Pursuant to this authority granted to you by Congress, I have attached letters from some of South Dakota's employers illustrating the importance of the H-2B program and the obstacles facing them when trying to fill these positions. These support letters represent merely a fraction of the businesses that have contacted my office about the importance of this program. I am confident that their real-world experiences will help inform the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) decision making process.

The busy season for H-2B labor is already underway, especially for the tourism and outdoor industries. South Dakota's businesses will need to receive any additional visas as soon as possible. In fiscal year 2017, Congress granted DHS similar authority to provide additional visas. The final rulemaking, however, came far too late in the season for many of my state's businesses to benefit. In order to mitigate the harm that has already been done by this labor shortage, H-2B visa holders will need to be on the job without delay.

Our nation's immigration and labor policies should have as its top consideration the American economy and the American worker. President Trump has to date sought to champion this cause, and I appreciate the role you have played in that effort. In advancement of these goals, I respectfully request that you: 1.) take into account the perspective of South Dakota's small and seasonal businesses, including the inevitable effect on domestic employment, as you weigh decisions related to the H-2B program, and 2.) instruct U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services officials to take every available measure to expedite processing should DHS make additional visas available this fiscal year.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to work with you on this issue. Please feel free to reach out should you have questions or need clarification about the importance of this program for the economy and people of South Dakota.

Sincerely,

M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable R. Alexander Acosta