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Outdoor Amusement Business Association

Seasonal Employment Alliance

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Statement on President Trump’s “Proclamation Suspending Entry of Aliens Who Present a Risk to the U.S. Labor Market Following the Coronavirus Outbreak”

The H-2B Workforce Coalition is deeply disheartened by the President’s Executive order suspending the entry of guest workers enrolled in the H-2B visa program through the end of 2020. As the nation continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to hire supplemental H-2B workers, when U.S. workers are not available, will play an integral role in bolstering the nation’s economy and creating new jobs for American workers.

Seasonal businesses take seriously our role in our nation’s economic recovery. We can best contribute to the economy by employing a full workforce, including our American workers and supplemental H-2B workers who support those American jobs. H-2B employers, many of which are small businesses, are committed to hiring any willing and able American workers before turning to H-2B workers, as the program currently requires. The businesses that currently need workers have stepped up their recruitment of American workers, but due to factors such as the seasonality of the work, the nature of the work, and the location of the job, there are instances where supplemental H-2B workers are still needed. For these reasons, we strongly urge the Administration to re-visit the order’s restriction on the issuance of H-2B visas.

While seasonal employers are actively recruiting U.S. workers, many unemployed American workers are not currently seeking other employment because they expect their former jobs to be available as soon as state restrictions are lifted. According to a recent nationwide *Washington Post-Ipsos* poll, nearly 80% of laid-off workers expect to be rehired by their previous employer once state stay-at-home orders are lifted.¹ In addition, a recent General Accountability Office report concluded that “counties with H-2B employers generally had lower unemployment rates and higher average weekly wages than counties that do not have any H-2B employers.”² Further, the H-2B program protects the jobs of the full-time, year-round American workers, who rely on the H-2B workers to sustain their jobs. Every H-2B worker supports 4.64 American jobs.³

We urge the Administration to promptly review the proclamation to lessen the impacts on seasonal businesses, their American work force and their ability to contribute our country’s economic recovery.

¹ Over 33 Million Americans Lost Their Job During the Pandemic. 77 Percent Believe They’ll Get It Back, Post-ipsos Poll Finds. Emily Heather Long - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/05/07/nearly-80-percent-laid-off-workers-believe-they-will-return-their-old-job-post-ipsos-poll-finds/>.

² United States, Congress, “H-2B VISAS: Additional Steps Needed to Meet Employers’ Hiring Needs and Protect U.S. Workers.” *H-2B VISAS: Additional Steps Needed to Meet Employers’ Hiring Needs and Protect U.S. Workers*, GAO-20-230, U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2020, pp. 13–14.

³ Zavodny, Madeline. *Immigration and American Jobs*. American Enterprise Institute, 15 Dec. 2011, www.aei.org/research-products/working-paper/immigration-and-american-jobs/.