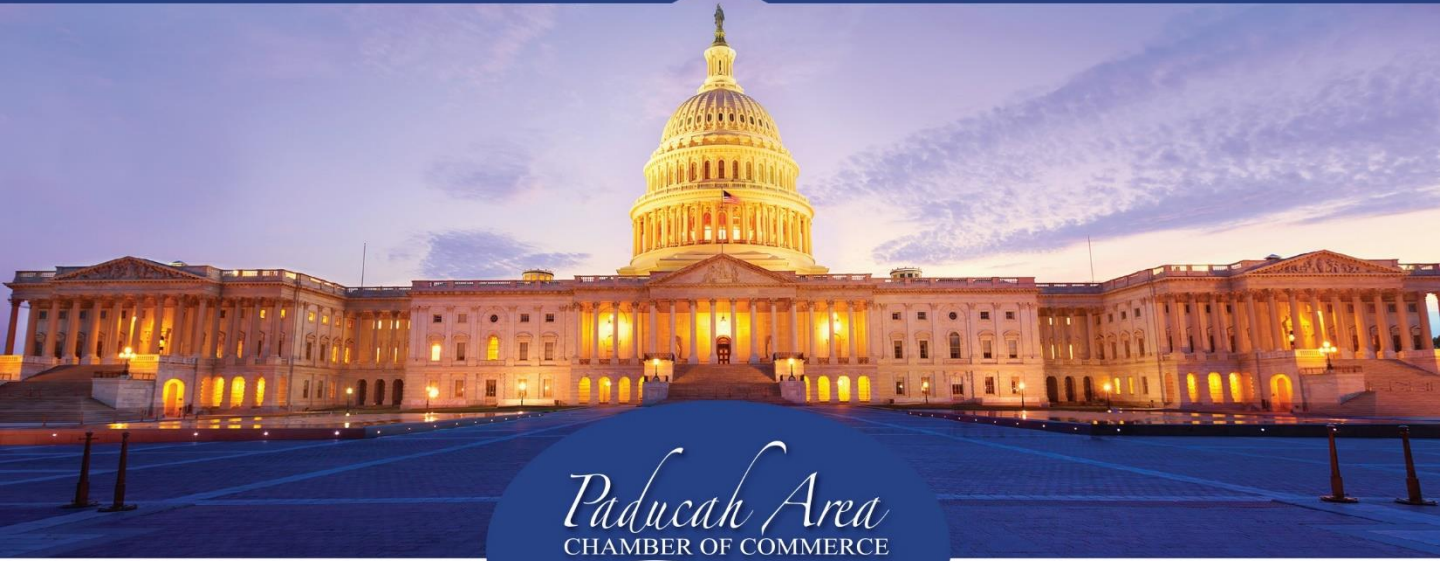


# 2023 FEDERAL PRIORITIES



## Community Priorities

Department of Energy  
Barkley Regional Airport  
BUILD Grant & Safe Streets Grant  
Infrastructure Investments

## Other Positions

Education & Workforce  
Health Care  
Arts, Travel & Tourism  
Business & Commerce

The Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce is the region's largest business advocacy organization representing approximately 1,000 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**  
2022 FINALIST



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



# KEY LOCAL PRIORITIES



## Department of Energy

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

The Paducah/McCracken County region appreciates the continued support for the Paducah Department of Energy (DOE) site. We are especially appreciative of the increase in funding above the President's budget request of approximately \$50 million in FY 2023, which included \$2 million for an analysis of the future of the DOE site. The increased spending level for the Paducah site has allowed for more cleanup work to be completed as well as increase the number of jobs in our community to a higher rate than in previous years. Current employment is over 1,500 continuing to make this one of our largest employers in the region.

The Department of Energy's mission to clean up the Paducah site is expected to continue for another 40 plus years. The Paducah/McCracken County community appreciates the continued support for the Paducah Department of Energy (DOE) site since the deactivation began in 2014.

