

Columbus Passes Update to Short-term Rental Law

Columbus City Council recently passed updates to its short-term rental code, originally passed in July 2018, as well as additional language integrating short-term rentals into the city's tax code.

A provision opposed by OHLA and its Greater Columbus Lodging Council which placed into the city code an MOU process with special exemptions from the law for hosting platforms was removed from the new law. This change was an important step in protecting requirements for the platforms necessary for compliance, such as data reporting and removing illegal listings.

The tax provisions include short-term rentals in the city's existing 5.1 percent lodging tax. However, the code does not require, but instead permits hosting platforms such as Airbnb to collect and remit the tax. If a platform chooses not to do so, it will be the responsibility of the host to collect and remit. This could be an enforcement challenge and is opposed by hosts who agree with OHLA that the entity who collects payment from the consumer should collect and remit the tax. (Just as we maintain that out-of-state online travel companies who collect payment from consumers should also collect and remit their full tax.)

Removal of the MOU language is a positive step, and OHLA-Greater Columbus Lodging Council will continue to work with the city during the implementation steps for the best possible results.

OHLA Joins Fix Our Roads Ohio

OHLA has joined a statewide coalition of businesses and other interests working to ensure adequate funding for Ohio's surface transportation infrastructure - [Fix Our Roads Ohio](#).



Governor Mike DeWine has appointed an Advisory Committee to develop options to address critical shortfalls in funding. Reliance on gas tax revenues will not solve the problem of the necessary major modernization of Ohio's road and bridges. The hotel industry will work with other partners to ensure equitable and sustainable options are implemented - and that hotels aren't singled out with a regressive tax for this purpose.

The Advisory Committee on Transportation will examine ways to pay for critical infrastructure needs. Advocates for better infrastructure anticipate a major funding shortfall for roads, bridges, and public transportation networks in the forthcoming state budgets. Infrastructure spending has declined significantly in recent years. The Ohio Department of Transportation budget is expected to be just \$1.7 billion next year, compared to \$2.4 billion in 2014. This could leave no funding for new projects.

Hotel taxes to pay for roads?

Infrastructure is important to hotel & lodging, as it is for every industry, but we must remain on guard against additional taxes on our business that would benefit others who don't pay as we do. With diminishing returns on retail gas taxes as a funding source, other states have looked to wholesale taxes, higher sales taxes, registration fees, and even new hotel taxes.

See more here: <http://www.governing.com/topics/transportation-infrastructure/gov-gas-tax-revenue-states-inflation.html>

Ohio Regulations Regarding Mobile Food Units

The Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of State Fire Marshal recently issued an updated Technical Bulletin (TB19-001), Ohio Regulations Regarding Mobile Food Units (with Checklist). This resource offers guidance regarding fire safety and the operation of mobile food units in Ohio.

Among the changes highlighted in the bulletin:

- Under the current law, while parked and in operation, mobile food units that use or contain a generator or fuel source other than the vehicle fuel tank cannot be closer than three (3) feet to other mobile food units.
- While parked and in operation mobile food units that use or contain a generator or fuel source other than the vehicle fuel tank must still be ten feet from entrances and other exits to buildings and structures and combustible materials.
- Propane tanks that are secured to the rear of the vehicle have to be 30 inches above the ground. Decreasing the 36" requirement to 30" still offers protection from vehicle impact for rear mounted tanks but allows more placement flexibility. Limiting the distance requirement to rear mounted tanks allows for tanks to be mounted on the tongue of a trailer.

If you have food trucks on site for events or other purposes, you can see all of the information in the Ohio Regulations Regarding Mobile Food Units (with Checklist) document here: https://associationdatabase.com/aws/OHLA/asset_manager/get_file/296617

Task Force Issues Trafficking Report

The Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force recently issued its report on human trafficking prevention efforts and accomplishments by various state agencies, detailing what it characterized as a largely successful coordinated statewide response to the problem. Identified in the report are priorities and accomplishments in three main areas: prevention, protection, and prosecution.

View the report: <https://humantrafficking.ohio.gov/OhioHumanTraffickingTaskForceReport0119.pdf>

OHLA and its local lodging councils continue to work to build working relationships to help fight and end trafficking. Contact OHLA to find out how you can work with the industry on this important priority.