



H-2A Processing Crisis Talking Points

Congressional Easter Recess Period
Senate Recess: March 19th through April 4th
House of Representatives Recess: March 24th through April 11th

- I am [currently experiencing/hearing from folks who are helping me with labor that there currently are] H-2A processing delays of 2-3 weeks.
 - These delays are happening within the Department of Labor (DOL).
 - The bottleneck being created by DOL is causing further backlog at the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS).
- It is unclear what the precise issue is, but it appears that the DOL processing delays and computer issues might be connected to the H-2B problems experienced earlier this year, which may be cascading and impacting the processing of H-2A applications. As the H-2A applications are finally processed by DOL, they are dumped on CIS, resulting in delays there, as well.
- While we can't figure out exactly what the agencies need to resolve these H-2A processing issues, ***we need you [the Representative] to engage with both agencies and press for solutions to avert a pending crisis of delayed H-2A applications.***
 - Our labor force is already perilously tight. Without additional H-2A workers, we will be in an untenable situation as we won't have the labor we need to harvest our crops.
 - What do these agencies need? Do they need some type of emergency funding? Do they need to spend money to authorize overtime for staffing/personnel to process the backlog? Whatever the solution(s) might be, these agencies need to figure it out and **IMPLEMENT IT NOW.**
- While chronic delays in the processing of H-2B workers may mean having a gardener show up a month late, this is only a minor inconvenience. Having an H-2A worker show up a month late means crops are left to rot in the fields, which causes significant economic damage to the farmer and impacts our ability to produce a stable domestic food supply, which is a national priority.
- Delays to date have involved hundreds of workers. But if these issues continue, we will be talking about tens of thousands of H-2A workers being delayed by early May. This will devastate the agricultural employers that rely on the H-2A program for part of all of their workforce [including my own].
- ***You [the Representative] need to lean on the DOL and CIS RIGHT to do whatever they need to do to solve this problem NOW,*** or else we are talking about an unmitigated disaster for [my business/the fresh produce industry].