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January 22, 2016

The Honorable Thomas Norment Jr.
Senate of Virginia
P.O. Box 396
Room 621
Richmond, VA 23218

To Chairman Norment:

I'm writing to express the Arlington Chamber of Commerce's strong support for SB 160, reinstating the additional .25% Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) for Arlington County.

The reinstatement of Arlington's TOT surcharge is the Chamber's foremost priority for the 2016 legislative session. This surcharge had been in place from 1990 until 2011, when the General Assembly allowed it to lapse. The funds generated by the additional TOT would provide much needed support to ensure that Arlington has a competitive position with regard to attracting leisure and business travel. It is important to note that travelers staying in Arlington are often those who consider Washington, D.C. as well. By bringing these visitors to Arlington, we draw additional spending to the Commonwealth.

Hotels and tourism are a crucial part of the business community in Arlington, as evidenced by the Chamber's dedicated Hotel General Managers Committee, our only industry specific committee. A letter of support from that group is attached as well.

However, attracting additional visitors to Arlington not only benefits our hotels, but a variety of businesses including restaurants and retail establishments who directly benefit from the increased travel.

Tourism in Arlington drove \$2.97 billion in visitor spending and supported 24,700 jobs in 2014. It also generated \$107.8 million in tax receipts to the Commonwealth. As the gateway to Virginia for travelers who would otherwise stay in Washington, D.C., Arlington's success in tourism promotion benefits Virginia as a whole, with a particular benefit to our surrounding jurisdictions. Long-term, stable funding will enable Arlington to build upon its strong regional collaboration in the Northern Virginia Visitors Consortium (NVVC).

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Reinstatement of the TOT surcharge is overwhelmingly supported by the Arlington Chamber and business community as a whole. We view the guest-paid surcharge as a driver of increased economic activity in Arlington and in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Kate Roche
President & CEO

CC: Co-Chair of the Senate Finance Committee
Senate Finance Committee

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The Arlington Chamber Hotel General Managers Committee unanimously supports the reinstatement of the guest-paid, ¼-cent tax dedicated to funding Arlington tourism promotion. I respectfully request your support of SB 160 (Howell) to benefit Arlington businesses.

Sincerely,

Christopher Raines

Chris Raines
Holiday Inn Rosslyn
Co-Chair Hotel General Managers Committee

CC: Co-Chair of the Senate Finance Committee
Senate Finance Committee