



For immediate release – June 5, 2023

GAMA Board Statement on the move of GAMA EXPO to Louisville

One of the most important things that can be done to make GAMA a better organization is for our members to share their concerns, and for GAMA's staff and its Board of Directors to consider those at all times. We have received many questions regarding the choice of Louisville, Kentucky, as the location for the GAMA Expo in 2024-2026, and it is imperative that our members know we are listening and care.

In the same way that a Site Selection Committee is currently being formed for the upcoming contract set to begin in 2027, the decision to move to Louisville was made in 2019. That Site Selection Committee weighed many factors, including concerns about Kentucky's legislative stances regarding human and civil rights. They had a discussion with representatives from The Galt House, The Kentucky International Convention Center, and Louisville Tourism regarding the latter. The Louisville team emphasized that they are passionate about their location being a progressive city and that the money GAMA Expo would bring to their properties and the city would help their efforts in being an example of inclusivity for the state. All factors were considered, and the contract was signed.

Following the passage of recent legislation and the closure of our final event in Reno, members reached out both publicly and privately to staff as well as to the Board of Directors. As an organization, it is our duty to consider our options when members voice concerns. Thus, the Board directed the Executive Director to research the possibility of canceling the Louisville contract. The Executive Director returned with a breakdown of the penalties not only for one year but the attrition as the contract progressed. It would cost GAMA an estimated \$1,822,716 to cover the cancellation of the three-year agreement, which is not financially feasible. That degree of monetary outlay would have a lethal impact on the organization.

After analysis of fiscal limitations to canceling the 2024-2026 agreement, the decision was made by the Executive Director to move forward with our existing contract while expediting approval of the Site Selection Committee to research future locations. The safety of our membership and guests is extremely important, so the Executive Director has informed the Board that the operations team will be seeking options for safety protocols and will review those with the Board of Directors as they develop. An example of such measures will be a shuttle service between the airport and the Galt House / The Kentucky International Convention Center.

It does not address the immediate concerns, but GAMA plans on following the new recommendation of the American Society of Association Executives to include cancellation clauses in future contracts. These clauses may be based on regions enacting laws violating the basic human rights of their citizens.

While the Board of Directors is responsible for strategic planning and the Operations staff is tasked with implementation and execution, it is vital that members continue to voice their thoughts and concerns at events, meetings, and via online communication channels. Thank you to everyone who continues to provide feedback to the organization so that leadership can best represent GAMA as a whole.

GAMA Board of Directors

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