National Allied Golf Associations

12 Months in Review
Presentation to the Minister of Sport

The Hon. Bal Gosal, Minister of State (Sport) contributed an article to Golf Business Canada’s Special Edition Fall issue, which featured an extensive overview of NAGA’s many government advocacy initiatives that took place across Canada in the spring-summer of 2011. As a gesture of thanks, Minister Gosal was presented with a professionally framed piece by two NAGA board members. This presentation was a great opportunity to update the Minister and his senior policy advisor on how things have been progressing with NAGA’s government advocacy efforts.

Golf Caucus Lunch

Following NAGA’s federal government advocacy effort this past June, a Parliamentary Golf Caucus was formed with MP participation from each party. Mr. Peter Stoffer, the NDP head of the Golf Caucus, hosted a lunch on Parliament Hill and invited NAGA Board members to speak to MPs on key issues that currently impact Canada’s golf industry. The lunch was attended by five MPs with representing each political party from provinces across the country.

Meeting with Conservative Golf Caucus Chair

NAGA members met with Mr. Russ Hiebert, MP for South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, British Columbia in early December to discuss the organization’s goal of introducing legislation to correct the unfair and outdated tax policy that hurts golf businesses. Mr. Hiebert, a Conservative MP, was interested in assisting NAGA, but also spoke candidly regarding the government’s current agenda to be more cautious in committing to anything that will cost money, even if only a small amount. He is still very supportive of NAGA and is very willing to help the organization by bringing the issue up in caucus. Mr. Hiebert also offered to host NAGA events on Parliament Hill if there is ever an interest or a need—a very supportive gesture indeed!
NAGA in the News
NAGA was featured in several highly read media outlets in January, both on the national and international level. The association was featured in a number of print, radio and television outlets, and articles regarding NAGA's tax legislation issue appeared in the Wall Street Journal and the Economist, two of the most widely read publications in the world.

Private Member’s Bill and the Stoffer Olympiad
In February, Mr. Randall Garrison, MP for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca (BC), formally introduced legislation designed to correct the unfair and outdated tax policy that hurts Canada's golf businesses. The Bill, C-397, is entitled “An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (golfing expenses)”. Mr. Garrison has been a member of the Federal government’s All Party Golf caucus since the fall of 2011, and this Bill is a great indicator on the caucus’ dedication to Canada’s golf industry. NAGA also participated in a fundraiser hosted by Mr. Peter Stoffer, MP and NDP Chair of the Golf Caucus, entitled the “Stoffer Olympiad” which featured a number of sports activities in his Parliament Hill office in Ottawa. The event was filmed by “This Hour Has 22 Minutes”, and featured in Maclean’s magazine, Canada’s most widely read news magazine.
March 2012

Coordinated Government Outreach
In order to make a final push to MPs on Parliament Hill before the federal budget was released on March 29th, NAGA sent out a one-page visual showcasing the differences on how the golf industry is viewed in the United States vs. Canada. In a show of solidarity, almost every NAGA participating organization, including the Canadian Society of Club Managers, Golf Canada, the National Golf Course Owners Association of Canada, PGA of Canada, and the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association, signed off on the letter. This action shows NAGA’s depth of commitment to working together to change Canada’s current tax legislation which unfairly impacts the country’s golf industry.

April 2012

Meeting with Minister of State (Finance)
A NAGA representative met with the Hon. Ted Menzies, Minister of State (Finance) in his constituency office in early April to discuss the associations’ income tax issue in detail. Touching base with Minister Menzies is extremely important for NAGA, as he is a very influential figure in the conservative caucus, particularly on the Finance committee.

Private Member’s Bill Event
Bill C-397 was introduced to the House of Commons in February with the goal of providing greater tax fairness for Canada’s golf industry. To publicize this great move forward for the country’s golf sector, an event was held at a golf course in Mr. Garrison’s riding. Local golf course professionals and media were invited to attend to learn more about the Private Member’s Bill, and how it will impact the country’s golf industry.
NAGA Honoured with Prestigious Award!

NAGA was thrilled to be recognized by Ottawa’s International Association of Business Communicators Excel awards for its work in Government Relations! The Excel Awards recognize work in a variety of communications fields, and this year NAGA was honoured for outstanding achievements in government advocacy. At the awards ceremony, NAGA was commended for the media attention its government relations initiatives received both nationally and internationally. This award recognition is a great honor for NAGA, and a good indicator that things are still moving in a positive direction in terms of the organization’s advocacy strategy!

