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Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association Applauds Fairfax County for Approving 11% of Relief Budget for Tourism Recovery

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RICHMOND, VA – Eric Terry, President of the Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association (VRLTA), today released a statement applauding Fairfax County for voting to dedicate \$25 Million, or nearly 11% of relief funding, to helping Fairfax’s tourism industry recover from a \$10 billion statewide pandemic-caused deficit.

VRLTA President Eric Terry said, “We are pleased to hear that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors stepped up in a big way today to help one of the hardest hit industries and fund Virginia’s tourism recovery. As the Commonwealth starts to open up, many of our businesses in the tourism industry are still suffering from the impacts of nearly a year of closed doors and reduced capacity. With labor costs and food product costs skyrocketing, this relief is greatly needed to get the businesses our communities depend upon back to full operation. It is my hope that the General Assembly and the rest of Virginia’s localities will follow suit. Our localities and the state must work together to bring Virginia’s 5th largest employer back to full force, and today was a great step toward that.”

The Tourism industry in the Commonwealth is the 5th largest employer and is a \$30 billion industry in healthy years, generating tax revenue and jobs for communities. During the Coronavirus pandemic, the industry lost a record \$10 billion and nearly 20% of restaurants in the state were forced to shut their doors.

The Commonwealth has been allocated \$4.3 billion to assist industry and localities with pandemic related recovery efforts. Localities will receive \$2.9 billion in total. Each locality is able to allocate their resources as they see fit, and the Virginia General Assembly will allocate resources at the state level. **Both locality and state funding are critical to the tourism recovery.** Today, Fairfax County voted to allocate \$25 million of its \$220 million in recovery funding to tourism, or roughly 11%. The industry is calling on the Virginia General Assembly and localities to work together to help the industry to a full recovery through relief funding allocations, and has sent a letter to the General Assembly requesting \$275 Million of the \$4.3 billion at the state level.

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