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February 14, 2024

THE INSIDER - SPECIAL EDITION

FLORIDA TOURISM DAY



The Hospitality and Tourism Industry is the lifeblood of Florida's economy and our presence in Tallahassee speaks volumes about the strength and significance of our industry. Last week, CFHLA was proud to partner with so many industry leaders and professionals from across the state for Florida Tourism Day.

During Florida Tourism Day, CFHLA members and partners had the opportunity to advocate and engage with our legislative leaders and policymakers on the issues that can directly impact your business. Additionally, we discussed the importance of tourism to our economy in Central Florida and the various issues that could hinder our industry from thriving.



With more than 30 members and partners who joined us, CFHLA was well represented in Tallahassee for this two-day advocacy trip. In the end, we met with more than a dozen legislators and discussed our top issues including the full funding of Visit Florida, the protection of the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) and the statewide regulation of vacation home rentals.

We appreciate each of the legislators that met with us and thank them for taking the time to listen to our concerns.



2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE - WEEK 5

The 2024 Florida Legislative Session officially hit its halfway point last week and after wrapping up week 5, there are less than 30 days to go until the end of session (Sine Die) on Friday, March 8, 2024.

With the close of week 5, initiating a conference committee to reconcile disparities between the Senate's \$115.9 billion proposal and the House's \$115.5 billion plan. While both chambers technically passed HB 5001 (the House approved 112-2 and the Senate passed unanimously), the Senate introduced amendments.

Additionally, the House has indicated that they will likely include TDT related changes in their proposed Tax Package that will be considered this week. Specifically, the House Ways and Means Committee meeting today to discuss potentially sunsetting the collection of TDT and/or requiring a renewal of all existing and future levies in similar intervals to a specific number of years.

CFHLA is in opposition to this specific proposal and we will push back against this harmful approach to TDT that could be extremely detrimental to our industry and local community.

Lastly, CFHLA continues to monitor the progression of other bills that are important to our industry including: maintaining **full funding for Visit Florida**, the **statewide regulation of vacation homes and advertising platforms**, **increased funding and incentives to encourage additional workforce housing opportunities**, **storm water issues**, **revisions to the Florida Timeshare Act**, and many others.



[CLICK HERE](#) to download the complete 2024 CFHLA Legislative Agenda.

**LEGISLATIVE ALERT - FUTURE OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT
TAX (TDT) THREATENED**

This week, the Florida House published its tax package, an annual package prepared by House leadership, which now included **a surprising new provision that would sunset the Tourist Development Taxes (TDT) unless approved by a voter referendum before July 2029.**

This proposal will be considered by the House Ways and Means Committee today that will require all Tourist Development Taxes (TDT) in effect as of June 30, 2024, to be renewed by voter referendum on or before July 1, 2029. If a TDT is not approved through referendum before that time, it will expire. Subsequently, all TDT levies approved by referendum will expire after six years but may be renewed for subsequent six-year periods if each six-year period is approved by referendum.

The statewide lodging industry agreed to levy the Tourist Development Taxes specifically to fund local tourism promotion through marketing and advertising, and this bill is a massive breach of that agreement.

Here's what this means:

- Local governments will shoulder the cost of referendum every six years.
- Resources will need to be expended every six years to promote re-adoption of the TDT, rather than concentrating resources and efforts on the work of tourism promotion and community impact.
- TDT revenues pledged for bonding prior to June 30, 2024, will not be disturbed, but future revenues will only be eligible for bonding for projects in which the bonds can be retired in six years or less. This will eliminate significant projects that require a longer bonding period.
- If TDT levies are not approved for referendum, this will be a significant loss of necessary funding to promote Central Florida's most important industry and could result in economic uncertainty.
- All entities and staff positions that rely on TDT collections will be in jeopardy.
- The potential loss of TDT will drastically and negatively impact Central Florida's tourism as marketing the region to visitors will be significantly hindered.

We urge all CFHLA members to participate in this short, urgent call to action below to share the negative impacts of this proposal with the Florida House and provide input on the forthcoming negotiation meetings that will take place between the House and Senate leadership during budget negotiations.

Please take a moment to join our urgent call to action on this critical issue!

CFHLA STRONGLY OPPOSES

[CLICK HERE TO TELL THE HOUSE TO PROTECT OUR TDT](#)

OTHER TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX (TDT) ISSUES

CFHLA is also closely monitoring is **SB 1748 / HB 1599 Tourist Development Tax by Senator Brodeur and Representative Truenow.**

This bill would prohibit a county from spending more than 25 percent of the TDT on an individual project unless the governing board of the county approves such use by supermajority vote.

HB 1599 by Representative Truenow – **No action** was taken in the House last week.

SB 1748 by Senator Brodeur – This bill **passed the Finance and Tax Committee on February 8, 2024 by a vote of 6-0 and now is in its last committee, Appropriations.**

HB 1081 by Representative Porras – This bill **passed the Regulatory Reform & Economic Development Subcommittee agenda on February 6, 2024 and is now in its second committee stop, Ways and Means.**

HB 1453 by Representative Valdes - **No action** was taken in the House last week.

