



A weekly newsletter on North Carolina General Assembly news relevant to the North Carolina tourism industry

Hotel Safety Bill Becomes Law

Governor Roy Cooper allowed Senate Bill 53 (Hotel Safety Issues) to become law last week after the General Assembly approved the NCTIA endorsed legislation with bipartisan majorities.

The lead champions in the Senate were Sen. Vickie Sawyer (R-Iredell/Mecklenburg) and Rep. John Bradford (R-Mecklenburg).

Governor Cooper vetoed similar legislation in 2021, because of his concerns over the shortage in affordable housing and the uptick in homelessness.

Proponents of the bill, including NCTIA, countered that hoteliers need balanced protections to evict short-term guests who are disruptive and not fostering a safe environment for other guests and staff.

"This bill clears up for hoteliers that a guest is not considered a renter unless a stay exceeds 90 consecutive days," said NCTIA Executive Director Vince Chelena. "We appreciate Governor Cooper allowing this bill to become law and we support the efforts by him and the General Assembly to address the affordable housing crisis in so many communities across the state."

Sports Wagering Heading to House Floor

The following article was published by the Associated Press on March 22 and republished by ABC 13 News.

Legislation (House Bill 347/Sports Wagering) authorizing and regulating sports gambling in North Carolina advanced through two more House committees on Wednesday, laying the groundwork for key chamber-wide votes next week.

The finance and judiciary committees approved the measure one day after the House commerce panel also advanced details of a proposed infrastructure whereby people across the state could wager online and at or near pro sports stadiums and arenas. From 10 to 12 interactive sports wagering licenses would be awarded by the state lottery commission.

Although sports gambling happens lawfully now at three American Indian casinos in the state, North Carolina is a largely untapped market in a country where over 30 states allow some kind of in-person or online sports-books, including neighboring Virginia and Tennessee. Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper also supports legalizing sports gambling.

A sports gambling measure passed the Senate comfortably in 2021. But the effort collapsed in the House last June after a coalition of social conservatives and hardline liberals weakened and ultimately defeated the legislation.

This year's measure also would have to pass the Senate as well before it could go to Cooper.

Determined forces behind the measure-gambling companies and North Carolina-based sports franchises among them - have pushed robustly for the idea again in the new two-year session. They say such gambling is already happening in the state through local bookies and online work-arounds.

There were 1.75 million attempts based in North Carolina to log in to online sportsbooks in other states during the past National Football League season, said John Pappas, an executive with a cybersecurity company that works to ensure bettors live in states where such gambling is lawful.

"Sports betting is here today," Pappas said.

Over 50 House members - nearly half of the chamber - from both parties have sponsored the latest legislation. And some past opponents are no longer in the legislature.