

ANNUAL CORPORATE SPONSORS



January 22, 2016

The Honorable R. Lee Ware Jr.
Virginia House of Delegates
P.O. Box 406
Room 421
Richmond, VA 23218

To The Honorable R. Lee Ware Jr.:

I'm writing to express the Arlington Chamber of Commerce's strong support for HB 1147, reinstating the additional .25% Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) for Arlington County.

The reinstatement of Arlington's TOT surcharge is the Chamber's foremost priority for the 2016 legislative session. This surcharge had been in place from 1990 until 2011, when the General Assembly allowed it to lapse. The funds generated by the additional TOT would provide much needed support to ensure that Arlington has a competitive position with regard to attracting leisure and business travel. It is important to note that travelers staying in Arlington are often those who consider Washington, D.C. as well. By bringing these visitors to Arlington, we draw additional spending to the Commonwealth.

Hotels and tourism are a crucial part of the business community in Arlington, as evidenced by the Chamber's dedicated Hotel General Managers Committee, our only industry specific committee. A letter of support from that group is attached as well.

However, attracting additional visitors to Arlington not only benefits our hotels, but a variety of businesses including restaurants and retail establishments who directly benefit from the increased travel.

Tourism in Arlington drove \$2.97 billion in visitor spending and supported 24,700 jobs in 2014. It also generated \$107.8 million in tax receipts to the Commonwealth. As the gateway to Virginia for travelers who would otherwise stay in Washington, D.C., Arlington's success in tourism promotion benefits Virginia as a whole, with a particular benefit to our surrounding jurisdictions. Long-term, stable funding will enable Arlington to build upon its strong regional collaboration in the Northern Virginia Visitors Consortium (NVVC).

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Reinstatement of the TOT surcharge is overwhelmingly supported by the Arlington Chamber and business community as a whole. We view the guest-paid surcharge as a driver of increased economic activity in Arlington and in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

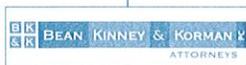
Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Kate Roche
President & CEO

CC: House Finance Committee

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Chairman R. Lee Ware Jr.
Virginia House of Delegates
P.O. Box 406
Room 421
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Chairman Ware Jr.:

As a Co-Chair of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce Hotel General Managers Committee, I am writing to voice the unified position of Arlington's hotels, backed by the full Arlington Chamber, in requesting your support for HB 1147 (Hope). This legislation reinstates the 0.25% Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) guest-paid surcharge that provides dedicated tourism-promotion funding in Arlington. Originally requested by the Arlington Chamber, this surcharge was renewed every three years from 1990 until the Virginia General Assembly declined to reenact it in 2011.

Our hotels are greatly affected by tourism promotion and the ability to differentiate Arlington as a desired destination for corporate, government, and leisure travelers. The efforts of the Arlington Convention and Visitors Service (ACVS) strengthen this differentiation in the marketplace and offer a promotional ability that individual hotels – and even their larger brands – cannot duplicate. Their services are essential for increased hotel occupancies and rates, and in turn, tax revenues to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Without this destination promotion, all hotels in Arlington could see a significant decrease in visitors and revenue.

The tourism industry in Arlington employs nearly 25,000 individuals, and generates more than \$920 million in local payroll for businesses large and small. The dedicated funding which would result from reinstatement of the TOT surcharge is essential to growth of our hospitality sector – for Arlington, for Northern Virginia, and for Virginia as a whole. As the gateway to Virginia for travelers who would otherwise stay in Washington, D.C., Arlington and its tourism-promotion program draw visitors into the Commonwealth. In fact, in 2014, Arlington visitor spending resulted in nearly \$108 million in state tax revenues – more than any Virginia county. Increased promotion by Arlington will result in greater revenue for Virginia.

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The Arlington Chamber Hotel General Managers Committee unanimously supports the reinstatement of the guest-paid, ¼-cent tax dedicated to funding Arlington tourism promotion. I respectfully request your support of HB 1147 (Hope) to benefit Arlington businesses.

Sincerely,

Christopher Raines

Chris Raines
Holiday Inn Rosslyn
Co-Chair Hotel General Managers Committee

CC: House Finance Committee