SB 872 by Senator Stewart - **No action** was taken in the Senate last week.

SB 1072 by Senator Avila - This bill **passed the Commerce and Tourism Committee on January 30, 2024 and is now in its second committee stop, Finance and Tax.**

SB 1594 by Senator Stewart - **No action** was taken in the Senate last week.

CFHLA MONITORING



VISIT FLORIDA FUNDING

CFHLA supports the Governor's proposed budget, which includes **\$105 million in funding for VISIT FLORIDA (increase from \$80M in FY 2023-2024)**.

Funding of VISIT FLORIDA ensures Florida continues to be top of mind as a leading vacation destination.

The approved Senate Budget includes **\$80 million**, same as the current fiscal year for **VISIT FLORIDA**. Meanwhile, the Florida House Budget has only included **\$30 million** for **VISIT FLORIDA**.

CFHLA also opposes any efforts to replace VISIT FLORIDA funding from the state budget with County-level TDT revenues.

We remain steadfast in our support of Visit Florida and it's full and continued funding.

CFHLA SUPPORTS



VACATION HOME RENTALS & ADVERTISING PLATFORMS

We are optimistic about the passage of the Vacation Home Rental bill **SB 280/HB** by Senator Nick DiCeglie and Representative Griff Griffitts. The

House and the Senate have debated this legislation over the past decade and this bill is a fair approach to all parties involved. SB 280 will lead to the regulation of vacation home rentals and is intended to be a compromise where local governments will have greater authority over vacation rentals than before, while vacation rental owners would have more uniformed structure and standards.

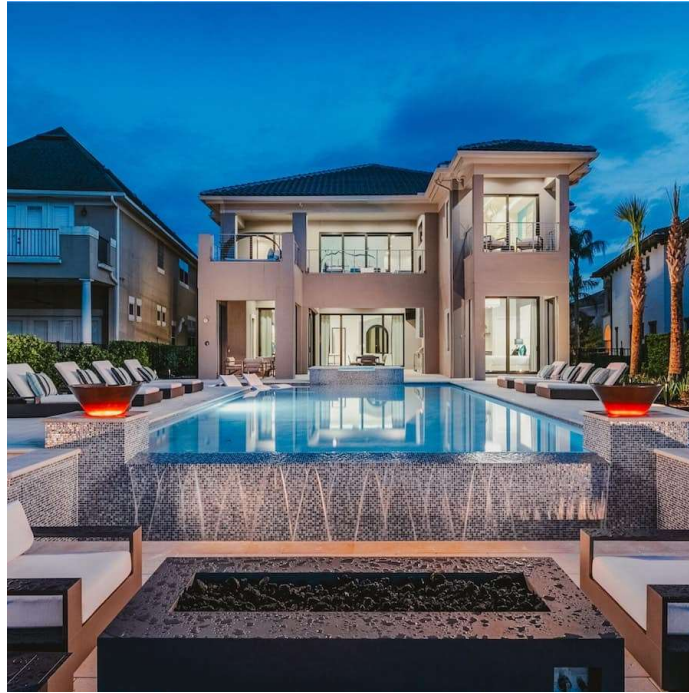
Moreover, CFHLA **supports the current Senate version** but we are continuing to advocate for an amendment to **SB 280** that would add in safety components to **include health and safety standards such as human trafficking awareness, training and prevention, regular health and safety standards and inspections, pool safety and drowning prevention, hygiene and cleaning procedures to protect visitors and their experience.**

We are grateful to the bill sponsor Senator Nick DiCeglie for remaining diligent in continuing this year to pass this bill.

HB 1537 by Representative Griffitts –The bill **passed the Regulatory Reform & Economic Development Subcommittee agenda on February 1, 2024 and is now in its second committee stop, Commerce Committee.**

SB 280 by Senator DiCeglie – **The bill passed the Senate Floor on February 1, 2024 by a vote of 27-13 and is now in House Messages.**

CFHLA SUPPORTS



WORKFORCE HOUSING

CFHLA supports full funding for the Sadowski Fund, as the Central Florida community has a dire need for more reliable and affordable rental housing.

In addition to existing State Apartment Incentive Loan dollars (usually known as SAIL), CFHLA would like to see the legislature increase the percentage of State Housing Incentive Partnership dollars (usually known as SHIP) that can be used for rental housing.

CFHLA also encourages the Legislature to consider creating incentives to encourage innovative approaches to affordable housing development. For example: incentives for development of high-quality rental properties in key areas or incentives and tax credits for businesses to create housing for their own staff.

Specifically, **Senate Bill 328 by Sen. Alexis Calatayud** and **House Bill 1239 by Rep. Vicki Lopez** seek amendments to the Live Local Act, the new affordable housing law passed last year that CFHLA supported. **CFHLA**

supports these bills and appreciates the Governor's Leadership in proposing \$208.6 million for the State Housing Partnership Program (SHIP), \$89.5 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program (SAIL) and \$100 million for the Hometown Heroes program for down payment and closing cost assistance for first time homebuyers.

