
Empire State Restaurant & Tavern Association

Report From The Executive Director...Scott Wexler

March 2020

Coronavirus Update - The Coronavirus outbreak that was first detected in China, spread worldwide and has now landed squarely here in New York State. This virus causes a disease called COVID-19 and can lead to fever, cough and shortness of breath. There are thousands of confirmed cases in a growing number of countries internationally and the virus is now spreading in the United States.

Amidst growing calls for closing bars and restaurants in New York State, as has been done in several other states and cities, and given the federal Center for Disease Control's (CDC) new guidance calling for no more than 50 people to be in a gathering Governor Cuomo has announced that restaurants and bars will close for on premise service and move to take-out and delivery services only effective 8:00 pm on March 16th. These establishments will be allowed to sell alcohol for off-premise consumption. Guidance from the SLA is expected to be available prior to this taking effect.

As a result of this crisis, it appears likely that the Assembly and Senate will pass and the Governor will sign legislation guaranteeing access to sick leave. The Governor's proposal will require businesses with 4 or less employees to guarantee 5 unpaid sick days to their employees, businesses with 5 to 99 employees will be required to provide at least 5 paid sick days, and businesses with 100 or more employees will be required to provide at least 7 paid sick days. The bill is also expected to include a "coronavirus quarantine leave requirement" requiring paid days off anytime a health crisis requires quarantine or similar action. We'll advise you of its provisions and your obligations as soon as we know more.

This is a rapidly changing situation so check our website, www.esrta.org, for updates.

Legislative Update - The coronavirus situation is having an impact on the state budget process - both the process and the policy. The Governor, the legislative leaders, and their senior staffs are focused on addressing coronavirus leaving less time to work on the state budget and the numerous policy issues embedded in it. We still expect the budget to be enacted on time, but many of the policy issues will be addressed outside of the budget - either before or after the April 1st budget deadline. Some issues (like guaranteed access to sick leave) will be prioritized and likely taken up sooner, but other issues will be done later in the legislative session giving us more time to make an impact on them.

We've been laying the ground work in Albany for our campaign to fight the big liquor & wine wholesalers over the past few weeks and we've been well received in our initial discussions. We delivered our petition to legislators today so they can see this issue has the support of business owners from all across the state.

You can help reinforce our work by sending off a message to two key legislators. State Senator James Skoufis and Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner have taken the lead in fighting for you. Send them a note of thanks for their efforts on your behalf. Here's a suggested message:

Thank you for taking an interest in our problems with liquor pricing. It will make a big difference to my business if you can help me take advantage of the large quantity discount prices available to others and get split case and delivery charges under control.

Their email addresses are:

Senator Skoufis - skoufis@nysenate.gov

Assemblywoman Woerner - woernerc@nyassembly.gov

Your notes to these legislators will reinforce the work we're doing in Albany and help move us forward. We'll keep you updated on our progress. Thanks for your support!

Plans for 2020 Golf Outing Announced - It's that time of year again, time to make your plans to attend the Association's Annual Golf Outing. We've renamed the event the "Cleo Emmer Outing" in honor of our longtime member and golf committee member. We're once again hosting the outing at Cronin's Golf Resort in Warrensburg. This year's outing will be held on Monday, June 8th. The \$110 per golfer registration fee includes greens fees, cart, lunch, refreshments on the course, hors d'oeuvres and dinner (cash bar), awards, and prizes.

Cronin's cabins are available for overnight stay on a first come – first served basis. Call 518.623.9336 to reserve your cabin. A number of our guests will be staying at the Lake George Holiday Inn. While we do not have a block of rooms at the hotel for the golf outing, they may have rooms available. Call 518.668.5781 or book online at ihg.com and search for the Holiday Inn Resort Lake George.

Since the golf outing is an Association fundraiser, we need your help raising funds. The best way you can show your support is by signing up for a sponsorship. Your \$100 donation for a tee sponsor (\$150 for two tee sponsorships) shows your support for our cause and will help make the outing a success. We also have other levels of sponsorship if you or any of your vendors want to support our efforts. Contact the state association office at 518.436.8121 or esrta@verizon.net for more information.