

Jake Pierson
Biddeford
LD 2089

Good afternoon Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Labor Committee. My name is Jake Pierson, President of Pierson Nurseries Inc, a wholesale grower and distributor of plant material. Our business is located in Dayton and we have been a participant in the H2-A Seasonal Worker program for 6 years now.

I am writing today to ask that you vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 2089. The H2-A program is a federal program that allows any agricultural entity in this country to apply to be able to bring in seasonal workers. There are many requirements to meet before any business is eligible to use the H2-A program. One of the most expensive and complex of these requirements is that businesses have to provide housing for their workers. The Federal Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act provides those standards.

Allowing the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards to have different standards from the Federal will negatively impact Maine agricultural businesses. As this is a federal program, all Ag entities across the nation can use it. If Maine were to change the housing requirements to a more stringent standard, our Ag entities will be at a competitive disadvantage against any other farms in other states using the H2-A program that are being held to the Federal Standards. If the opposite was done by the State, I would fear that the Federal Government may make it impossible for farms in Maine to use the H2-A program. It is a complex and long process to get approved to use the program. Any disruption in that process may keep farms from being able to get their workers in time.

For these reasons, I ask that you please vote Ought Not To Pass on LD 2089.