

As you know, the H-2B visa program is an invaluable asset to many seasonal businesses throughout the country. Recently, many seasonal business owners are reporting significant delays at the Department of Labor (DOL) in processing H-2B visa applications in a timely fashion, frequently resulting in an inability to hire these needed H-2B workers. In advance of the upcoming high season for the tourism, hospitality, and landscaping industries in our districts, these delays are alarming and unacceptable. Our employers are already anticipating significant lost revenue as a result.

The difficulties in hiring temporary H-2B workers are also detrimental to local economies that depend on robust seasonal industries for a significant portion of their annual employment and income. With each employer requesting anywhere from five (5) to three hundred(300) H-2B employees, each application that DOL fails to process in a timely and efficient manner represents a substantial portion of each employer's workforce that will not be available at the start of their limited high season. For businesses where the seasonal economy lasts only a few months, these delays are devastating.

Further, many of these seasonal businesses, without the needed H-2B workers, will be unable to operate at all, leaving their domestic employees without work until those workers arrive. In some cases, the business will fail altogether, eliminating these crucial employers from the job market. The resulting loss in capacity of local economies to provide both services and jobs leads to decreased patronage of, and investment in, these economies. In fact, for every H-2b worker hired, 4.64 American jobs are created and supported. In other words, delays in businesses' ability to hire H-2B workers has an extended impact that adversely affects the long term health of state and local economies at a time when American workers and their families can ill afford economic setbacks.

As such, it is imperative that DOL remedy these processing delays as soon as possible. We appreciate your cooperation and assistance on this matter. We look forward to hearing from you regarding your Department's plan to resolve these issues and facilitate the optimum functioning of our seasonal economies and the businesses that rely on them.