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Virginia Business Community Bands Together in Opposition of a Fairfax County Meals Tax

Fairfax County & Richmond, Va. – April 4, 2016 – Today, a coalition of Fairfax County restaurants, hotels, and business groups sent a letter of opposition to a proposed meals tax referendum that would arbitrarily target Fairfax County businesses. The letter, sent to Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, is signed by nearly 20 of the area’s most well know restaurants, hotels and chambers of commerce.

“Imposing a meals tax will not only directly affect the bottom lines of restaurants, caterers, and hotels, but will also directly affect the wallets of County residents,” the letter stated. “Singling out the restaurant and hotel industries to raise revenue is unfair to the residents of Fairfax County, industry employees, and the small business owners working hard to keep their businesses afloat.”

Restaurants typically operate on thin margins of around 3-6% with the majority of restaurants being small businesses. Survival in the industry is steep with only seven in one hundred restaurants succeeding nationally within the past five years.

“The restaurant industry is already dealing with increasing costs of healthcare and minimum wage. Restaurants and other food services operations supply over 35,000 full and part time jobs in Fairfax County. Imposing a meals tax may decrease the number of jobs available,” the letter said.

Historically, Northern Virginia voters have never approved a meals tax referendum. The group argues that the hospitality industry is being unfairly targeted as a source of tax revenue due the perception that the majority of these taxes will be paid by tourists to the area.

“Seventy two percent of the \$90+ million tax would be paid by Fairfax County residents and not those visiting the area. The meals tax takes money directly from the pockets of Fairfax County residents, and not residents of Loudoun County, Prince William County or Maryland. Additionally, a meals tax puts Fairfax County at a disadvantage for more price sensitive groups such as student tour groups, and weddings where every penny counts,” said the signers.

The group also argues that those that would be most affected by the meals tax would be Fairfax County senior citizens and low to middle income families as those are individuals that dine out the most and can afford this tax the least.

To read the letter in its entirety, [click here](#).

About Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association (VRLTA)

The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association is the only unified voice for the restaurant, lodging, travel and hospitality suppliers associations. VRLTA creates value for members by promoting the legislative interests of the industry, networking, educational opportunities, and protecting free enterprise. Inquiries about membership and VRLTA services should be directed to VRLTA at (804) 288-3065 or VRLTA.org.

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