For Fiscal Year 2024, the Paducah Chamber is pleased that both the House and Senate spending bills include \$240 million from the Uranium Enrichment Decontamination and Decommissioning Fund (UED&D), which is ~\$22 million above the President's budget request. As the federal spending process continues, the Chamber requests the following:

- (1) Maintain or increase the funding from UED&D for cleanup at the Paducah DOE site.

*Note: This "plus-up" maintains the spending level that Congress has provided for the past four years, which makes site-wide funding approximately \$320 million. Any funds appropriated for shipping and disposal of oxide cylinders is in addition to this requested amount. In FY23, Congress provided ~\$7.5M for this effort.*

Funding would help fulfill the Environmental Management's (EM) Strategic Vision to continue disposition of R-114, continue deactivation of the first gaseous diffusion facility, and support for reindustrialization.

- (2) Support for a new Mission Support facility that would replace the current 70-year-old administration facility and the 26 support structures. These current facilities are in need of \$38 million of new purchases and upgrades and a new facility would save approximately \$2 million per year in reduced maintenance and energy costs.

Thank you for including report language in both the House and Senate bills that highlight this need.



*Switchyard cleanup at the site.*



3) Support for a laser enrichment project at the site and efforts for a competitive process in the High Assay Low-Enrichment Uranium (HALEU) market. We encourage the issuing of funding for front-end nuclear projects, such as money for laser enrichment. We believe a fair and open competition of those dollars, rather than providing money through a sole source, is the best use of taxpayers' dollars. We believe we must develop our own HALEU market and Paducah hopes to play a role in the future of HALEU. To that end, the Paducah Chamber supports the federal government building a stockpile of HALEU and issuing purchase agreements (or cost share) for this stockpile to companies who are developing new technologies such as laser enrichment.

(4) Support for a process that would further potential recycling of stockpile of nickel ingots for purposes of supporting economic development in the region.

## Road Map for the Future



The Paducah Chamber is appreciative to have been selected by DOE to lead a study for the future of the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant Site. The grant will be used to develop a comprehensive road map for the future of the site. The Chamber will involve many partners during the study including the Department of Energy, Paducah Area Community Reuse Organization, City of Paducah, McCracken County, Greater Paducah Economic Development, the State of Kentucky including the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the cabinets of Economic Development and Energy and Environmental, the state Office of Energy Policy and local universities, among others.

In August, Chamber awarded a fixed-price subcontract to Bacon Farmer Workman Engineering & Testing, Inc. (BFW) to prepare the reindustrialization plan. This is a critical planning effort for the community and the region. BFW is partnering with Geosyntec Consultants, a consulting firm of engineers, scientists, and innovators out of Knoxville, Tennessee. Both BFW and Geosyntec are currently performing work at the site and bring in-depth, site-specific knowledge to the project. Geosyntec has experience developing similar plans for other DOE sites, most recently the reindustrialization of the Oak Ridge, Tennessee site. The work will be completed over the next two years. Throughout the process, there will be regular updates communicated with the local community and other stakeholders.

# KEY LOCAL PRIORITIES

## Barkley Regional Airport



In 2023 Barkley Regional Airport opened a new \$43.5 million terminal with federal, Cares Act, ARPA, state, local and PACRO funding. Our community is very appreciative of the support received to see this project through to completion. Additionally, the airport had to change EAS carriers during the past year and is now utilizing Contour Airlines flying to Charlotte, North Carolina for 12 flights per week.

**Barkley Regional Airport is a critical economic driver for our region and one of only five commercial airports in Kentucky. To support the airport, we request the following:**

**Essential Air Service (EAS) Funding:** *Supports* full funding of the EAS program. This program is essential to the airport’s economic viability as it connects the region with one stop to the National Air System (NAS) via Charlotte International Airport.

*Opposes* the draft Senate/House bill that would require EAS airports to pay five percent of the carrier’s subsidy per year. This would require Barkley to pay at least \$1,223,614 over the current four-year EAS contract for air service. This is an unsustainable financial burden for EAS airports.

