

Government Affairs

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Government Affairs Overview

The governmental affairs department provides the membership with a comprehensive state governmental affairs program covering legislative and regulatory issues, as well as political action.

This effort involves researching and establishing MH&LA's legislative policies; encouraging participation by member properties in communicating these positions through our newsletter and legislative updates; detailing lodging industry obligations under federal and state regulations; and intervening with state and federal agencies on behalf of the industry.

The ultimate goal of this effort is to provide a favorable business climate in which the lodging industry can prosper.

Foremost among the responsibilities of the Maryland Hotel & Lodging Association and its national affiliate, the American Hotel & Lodging Association, is representing all components of the lodging industry before, and protecting them from, the various legislative and regulatory bodies in Maryland and in Washington, DC.

There are a number of very important components of MH&LA's ongoing Governmental Affairs program:

Statewide Legislative Advocacy: MH&LA devotes a substantial portion of its resources to addressing a wide range of legislative issues in Annapolis, and the American Hotel & Lodging Association does the same in Washington, DC. MH&LA's long-time legislative advocates review the many thousands of bills as they are introduced and amended in Annapolis each year to identify those which could have an impact either positive or negative on any element of Maryland's lodging industry. The range of legislative actions that might affect hotel and motel operations is extensive. Following is the checklist of subject areas that MH&LA and its lobbyists use in reviewing all pending legislation:

Access for the disabled, Advertising, Airports, Alcoholic Beverages, Cable television / In-Room Movies, Competition From Tax Exempt Entities, Construction & Building Standards, Construction Financing, Credit Cards & Checks, Crimes Involving Innkeepers, Disability Insurance, Employment Practices, Equal Rights & Discrimination, Fire Safety & Security, Food Service, Franchising, Gift Certificates, Health Insurance, Immigration, Innkeeper Liability for Lost, Damaged or Stolen Property, Landlord-Tenant, Innkeeper-Guest, Liquor Liability, Mechanics Liens, Music Copyright Obligations, Parking Facilities, "Plant" Closure, Public Utilities Commission, Sexual Harassment Liability, Smoking, Swimming Pools & Spas, Taxes, Telephones & Radios, Tourism & Tourism Promotion, Transportation, Travel Industry, Unclaimed & Abandoned Property, Unemployment & Disability Insurance, Water Quality, Workers' Compensation Insurance, and Wrongful Discharge

MH&LA acts aggressively to protect the lodging industry from harmful legislation, such as increases in the minimum wage, increased workers' compensation benefits, increases in UI and DI benefits, and expanded tort liability.

MH&LA is also very proactive in helping the industry to achieve legislative changes that are beneficial to its interests. MH&LA's staff and board identify each year those legislative changes that MH&LA wants to sponsor in the following session. The association then mounts an appropriate effort to identify and secure legislative support, build coalitions if necessary, and lobby and advocate actively to ensure enactment of its initiatives.