

Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update – Nov. 3rd, 2017

11.10.17

Our weekly OTA & Travel Distribution Update for the week ending, Friday, November 3, is below. The week's update features a variety of stories, including a potentially landmark purchase by Airbnb.

Airbnb Going Mainstream with Possible Wyndham Purchase [SHORT-TERM RENTALS]

("Airbnb Might Buy Wyndham's European Vacation Rental Business," November 3, 2017)

Skift reported last week that Airbnb (among other possible purchasers) may be evaluating a possible purchase of Wyndham's \$1B European vacation rental business. Wyndham boasts tens of thousands of listings throughout Europe and would quickly expand Airbnb's global (and luxury) offerings. Expect more details on this purchase and its effects if Airbnb becomes the prevailing suitor.

Seattle To Pass Short-Term Rental Regulations [SHORT-TERM RENTALS]

("Expedia and Airbnb are double targets of Seattle tax proposals," Puget Sound Business Journal, November 3, 2017)

Seattle is only a week away from passing two bills intended to regulate both short-term rental operators (or hosts) as well as the platforms that distribute them. A third bill, needed to amend existing land-use restrictions, is expected to pass later this month. While many amendments are expected to be presented and considered this next week, the bills as currently drafted feature (a) a licensing framework for both hosts and platforms, (b) a cap on the number of dwellings a person can rent (subject to exemptions for certain existing short-term rentals), and (c) a \$10.00 per night tax on short-term rentals, the proceeds of which will be used, among other things, to help fund affordable housing. Expect additional details on Seattle's approach to short term rentals in the weeks ahead when the long-awaited bills are finally adopted.

Other news:

Wall Street Journal Launches Online Travel Site Powered by Upside

Skift Travel News, October 30, 2017

Upside is trying to reach a more high-yielding audience of business travelers through its partnership with The Wall Street Journal. Whether the Upside experience ends up resonating with its users over the long

term is another story. -Andrew Sheivachman

Google Shuts Off Flight Fare Search API

Pymnts.com, November 2, 2017

Google announced that it will be shutting off developer access to its QPX Express API service, which automates data for airfare search engines. According to a news report from The Verge, the move could affect third-party travel sites, such as Orbitz and Expedia.

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