

2017 Legislative

Roundtable Reception

CATSKILLS

Friday, March 3, 2017

8:30 - 10 a.m.

Bernie's Holiday Restaurant, Rock Hill

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# LEGISLATIVE

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## Catskills Legislative Roundtable

Friday, March 3, 2017

*Bernie's Holiday Restaurant*

277 Rock Hill Drive, Rock Hill, NY

8:30 - 10 a.m.

## Program

**8:30 a.m.**

Registration & Reception

**9 - 10 a.m.**

**Welcome:**

### **Presentation of State Issues**

Mark Dorr, *President, NYS Hospitality & Tourism Association*

### **Regional Presentations**

Warren Hart, *Director, Greene County Economic Development & Tourism*

Roberta Byron-Lockwood, *President & CEO, Sullivan County Visitors Association*

Rick Remsnyder, *Director, Ulster County Tourism*

**Roundtable Discussion with State and Local Elected Officials**

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## New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association

The New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association (NYSH&TA) is a not-for-profit trade organization representing nearly 1,000 lodging properties, totaling over 122,000 guest rooms. The Association provides: **representation and advocacy** on behalf of the industry before state lawmakers and regulatory agencies; **resources** in the form of money-saving programs and networking opportunities; **educational offerings** that help members best serve their customers.

### Short-term Rentals

NYSH&TA is working toward the introduction of legislation that would prohibit short-term rentals in New York. Airbnb operates short-term rental units that are largely unregulated in terms of both taxes and safety measures throughout New York. Airbnb has recently entered into tax agreements with several counties to collect and remit occupancy taxes on behalf of its hosts.

The tax agreements are merely an effort by Airbnb to legitimize their model within New York, and do not address the problems at the heart of the short-term rental issue. They do not address safety concerns, as they place no requirements on short-term rentals for compliance with the fire and safety regulations that other lodging options must comply with under State law. As an industry, we continue to emphasize the need to level the playing field not only on taxes but code enforcement and public protections as well. To this end, we will continue to educate legislators on the need for statewide regulation and oversight on such an important issue facing the industry.

### Tourism Funding

Governor Cuomo advanced the following tourism funding initiatives in his Executive Budget proposal:

- Matching Grants - \$3,815,000
- I Love NY - \$2,500,000
- Market New York - \$7,000,000
- Taste NY - \$1,100,000
- Beekmantown Information Center - \$196,000
- Binghamton Information Center - \$196,000
- Cultural arts and public spaces fund, including projects that increase tourism - \$10,000,000
- Round 7 of the REDCs are advanced

### Small Business Package

NYSH&TA is working to introduce legislation that will benefit the tourism industry as a whole, and small businesses particularly. Topics for this package may include:

- Training Wage/Seasonal Workforce;
- Ski Equipment Tax Credit;
- Tax Credits for Hiring Youth or Seasonal Workers

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## **Catskill Association for Tourism Services**

The Catskill Association for Tourism Services (CATS) is responsible for the promotion of the Catskill Region; Delaware, Greene, Sullivan and Ulster counties, as a tourism destination. 15% of all employment in the Catskill region is generated by tourism, with a combined payroll of \$494 million. The tourism industry generated almost \$75 million in local taxes and over \$61 million in state taxes, with a tax savings of \$988 per household. Located within a 100 mile radius of 40 million people, the assets of the Catskills host millions of visitors a year. The Tourism Industry in Catskills is a vital part of the economic health of the Catskill counties. Further investment in the tourism industry of the Catskill Region is necessary to insure the continued growth and vitality of this economic engine.

## **Regional Partnerships**

It is important to continue working on regional partnerships with Catskill Watershed Corporation; Catskill Center; Catskill Interpretive Center; Catskill Park Advisory Committee and Coalition in regards to Catskill Park Action Day and requesting funding for outdoor recreation and tourism advertising.”

We wish to express gratitude towards Governor Cuomo for his continued support of a fully funded Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) budgeted at \$300 million. In addition, the Catskill Park Coalition was glad to see the inclusion of, at a minimum, \$5 million to support the Catskills through the new Adventure NY proposal included in the Governor’s budget, though we would like to see specific details for how that money will be spent in the Catskills.

We applaud our local representatives for taking up the cause to improve the Catskill Park, including Senators Seward and Amedore for securing the Catskill Park’s Aid to Localities funding and Assemblymembers Cahill and Gunther’s continued support of the Park and the Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center.

We hope that in this year’s budget, a “Catskills Package” can be secured, supporting both enhanced access to, and stewardship of, our public lands ultimately providing a world-class experience for visitors and residents alike that strengthens the economy on Main Street and our natural environment.

## **Interstate 86**

The completion of the conversion of Rte 17 to I-86 is imperative. Recognition as a national highway is important to the tourism industry of the Catskills. It enhances the visibility on the national grid of investors as well as the traveling public.

## **Support of the Regional Economic Development Councils**





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