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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.

APRIL 2017



## QUARTERLY POLICY PERSPECTIVES

### LOCAL NEWS



- A [General Obligation \(G.O.\) bond](#) is under development for Denver voters to decide this November. VISIT DENVER is advocating for projects that accomplish [Denver Tourism Roadmap](#) initiatives including a designated festival park, river enhancements, citywide bike infrastructure and more.
- RTD and the City and County of Denver are undergoing a [federal review of the future of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall](#). Because the Mall was built with federal funds, a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is required before any potential changes can be made to the surface or configuration. Redevelopment of the Mall and making it a world-class destination are priority initiatives in the Denver Tourism Roadmap.
- Denver is bidding to host multiple annual [Outdoor Retailer](#) shows as a result of the event leaving the state of Utah due to detrimental public lands policy impacting the outdoor industry. VISIT DENVER has been working closely with the State's Office of Outdoor Recreation and City and County of Denver Office of Economic Development in this effort.
- Mayor Hancock, a Denver tourism champion, shared [histop tips for visitors](#) in *U.S. News and World Report* highlighting the city's cultural institutions, vibrant downtown, acclaimed restaurants, rising music scene, diverse neighborhoods and more.
- [Airbnb hosts in Denver](#) earned an estimated \$37.3 million in 2016. At the end of March, approximately [46% of short-term rental hosts were in compliance](#) with licensing and lodger's tax collection requirements, a higher rate of compliance than any other city in the country.
- Denver City Council approved a [new ethics code](#) for public officials for meals, event tickets and other gifts to city officials with a cap of \$300 annually per organization conducting direct business with the city.
- The [111<sup>th</sup> National Western Stock Show](#) welcomed nearly 685,000 visitors from 42 states during this year's show. The Office of the National Western Center set up interactive displays to inform visitors about the future of the site as land acquisition, rail consolidation and other redevelopment efforts are currently underway.

## STATE NEWS



- As the State Legislature debates the FY18 budget, the Colorado Tourism Office's budget was at risk for reduced funding from the current \$19 million. Thanks to the efforts of our state-wide advocacy organization, the Tourism Industry Association of Colorado (TIAC), CTO's budget was protected by the Senate. TIAC will closely monitor budget discussions in the House and engage as needed to ensure CTO is fully funded.
- TIAC has engaged the Colorado Legislature to support a [state-wide transportation funding](#) initiative for voters to decide this November. As of this writing, House Bill 1242 has passed the Colorado House and now proceeds to the Senate.
- [Top Chef](#), the #1 food program on cable in 2016, has selected Denver and Colorado for its 15th season based on the state's growing reputation as a cutting-edge food destination. Episodes will be filmed in Denver, Boulder and Telluride and the new season will air later this year. The partnership to bring the show to Colorado included VISIT DENVER, Colorado Tourism Office, Colorado Office of Film, Television and Media, Sage Hotels & Restaurants, the Boulder Convention and Visitors Bureau and Visit Telluride.
- The Colorado Tourism Office unveiled the [Colorado Tourism Roadmap](#) to guide tourism growth and competitiveness over the next three to five years.
- Colorado's successful 'Come to Life' marketing campaign attracted [higher spending visitors](#) in 2016 compared to the year prior.
- In January, Gov. Hickenlooper delivered his annual [State of the State](#) address and touted the state's vibrant cultural scene, outdoor recreation, professional sports teams and visitors to our mountains.

## FEDERAL NEWS



- The U.S. Travel Association held their annual [legislative fly-in](#) in Washington D.C. with approximately 325 travel industry partners from across the country. Colorado tourism representatives, including VISIT DENVER, met with the Colorado delegation to share details about the state's strong tourism economy, need for airport modernization and importance of international travel.
- As [Denver prepares to host IPW](#) in 2018, the travel industry's premier international marketplace, ensuring secure and efficient international travel is paramount.
- During the fly-in, USTA announced the awardees of the [Distinguished Travel Champion](#) and Colorado Senator Cory Gardner was a recipient! The award honors exceptional leadership on travel issues including support for Brand USA, infrastructure modernization, strengthening the Visa Waiver Program and balancing security and travel facilitation.
- Executive orders creating travel bans impacting specific international visitors have created confusion among meeting planners, conventioners and leisure visitors and could have a projected [\\$18 billion impact](#). It is vital that there is a fair and reasonable balance between travel and security concerns. Visitors can find up to date information at the S. State Department.
- A record 325 million people visited the [national parks](#) in 2016 as the National Park Service celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- [Transportation Secretary Cho](#) outlined her priorities during confirmation hearings including improvements to roads and airports. President Trump's priority infrastructure list includes two Colorado highway projects and a transmission line project.



