

(Washington, D.C.) - Congressman Rob Wittman (R-VA) released the following statement following a press conference to announce the introduction of a discharge petition to bring H.R. 1843, the Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act of 2007, to the floor for a vote:

“Today I was honored to join Congressmen Boustany, Putnam and Gerlach to discuss the discharge petition being offered by Congressman Boustany that would bring to the House floor a Democratic-sponsored bill that helps small business owners gain easier access to temporary seasonal workers. Virginia's First District has many employers who rely heavily on seasonal workers and so I am pleased to join this effort to address this critical issue.

“The current H-2B visa program allows for only 66,000 temporary visas to be issued each year and it is often exhausted before many employers have an opportunity to submit an application. This year the cap was filled within days. In the midst of an economic slowdown, this is unacceptable.

“Increasing the number of H-2B visas is a simple and easy way to lessen the burden on seasonal employers who are now scrambling to find workers. Without this increase, many of these businesses may be forced to close their doors, resulting in permanent job loss for non-seasonal employees. This could be a fatal blow to many small communities.

“This is a small business issue, not an illegal immigration issue. In Virginia, several key industries, particularly the seafood, hospitality and landscaping industries could face irreparable damage if we do not take action. I will sign the discharge petition because I know this legislation will benefit our small business community and our economy and I will encourage my colleagues

to do the same.&quot;