



Issue Brief



Additional FRA Policy Priorities

September 2019

Legislation

Future Logging Careers Act (HR 1785, S 818)

This legislation would allow 16-17-year olds to operate enclosed mechanized logging equipment under supervision if employed in a family logging business. This is critical to the logging sector as businesses are often passed down to the next generation.

Administrative Rulemaking

H-2A Guestworker Visa Program Modification Proposed Rule

The Department of Labor (DOL) has proposed changes to the H-2A guestworker visa program. The proposed changes would move some forestry practices (tree planting, pine straw collection) from the H-2B program to the uncapped H-2A visa program. This change would allow greater access to non-immigrant workers for forest employers. FRA has concerns on several aspects of the proposed rule that include changes in housing requirements and the application process, both of which would result in significant cost increases to businesses using non-immigrant labor under the H-2A program. FRA understands that this is only a proposal by the DOL. We will be submitting comments with our recommended changes to be incorporated in the final rule.

Trucking Hours of Service Proposed Rule

The DOL has proposed changes to the truck driver Hours of Service regulations. Among the proposed changes are modifications to the short-haul exception which would increase the number of drivers able to take advantage of the exception. It would also extend the maximum duty period allowed under the short-haul exception available to certain commercial motor vehicle drivers from 12 hours to 14 hours, and extend from a 100 to a 150 air-mile radius, the maximum distance in which drivers qualifying for the short-haul exception may operate. Logging trucks meet this exception. FRA supports the changes in the proposed rule. FRA will be submitting comments in support of the proposed rule by September 27.

Trade

The Administration is expected to submit legislation to Congress in September to implement the terms of the U.S. Canada Mexico (USMCA) agreement—a deal reached almost a year ago to replace the existing North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the three countries. FRA has long supported the principles of free and fair trade and joins the long list of national trade associations that are urging Congress to approve this new agreement expeditiously. FRA has joined on with a number of associations to urge passage of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

For more information, please contact:

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