#### Denver Social Consumption Committee

After several months of meetings to discuss the enacting ordinance for the initiative 300, social consumption of marijuana, the Committee held its final meeting last week. The Excise and License Department is in the process of drafting a recommendation on the ordinance which will come back to the committee for discussion before being sent to City Council. [Click here for more information on this Committee.](#)

#### Green Roofs Initiative

A small group of Denver residents have stated that they will file an initiative for the November ballot to require buildings above a certain size to turn a portion of their rooftops into gardens. [Click here](#) for more information on the Green Roof initiative and [click here to read the Denver Post editorial](#) on the subject.

#### Senate Introduces Legislation to Reform H-2B Visa Program to Provide Business Certainty

Senators Thom Tillis (R-NC), Angus King (I-ME) and seven additional bipartisan senators introduced S. 792, the Save our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act. This legislation helps employers navigate the H-2B temporary non-agricultural visa program and increases certainty for small business using this program by including a returning worker exemption provision. The provision allows for workers that have previously worked legally in the U.S. through the H-2B program to not count against the visa cap when returning to work. Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), John Cornyn (R-TX), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Mike Rounds (R-SD), John Thune (R-SD) and Mark Warner (D-VA) signed on as original cosponsors.

AHLA and the H-2B Workforce Coalition applaud the Senators for their introduction of S.792. [Click here to read AH&LA press release.](#)

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).



**COLORADO  
RESTAURANT  
ASSOCIATION**

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

**Extending Hours of Alcohol Service** (HB 1123 by Rep. Lebsack) This bill would give local governments the ability to pass a city ordinance that would extend hours of alcohol sales past 2 a.m. The bill does not allow a local government to restrict the current hours of alcohol sales. The CRA is neutral on this because there is no clear member consensus. One of our concerns is that this bill would create a patchwork of hours across the state. ***This bill passed out of committee and will now be heard by the entire Senate.***

**Marijuana Open and Public Consumption** (Senate Bill 184 by Sen. Gardner) would create a statewide definition of “open and public” or “openly and publicly” when it comes to the consumption of marijuana. Under this definition any business with unrestricted access to the public would be considered “open and public” and therefore marijuana couldn’t be consumed there. Additionally, it creates an opt-in program for cities to allow marijuana consumption clubs. These clubs couldn’t sell or serve alcohol or have food that is prepared on-site, aside from light snacks. ***This bill passed out of the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee and will now be heard by the entire House of Representatives.***

**Employees who can purchase alcohol for restaurants.** (Senate Bill 58 by Sen. Baumgardner, Rep. Singer) This is a clean-up bill to make sure that the way that restaurants currently operate can continue. There was an interpretation of a section of law that stated that only the Registered Manager (i.e. the person associated with your liquor license) of a restaurant can order alcohol for the establishment. Standard practice is different for an estimated 95% of restaurants – where a bar manager or F&B director, etc. is actually doing the ordering. This is cleaning up the language to make it clear in Colorado Law that the Registered Manager or their designated employee can legally order alcohol for the restaurant. ***This bill was passed into law.***

**Music Licensing** (House Bill 1092 by Rep. Lebsack) Music Licensing is primarily dictated by Federal Law. However, certain rules regarding fair and open communication between music licensing organizations and restaurants (as well as other businesses) are written into Colorado Law. This bill adds certain requirements for music licensing organizations. They must: Register with the Secretary of State in Colorado, publish their contract rates on the Secretary of State’s website (A music licensing company is not be able to execute a contract with a restaurant or bar in Colorado without the rates being published first.), and publish an accurate list of the music licensed by their companies on the Secretary of State’s website. ***This bill was passed into law.***



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