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GOVERNMENT

NY assemblyman will attend Auburn council meeting to discuss proposed hotel tax

Robert Harding

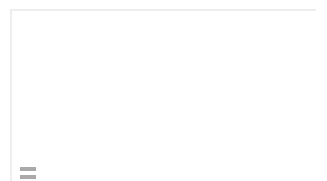
Mar 16, 2024



The Holiday Inn in Auburn.

Kevin Rivoli

Robert Harding



One of Auburn's state representatives is scheduled to attend the City Council meeting this week to discuss a proposed tax on hotel stays and short-term rentals.

Auburn City Clerk Chuck Mason said Assemblyman John Lemondes will appear at the council's regular meeting Thursday. According to Mason, Lemondes has asked the council to allow questions from the public during that portion of the meeting.

The meeting is scheduled for 5 p.m., but the hotel tax discussion is set for 7 p.m.

The council voted in December to **send a letter** to Lemondes and state Sen. Rachel May, who also represents Auburn, requesting legislation that would allow the city to impose a 5% hotel and short-term rental tax. May **introduced the bill** in January, but Assembly records show Lemondes has not yet sponsored a similar measure.

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The bill must be approved by the state Legislature and signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul before Auburn could implement the hotel tax.

An estimate provided by Mason shows a 5% tax on hotel stays and short-term rentals would generate \$500,000 in revenue for the city. The additional revenue could support emergency services and infrastructure projects, Auburn City Councilor Terry Cuddy said at a meeting in December.

Auburn's **pursuit of a hotel tax** follows legislation that was **signed by Hochul** last year allowing three central New York municipalities — the village of Weedsport in Cayuga County and the town and village of Skaneateles in Onondaga County — to impose hotel taxes. Lemondes and May sponsored the bills authorizing the local governments to charge the taxes.

Other cities in central New York and the Finger Lakes region have hotel taxes, including Canandaigua, Geneva and Ithaca. Several counties, including Cayuga, impose occupancy taxes.

There has been pushback from the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association, a statewide group representing the hotel industry, against new hotel taxes. The organization unsuccessfully urged Hochul to veto the hotel tax bills in 2023.

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