

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 11, 2024

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwomen and Ranking Members,

We write with shared concerns regarding the annual adjustment to the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR). Now in 2024, the H-2A labor rates paid by agricultural employers have become more unaffordable. The new rates put further financial strain on farm operations of all sizes, and we urge you to include an H-2A wage freeze in upcoming funding legislation.

The national average AEWR has already more than doubled over the past two decades, making agricultural guest labor unaffordable for farm employers and resulting in higher consumer costs. According to the American Farm Bureau Federation, the national average AEWR will be around \$17.55, which is upwards of a mean 5 percent increase over 2023. While the AEWR varies by region, nearly half of all states are projected to have an AEWR between \$17 and \$19 per hour in 2024. Meanwhile, producers in Canada pay closer to \$11 per hour for fieldworkers, or even approximately \$1.50 per hour in Mexico. This uneven playing field greatly disadvantages our domestic producers.

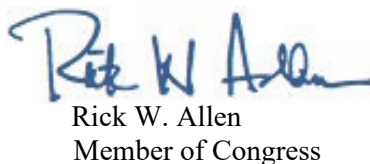
For farmers and ranchers who use H-2A, the skyrocketing AEWR will only compound inflated input costs like energy and fertilizer, other guest worker expenses like transportation and housing, and burdens from several impending federal regulations and fees. USDA data shows that hired farm labor costs account for nearly 15 percent of total cash expenses. More labor-intensive industries will be hardest-hit, including specialty crop growers, who already spend nearly 40 percent of their total cash expenses on labor alone. If we do nothing, many of our constituents will be forced shutter their businesses, despite good-faith efforts to ensure our national food security and feed families across our nation.

While more permanent solutions are needed to address the AEWR's past impact and its future trajectory, we request that an upcoming government funding vehicle prohibit funds from being used to implement a wage increase or otherwise freeze the H-2A wage rates at January 2023 levels. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



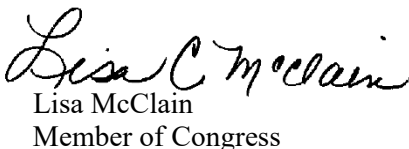
Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress



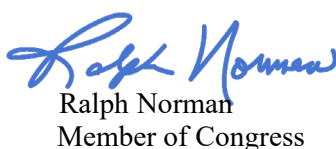
Rick W. Allen
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



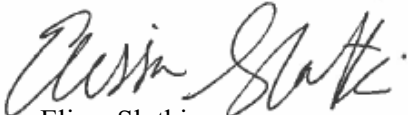
Lisa McClain
Member of Congress

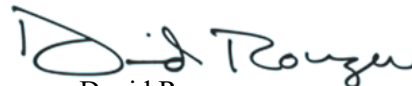


Ralph Norman
Member of Congress




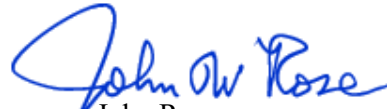
Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress

