

## California Hotel & Lodging Association Teams Up with Department of Homeland Security to Provide Long-Term Housing in California for People Displaced by Katrina

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California's Premier Lodging Association, in Conjunction with Its National Affiliate, Establishes Nationwide Program to Provide 250,000 "Homes" for Victims

The California Hotel & Lodging Association (CH&LA), through its national affiliate, the American Hotel & Lodging Association, has been requested by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to assist in securing guest rooms for housing of evacuees and emergency contractors. DHS estimates that an additional 250,000 guestrooms are needed.

A key logistical goal is to move evacuees from hotels in close proximity to the areas directly impacted by Katrina to make those rooms available for staff and emergency workers involved in restoring services. Concurrently, DHS is establishing, with CH&LA and its affiliates across the country, a way to provide long-term housing for these victims, as well as all other evacuees.

DHS is first seeking hotel rooms within a large concentric circle of the affected area. Hotels should be willing to commit to a large block of rooms, or even an entire hotel, so that evacuees can be administratively managed and access appropriate resources via FEMA. Hotels should either have kitchenettes or be able to provide 3 meals per day. Where this is not possible, FEMA will coordinate with local shelters or restaurants to provide meal vouchers. Housekeeping services can be weekly and other amenities can be excluded as deemed appropriate by the hotel.

FEMA will provide transportation to get the evacuees to the hotels that have contracted to provide this type of long-term housing.

Contracts will extend for six months, with possible renewal for an additional six months to a maximum of 18 months. Compensation, probably a per diem or lease rate based on established fair market rates within each state and county, will be paid to the hotel, with the exact amount determined before contracts are signed.

"California lodging operators have been asking us how they can best support the Katrina relief efforts, and this program provides the perfect way for our members to have an immediate and direct impact, here in California, on helping all of these displaced individuals," said Jim Abrams, president & CEO of the California Hotel & Lodging Association. "CH&LA is strongly urging each of its members to make an assessment of the number of rooms that they can make available for this type of long-term contractual arrangement, and then to act promptly to be part of this critical component of the relief effort," said Abrams.

CH&LA is urging especially its members, including timeshares and condos, which have seasonal operations, and are going to be mostly vacant during the post-summer period, to assist this effort by utilizing this mechanism to fill empty guest rooms with people who are in desperate need of longer-term housing.

Hotels, inns, and other lodging establishments that wish to participate in this vital program can go to AH&LA's web site ([www.ahla.com](http://www.ahla.com)) and fill out online a form that requests specific information about guest room availability and then submit it to join in this effort.

The California Hotel & Lodging Association (CH&LA) is the largest state lodging industry trade association in the country. Its 1,600 member properties, which comprise close to 200,000 guest rooms, consist of hotels, motels, bed and breakfast inns, guest ranches, resorts, spas, condominium rentals, timeshares, and vacation home rentals located throughout California. CH&LA's mission is to be the indispensable resource for communicating and protecting the rights and interests of the California lodging industry, for providing educational training and value programs for all segments of the industry, and for supporting strategic alliances to promote the value of California tourism and travel. Sacramento-based CH&LA has been representing California's lodging industry for more than a century. CH&LA is on the web at [www.calodging.com](http://www.calodging.com).

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