

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association Applauds  
Governor Northam Funding Tourism and Hospitality Recovery**  
*Calls on General Assembly to Follow Suit*

**RICHMOND, VA** – Eric Terry, President of the Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association (VRLTA), today released a statement applauding Governor Northam for pledging \$300 million of American Rescue Plan funds to Virginia’s tourism and hospitality recovery.

VRLTA President Eric Terry said, “We are pleased that Governor Northam has recognized the continuing crisis for Virginia’s tourism and hospitality industry and has answered our calls to assist the industry’s pandemic recovery. Given the struggles many of these businesses still face, we hope that the program will distribute funds quickly and offer flexibility to help get them back on their feet. Tourism and hospitality losses in Virginia have totaled \$14 billion, and nearly half of the job losses caused by the pandemic statewide were in our industry. A stronger tourism and hospitality industry means a stronger Virginia, and VRLTA applauds Governor Northam’s announcement today, which would put us on the right path to recovery.”

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 \$14 billion and nearly 20% of restaurants in the state were forced to shut their doors. The industry also accounted for nearly half of the jobs lost in the state due to the pandemic.

The Commonwealth has been allocated \$4.3 billion to assist industry and localities with pandemic related recovery efforts. Following the Governor’s announcement, the industry is calling on the Virginia General Assembly to move forward with the Governor’s plan when it reconvenes in August.

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