

July 2019



## QUARTERLY POLICY PERSPECTIVES

Welcome to VISIT DENVER's quarterly *Policy Perspectives* newsletter highlighting local, state and federal issues impacting the tourism and hospitality industry. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Carrie Atiyeh, Director of Government & Community Affairs, at [catiyeh@visitdenver.com](mailto:catiyeh@visitdenver.com) or (303) 571-9466.

### LOCAL NEWS



- Denver's municipal election was held on [May 7<sup>th</sup>](#) and a run-off election occurred on [June 4<sup>th</sup>](#) for seven races. Congratulations to Councilmembers-elect Sandoval (D1), Torres (D3), Sawyer (D5), CdeBaca (D9) and Hinds (D10), re-elected Councilmembers Flynn (D2), Black (D4), Kashmann (D6), Clark (D7), Herndon (D8), Gilmore (D11), Kniech (At-Large) and Ortega (At-Large), as well as to Mayor Hancock, Auditor O'Brien and Clerk & Recorder-elect Lopez! All elected officials will be inaugurated on July 15<sup>th</sup> for a 4-year term.
  - Initiative 300 (Right to Survive) was defeated 81% to 19%, Initiative 301 (Decriminalize Denver) passed by a margin of 50.6% to 49.4%, and Initiative 302 (Let Denver Decide) passed 79% to 21%.
- Tourism Pays for Denver! Denver welcomed more than [31 million visitors in 2018](#), including 14.9 million overnight leisure visitors who spent \$5.6 billion in the local economy.
- Several new programs are underway by various stakeholders to help achieve initiatives related to the [Denver Tourism Roadmap](#), particularly impacting connectivity and mobility:
  - The draft environmental assessment for improvements to be made to the [16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall](#) was released earlier this spring. The project is awaiting federal approval.
  - The City is proposing to create a new [Department of Transportation and Infrastructure](#), reorganizing what is now the Department of Public Works which will become a division within the new department. Denver City Council has referred a measure to the November 2019 ballot to be approved by voters to create the new department.
  - Within the next five years, the city is installing [125 miles of new bikeways](#), which are in part funded by \$18 million from the Elevate Denver Bond approved by voters in November 2017.

- [Rider Levett Bucknall](#) has been approved by Denver City Council as the new project manager to oversee the Colorado Convention Center expansion.
- In November 2018, Denver voters approved a 0.25% sales tax to support [parks and open space](#) by supporting Referred Measure 2A. The fund is projected to generate \$37.5 million in 2019 and the full parks plan is now available.

## STATE NEWS



- The legislative session wrapped up on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. See the below Partner Perspectives section for a recap from our partners at the Colorado Hotel and Lodging Association and Colorado Restaurant Association.
- The [Colorado Tourism Office](#) (CTO) is rebranding eight regions of the state to showcase their unique features including The Pioneering Plains and Rockies Playground.
- Replicas of the iconic "[Welcome to Colorful Colorado](#)" signs welcoming visitors as they enter the state are being installed at state visitor centers due to their popularity and safety precautions.

## FEDERAL NEWS



- The U.S. Travel Association (USTA) held its annual legislative fly-in in Washington, D.C. with several hundred travel industry partners from across the country attending. VISIT DENVER participated with fellow Colorado tourism representatives to meet with the Colorado delegation, including newly elected House members, to share details about the state's strong tourism economy, the importance of international travel, and the need for maintenance of our national parks.
- [Tourism budgets](#) around the country are under threat including in Florida and Texas and at the local level, primarily as budgets are being squeezed by other demands.
- Destinations International and Longwoods International recently conducted a national online survey to benchmark [American residents' perspectives](#) on the tourism industry and found that overall most people support the industry at the local and state levels.
- USTA has released a new report, "[Made in America](#)", highlighting the travel industry's impact on workforce development and opportunities for meaningful career advancement.
- A recent research report analyzes whether [travel bans and boycotts](#) are effective as a tool to impact policy decisions, the costs associated with boycotts, and impacts to a destination's brand.

- Traffic is having serious, negative impacts on travel. In 2018, 47.5 million auto trips were avoided due to [concerns regarding highway congestion](#), costing the U.S. economy nearly 250,000 jobs and \$30 billion in travel spending.

