



January 13, 2020

The Honorable Janet D. Howell
Senate of Virginia
Pocahontas Building, Room E509
900 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Chair Howell,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce strongly supports SB 107, removing the July 1, 2021 sunset from Arlington County's additional 0.25 percent Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) that is dedicated to tourism promotion. We urge you to support the bill.

The TOT surcharge funds tourism and travel promotion in Arlington County, ensuring that Arlington and Virginia businesses are aggressively promoted as the best places to stay, shop, and dine in the DC metropolitan area. Many travelers stay in Arlington while visiting Washington, DC and the National Capital region. Thus these efforts draw spending into Virginia that might otherwise go to Maryland or the District of Columbia.

The commerce these visitors generate extends beyond hotels to restaurants, retailers, and other businesses. Arlington County tourism and travel generated \$3.4 billion in local spending in 2018 and \$126.8 million in Commonwealth tax receipts in 2018. Removing the TOT surcharge sunset provision will help our hospitality industry and the Arlington Convention and Visitors Service develop a long range plan to work towards increasing tourism and travel. The sunset provision is an obstacle to such longer-range planning.

Arlington County and the Chamber have developed a great partnership with a signed Letter of Agreement that guarantees hospitality industry input into the use of TOT funds. The Arlington Convention and Visitors Service team is working hand in hand with the Chamber in mapping the future of County related tourism and travel.

The Chamber is grateful to the General Assembly for its actions to reinstate the TOT surcharge for two years in 2016 and to extend it for a further three years in 2018. No other jurisdiction in the Commonwealth has such a sunset provision in its TOT surcharge. We now ask the General Assembly to remove Arlington's sunset provision.

Thank you for your consideration of this important economic development initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee members; Arlington County Senate delegation