Meeting with the Office of Minister John Baird

Jeff Calderwood, NAGA’s Government Relations Spokesperson, met with the Regional Director for the Hon. John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs and one of the most high profile members of the Harper Cabinet. Jeff spoke in-depth with Minister Baird’s Director on the current unfairness of Canada’s current tax legislation, and how it impacts the golf business industry.

Minister Baird’s Regional Director was familiar with this issue due to NAGA’s coordinated government advocacy efforts that have been taking place over the past year, and was also familiar with the Private Member’s Bill, “An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (golfing expenses)” that was formally introduced in the House of Commons by NDP MP Randall Garrison in February. The Regional Director promised to pass all information on to the Minister, and encouraged NAGA to continue its advocacy efforts to all parties, as that will be important to the success of the possibility of changing the current unfair tax legislation.
Golf Outing with the Minister of Finance

In June, Jeff Calderwood, NAGA’s National Spokesperson, had the opportunity to meet Minister Flaherty at a golf event in his riding. Minister Flaherty’s wife, Christine Elliott, MPP for Whitby—Oshawa, was also in attendance. Minister Flaherty and Jeff had the opportunity to speak about how the golf industry in Canada currently suffers from an outdated 40-year-old tax policy that singles out the industry in an unfair manner. Minister Flaherty noted how much support NAGA seems to have created with MPs from across the country from all parties, and said the association is doing the right thing to keep that process going. The Minister did stress that due to the importance of austerity and balanced budgets, it would be very difficult to change current legislation at this time.

Federal MP Attacks Golf – NAGA Responds

During the summer, Conservative member of Parliament John Williamson of New Brunswick sent out a direct mail piece to constituents attacking golf as an elitist activity. Williamson suggested a golf tax credit would be used to entertain “corporate buddies”.

On behalf of golf, NAGA responded by having Lindon Garron, Executive Director, PGA Atlantic Canada, meet with Williamson and explain that the tax credit for golf was a small business tax fairness issue. Williamson is now educated on the issue and a potential supporter. This action showcases the importance of local engagement of MPs to explain the tax issue in greater detail and ensuring there are no misperceptions.
Consumer Golf Behaviour Study Outreach

In September, NAGA released an extensive Consumer Golf Behaviour Study. This report clearly showed that Canadian golf businesses need to enhance the way they operate in order to stay competitive.

The Executive Summary of the report was sent to all MPs along with a personalized letter from NAGA’s Chair explaining the relevance of the report while also noting some other important statistics related to Canada’s golf industry, specifically its contribution to the country’s GDP and the number of people employed by the industry. The letter encouraged MPs to do the right thing and establish tax fairness for Canada’s golf sector.

October 2012

Senator Doug Finley Parliamentary Event

Jeff Calderwood, NAGA’s Government Relations Spokesperson, attended an event at the Canadian War Museum in honour of one of the Conservative Party’s most popular members, Senator Doug Finley. The event was extremely well attended, with Conservative party members from across the country present to pay their respects to the Senator. Jeff had the chance to speak with several prominent members of the Conservative government, including the Hon. Tony Clement, Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario and MP for Parry Sound—Muskoka, a riding with a substantial number of golf courses.
Renewed Grassroots Advocacy Effort

With the 2013 Budget fast approaching, it is essential that golf industry professionals approach their MP to discuss the need to establish tax fairness. NAGA asked its members to follow up with their local MP by requesting a meeting on the tax fairness issue.

NAGA had a representative on site at the Golf Business Canada Trade Show in November, and all trade show attendees were encouraged to pledge their commitment to meet with their MP within the next few weeks. Over 50 participants from across the country agreed to reach out to their local politician, which will inevitably help to enhance NAGA's visibility while the upcoming budget is under review.

NAGA Chair and Spokesperson Hit the Hill

NAGA's Chair and Spokesperson met with six MPs and two Financial Policy Specialists in and around Parliament Hill in late November to advocate for tax fairness for the country's golf industry sector. Many of the MPs indicated their support for NAGA and offered to write letters to the Minister of Finance and other relevant officials connected to the issue. The MPs indicated their support for the association's grassroots advocacy work, and advised that it will be important to have all parties committed to the issue.

Jeff Calderwood, NAGA's Government Relations Spokesperson, also attended Parliament Hill's annual All Party Party which took place on November 28th at the Government Conference Centre. The event is one of the most highly attended events of the year, and almost all MPs and Senators make a point to participate to mingle with Parliament Hill staff and other stakeholders. This event offered a fantastic networking opportunity, and Jeff met with several MPs while there and had the chance to speak in greater depth about some of NAGA's concerns regarding the tax issue.