

NR 2016- 05

For Immediate Release

February 26, 2016

General Assembly Passes Arlington's Transient Occupancy Bill

Richmond – The Virginia General Assembly today passed legislation patroned by Senator Janet Howell and Delegate Patrick Hope to reinstate Arlington's Transient Occupancy Tax. House Bill 1147 and Senate Bill 160 both reinstate Arlington County's "add-on" transient occupancy tax of .25% for two years beginning July 2016. This tax dates back to 1990 and expired in 2011. One hundred percent of the new revenue generated will support tourism-marketing intending to attract tourists and business travelers to Arlington County. The legislation is awaiting the Governor's signature.

Senator Janet Howell added "After several years of effort, we were successful in getting the transient occupancy tax approved. The funding will help our tourism industry be competitive. Thanks are due to the Arlington Chamber for its support."

Delegate Patrick Hope said, "Arlington has taken the long road to get to this point. John Vihstadt's bipartisan relationships in Richmond were a key factor in securing passage with the

Republican majority in the House of Delegates and that has made all the difference."

Arlington County Board Member John Vihstadt, who met with House of Delegates Speaker William Howell and other Republican legislators to advocate for the TOT bill, said that "Richmond lawmakers understand and appreciate that Arlington is under new management. We want to work together to help our tourist economy thrive."

Kate Roche, President and CEO of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce said, "Reinstating the additional Transient Occupancy Tax surcharge is the Chamber's top legislative priority for this session. We are hopeful that the legislation will be signed into law by Governor McAuliffe. The reinstatement provides much needed revenue to fund the Arlington Convention and Visitors Services, attracting visitors to Arlington, which in turn brings substantial revenue for Arlington County and the Commonwealth. Tourism also accounts for about 25,000 jobs in Arlington, playing a vital role in our economy."

Christopher Raines, the General Manager at the Holiday Inn Rosslyn at Key Bridge, further added "The Transient Occupancy Tax surcharge is vital to Arlington County hotels continued growth. With increasing supply in DC and more accessible neighboring Virginia locales, Arlington Convention and Visitor Services needs additional revenues to compete on a more level playing ground. Our hope is that additional revenues will result in an increased presence at relevant trade shows, destination markets, and online marketing. We believe this will result in additional travel markets opening for us, particularly internationally. We give this bill our full support."

Patrick A. Hope is a Member of the Virginia General Assembly as the Delegate from the 47th District representing part of Arlington County. He serves on the House Health, Welfare, and Institutions, Courts of Justice, and Militia, Police and Public Safety Committees.

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Media Contact:

Mary P. Dooley, Legislative Assistant

Delegate Patrick Hope

delphope@house.virginia.gov

804-698-1147