



DORCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INC.

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May 4, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Re: H2-B Visa Program effect on Maryland's crab processors

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

This letter is being sent on behalf of the Dorchester Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. We understand you are aware of the change in the H2-B visa program and the impact it is having on crab processors in Maryland and in particular within Dorchester County.

We want to help ensure everyone understands this change will impact more than just the processors who cannot get the workforce they have relied on for over two decades. Waterman that are supplying the crabs will experience a significant reduction in demand and as a result reduction in pricing. These hardworking stewards of our heritage already have a difficult time covering the cost of fuel and maintenance on their boats and this added pressure will force many to leave the industry. Local restaurants rely on the crab meat supplied by the processors to attract patrons to their establishments. Soring cost and supply shortages of local crab meat will impact their ability to maintain already thin margins. If any of the processors or related businesses are forced to close their doors this season because we cannot find a solution to the issue they will likely never reopen.

Asking an industry to adjust major business practices with such little notice is not a reasonable approach, and we hope our elected officials can find a quick solution to solve the immediate need and then work to define a long-term plan.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to reach out to us. If there any action you need from the Chamber to help with a resolution, please let us know.

Sincerely,

William Christopher, President/CEO



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

August 27, 2018

Mr. William Christopher
President/CEO
Dorchester Chamber of Commerce
528 Poplar Street
Cambridge, Maryland 21613

Dear Mr. Christopher:

Thank you for your May 4, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

Your letter urges Secretary Nielsen to approve additional H-2B petitions pursuant to the H-2B visa provisions contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141), which was signed by the President on March 23, 2018.

This provision authorized Secretary Nielsen, in consultation with Secretary Acosta, to determine whether to increase, and if so, by how many (within specified parameters), the number of available H-2B visas for fiscal year (FY) 2018. In making her decision to increase the number of H-2B visas, the Secretary carefully weighed several factors, including whether U.S. workers may be harmed by any such increase.

On May 31, 2018, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Department of Labor published a temporary final rule increasing the cap on H-2B nonimmigrant visas by up to 15,000 additional visas through the end of FY 2018. The Secretary does not intend to reopen the supplemental cap for FY 2018.

As with the essentially identical provision in the FY 2017 Omnibus, DHS did not ask for, and does not believe it is appropriate to have, the discretion to authorize the issuance of additional H-2B visas, in general, and specifically under a supplemental cap. I share Secretary Nielsen's opinion that Members of Congress have the best information to know the correct number of H-2B visas needed to support American businesses without harming American workers because congressional representatives have the best understanding of their constituencies and the needs of their local employers.

Further, I share the Secretary's desire to work together with Congress to find solutions to most effectively allocate available H-2B visas throughout the year, while also protecting U.S. workers in the process. DHS will be submitting a congressionally mandated report that details options for addressing the issue of late-season filers in the H-2B program, resulting in their inability to obtain H-2B workers. This report will include suggestions on how the program

Mr. William Christopher
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can better serve our national interest. In the meantime, DHS continues to take steps of its own in this regard, including advising members of the public who may have information about a participating employer who is abusing the H-2B program on how to file a report through ReportH2BAbuse@uscis.dhs.gov.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Francis Cissna". The letters are stylized and cursive.

L. Francis Cissna
Director