This week at the Virginia General Assembly marked the “crossover deadline,” the procedural mid-point of session by which all legislation must be considered in its respective house of origin and transmitted to the other chamber for further consideration or else fail to be enacted into law. Provided below is a brief summary and update regarding priority issues the Committee is currently monitoring and actions that have occurred over the last week. A comprehensive listing of business-related legislation introduced for the 2017 General Assembly session is also attached.

**Appointment of the Arlington County Board of Equalization**
Delegate Patrick Hope introduced H.B. 1820 on behalf of the Chamber to amend the process for the appointment of local Board of Equalization. The County agreed to the legislation and the measure passed the House of Delegates on a unanimous vote. It was referred to the Senate Committee on Local Government and has been added to the Committee’s docket for Tuesday, February 14.

**Local Regulation of Trespass Towing**
H.B. 1960, which would repeal the authority of Northern Virginia local governments to enact a “second signature” requirement and institute several consumer protections, passed the House of Delegates on a 68-28 vote at the crossover deadline Tuesday. It has been referred to the Senate Committee on Transportation and will likely be heard in Committee on Wednesday, February 15. The Senate Committee reported identical legislation (S.B. 1468) to the Senate floor on a 9-4 vote, where it failed on a 20-20 tie with the Lieutenant Governor casting the tie-breaking vote. The Chamber and a coalition of other stakeholder groups are preparing for another floor vote on the issue, working to ensure that all Senators understand the actual impacts of the legislation, which got muddled in the floor debate.

**Short-term Residential Lodging**
After months of study by the Virginia Housing Commission and negotiation among stakeholder groups, Airbnb opted not to introduce legislation this during this year’s short legislative session preceding an election year in which there appears to be little appetite for addressing high-profile, politically charged issues. Two prominent opponents of the industry position, however, did put forward legislation of their own seeking to grant additional authority to local governments for regulating such use.
Senate Majority Leader Tommy Norment (R-Williamsburg) introduced S.B. 1578 to allow local governments to require registry of short-term lodging and provide for fees paid to the local government as well as the ability to revoke such use based on zoning and other violations. The industry presented an amendment in the nature of a substitute that would have restored elements of last year’s legislation, including preemption of local authority to prohibit short-term residential lodging. No motion was made to adopt the substitute and S.B. 1578 was reported from Committee and passed the Senate floor on a 36-4 vote on Tuesday. The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on General Laws. Airbnb continues to pursue amendments on the House side.

Senator Bill Stanley (R-Moneta) introduced S.B. 1579, requiring that any individual engaging in short-term rental of property must acquire insurance coverage at a minimum of $500,000 of liability coverage. The bill would have further created a fine of $10,000 per violation for any individual posting, listing or advertising the availability of a unit for short-term rental in a jurisdiction where such use is prohibited. Last week, the Senate Committee on Local Government voted unanimously to roll S.B. 1579 into Senator Norment’s S.B. 1578, effectively disposing of the bill in favor of Senator Norment’s approach.

The Arlington Chamber will continue to monitor this issue.

**Establishment of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission**

Senator George Barker (D-Alexandria) introduced S.B. 1251 this year, a bill that authorizes Virginia to become a signatory to the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission Interstate Compact. By federal mandate, Virginia is required to take action to adopt identical legislation as Maryland and the District of Columbia to create a new body with oversight of the transit system’s safety. At risk if the Commission is not created is $6 million in annual statewide federal transit funding and an additional $150 million in funding that comprises the Commonwealth’s matching funds for WMATA operations. In spite of consternation and debate over the terms and funding of Metrorail’s operating compact between the three jurisdictions, S.B. 1251 passed unanimously on the Senate floor and reported with a substitute from the House Transportation Committee this morning on a 22-0 vote.

Delegate Jim LeMunyon (R-Chantilly) introduced H.B. 2136, a House version of Senator Barker’s bill. H.B. 2136 passed unanimously from the House floor on Tuesday and will be heard in the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections next Tuesday.