

ASI's Statement of Support for the Securing Agriculture's Workforce Act (SAWA)

The American Sheep Industry (ASI), America's oldest livestock producer organization, represents a membership that for decades has been heavily dependent on the H2A and predecessor programs to hire the range herders and sheep shearers so vital to our family farms and ranches and the ability to produce America's lamb and wool. ASI, therefore, provides a qualified endorsement of Chairman "GT" Thompson's Securing Agriculture's Workforce Act (SAWA). While ASI acknowledges and appreciates SAWA's proposed reforms, timeline extensions and efficiencies for the broader agricultural industry, it does not provide the specific relief needed for onerous provisions specific to the range herder and shearer segments of the H2A program.

SAWA requires additional safeguards against market-blind state mandates on range herder wages, accountability for related production costs and 'special procedure' rules codification to be fully applicable to the unique needs of our producers.

The Department of Labor's interim final rule adjustments to AEWR calculations and housing costs issued last fall provided relief to general users of the H2A program but did not include range herder wage and housing modifications. As such, it is essential that SAWA or similar ag labor reform legislation include a requirement that range herders are extended similar relief. ASI stands in support of desperately needed agricultural labor reforms and urges Congress to ensure that any related legislation addresses the unique needs of the farmers and ranchers who rely on sheep herders and shearers to stay in business." – Larry Hopkins, Region III Director and Legislative Action Council Chair, American Sheep Industry

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About ASI

The American Sheep Industry (ASI) is the national organization representing the interests of U.S. sheep producers, advancing the sheep industry through targeted work in policy, animal health, market development, education, and producer-driven leadership.

Contact: Morgan Young
American Sheep Industry Association (ASI)
Phone: 303-771-3500





Email: info@sheepusa.org
Website: sheepusa.org

9785 MAROON CIRCLE, SUITE 360
ENGLEWOOD, COLORADO 80112
303.771.3500
info@sheepusa.org