**580 Rule:** *Opposes* proposed changes by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to 14 CFR Part 110.2 (580 rule), and requests no changes made to current regulations. Changes currently proposed by FAA to remove an existing exemption for Part 135 and Part 380 service carriers would devastate Barkley Regional Airport – and other airports of similar size around

the country – causing communities to lose jet service for lack of a carrier that meets the stringent requirements who is willing to provide service. At Barkley Regional Airport, Contour has an enviable safety and reliability record as well as in other cities they serve. No safety concerns have been noted.

**EAS Subsidy Cap:** *Supports* increasing the maximum \$200 per passenger allowed under the EAS program. Despite rising inflation, this subsidy cap has not been adjusted in over 22 years. It now threatens the ability of airports across the country to maintain any commercial service if it is not increased.

**Conduct Planning Study:** *Supports* \$750,000 awarded from FAA Entitlement funding to support a planning study that will help chart a path for Barkley and create an updated Airport Property Map.

**Runway Rehabilitation Project:** *Supports* \$8.5 million discretionary funding for the Design and Rehabilitation of Runway 5/23 (Phase 2). Barkley has upfronted the design, has a bid in hand and is shovel ready.

**Extend Airport Security/Perimeter Road to New Terminal Apron:** *Supports* \$3 million FAA BIL-AIG funding to extend the paved Airport interior perimeter road from the old Terminal to the new \$43.5 million Terminal Building to keep unlicensed airport support vehicles and aircraft refuelers off the airfield pavement for Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT) considerations.

# Infrastructure Investments

**BUILD Grant:** Supports the City of Paducah in its request for supplemental BUILD grant funds from DOT which are needed to complete the BUILD grant project awarded to the city in 2019. DOT opened the grant process back up to recipients awarded in 2018 and 2019 to apply for supplemental funds. The city has recently completed that application with an ask of \$3.5 million.



The overall price of the project has increased significantly beyond local control, not because the project has increased in scope, but due to inflation, COVID complications, supply chain issues and labor shortages. This project is a key anchor to overall downtown improvements and includes the Riverboat Excursion Pier to support the growing tourism industry and allows for safer passenger disembarking for riverboat passengers.

**Safe Streets Grant:** Supports the City of Paducah application for a DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant. In partnership with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and Paducah Public Schools, a redesign of the Buckner Lane/Broadway Street and Lone Oak Road/Labelle Avenue intersection with improvements to 32nd Street and Buckner Lane is being requested. The project would better accommodate traffic flow at this crucial intersection, decrease the number of traffic accidents, and provide pedestrian crosswalks, making crossing the street safer and more accessible including for students at two nearby schools. The total project cost estimate is \$8.45 million with the Federal grant request ask being \$6.9 million.

## Inland Waterways

**Inland waterways is a significant economic driver and creates thousands of jobs in Paducah, McCracken County and the surrounding area.**

### FY 2024 Energy and Water Development

**Appropriations:** Supports appropriations for the full amount supportable by annual diesel fuel tax receipts deposited into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) and any additional funding needed from the balance of the IWTF under the cost-share modified in the Water Resources Development Act of 2022.

**Water Resources Development Act of 2024:** Supports bipartisan efforts to continue authorizing funding for water infrastructure projects. Our levees, dams, inland waterways, and ports protect hundreds of communities, support millions of American jobs, and generate billions of dollars for the state of Kentucky. Continued biennial passage of WRDA legislation is critical to maintaining the nation's water infrastructure.

**Additional Fees:** Opposes additional tolling, lockage fees, or other charges for the users of the inland waterways systems.

**Kentucky Lock:** Supports Senate WRDA language to expedite the Kentucky Lock Addition construction. This project had contract delays that will inevitably increase the cost. Even though there is significant funding available, it remains to be seen whether contracts can move forward without prolonging the project's operational date.

