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"As this state's third largest industry, we find the loss of two to three weeks of peak season revenues an appalling legislative proposal."

*Deanna Richeson
President/CEO
MLTA*

Legislation to Repeal PLDS Voted out of Committee

In spite of compelling testimony offered by tourism leaders who dropped what they were doing and drove to Lansing to represent us all, the Senate Education Committee voted to report SB 271 out of committee Tuesday on a 4-1 vote. Data provided by PLDS supporters appeared to make little impact on the resulting vote.

"We generate 50% of our revenues for the entire year in July and August. If this bill passes we'll be forced to layoff people that have been with us for years."

*Doug Pollock
Vice President Hospitality
Parkland Properties Muskegon*

MLTA provided testimony indicating that 64% of Michigan voters support starting school after Labor Day. [Click here to read MLTA's written testimony](#). The committee was provided a summary of an economic impact study commissioned by MLTA which found PLDS led to a \$20 million increase in room sales only two years after the law's passage.

Committee members were also reminded that July and August were the top two revenue-producing months for our industry. They were repeatedly informed of the negative impact PLDS repeal would have on access to high-school age employees.

"It's a short summer as it is and we employ a lot of high school students. We oppose SB 271 because we'll lose access to the employees we need to serve our guests."

*Robert Lukens
Executive Director
Muskegon County CVB*

Committee ignores MLTA suggestions to make PLDS work better for everybody

Educators keep pointing out that the United States lags other countries in the number of days of instruction and that our country needs to step up to meet this competitive challenge. To address that concern, MLTA indicated its support for language that would waive the PLDS requirement for those schools that offer 195 days or more of instruction. (The current state mandate is 180 days.)

"Before this law's passage in 2005, we had to close Michigan's Adventure in mid-August because we simply did not have enough student employees to meet customer demand."

*Camille Jourdan-Mark
Vice President & General Manager
Michigan's Adventure*

Educators have claimed they cannot meet the requirement to open school after Labor Day because the state recently increased the mandate for the number of days of instruction from 175 to 180 days. In response, MLTA offered support for the standard in place in 2005 which requires 180 days of instruction or its equivalent of 1,098 instructional hours. By gently increasing the duration of the school day, schools could easily open after Labor Day and reduce the length of their year by up to two weeks.

Review of Research finds little to support Educator claims on Balanced Calendars

Bill sponsor, Marty Knollenberg (R-Troy) repeatedly cited "studies" which he said show that starting school in August improves summer learning loss and advances learning outcomes. Research supporting those claims was found to be "inconclusive and lacking in methodological rigor," by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), a non-partisan organization whose charge is to provide Congress with objective data on policy issues.

"In Sault Ste. Marie, our season doesn't even begin until the last weekend in June. In passage of this bill, you are constricting the ability of Michigan families to take extended vacations during the two best months of the summer."

*Linda Hoath
Vice President
MACVB*

Last December when similar hearings were held, Knollenberg and the committee were provided a copy of "[Year Round Schools: In Brief](#)," by the Congressional Research Service. The study examined educational research on whether reducing the length of summer vacation and redistributing those days throughout the school year truly does advance student learning outcomes. That report found:

"The research on the extent to which year-round schools affect student achievement has generally been found to be inconclusive and lacking in methodological rigor. There is some consensus that year-round schooling has no effect or a small positive effect on student performance; however, the quality of the studies that led to these findings has been questioned."

Unfortunately, such data appeared to have little impact on the committee.

Where to go from here?

SB 271 now sits on the floor of the Senate where it awaits possible further action. Senator Goeff Hansen (R-Hart) strongly supports PLDS and has vowed to work tirelessly to fight against repeal. No vote is expected soon. However, while facts, data, and voter support are on our side, it appears that Senators are being swayed by misinformation provided by PLDS opponents.

"July and August are the top months for boating. We oppose this bill because when school starts, boating stops."

*Nicki Polan,
Executive Director
Michigan Boating Industries Association*

It's clear that we need to step up our game and reestablish ongoing communications with legislators whose decisions largely shape our industry's future. MLTA urges you to get in the game and help us fight, beginning now.

"The real reason for the push to start school in August is high school sports. You're considering an important policy decision that favors high school sports against the Michigan businesses that fuel our economy and help pay for schools in the first place."

*Deanna Richeson
President/CEO
MLTA*

Get Fired Up - Get Going!

We need to get fired up and channel that energy into doing the things that make a difference. Invite your legislator to visit your property or business. Call their office and explain how July and August revenues impact your budget. Tell them about your peak season and how you must staff-up when it arrives. Establish a relationship and rapport with your legislator. The better they know you, the better they understand our issues.

We've proven what we can accomplish in the past. Let's take what we've learned and apply it to the future.

"It's important to remember that we're talking about August here, which is peak season for golf and most other segments of our industry."

*Kate Moore
President
Michigan Golf Course Owners Association*

Other Key Industry Legislative Issues

But what about funding for Pure Michigan, efforts to address the unabated growth of commercially-operated Airbnb properties, and recent legislation proposed to revise Daylight Savings Time? Here are some quick hits on each...

Pure Michigan Funding Cut

Members of the Michigan House of Representative continue to search for ways to reduce spending to fund a proposed reduction in the state income tax. Indicative of that search, were actions that took place in the House Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government. In a tumultuous meeting, the initial proposal was a \$9 million cut, taking funding from the current \$34 million to \$25 million.

Thankfully, an amendment passed, reinstating funding back to \$34M. However, it's possible that attempts to cut Pure Michigan may occur when the full Appropriations Committee takes action in coming days. **We can't afford to sit back on our heels; we need to be ready to engage.**

Airbnb

On March 9th, the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) released a report that examines the rise of commercial activity taking place on Airbnb nationwide. This study,

[*Hosts with Multiple Units - A Key Driver of Airbnb Growth*](#), reveals that Airbnb's business is moving even further away from true home sharing: 81% of Airbnb's U.S. revenue - **\$4.6 billion** - comes from whole-unit rentals (those rentals where the owner is not present during the time of the rental).

Downtown Detroit hotels are increasingly concerned with the potential for rapid expansion of illegal hotels in their area. Concerns have been heightened as it appears that commercial real estate investors - as well as Airbnb - are looking to acquire properties within the new Little Caesars Arena District, which encompasses fifty blocks of commercial and residential space.

On a related note, some Northern Michigan townships have classified any short term rental as "commercial activity" and have banned that activity from residential areas, thus outlawing Airbnb.

Responding to the concerns of realtors, the Michigan Realtors Association is planning on introducing legislation that would amend the Zoning Enabling Act to prohibit a municipality from banning short term rental and classify any property that rents for under 30 days per year as residential. We are awaiting language on the proposal to enable us to assess its impact. MLTA is gathering information to enable us to respond to the potent threat Airbnb presents Michigan's lodging industry. **Stay tuned.**

Daylight Savings Time

Legislation which would expand Daylight Savings Time to year round application appears to be dead in committee. Hearings were held on HB 4011 sponsored by Representative Peter Lucido (R-Shelby Township) earlier this month, with strong criticism coming from both sides of the aisle. No further hearings have been scheduled at this time.

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Association**

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A 112-year tradition of working to promote travel
and tourism in Michigan.

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