

Guidelines for Meetings with the Governor and Other State Officials

FOREIGN DIGNITARIES

Meetings with the Governor

Any time a foreign representative seeks a meeting with the Governor, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership should be notified through the Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade at the earliest possible time. The Virginia Economic Development Partnership, through its Communications and Promotions Division and International Trade and Investment Division, will evaluate the meeting with two critical considerations in mind:

1. What (if any) gift exchange or protocol issues should be implemented
2. The value of trade and/or investment opportunities from a meeting with the dignitary or foreign delegation

VEDP will make recommendations to the Governor's Office through the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, and will provide gifts and staff support where appropriate. If VEDP considers a meeting valuable for international trade and investment, the Chief of Staff will determine the level of involvement of economic development officials in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce and Trade. If the meeting is solely diplomatic and does not involve economic development or trade issues, VEDP will provide background materials on the represented nation and gifts for exchange, where appropriate.

Meetings with Other State Officials

Any time a senior foreign representative or delegation seeks a meeting with a state agency or official, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership should be notified through the Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade at the earliest possible time. Senior officials include all elected officials and cabinet-level officials at the (comparable) federal, state, and local level.

The Secretary of Commerce and Trade will notify the Chief of Staff of all these meetings, and they will jointly determine whether there is an appropriate role for VEDP to play. This determination will be based not only upon the seniority of the official in question, but also upon the nature of our relationship with the country that official represents.

If the Chief of Staff and Secretary of Commerce and Trade determine the visiting foreign officials are not appropriate for a meeting with VEDP to further the Commonwealth's international business interests, the meeting will proceed as planned. No gifts will be provided by VEDP, though they may be appropriate for exchange.

If the Chief of Staff and Secretary of Commerce and Trade determine the visiting foreign officials are appropriate candidates for a meeting with VEDP, VEDP will contact the Virginia representatives with whom the foreign official will be meeting to coordinate efforts, and will provide gifts for exchange if necessary. VEDP will NOT seek to supplant or interrupt any existing meeting with another state agency or official. Instead, they will evaluate the usefulness of two options:

1. Scheduling a separate meeting to discuss international trade opportunities
2. Joining an existing meeting as a partner with another agency in advancing similar goals

It is important to note that certain state agencies, including the Virginia Port Authority and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services have consistent, frequent interaction with foreign companies, and occasionally with foreign officials. These agencies may exercise some judgment in determining those meetings where it may be necessary to notify the Secretary of Commerce and Trade.

KEY BUSINESS LEADERS

Meetings with the Governor

Any time the CEO or other high-level officials from a prominent corporation (inside or outside Virginia) seeks a meeting with the Governor, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership should be notified through the Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade at the earliest possible time. Unless the meeting is specifically related to a non-business topic, staff from the Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade and/or VEDP will prepare background documents for the Governor's scheduling office and attend the meeting.

Though there may be times it is inappropriate to discuss business issues with a high level company official, the Secretary of Commerce and Trade must ALWAYS be notified of these meetings in advance. If there is some question about the value and/or topic of a meeting, the Chief of Staff will determine the level of involvement of economic development officials in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce and Trade.

Meetings with Other State Officials

Any time the CEO or other high-level officials from a prominent corporation (inside or outside Virginia) seek a meeting with state officials, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership should be notified through the Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade at the earliest possible time. These meetings may or may not have a direct link to the Commonwealth's business development strategies, but our relationships with top companies are crucial to our economic development success. Notifying VEDP of the meeting also enables them to schedule additional meetings around the visits of our top corporate clients and prospects.

If there is some question about the participation and/or notification of VEDP in meetings of this nature, the Chief of Staff will determine the level of involvement in consultation with the agency in question and the Secretary of Commerce and Trade.