



September 13, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

RECEIVED
By ESEC at 3:30 pm, Sep 13, 2024

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

On behalf of the American Hotel and Lodging Association, the leading national trade association for the hotel and lodging industry, we want to thank you for recognizing the seasonal labor crisis and unprecedented demand that led to the release of 64,719 H-2B supplemental visas for FY23 and 22. Due to the continual workforce shortages industries are continuing to experience, **we urge you to exercise the authority Congress granted you and release 64,716 supplemental H-2B visas for FY24.**

The dire shortage of seasonal labor in the U.S. has caused many employers to turn to the H-2B program to meet their workforce needs to not only sustain their businesses, but also to support their American workers. Every H-2B worker supports 4.64 U.S. jobs.¹ The H-2B program places many requirements on employers to recruit U.S. workers, and our members try to find as many U.S. workers as they can. In these unprecedented times, there are simply not enough workers to meet the seasonal workforce needs of U.S. employers.

As of July 2024, there were 7.7 million job openings² in the United States, but only 7.1 million unemployed workers³ to fill them. In the hospitality sector alone, there were over 100 thousand jobs⁴ waiting to be filled. A lot of hoteliers have attempted to do things to attract or retain workers – including increasing wages, offering greater flexibility and or expanding benefits but this has unfortunately not been enough. The H-2B program is critical to help fill the many open positions in locations that rely on seasonal guests. AHLA requests that the maximum amount is available for the hospitality industry as well as the various other industries suffering from severe labor shortages.

Current H-2B filings combined with the expected filings for the second half cap clearly show that there will be significant workforce disruptions if additional cap relief does not materialize soon. For FY 2024, the 33,000 first half cap was met on October 11, 2023, and the 33,000 second half cap was met on March 7, 2024. The returning worker supplemental visa cap for the first half of the fiscal year was reached on January 9 and the cap on supplemental visas for the second half of the year was reached on April 17. Congress has continued to provide you with the authority to release additional visas and we urge you to announce your intention to do so as soon as possible and publish a temporary rule implementing that decision.

The authority granted by Congress allows the Administration to release the highest number of H-2B returning workers approved in the program's history, which was 64,716 in FY 2007. Given the stark workforce needs for this fiscal year and the workforce shortfalls that seasonal employers will experience, we urge DHS to exercise your

¹ <https://www.aei.org/research-products/working-paper/immigration-and-american-jobs/>

² <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf>

³ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/jolts.pdf>

authority and make available all the visas. This will provide employers the ability to better handle their labor challenges, as they will have additional certainty regarding their workforce planning decisions in the coming months. We urge you to promptly take similar action this year to address the workforce needs of seasonal business.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. We look forward to continuing the important dialogue and assisting in any way possible.

Sincerely,



Kevin Carey
Interim President and CEO
American Hotel and Lodging Association

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of the Director
Camp Springs, MD 20588-0009



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

October 24, 2024

Kevin Carey
Interim President and CEO
American Hotel and Lodging Association
1250 Eye St, NW, Ste 1100
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Carey:

Thank you for your September 13, 2024 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am responding on behalf of the Department.

In your letter, you emphasized the importance of the H-2B Temporary Nonagricultural Worker Program for seasonal businesses, including your organization's members in the hospitality industry. Your letter urges DHS, in consultation with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), to make 64,716 additional visas available for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, as done in FYs 2023 and 2024.

DHS appreciates the concerns you raised regarding the challenges faced by small and seasonal businesses who rely on the H-2B program to sustain their businesses and support American workers. As noted in your letter, Congress recently provided statutory authority for supplemental H-2B visas for FY 2025 in the *Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025* (Public Law 118-83). DHS is consulting with the DOL to assess whether there is the need to make additional visas available and, if appropriate, will work expeditiously to exercise that authority.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please send an email to public.engagement@uscis.dhs.gov.

Sincerely,

Ur M. Jaddou
Director