

YOUR LETTERHEAD

DATE

Dear Congressman/Senator:

I'm writing to ask your help on an important issue that impacts our ability to accomplish timely and cost effective reforestation (tree planting) after timber harvest.

Approximately 95% of all U.S. manual tree planting work is accomplished by forestry contractors who utilize "guest workers" that are brought into the U.S. for this seasonal work under the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) H-2B Visa Program.

The U.S. DOL recently revised its wage methodology for these H-2B workers and issued a Final Rule that will, in the case of reforestation, mandatorily raise the wages of "guest worker" tree planters in some case by as much as 129%.

	OLD RATE		NEW RATE			NEW RATE	
			LOWEST	% Increase		HIGHEST	% Increase
Alabama	\$10.40	to	\$13.06	26%	to	\$21.16	104%
Arkansas	10.16	to	13.08	23%	to	16.32	61%
Louisiana	9.60	to	16.31	70%	to	16.31	70%
Mississippi	9.52	to	14.46	52%	to	17.66	86%
North Carolina	7.63	to	16.38	123%	to	16.96	129%
South Carolina	9.24	to	11.96	29%	to	-----	----
Tennessee	9.85	to	10.42	6%	to	12.09	23%
Texas	9.90	to	12.64	28%	to	13.54	37%

This type of tree planting wage increase cannot be passed on to the landowners who reforest. When faced with a tree planting labor cost increase of this magnitude most landowners will simply decide not to reforest.

As if this were not enough, U.S. DOL is currently revising the balance of its H-2B Visa Program Rules and the Agency's Proposed Rule contained unfair and expensive worker housing, worker work guarantees, and U.S. worker hiring requirements. If the Final Rule retains these onerous requirements many reforestation firms will also simply go out of business.

We urge you to contact the U.S. DOL Secretary Solis and ask the Department to rescind the January 19, 2011 final H-2B Wage Rule and to abandon plans to move forward with revision of the March 18, 2011 Proposed H-2B Rule.

Sincerely,

Landowner/Wood Using Company