## PARTNER PERSPECTIVES



The 2019 legislative session was one of the most contentious in recent memory and several bills that will impact Colorado hotels passed. Below are links to two memos that detail what happened during the session and what Colorado hoteliers need to do as a result.

Click [here](#) to download a report that details the bills that were passed that will specifically impact Colorado hotels, including information on what you need to do to comply.

Click [here](#) to download the full legislative session wrap-up from CHLA's lobbying firm, Michael Best Strategies.

Should you have questions or need further information on anything that CHLA is working on, please don't hesitate to contact Amie Mayhew, President & CEO, at 303-297-8335 or [amayhew@chla.com](mailto:amayhew@chla.com).



**Retail Food Establishments Civil Penalties** (House Bill 1014) CRA initiated and supported this bill to make changes to civil penalties for retail food establishments outside of Denver and changes to when a local health department needs to conduct a reinspection. This bill allows local health departments to focus their resources on the businesses that need the most help,

while giving restaurants who consistently meet health code standards relief from timely and often unneeded reinspections. This bill has been signed into law by the Governor.

**Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act Changes** (House Bill 1076) CRA initiated and supported this bill to make changes to the Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act to ban vaping/e-cigarettes indoors where smoking is banned. Currently, you cannot smoke within 15 feet of the main entrance to a building. This bill would extend that to 25 feet. The bill makes no changes to patios. This bill has been signed into law by the Governor.

**Tip Sharing Signage** (House Bill 1254) CRA initiated and supported this bill to make changes to the required sign that must be posted by a restaurant if they choose to share tips with non-regularly tipped employees. If passed, a restaurant would be able to provide a notification on a menu, receipt, or table tent, describing how the business shares tips with all employees. There is no required language so the business would get to choose how they want to express this to their guests. This bill has been signed into law by the Governor.

**Local Minimum Wage** (House Bill 1210) CRA was neutral after amendments to this bill which would allow any county or municipality the ability to set their own minimum wage for workers performing work in that county or municipality's jurisdiction. Additionally, the bill would allow the county or municipality to establish their own enforcement scheme that could include a private right of action. This bill was amended on the Senate floor to preserve the \$3.02 tip credit along with other amendments. In order to get the amendments we asked for the CRA had to commit to be neutral on the amended bill. This bill has been signed into law by the Governor.

**Equal Pay for Equal Work Act** (Senate Bill 85) CRA was neutral after amendments to this bill which removed the current administrative process for claims of wage discrimination based on sex and allows for employees to bring a civil court action. The bill also prohibits an employer from asking a candidate for wage history, requires employers to post all job openings to all employees with detailed information about benefits and pay range before promoting or hiring an employee, and allows for an employer to be fined between \$500 and \$10,000 for a single violation. This bill has been signed into law by the Governor.

**Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act** (Senate Bill 188) CRA was neutral after amendments to this bill which would have created a state mandated Family and Medical Leave Insurance program in the State of Colorado. This bill was amended on the floor of the Senate and turned into a study. Now, the State of Colorado is required to put together a task force to analyze the impacts of family and medical leave legislation on the state. This bill has been signed into law by the Governor.

**Local Government Regulate Tobacco Sales** (House Bill 1033) CRA opposed this bill that, if approved by a vote of the people within a county or municipality, a special sales tax can be imposed on products containing Nicotine. Additionally, this legislation allows a local government to set more strict regulations on tobacco products in their jurisdiction like prohibiting sale to people under 21. Such legislation will cause confusion for customers and retailers with multiple locations. This bill was signed into law by the Governor.

**Regulation of Food Trucks** (House Bill 1246) CRA was neutral on this bill that would have required a local government to grant a business license to food truck operators that had obtained a license from another local government. Also, it would have prohibited the local government from imposing additional licensing requirements. The bill was turned into a study that requires the State of Colorado to study local government regulation of food trucks. The

study must include areas of duplicate or conflicting regulation. [This bill has been signed into law by the Governor.](#)

Please contact Nick Hoover, Manager of Government Affairs or Sonia Riggs, President & CEO, at 303-830-2972, should you have questions or need further information on anything that CRA is working on.



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