



Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association

2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee Approved: November 9, 2016

CFHLA Board Approved: November 17, 2016

CFHLA Executive Committee Revisions Approved: January 17, 2017

CFHLA Executive Committee Revisions Approved: February 14, 2017

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX (TDT)

- In 1977, the Florida Legislature passed the "Tourist Development Tax" (F.S.125.0104) at the request of Florida lodging executives. The purpose of the tax was to create dedicated revenue for tourism promotion and investment.
- CFHLA strongly advocates preserving the integrity of this "bed tax," so that it is utilized for **tourism-promotion** purposes only.
- Our citizens' way of life continues to be enhanced through the investment of TDT dollars in tourism promotion and other successful efforts that continue to attract visitors to the state. **Empty beds do not generate tax dollars!**
- CFHLA strongly supports efforts to **sunset or repeal** 2016 legislation that allowed Bay, Okaloosa and Walton Counties to expend Tourist Development Tax dollars for public safety purposes relating to tourism.

VISIT FLORIDA FUNDING

- CFHLA supports maintaining or increasing funding for Visit Florida, which was allocated \$76 million by the Legislature in 2016.
- CFHLA opposes any potential efforts to substitute Visit Florida funding from the state budget with County-level TDT revenues.
- In 2015, Florida welcomed **105 million visitors**, including over **11.5 million** international travelers, punctuating the growth of the state's Tourism Industry, which **employs more than 1.1 million Floridians**, making tourism the #1 industry in the Sunshine State.

SHARED ECONOMY COMPANIES

- CFHLA will monitor all Legislative activities as it relates to the financial, insurance and safety standards being applied to both Ride-Sharing and Shared Lodging companies, so that these businesses function on a **"level playing field"** with established, professional Transportation and Lodging companies.
- Legislators must protect the quality of life in our communities and protect those that use these sharing platforms. No more "start up now, ask questions later."
- CFHLA supports legislation requiring all individuals engaging in leasing or renting their property to **register with the Florida Department of Revenue.**
- CFHLA supports legislation establishing **insurance requirements** for "Ride Sharing" or Transportation Network Company (TNC) drivers
- CFHLA supports legislation that would streamline regulations for Transportation Network Companies, but opposes any efforts that would preclude local governments, airports or private properties from their ability to regulate/manage their jurisdictions/properties as it relates to background check and insurance requirements.

GAMBLING

- CFHLA remains strongly **opposed to the development of destination resort casinos or the expansion of gambling** in Florida as the vitality of Central Florida's economy depends on its reputation as a **"Family Friendly"** destination.

REGULATION OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

- CFHLA supported the passage of legislation during the 2013 Legislative Session that preempted to the state all **regulation of employee benefits**, such as wages and vacation time, as well as family and medical leave.
- With 67 counties in the State of Florida, maintaining **uniformity and predictability** is essential to avoid future compliance "nightmares" for companies that conduct business in multiple jurisdictions.
- CFHLA will monitor any Constitutional Initiatives relating to employee benefits.
- CFHLA supports the "Florida Competitive Workforce Act," legislation that modernizes state law by banning discrimination based on sexual orientation & gender identity.

FLORIDA'S FILM/TV PROGRAM INCENTIVE

- CFHLA supports funding for the **Film and Digital Media Tax Credit Program** to bring TV/film business back to Florida.
- The film and entertainment industry **provides economic benefits to not only the tourism and lodging industry**, but also to restaurants, retail, and construction – and creates jobs.

VACATION RENTALS

- CFHLA supports the right of individual property owners to rent their entire second home properties as vacation rentals by professional management companies, allowing the professional vacation rental community to maintain a strong hospitality presence in the state.
- CFHLA opposes any efforts to establish "**Minimum Night Stay**" requirements for vacation rental properties.
- CFHLA opposes any changes to Florida Statute 509.032, that would expand local government control of vacation rentals licensed by the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation.

SCHOOL START DATE

- CFHLA supports a "Third Monday in August" target for school year openings.
- Benefits of later start dates include **increased tax revenue** from an influx of visitors, additional income/work opportunities for students and the **reduction of non-instructional** costs to school districts.

NON-HOMESTEAD CAP

- CFHLA supports extending the 10% cap for commercial (non-homestead) property value assessments until the year 2028.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

- CFHLA will continue to monitor all activities relating to the expansion of **Medical Marijuana** and remains dedicated to **protecting Florida's "Family Friendly" brand**.

ONLINE TRAVEL COMPANIES / THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS TAXATION

- CFHLA believes in **fair taxation** and that public lodging taxes are based upon the price charged to the consumer.
- Additionally, CFHLA maintains that the lodging establishment is not responsible for the collection of the tax difference between the wholesale price and retail price on accommodations purchased by online travel agencies.

VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARDS

- CFHLA will monitor any legislation relating to the composition of Value Adjustment Boards (VABs) and the VAB mediation process across the State to ensure that a **fair appeal process** is available as it relates to the assessment of hospitality properties.

ORANGE COUNTY HOURS OF SALE / CONSUMPTION (LOCAL ISSUE)

- CFHLA supports the proposed amendment to Orange County ordinance 2012-03 Section 4 - 3 that would allow alcohol service between the hours of **7:00 AM and 2:00 AM** as opposed to the current 11:00 AM beginning time.
- A number of neighboring counties begin alcohol service at 7:00 AM, four hours before Orange County, putting Orange County lodging establishments at a competitive disadvantage when attempting to secure both group and leisure guests.

ENERGY BENCHMARKING MANDATES (LOCAL ISSUE)

- CFHLA opposes local government mandates relating to the reporting of "energy audits" for public dissemination.
- CFHLA supports **voluntary, incentives-based** energy benchmarking programs that do not place undue financial/operational burdens on private companies that manage buildings unable to compete with newer, energy-efficient buildings.