



“The H-2B Temporary Foreign Worker Program: Examining the Effects on Americans’ Job Opportunities and Wages”

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest**

By

AmericanHort and The National Association of Landscape Professionals

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Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member Schumer, thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this written testimony for today’s hearing on “The H-2B Temporary Foreign Worker Program: Examining the Effects on Americans’ Job Opportunities and Wages.”

AmericanHort was formed in 2014 by the consolidation of the American Nursery & Landscape Association and OFA – The Association of Horticulture Professionals. With a combined history of 220+ years, AmericanHort supports nearly 16,000 member and affiliated businesses that include breeders, greenhouse and nursery growers, garden retailers, distributors, interior and exterior landscape professionals, florists, students, educators, researchers, manufacturers, and all of those who are part of the industry market chain. The horticulture industry’s production, wholesale, retail, and landscape service components have annual sales of \$163 billion, and sustain over 1,150,000 full- and part-time jobs. Our mission is to unite, promote, and advance the horticulture industry through advocacy, collaboration, connectivity, education, market development, and research.

The National Association of Landscape Professionals represents an industry of nearly 1 million landscape, lawn care, irrigation and tree care experts who create and maintain green spaces for the benefit of society and the environment. The association works with law makers and the public to protect and grow the industry and offers education, networking, training and certification programs that increase the professionalism in the industry and inspire its members to excellence.

Statistical analysis and the experience of our individual members clearly demonstrate that the H-2B program helps grow the U.S. economy and increase American jobs. According to the American Enterprise Institute study on [Immigration and American Jobs](#), every H-2B worker creates or sustains 4.64 American jobs on average.

The H-2B program provides a vital and legal source of seasonal labor for the landscape industry and other industries that cannot fill their labor needs with American citizens. Employers who turn to the H-2B program do so as a last resort. The landscape industry is one of the major users of this program because the industry requires numerous workers during the busy spring and summer seasons. Employers are unable to attract significant numbers of American workers for these labor-intensive, short-term, seasonal jobs. Because of the seasonal nature of the industry, traditional sources of seasonal labor, such as college students, are not adequate, and the heavy machinery used in the business prohibits companies from hiring high school students. Before they even apply for H-2B workers, companies go through an intensive recruitment period in an attempt to hire Americans and must prove that they cannot find Americans to take the jobs. They gladly hire American workers when they can.

While the H-2B program is important to the landscape industry and its American work force, it is also a vital part of the vertically integrated green industry, which includes nursery growers, vehicle and equipment manufacturers and others whose economic livelihood is tied to the landscape industry. Their annual sales are dependent upon a robust and growing landscape industry. In today's growing economy, access to reliable, legal labor is the limiting factor on company growth. The H-2B program allows landscape businesses to fill the labor gap during peak seasons if American workers are not available in sufficient numbers to meet employers' needs.

A vibrant landscape and horticultural industry would not be possible without the dedicated and skilled American professionals that run and manage businesses across the country and the seasonal H-2B workers that support them during peak seasons.