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May 13, 2008

The Honorable John Conyers
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conyers and Ranking Member Smith:

On behalf of the American Hotel & Lodging Association and America's lodging industry, we are very pleased to learn that critical immigration legislation is being considered by Congress. This is especially significant in light of previous reports that certain members of the House were blocking any measures short of comprehensive reform.

With the approval of H.R. 4080 to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act establishing a separate nonimmigrant classification for fashion models by the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law, it is clear that limited immigration measures are indeed being actively considered and approved.

The fact that H.R. 4080, a specifically-targeted immigration measure, is now scheduled for consideration and a vote in the full Judiciary Committee is a clear statement that immigration-related measures that the committee and Congress consider an important priority to our economy will be addressed in a timely matter.

While we have no way to judge the crisis facing the fashion industry or the dire consequences looming for our economy if fashion models are not allowed to enter the U.S., we are confident that the situation was grave enough that H.R. 4080 merited immediate action.

The lodging industry is now facing a true crisis due to the lack of seasonal workers because Congress has not renewed the relief policy for H-2B visas. The survival of lodging properties throughout the country depends on their having successful seasons. During these peak seasons, they are able to generate the revenue necessary to offset the rest of the year when business is slow and maintain their full-time staffs year-round.

H.R. 1843 would renew the extremely successful policy of exempting returning H-2B workers from counting toward the annual 66,000 limit. Approved overwhelmingly twice, the provision expired at the end of last September.

We are confident that you will consider the survival of seasonal lodging properties a priority similar to that of fashion models and approve H.R. 1843 for consideration by the House with the utmost dispatch.

Please feel free to contact Shawn McBurney, senior vice president of Governmental Affairs at (202) 289-3123 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe McInerney".

Joseph McInerney
President and Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marlene M. Colucci".

Marlene Colucci
Executive Vice President for Public Policy

cc: Members of the House Committee on the Judiciary