

Talking Points: Practical Immigration Solutions for Tree Care

- **Our workforce challenge is real and persistent:** Tree care is rewarding but also dangerous and physically demanding. The domestic labor market alone has not met our workforce needs, which threatens both community safety and business stability.
- **Tree care is essential public safety work:** Our crews maintain trees near homes, businesses, and power lines. Without enough trained workers, communities face greater risks from storms, wildfires, and downed utility lines.
- **H-2B visa cap is too low:** The current cap of 66,000 visas per year falls far short of demand. This leaves companies unable to meet contracts, delays critical work, and forces us to scale back investments in equipment and full-time U.S. staff.
- **Certainty for responsible employers:** Congress should maintain the bipartisan “Certified Seasonal Employer” exemption in the FY26 DHS Appropriations Bill. This would allow long-time H-2B users to operate with certainty instead of uncertainty that disrupts safety-critical work.
- **Protecting TPS workers is vital:** Many tree care companies rely on long-time employees under Temporary Protected Status. These workers contribute billions in taxes and play critical roles in our communities. Sudden policy changes without DHS compliance guidance disrupt businesses and put public safety at risk.
- **Need for clarity from DHS:** Employers need certainty and transition time when TPS or work authorization policies change. Without it, companies face abrupt workforce losses that jeopardize service to utilities, municipalities, and property owners.
- **Support for the Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act (EWEA):** This bill would create a new H-2C visa program capped at 85,000 annually providing industries like ours with access to legal, temporary workers while strengthening the integrity of the system.
- **Balanced reforms are possible:** We strongly support securing the border. But immigration policy must also provide legal, reliable workforce pathways for industries like ours that safeguard communities and infrastructure.
- **E-Verify with fairness protections:** An improved E-Verify system that protects good-faith employers will help ensure a legal workforce without unfairly penalizing responsible businesses.
- **Congress must act:** By reforming the H-2B program, protecting TPS recipients, and advancing workforce solutions like EWEA, Congress can keep tree care companies strong, safeguard communities, and support American jobs.

Tree Care Industry Seeks Practical Immigration Solutions

Targeted reforms are essential for workforce stability and public safety

Who We Are

The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) represents more than **1,400 businesses employing 150,000 professionals** nationwide. Our members maintain trees near homes, businesses, utilities, and rights-of-way, playing a vital role in public safety, storm response, and wildfire prevention.

The Workforce Challenge

Tree care is rewarding but dangerous, and the domestic labor market alone has not met our workforce needs. Without enough trained workers, communities face greater risks from storms, wildfires, and downed utility lines.

H-2B Visa Program

The H-2B program allows companies to meet seasonal labor needs when American workers are unavailable. But the congressionally mandated cap of **66,000 visas per year** falls far short, leaving companies unable to meet contracts or respond to emergencies.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Workers

Many companies rely on long-time TPS employees who contribute billions in taxes and provide essential services. Sudden policy changes and unclear DHS compliance guidance create abrupt workforce disruptions that jeopardize safety and operations.

Balanced Solutions

Maintain the bipartisan 'Certified Seasonal Employer' exemption in the FY26 DHS Appropriations Bill to give long-Provide protections and compliance clarity for TPS recipients and employers.

Support the Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act (EWEA) to create an H-2C visa program (85,000 annually) Implement an improved E-Verify system with protections for responsible employers.

The Legislative Opportunity

Congress can strengthen both border security and workforce stability by enacting targeted immigration reforms that allow tree care companies to hire legal, qualified workers while protecting American jobs and communities.

Our Ask:

We urge Congress to enact targeted immigration reforms to stabilize the tree care workforce and safeguard communities, including:

- Continuing protections and compliance clarity for TPS recipients.
- Expanding and reforming the H-2B program, including the Certified Seasonal Employer exemption.
- Supporting the Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act (EWEA) to create a new H-2C visa program.
- Implementing a fair and improved E-Verify system.

These reforms will ensure public safety, preserve community services, and support American jobs while upholding the integrity of the immigration system.