

# IAAPA PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

As you will read below, we remain fully engaged educating elected officials and regulators about issues that impact your bottom line.

Your continued support through emails and outreach, providing us with information about your business, and participating in one-on-one meetings, is critical to the success of these efforts. Thank you for staying engaged!

## **Support Hometown Attractions Coalition Update**

The coalition continues to run at full speed, and thanks to grassroots advocates, over 4,000 emails and social media messages were sent to targeted elected officials demanding equity in Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF) eligibility and the reinstatement of the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC). The message was further amplified through the coalition's social media campaign that generated over 700,000 impressions and 15,000 clicks to the coalition landing page. Advocates have also participated in twenty meetings with key members of Congress explaining the impact of these programs and asking for their support.

Along with the efforts of the coalition, a growing partnership with 70 other national organizations and associations, has created traction for the ERTC issue resulting in the introduction of bi-partisan legislation (H.R. 6161/S. 3625) seeking to reinstate the tax credit.

The coalition is also working with 17 national organizations and associations advocating for equity in RRF grant eligibility, in the event the RRF is supplemented a second time. A group of elected officials are working to include pandemic grant assistance into the mid-March omnibus, and the coalition supports language that broadens eligibility beyond restaurants to "similar types of business." Because of shifting priorities in D.C., their ability to succeed remains in doubt. We will continue to keep you updated on this issue.

## **OSHA Heat Injury and Illness Prevention Regulations**

IAAPA submitted comments to OSHA re: Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Setting Advanced Notice of Proposed Rule-making. Highlighting the fundamental importance of safety and training within our industry, we encouraged OSHA to limit the scope of any regulation to those industries that have experienced a disproportionate number of heat related injuries and illness in the United States. In addition to allowing industries with a safe record in this area to continue to operate with flexibility, this will allow OSHA to focus its limited enforcement resources<sup>1</sup> where they can have the most impact.

The IAAPA North America Government Relations Committee has now properly placed this ongoing project with the IAAPA North America Safety Committee. They will begin working on a “best practices” document so industry can demonstrate the ability to self-regulate if and when OSHA concludes its rule on this topic. We will continue to keep you updated on this issue.

### **Department of Labor Overtime Rule**

In the Fall 2021, the Department of Labor (DOL) announced its intention to issue a Notice of Proposed Rule-making modifying overtime exemptions. The proposed changes would increase the wage level to qualify for overtime pay which is currently set at \$35,568 annually or \$684 per week. This is a significant rule-making with respect to cost, difficulty in implementation, and impact on the workforce. IAAPA signed onto a coalition letter with 110 organizations urging DOL to meet with industry to gain input regarding the impact of such rules within the current economic environment, as well as the practical implications prior to beginning the rule-making process. We expect the proposed language to be released in April and will continue to keep you updated on this issue.

### **Workforce Development and Retention**

In a recent member poll conducted by the public affairs team, workforce recruitment and retention challenges remain the top concern for our industry. To support your workforce needs, we are focused on the administration of two crucial visa programs; J-1 Summer Work Travel (SWT) Program visas that allows non-immigrants to participate in work and study-based visitor programs; and H-2B visas allowing non-citizens to fill temporary non-agricultural jobs.

In an effort to bring J-1 SWT processing numbers up to pre-pandemic levels, IAAPA is working with Representatives Moore (R-UT) and Kuster (D-NH) to introduce House Resolution 901 supporting the J-1 SWT Program while also highlighting the impact of continued visa processing issues. IAAPA also met with new SWT leadership at the U.S. Department of State regarding industry support for this program as well as ongoing processing challenges. Finally, IAAPA submitted formal comments to the Department of State regarding the impact of a proposed 53% increase on J-1 visa fees requesting a delay or prorated implementation.

H-2B visa allowances have fluctuated causing an impact on industry workforce. IAAPA supports the H-2B Returning Worker Exception Act (H.R. 3897) and has urged the Administration to expedite the release of the 2nd half (2022) H-2B visas to provide the maximum number allowed.

### **Unmanned Aircraft Systems**

IAAPA continues to leverage partnerships with other organizations and has joined the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in providing feedback on the development of the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA)

proposed action to implement Section 2209 of the FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016 (FESSA).

While we support the safe integration of UAS into the national airspace, we also want to ensure that critical infrastructure facilities – like parks and attractions - and other sensitive sites are protected, as Congress intended, from any potential safety or security risk posed by a UAS operating in the airspace near such facility or site.

### **IAAPA Submits Comments on New U.S. Travel and Tourism Strategy**

On January 28, 2022, IAAPA submitted formal comments to the U.S. National Travel and Tourism Office regarding the development of the new National Travel and Tourism Strategy. The stated goal of the new strategy is to provide a whole-of-government approach to accelerating full recovery and employment in the travel and tourism sector. IAAPA emphasized important considerations including increased visa processing capacity for tourism and business visas, entrepreneurial public/private solutions to address supply chain problems, and industry involvement and input when new or amended rules and regulations are considered.

### **Canadian Update**

At the November Expo, IAAPA North America formed the Canadian Working Group. The purpose of this group is to 1) identify the core needs of Canadian IAAPA members and what resources are available or needed to support them, and 2) begin a dialogue between IAAPA and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) to build relationships and develop synergies. Keith Stephenson and Bob Williams from Calaway Park will co-chair this team.



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