



Issue Brief



H-2B Reform

September 2019

More H-2B Visas are needed:

- Congress has provided authority to the DHS to increase the H-2B visa for FY 2019.
- Demand for H-2B visas was greatly exceeded for 2019.
- More visas are needed so employers can hire employees in a timely matter.
- Congress must provide a permanent and meaningful cap relief for H-2B visa program as a standalone measure or as part of other relevant legislation.
- FRA supports House-passed Appropriations Bill and House DHS Appropriations-passed Bill.
- Seasonal workers are key to re-planting forest land and maintaining productive, healthy forests for future generations.

Why FRA Supports H-2B Reform

- Seasonal non-immigrant guestworker reform is a top advocacy priority for FRA members.
- The forest products industry relies heavily on foreign guestworkers to supplement our U.S. workforce to sustain forests and manage vegetation. Because this work is usually seasonal, and because tree planting crews are itinerant without connection to a community, domestic workers are typically not interested in these jobs.
- The Congressionally mandated cap of 66,000 H-2B visas is inadequate to meet the labor needs of seasonal businesses. Currently, demand exceeds the cap of 66,000 visas by two to three times.
- FRA supports the House-passed Appropriations Bill that includes language allocating H-2B visas proportionally by quarter. This would make more H-2B visas available when needed during the spring and summer months.
- FRA supports the House Appropriations Committee-passed Bill for the Department of Homeland Security. The language would increase the amount of H-2B visas for FY2020.
- Congress must provide H-2B cap relief that reflects actual demand and enact reforms that provide certainty for compliant employers.

Request: Include in the final spending bills the H-2B cap relief and reforms that are in the House-passed FY2020 Appropriations Bill for the Department of Labor and the House Appropriations Committee-passed Bill for the Department of Homeland Security, and pass comprehensive H-2B cap relief as a standalone measure or as part of any other relevant legislation to provide a permanent solution.

About FRA

The Forest Resources Association (FRA) represents the interests of nearly 300 organizations and businesses in the forest products industry. Our members include forest landowners, suppliers, consuming mills, associated businesses, and state forestry associations. FRA members are represented in 48 states and 320 Congressional Districts.

FRA's Vision is to be recognized for its diverse membership and commitment to sustaining the success of the forest products industry.

For more information, please contact:

Deb Hawkinson, FRA President, 202-296-3937 or dhawkinson@forestresources.org

Tim O'Hara, FRA Government Affairs and Lake States Manager, 218-390-7965 or tohara@forestresources.org