SB 328 by Senator Calatayud - **The bill passed the Senate Floor on February 1, 2024 by a vote of 40 - 0 and is now in House Messages.**

HB 1239 by Representative Lopez – **The bill passed its previous two committees and is now in its last stop, Appropriations.**

CFHLA SUPPORTS

IMMIGRATION REFORM

CFHLA encourages solutions to our current immigration reform policies that help our hospitality businesses and economy thrive instead of hindering them.

There have been two bills filed this session regarding this issue. Each bill urges the Federal Government to secure the southern border of the United States, enforce Federal Immigrations Laws, and fix the legal immigration system.

HM 669 by Representative Sirois – **This bill has passed all three committees and is now ready to be heard on the House Floor.**

SM 598 by Senator Ingoglia – **This bill has passed both of its committees and is now ready to be heard on the Senate Floor.**

CFHLA SUPPORTS

FLORIDA TIMESHARE ACT

CFHLA supports HB 429 by Rep. Robinson and SB 756 by Sen. Perry which seeks the clarification and modernization of several provisions in the Florida Timeshare Act. This is ARDA's legislative proposal.

These bills would:

- Grant timeshare associations with the authority and flexibility to remove an amenity;
- Expanding the "Inn Keeper's Rights" to include timeshare properties (currently only licensed lodging establishments are included in this Statute);
- And clarify an existing provision that timeshare associations shall issue estoppel certificates.

[HB 429](#) by Representative Robinson – **This bill has passed all three of its committees and is now ready for consideration on the House Floor.**

[SB 756](#) by Senator Perry – **This bill has passed the Rules Committee by vote of 20-0 on February 8, 2024 and is now ready for consideration on the Senate Floor.**

CFHLA SUPPORTS

REGULATION OF CASHLESS BUSINESSES

CFHLA is opposing HB 35 by Rep. Rudman and SB 106 by Sen. Jones which would require most brick-and-mortar businesses to accept cash, which combats the counter effort of accepting only electronic forms of payment. Several businesses have moved to cashless sales.

[SB 106](#) by Senator Jones – **Passed by both the Commerce and Tourism Committee and the Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government. Now awaiting final committee stop, Fiscal Policy.**

HB 35 by Representative Rudman – **This bill has three committee stops and has not been heard yet.**

CFHLA OPPOSES

REVISIONS TO FLORIDA'S CHILD LABOR LAWS

CFHLA Supports HB 49 by Rep. Chaney and SB 1596 by Sen. Burgess.

The Work Hour Law Moves allows 16- and 17-year-olds to work extended hours and is seen as beneficial for teens already working beyond legal limits off the books.

This bill would be beneficial to the hospitality and tourism industry as it works to address worker shortages post-pandemic, help with retention and help minors and their families to succeed in the current economic environment.

HB 49 by Representative Chaney – **This bill passed the House by a vote of 80 – 35 on February 1, 2024 and in Senate Messages.**

SB 1596 by Senator Burgess – **The bill has passed the Commerce and Tourism Committee on January 30, 2024 and now awaiting a hearing in its final two committee stops, Regulated Industries and the Rules Committee.**

CFHLA SUPPORTS

SCHEDULE FOR SESSION WEEK 6 (FEBRUARY 12-16)

To view the Senate's schedule, [CLICK HERE](#).

To view the House's schedule, [CLICK HERE](#).

UPCOMING CFHLA PAC/PC MEETING

The next CFHLA PAC/PC Boards of Director Meeting will be on **Wednesday, February 21st from 8:15 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. at the CFHLA office.**

UPCOMING GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS MEETING

The next Governmental Affairs meeting will be held on **Wednesday, March 13th at the Signia by Hilton Bonnet Creek (thank you, Fred Sawyers) from 12:00 noon - 1:30 PM.**

DONATE

CFHLA MEMBERS - Please **consider making a donation of \$50** via the link below to the CFHLA PAC/PC. All contributions help CFHLA expand its efforts to support and endorse Hospitality-Friendly candidates for local and state offices. **In the 2022 General election, all 16 CFHLA endorsed candidates were successfully elected into office.**

[DONATE NOW!](#)

As a reminder, all CFHLA Board Members, PAC/PC Board Members, and ARC Board Members have committed to contributing \$200 to the CFHLA PAC/PC in 2024. If you are a part of one or more of these groups, please consider fulfilling your commitment today.

IN THE NEWS

[Tourist-tax plan makes smaller-than-expected trim of Visit Orlando budget](#) - Orlando Sentinel

[Camping World Stadium sets target to begin TDT-funded upgrades](#) - Orlando Business Journal

[What's next after Orange County OKs TDT funds for 2 projects and cuts](#)

[Visit Orlando budget](#) - Orlando Business Journal

[Child labor restrictions in crosshairs of Florida lawmakers with new bill](#) - Orlando Business Journal

[Governor DeSantis drops out of 2024 Presidential Race](#) - YouTube

[Universal Orlando unveils Epic Universe details, Harry Potter and Nintendo lands](#) - Spectrum 13

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About CFHLA

6675 Westwood Blvd #210, Orlando, FL 32821

The mission of the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association is to represent the Central Florida Hospitality Industry, by setting the standard of excellence through advocacy, collaboration, education, recognition, and service.