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H-2b visas approved



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The first H-2B foreign labor visa approvals in more than two years have been issued. And the Calvo administration says it is "cautiously optimistic" that this will spark the remaining petitions to bring thousands more workers here for the military buildup.

These mark the first approvals by USCIS since November 0f 2016, the start of an apparent reversal in policy that saw the number of H2B workers dwindle to a mere handful in the next two years. This raising alarm bells for local leaders concerned about the impact to the long-awaited marine relocation.

These new approvals were authorized through a provision by congress in the latest defense that specifically allows up to 4-thousand foreign workers for military projects.

Labor department alien processing and certification division administrator Greg Massey says this was the first test case under the NDAA law, and he expects the floodgates will soon open. "Once some approvals start coming in we're quickly gonna come up to our status quo of about 15-hundred workers and then looking at the work output that the military has put out during the industry forum we're kinda projecting that we should be up to that 4,500 range, again this is all crystal balling but at this point it looks like a conservative estimate," he said.

Five occupations for a total of 162 positions were approved for PHC Corporation. And another 171 positions for three other occupations are pending.

Meanwhile, there are petitions for another 550 workers for non-military projects, which are allowed under a district court ruling that ordered USCIS to revert back to its policy before November 2016 when the denials started.

The administrations calls this is the "second big test"

that would signal that the federal government is acting in good faith and that the military buildup will benefit the people on both sides of the fence.



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