To Whom it May Concern,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I am the owner of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ based in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I am proud of the company that I have poured my heart and soul into for the last \_\_\_\_\_ years. The success of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has enabled me to give back to the community. I employ \_\_\_\_ year-round local, U.S. workers. I provide competitive salaries and benefits as well as paying substantial amount of taxes that support the local economy.

But all of this is in jeopardy due to our inability to acquire legal, seasonal workers to supplement our U.S. workforce. Because of our commitment to a 100% legal workforce we turned to the H2B visa program to supplement our U.S. workforce. **We would not be in business without the H-2B program**. We pay our H-2B workers close to double the minimum wage, they pay into Social Security and Medicare, and they return home each year. Their families do not accompany them thus they are not contributing to our already overburdened social services and school systems. I also have to hire all willing and qualified U.S. applicants first before bringing in one H-2B guest worker. It is truly an excellent program.

Unfortunately the government is denying me access to the program because of an arbitrary visa cap of 66,000 that was set in 1990 and has not been altered since. Because of the strong economy and the increased enforcement on businesses who employ unauthorized workers, the demand for the program has surged. It is now three times the supply.

The Department of Labor [announced](https://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/) on January 3, 2018 that on January 1, 2018 it received approximately 4,500 applications for over 80,000 workers for an April 1, 2018 start date. In the intervening weeks this number has risen to over 98,000. 98,000 workers have been requested for 33,000 slots!

If the cap is not addressed, the affected businesses, including mine, will have to turn down contacts, lay off U.S. workers and possibly close down. On occasion, a Returning Worker Exemption (RWE) is passed to alleviate the pressure on the cap. The RWE allows for returning workers to be exempt from the cap but there is no RWE or cap relief in place for FY 18.

I am writing to you in the hope that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will write a story on this crisis. My company is not the only local company that is affected. Click [here](http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/uncertainty-over-foreign-temporary-worker-program-puts-pressure-on-missouri/article_dcaf11b7-f9fb-5427-a469-35a79a75a6f8.html) for a recent St. Louis Post Dispatch article on the crisis and click [here](http://fox8.com/2018/02/25/local-landscapers-worried-about-having-workers-this-summer/) for a recent Fox News 8 Cleveland story.

Thank you for the consideration.

Regards,