

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4315

May 13, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Keith E. Sonderling
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear President Trump, Secretaries Mullin and Rollins, and Acting Secretary Sonderling:

I write to highlight a critical issue that is facing the Texas Gulf shrimping industry. Shrimpers from my congressional district and across the Gulf region applied for the H-2B Temporary Non-Agricultural Workers program but have not secured the necessary visas for the upcoming shrimp season, which begins on July 15, 2026.

As you all know, the H-2B visa program for Fiscal Year 2026 is heavily oversubscribed because of statutory caps. Earlier this year, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) received enough petitions to meet the congressionally mandated 66,000 H-2B caps for the second half of Fiscal Year 2026¹. Although supplemental visas added 64,716 visas in January 2026², the first and second allocations quickly reached the cap; and, given the widespread labor shortages impacting industries nationwide, I fear that this will also be the case with the third allocation.

The domestic shrimping industry is already facing an existential crisis due to unfair competition from foreign imports, combined with severe labor shortages, and increased fuel prices. Without immediate action from the Administration, this industry will suffer irreparable harm if they cannot

¹ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. *USCIS Reaches H-2B Cap for Second Half of FY 2026 and Filing Dates Now Available for Supplemental Visa Allocations*. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 20 March 2026, <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-reaches-h-2b-cap-for-second-half-of-fy-2026-and-filing-dates-now-available-for-supplemental>.

² U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. *Temporary Increases in H-2B Nonimmigrant Visas for FY 2026*. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 29 April 2026, <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/temporary-workers/h-2b-non-agricultural-workers/temporary-increase-in-h-2b-nonimmigrant-visas-for-fy-2026>.

employ the workers they need for the upcoming commercial shrimp season. Building on the Administration's April 2025 Executive Order 14276, "Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness³," I ask that you all release visas to the employers who have an approved H-2B Temporary Labor Certification but are facing a capped allocation whether that be from additional H-2B or H-2A visas or any program deemed necessary. This action is crucial to provide shrimpers with the resources to sustain operations in a challenging industry. According to the March 2026 NOAA Technical Memorandum⁴, on the national scale, revenue dropped by 50 percent from \$489 million in 2021 to \$221 million in 2023. The last profitable year for the Gulf shrimp fleet was in 2021.

The Administration must do more to protect the shrimping industry. Our domestic shrimpers are on the verge of a major collapse. If employers have the necessary visas, we can bring certainty to so many small family-owned businesses and coastal communities all over the Gulf Coast.

I stand ready to work with the Administration to find a solution to save the Texas Gulf Coast shrimping industry and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "VGMA", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Howard Lutnick, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce

³ Donald J. Trump. *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness*. The White House, 17 April 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/restoring-american-seafood-competitiveness/>.

⁴ Liese, Christopher, et al. *Snapshot: Economics of the Gulf of America Federal Shrimp Fishery*. NOAA Fisheries, March 2026, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2026-03/Gulf-Shrimp-Economic-Snapshot-Report-Final-NMFS-SEFSC-795.pdf>.