



February 23, 2021

To: Speaker Ralston and Members of the Georgia House of Representatives

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought Georgia's hospitality industry to its knees, leaving hotel occupancy in the single digits across the state while shuttering the doors of restaurants, venues and attractions from cities like Atlanta and Columbus and Albany to small towns like Darien and Guyton and everywhere in between. An industry that annually supports nearly 480,000 jobs across all 159 counties has now been forced to lay off or furlough upwards of 90% of their staff while the state and local governments lose hundreds of millions of dollars in tourism revenue.

As Georgia's second largest private sector employer and one of the top economic drivers, our hospitality and tourism community needs your help now more than ever.

One way to help our industry's recovery is through your support of HB 317, a bill that overwhelmingly passed the House last year prior to the disruption of COVID-19. HB 317 builds on the essential marketplace facilitator bill (HB 276) by streamlining the collection process of lodging taxes. This piece of legislation would shift that responsibility to short-term rental platforms (i.e. Airbnb, VRBO, etc.), as marketplace innkeepers, to collect and remit the local hotel/motel tax and \$5 state transportation fee on behalf of their hosts. These taxes are currently owed but not being collected.

There are more than 270 jurisdictions across Georgia that will be guaranteed a new revenue stream through this proposed bill, and the state will receive additional funds for transportation projects as the industry rebounds. Georgia's Short-Term Rental (STR) market is estimated to generate more than \$833 million annually in sales, resulting in more than \$125 million currently lost in tax revenue.

Given the importance of the hospitality & tourism sector to our state's economy, Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association (GHLA) and Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (GACVB) ask for your support of HB 317. We need to level the playing field across Georgia's hospitality industry and stimulate both the state and local economies during this extremely difficult time.

GA Short Term Rental Economic Data: [2019 GA Lost Revenue From Short Term Rentals](#)

  
Jim Sprouse  
GHLA



  
Jay Markwalter

