

Western Growers president and CEO Tom Nassif has urged the U.S. Administration to quickly implement the recently published [proposals for the H-2A reforms](#).

The H-2A program allows U.S. employers to bring foreign nationals to the country to fill temporary agricultural jobs. According to the USDA, the proposed changes would "modernize the Department's H-2A regulations in a way that is responsive to stakeholder concerns and enhances employer access to a legal source of agricultural labor".

Proposals include updating the way wage rates are determined, streamlining and simplifying the application process, strengthening protections for U.S. and foreign workers, and easing burdens on employers.

"We appreciate the emphasis the Administration has placed on resolving agriculture's ongoing labor challenges, and their efforts to incorporate feedback from agricultural employers into the proposed H-2A reforms," Nassif said.

"While we encourage swift implementation of these important modernizations to the agricultural guest worker program, we also urge Congress to codify these changes into law as we have seen previous regulatory progress reversed by ensuing administrations.

"Furthermore, legislation will be required to address the pressing need agricultural employers have to retain their existing workforce."

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said on Monday: "The proposed rule will increase access to a reliable legal agricultural workforce, easing unnecessary burdens on farmers, increase enforcement against fraud and abuse, all while maintaining protections for America's workers.

"When this rule goes into effect, our farmers will be released from unnecessary and burdensome regulations allowing them to do what they do best."