

We Are Our Member's Chamber.

Recently I have been asked about our affiliation with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Specifically, folks want to know if we are a member and if our policy statements are derived from theirs. This inquisitiveness has emerged ever since the war of words between the Obama administration and the U.S. Chamber made national news. Since the questions keep coming up, I thought it made sense to set the record straight. We are a member of the U.S. Chamber as are most other large chambers. There are two reasons for our membership:

- a. it provides us access to a variety of organizational development resources that are of value to us.
- b. We receive regular updates on what is happening in Washington. The updates are fairly non partisan and fact based. They are helpful to us in understanding what the prevailing issue trends are. These updates were extremely helpful when we were working with Senator Leahy and others to ensure that the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative did not adversely affect Vermont's tourism industry

The Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce's position statements on issues ranging from health care, to tax policy, to the environment are developed by our members, our standing committees and our Board of Directors. We do not take direction from any outside organization. All members are invited annually to be part of our policy formation teams. Our positions are outlined in both printed and electronic formats.

Clearly, with a membership of about 2500 we cannot always be aligned with every member's views. However we strive to reach consensus under the philosophical umbrella of our mission and operating principles.

The Chamber exists to advance commerce in our region. In carrying out this mission we are guided by the principles of community responsibility, environmental sustainability and issue-based advocacy.

I am happy to discuss any of our positions, our process or our affiliations with any member.

Thank you.