

(WASHINGTON)--- Congressman Allen West (R-FL) is concerned the recent clarification rule of the Americans with Disabilities Act requiring all public pools, hot tubs and spas to be handicap accessible will have an enormous, negative impact on the South Florida hotel industry. The regulation (RIN 1190-AA44) is set to go into effect in May 2012. The standards require hotels, state and local governments, resorts, swim clubs and other sites to install costly, fixed lifts, disregarding the financial impact the requirement would have to those entities during an already volatile time in the nation's economy.

"This is another example of the bureaucratic nanny-state not considering the economic ramifications of its insidious regulatory policies," West said. "I have talked with and received letters from several South Florida hotels saying this is a wasteful exercise that will cost Florida businesses a lot of money and accomplish nothing."

West believes an alternative to the regulation would be to allow governments and businesses to install a lesser expensive, 'portable' lift, that would be ready for specific use. A mechanical lift including installation could cost an estimated \$10,000 each.

With only a few months to implement the requirement or face fines of \$55,000 from the federal government, many South Florida hotel chains are scrambling to meet the deadline.

"This position makes no common sense and will be an economic disaster to hotels in Florida," said Michael Walsh, President of Ocean Properties in West Palm Beach, a company that operates 46 hotels around the Sunshine State. "This is the federal government making a bad policy with complete disregard to reality."

Walsh said his hotels have not had a single request for a lift. Further, he has concerns a permanent lift will result in injuries from children playing on it and getting hurt. West is supporting a letter circulating around the House of Representatives asking for an extension of the regulation deadline, to further investigate the requirement.

"With such a short amount of time given to implement the new regulations, many hotels will be forced to shut down their pools," West said. "This could be devastating to the Florida tourism

season."

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