

H-2B WORKFORCE COALITION

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – The H-2B Workforce Coalition issued the following statement today of the Labor, HHS and Education spending bill for fiscal year 2017:

The H-2B Workforce Coalition applauds Chairman Tom Cole and the House Labor HHS Appropriations Subcommittee for recognizing the importance of regulatory flexibility when it comes to economic growth and job creation, especially for the small business sector.

The Labor-HHS Appropriations bill includes two provisions that will allow small businesses that use H-2B visas to more effectively utilize the program to help sustain job growth in the United States.

Studies show that for every H-2B position filled, 4.6 American jobs are sustained.

One provision would allow employers to hire H-2B workers only when they need them the most. This provision would give employers the discretion to stagger their hires to only those peak times in the season when those workers have the maximum impact in sustaining American jobs.

The other provision would allow a more extended use of validated third-party private wage surveys to determine the most accurate prevailing wage to be paid to the H-2B workers. This provision protects both workers and small businesses to insure that the fairest wage is being paid.

“Flexibility is very important in scheduling reforestation work, which is strongly weather-dependent,” stated Deb Hawkinson, President of the Forest Resources Association. “It is important to match workers’ entry to suitable ground conditions and other weather-related factors for an effective operation that creates quality for clients.”

“Thanks to Chairman Cole and the House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies for including H-2B process improvements in the fiscal 2017 appropriations bill,” said Sabeena Hickman of the National Association of Landscaping Professionals. “The ability of employers to use validated third party wage surveys and bring H-2B landscape workers into the country on staggered schedules as the busy spring season ramps up will help seasonal businesses and their employees and save Department of Labor resources.”

“The entire Gulf seafood supply chain is in some way dependent upon the availability of H-2B visa workers who fill the most labor-intensive positions in our industry – jobs that support thousands of others for Americans across the region,” said Margaret Henderson, Executive Director of the Gulf Seafood Institute. “The Gulf Seafood Institute is pleased that House Appropriators are taking the lead on preserving this critical program on behalf of our businesses and the American consumers who enjoy accessing Gulf seafood all across the country.”

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