



March 5, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Speaker, Mr. Majority Leader, Ms. Minority Leader and Mr. Minority Leader:

The National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA) urges your support for addressing the workforce needs of the roofing industry with the inclusion of additional visas for the H-2B seasonal guest worker program in the upcoming appropriations bill. Such an amendment is vital to address the roofing industry's workforce shortage, which is approaching crisis proportions.

The H-2B program is critical for many employers, including numerous NRCA members, who often cannot find local workers to fill job openings during the busy summer season. The program provides an opportunity for these businesses to operate at a greater capacity during peak season, retain their full-time workers and contribute to their local and state economies. Seasonal workers help support many upstream and downstream jobs. In fact, every H-2B worker is estimated to create and sustain 4.64 American jobs, according to a study commissioned by Immigration Works USA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Unfortunately, the program's annual 66,000 cap (33,000 for each half of the fiscal year) is woefully inadequate to meet the demands of a growing economy. Given the program is hugely oversubscribed for 2018, many employers will not obtain the workers they need unless Congress provides additional visas. Without legislative relief from the statutory cap, it will be much more difficult for roofing industry employers to use the H-2B program, causing them in many instances to turn away customers and reduce the level of work for their American workers. For some employers, this will cause irreparable harm to their businesses.

The H-2B program is extremely costly and complicated, yet employers turn to it because it is the only way they can hire legal seasonal workers. The program requires employers to undertake extensive recruitment of American workers, gain approval from four government agencies and pay a premium wage.

As Congress moves forward with the development of the upcoming appropriations bill, NRCA urges your support for additional visas for the H-2B program sufficient to meet demand. This is critical for continued economic growth in the roofing industry.

Thank you for your careful consideration of NRCA's views regarding this important issue. If you have questions or need more information, please contact Duane Musser, NRCA's vice president of government relations, at (202) 546-7584 or dmusser@nrca.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Barr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and the last name "Barr" clearly distinguishable.

Jim Barr
Barr Roofing Company, Abilene, TX
Chairman of the Board, NRCA

cc: All Members of the House and Senate