MAR

The Voice for Real Estate

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT REPORT

2012 LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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:

TRANSFER TAXES [Sent to Study]. Advocated 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 THEFT PREVENTION [Different Versions Passed in the House and Senate]. Strongly supported 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 [Sent to Study]. Testified in opposition to a bill which would require all home sellers to furnish the prospective buyer with a completed energy evaluation. MAR also secured an appointment to the Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Advisory Council, to stay apprised of legislative and regulatory plans and provide input on home energy efficiency and building efforts that will help and not hinder the Massachusetts housing market.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS - CONTINUING EDUCATION [Recommended Favorably from Committee]. Strongly supported legislation to enhance the continuing education requirements for maintaining a real estate salesperson's or broker's license.

COMPARATIVE MARKET ANALYSIS and BROKER PRICE OPINION [Successfully Advocated for Altered Language in Legislation] Monitored and provided input on legislation that could have hindered REALTORS® ability to give an opinion of the price of real estate for the purpose of a prospective listing, purchase or sale. The changes MAR suggested were designed to preserve and protect REALTORS' ability to conduct CMAs and BPOs.

SHORT SALES [Successfully Advocated for Altered Language in Legislation] Successfully lobbied for changes to legislation in order to preserve REALTORS®' crucial role in short sales on behalf of home buyers and sellers, often preventing foreclosures. Changes were incorporated into the bill protected REALTORS® from having to register for and maintain a separate license to conduct Short Sales.

HOME RENTAL TAX [Sent to Study]. 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, etc.), when renting out to seasonal vacationers.