MAR

The Voice for Real Estate

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT REPORT

2011 LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY ACHIEVEMENTS

MAR & ITS REALTOR® MEMBERS GOT THEIR MESSAGE THROUGH ON BEACON HILL: THAT THE COMMONWEALTH'S ECONOMIC HOUSE IS BUILT ON REAL ESTATE, AND THAT ECONOMIC RECOVERY RELIES ON THE STRENGTH OF THE HOUSING MARKET. HERE ARE SOME OF OUR KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS OF DECEMBER 30, 2011:

TRANSFER TAXES [Held in Committee]. Advocating against bills that would have authorized the creation of new local & statewide transfer taxes on the sale of real property. These additional sales taxes on homes would have serious implications for the Massachusetts economy and set the wrong precedent for the Commonwealth's tax policies.

SCRAP METAL [Approved by both Mass. House & Senate]. Strongly supporting legislation to require scrap metal dealers to register with the State and document details of all transactions, including descriptive information about the metal item and the person from whom the item was procured. Vacant houses are an increasing concern in many communities of the Commonwealth. Metal piping and other fixtures are stolen from the structure, thus making its title unmarketable for mortgage loan qualification purposes. The problem is becoming widespread, hurting home values in neighborhoods in which thefts occur.

HOME ENERGY COST DISCLOSURE [Held in Committee]. Testified in opposition to 1698, which would require all home sellers to furnish the prospective buyer with a completed energy evaluation.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS - CONTINUING EDUCATION [Advanced in the House of Representatives]. Strongly supporting legislation to enhance the continuing education requirements for maintaining a real estate salesperson's or broker's license.

SELLING CITY-OWNED PROPERTY EFFICIENTLY (SCOPE). MAR is working to promote a legislative/regulatory concept that would give municipalities the option of selling its vacant and underutilized properties to qualified buyers in the open market through a more efficient and cost-effective process.

TAX ON RENTAL OF PRIVATE RESIDENCE [Held in Committee]. Thus far, successfully halted all Bills that would require private homeowners to collect State & Local Room Occupancy Tax, in the same way as a commercial hospitality business (hotel, motel, &c.), when renting out to seasonal vacationers.

SMOKE DETECTORS. Successfully lobbied to compel the Administration to amend a Bill it had proposed to remove a provision that would have granted the statutory discretion to state government to mandate installation of hard-wired smoke detectors in older homes prior to sale. This could have cost home sellers millions of dollars per year in Massachusetts.