



***For Immediate Release***

## **\$150 Million Targeted for Georgia's Hotels Will Get the Industry 'Back on its Feet'**

**ATLANTA (May 16, 2022)** — A \$150 million grant announced by Gov. Brian Kemp today will dramatically improve the future of Georgia's hotel and lodging industry, according to leaders of Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association (GHLA), the group charged with implementing the federal grant that will bring much-needed financial relief to an industry ravaged by the pandemic.

GHLA's program, Save Georgia Hotels, is an American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) Negative Economic Impact grant that will help hotel operators and hotel employees return to work. All awarded funds must be used at Georgia properties. Funds used according to the rules and oversight of the ARPA will be a grant, not a loan requiring repayment.

"This program will provide Georgia's hospitality industry with the support it needs to create and sustain jobs for people throughout the state, helping the industry return to its pre-pandemic level of success," said Jim Sprouse, GHLA's Executive Director and coordinator for Save Georgia Hotels.

GHLA spent more than a year working with state leaders, federal officials, and private partners to secure the funding for the more than 2,000 hotels that will be eligible to apply. STR, a CoStar Group company, and the American Hotel & Lodging Association played important roles in securing the federal grant, providing data, analytics and support in the development of the proposal.

"This grant is so important to Georgians — every single hotel property in the state has suffered significant loss since March 2020," said Brad Koeneman, General Manager of Hilton Atlanta and chairman of GHLA. "We are grateful for Gov. Brian Kemp's partnership on this program, and we share his commitment to get Georgians back on the job and the hotel industry back on its feet."

Awarded funds must be dedicated to specific uses that rebuild Georgia's hotel and lodging workforce. Uses include workforce incentives such as additional pay, accelerated wage scales and bonuses; enhanced safety and security on lodging property; and employee training and career development.

GHLA will create systems, processes, and a formula for funding, and all will be tested through a pilot program. A date for the open-application phase will be determined in the coming weeks and will apply to Georgia hotels that were in operation before the pandemic.

"We will make this a fair, data-driven application process that will get critical funds into the right hands efficiently," says Sprouse. "We have the right partners in place to ensure this program succeeds."

*(Continued on next page)*

**About GHLA:** *GHLA is the state's non-partisan trade association representing the lodging industry and its role in Georgia tourism, which has an impact of more than \$69 billion on the state's economy. GHLA members represent hotels from around the state and include national franchises and independent lodging. For more information, go to [www.GHLA.net](http://www.GHLA.net). For Membership, go to [www.GHLA.net/join](http://www.GHLA.net/join).*

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