



STATE OF GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Tyler J Harper
COMMISSIONER

Monday, February 24, 2025

Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer
United States Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20210

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer,

First, I want to offer my sincere congratulations on your confirmation as U.S. Secretary of Labor. I look forward to working with you and President Trump to empower American farmers, level the playing field with foreign competitors, and Make American Agriculture Great Again. I am writing today to ask that you immediately move to freeze or repeal the 2025 Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) increase for H-2A laborers promulgated in December 2024 under the Biden Administration.

It is no secret 2024 was a difficult year for farmers in Georgia and across the country. Depressed commodity prices, inflation, high inputs, and high interest have caused an over \$40 billion drop in US Net Farm Income – the largest decrease in history. Combine these factors with the impact of a generational storm like Hurricane Helene, which wiped out over a third of our industry's market value overnight, and you can begin to understand the dire situation too many Georgia farmers are facing right now.

Georgia's 9% AEWR increase from 2024 to 2025 will force Georgia farm families to pay millions more for labor this year. In fact, over the final three years of the Biden Administration, the federally mandated rate farmers must pay H-2A laborers increased by 31% - costing Georgia farmers approximately \$250 million. Even more concerning, is the fact that this appears to have been done intentionally. The Biden Administration, through a 2022 rule change, created a wage classification system designed to produce a never-ending cycle of artificially inflated wages. To continue that cycle, especially while our farmers are just now beginning a multi-year recovery effort from Hurricane Helene would be unconscionable.

H-2A laborers play an essential role supporting our agricultural economy in Georgia, and they deserve to be paid a fair wage. That is undeniable. However, it is equally undeniable that the significant costs of utilizing the H-2A program have begun to outweigh its benefits for American producers, and reform is desperately needed.

We have an opportunity to turn the page from the Biden Administration and to make positive changes for American producers across the country. I hope you will strongly consider this request, and I look



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forward to working together to making real, meaningful reforms to the H-2A program in order to better serve both farmers and farm workers.

God Bless & Keep Plowin,

Tyler J Harper, Commissioner
Georgia Department of Agriculture

This letter is co-signed by the below organizations, business, and individuals:

Signers will be listed as below:

- a. Organization Name
- b. Farm Name – Farm Location
- c. Mr/Mrs First, Last – City, Ga
- d. Sen./Rep. First, Last – District XX