H2B Update and CRS UVM Report

H-2B Updates

- **DHS Funding Bill Advances with Certified Seasonal Employer Cap Relief Language:** On June 11, the House Appropriations Committee advanced its FY 2027 Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill on a party-line vote. The legislation retains the certified seasonal employer H-2B cap relief language that the H-2B Workforce Coalition has been advocating for. The provision would establish an exemption from the statutory 66,000 annual H-2B visa cap for employers that received H-2B labor certifications in each fiscal year from FY 2022 through FY 2026. Eligible employers could obtain cap-exempt H-2B positions in FY 2027 up to the highest number of H-2B workers for which they were certified in any one of those five fiscal years. Any workers requested above that level would remain subject to the annual cap. Ahead of the committee markup, TCIA joined a coalition letter supporting the provision and urging House appropriators to retain the language in the bill.
- **Bipartisan Lawmakers Press DHS on H-2B Processing Delays:** On June 2, a bipartisan group of House lawmakers led by Rep. Ann Wagner (R-MO) sent a letter to DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin raising concerns about significant H-2B processing delays that employers report have prevented workers from arriving in time to meet seasonal labor needs. The letter notes that many employers have experienced substantial delays in the arrival of approved H-2B workers and argues that these disruptions are forcing businesses to delay projects, reduce services, and turn away customers. The lawmakers requested detailed information from DHS and USCIS regarding H-2B processing times, premium processing performance, petition rejection rates, lockbox processing issues, and potential improvements to the electronic filing process.

CRS Publishes Report on Vegetation Management Along Power Lines on Federal Lands
On June 8, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) published a report, "Vegetation Management for Wildfire Mitigation Along Electric Power Line Rights-of-Way on Federal Lands". CRS is the nonpartisan research arm of Congress that produces background reports to give Members and committees a neutral, shared reference on issues likely to come before them. The report maps how vegetation management along power line rights-of-way is governed on federal land—covering owner/operator responsibilities, the agencies

that regulate the work, NERC reliability standards, and Section 512 of FLPMA—and closes with an analysis of how the pending Fix Our Forests Act (S. 1462/H.R. 471) and 2026 farm bill would affect vegetation management along these rights-of-way. In its "Issues for Congress" section, the report identifies challenges that stakeholders have raised—including inconsistency across federal land-management agencies, administrative and permitting delays, and limited agency capacity—and lays out options Congress could consider in response. These options include standardizing planning and approval processes across jurisdictions, extending mandatory reliability standards to certain lines between 100 kV and 200 kV not currently covered, authorizing greater coordination among the agencies that manage power line rights-of-way, and creating a program to assist operators with vegetation management costs.