## Paducah-McCracken County Riverport

**Grant Funding for Ports:** Supports continued and future support of port-focused grant and infrastructure programs. The Paducah-McCracken County Riverport Authority received a federal grant in 2021 from the Department of Transportation Small Ports and Terminals Project. These funds are being used to modernize bulk commodity handling equipment dating back to the 1960s that had reached their end-of-life and could not keep up with projected future cargo activity. These types of grants allow the Riverport to stay up to date and to be able to grow and expand.



# Education and Workforce

**Funding for MARAD Centers of Excellence:** *Supports* funding specifically for centers designated in the U.S.

Department of Transportation's

Maritime Administration

(MARAD) Centers of Excellence

program for improvements to

enhance their academic and

workforce programs to better

align with the needs of the

business and industry. Funding

would greatly benefit West Kentucky Community and

Technical College, which received the designation of a

Center of Excellence (CoE) for Domestic Maritime

Workforce Training and Education, in 2021.



**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.

**Financial Aid:** *Urges* reforms to financial aid programs to improve access by simplifying the FAFSA process and increasing 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.

**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.

**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.

**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 two-year or four-year degree.

**Capacity Building Grants for Non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA):** *Supports* increasing the \$5 million request for the NLGCA competitive grant program to \$10 million. This increase will support Murray State University and other universities for communities of its size in areas such as rural development, agricultural initiatives and other priorities.

## Health Care

**Waivers for Long Term Care Hospitals:** *Supports* legislation which provides better access for citizens needing specialized care locally, including extending waivers adopted during the COVID pandemic for Long Term Acute Care Hospitals (LTACH). These waivers allowed patients to utilize needed services by overriding the non-clinical rules that were in place without input from the physician community.

# Arts, Travel & Tourism

**As one of nine UNESCO Creative Cities in the U.S., 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.**

**Arts Funding:** *Supports* the continuation of grant funding that provides assistance to local cultural organizations. For example, grants in our community from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation-African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund have been awarded to various local organizations.

**Creative Business Friendly Policies:** *Supports* federal policy, like CREATE, PLACE and PATPA, which expands loan programs for businesses who engage creative workers, and improves access to economic development tools; increases access to technical assistance, grants, removes barriers to disaster relief funding, and tax incentives; and corrects tax policy to ensure artists can deduct the cost of unreimbursed business expenses.

**Equity Through Arts:** *Supports* the Equity Through the Arts and Humanities Act (H.R. 7627) which encourages participation in the arts, especially for young people; acknowledges the cultural and social significance of representation in the arts; and works to dismantle the systemic barriers that keep the arts out of reach in marginalized communities. The legislation would create a grant program through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for nonprofit and public entities, including faith-based and community organizations, that serve and are led by people of color. The legislation is also endorsed by Americans for the Arts.

**International Travel:** *Supports* clear and consistent standards for international visitors. As a UNESCO Creative City, home of the National Quilt Museum of the United States, it is very important that international travel to our country and our community be an easy process. Specifically, prioritize visa processing resources for travel visas. Lowering wait times to less than 30 days would eliminate a major barrier to entry for many potential visitors.

# Business & Commerce

**Inclusion of the Human-services Emergency & Logistic Program (HELP) Act:** *Supports* the inclusion of the HELP Act in the reauthorization of the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA). The HELP Act provides needed investments to build 211 networks which provide support for communities in times of need. It also creates an oversight system in which community members can make yearly recommendations to improve services. 211 is a help line provided to the entire state of Kentucky at no charge thanks to a government grant with United Way of Kentucky and local 211 centers.

**Business Competitiveness:** *Urges* Congress to review and repeal overly burdensome banking regulations that increase costs and stifle lending to businesses, ultimately limiting investment. Regulations for banks should be tailored to include risk in addition to asset size.

**Supply Chain:** *Encourages* the federal government to ensure that policies protect the private sector's ability to diversify supply chains and address interruptions and that policy does not introduce new barriers to trade. Supply chain disruptions and material shortages have become commonplace and have a major impact on small businesses, affecting their ability to keep pace with customer demands.

**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.

**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.



**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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