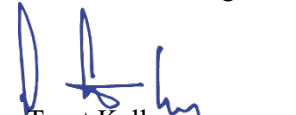

Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress


David Rouzer
Member of Congress

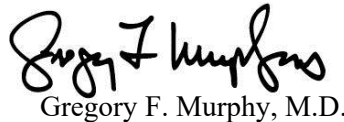

Austin Scott
Member of Congress



Dan Meuser
Member of Congress

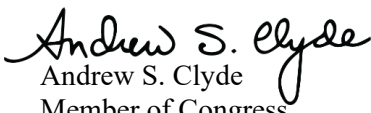

John Rose
Member of Congress


Trent Kelly
Member of Congress



Mike Ezell
Member of Congress

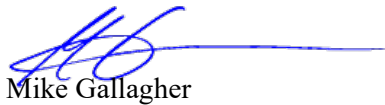

Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
Member of Congress


John Moolenaar
Member of Congress

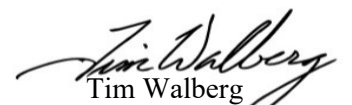

Andrew S. Clyde
Member of Congress


Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress



Byron L. Donalds
Member of Congress


Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress


Michael Guest
Member of Congress


Tim Walberg
Member of Congress


Cliff Bentz
Member of Congress



William Timmons
Member of Congress

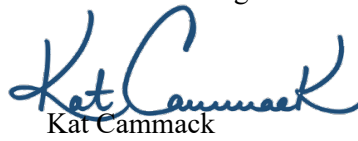

Jerry L. Carl
Member of Congress


David Kustoff
Member of Congress



Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
Member of Congress

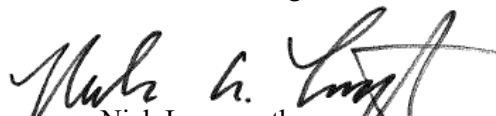

Jack Bergman
Member of Congress


Greg Pence
Member of Congress


Kat Cammack
Member of Congress

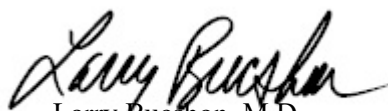

Mike Bost
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress

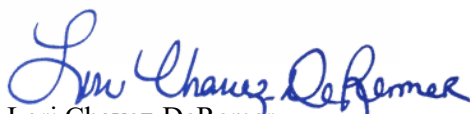

Nick Langworthy
Member of Congress



Eric Houcin
Member of Congress



John Duarte
Member of Congress

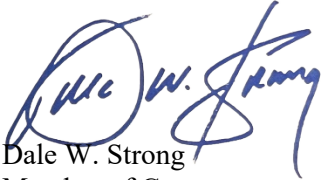

Larry Bucshon, M.D.
Member of Congress


Marc Molinaro
Member of Congress


Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Member of Congress


Barry Moore
Member of Congress


James R. Baird
Member of Congress



Dale W. Strong
Member of Congress



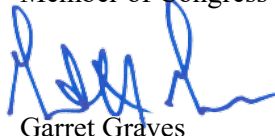
Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress




Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress



Pete Sessions
Member of Congress



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Gary Palmer
Member of Congress



Dan Bishop
Member of Congress



Andy Barr
Member of Congress



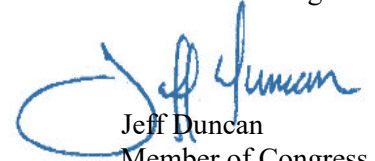
Darin LaHood
Member of Congress



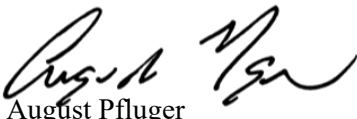
Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress



Nancy Mace
Member of Congress



Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress



August Pfluger
Member of Congress



Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



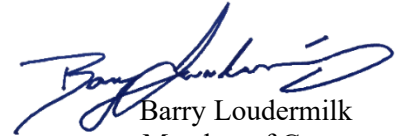
Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



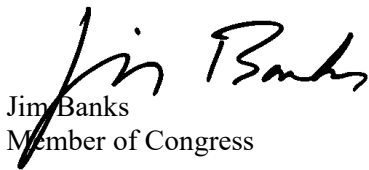
James Comer
Member of Congress



Frank D. Lucas
Member of Congress



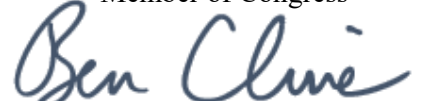
Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress



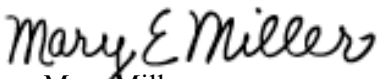
Jim Banks
Member of Congress



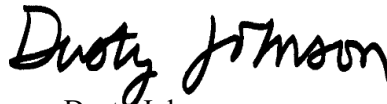
Lance Gooden
Member of Congress



Ben Cline
Member of Congress




Mary Miller
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress



Mike D. Rodgers
Member of Congress



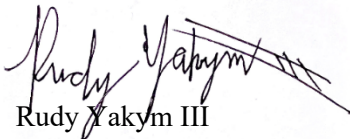
Clay Higgins
Member of Congress



Kelly Armstrong
Member of Congress



Brett Guthrie
Member of Congress



Rudy Yakym III
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



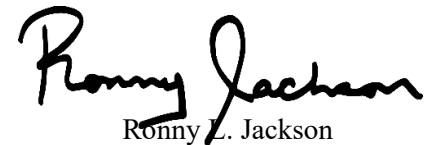
Russell Fry
Member of Congress




Mike Kelly
Member of Congress



Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



Ronny L. Jackson
Member of Congress



John Joyce, M.D.
Member of Congress



John James
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress