



The Daily Dish

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LAURA COLLINS, DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | APRIL 2, 2014

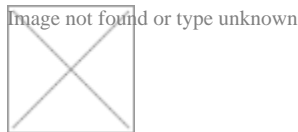
New AAF Regulatory Review- [EPA's Definition of "Water"](#): Three court cases have forced the EPA to adjust its rulemaking approach to the definition of "Waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act. "The rule includes a complicated framework and imposes \$166 million in annual costs to state and local governments, and private entities... The primary adjustment the agencies make in this proposal is to substitute a broad, standard definition of bodies of water...with a more case-based definition framework. The main crux of this case-based system, under Rapanos, is determining whether such bodies reach a 'significant nexus' with other navigable bodies traditionally covered by the CWA." "Although stakeholders can thank the Supreme Court for narrowing the scope of 'Water of the United States,' this proposal still has many issues to address."

AAF's Angela Booth's Guest Column via Real Clear Policy- [Medicaid Expansion: Beyond Yes or No](#): "Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin is launching his Medicaid-reform initiative. Wisconsin currently has one of the nation's most generous Medicaid programs..." With the new approach, "between Medicaid and the exchange, an estimated 224,580 people will receive coverage — reducing the size of Wisconsin's uninsured population by 47 percent." "There is no silver bullet for bending the Medicaid cost curve, and these are ideas we should be exploring. Governors are ready to innovate, but they need a willing partner in CMS."

Eakinomics: Increasing H-1B Visas Equal Smart Reform- Guest Authored by Laura Collins, AAF's Director of Immigration Policy

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) began accepting applications for H-1B visas – available for high skilled immigrant workers -for 2015 yesterday. The 85,000 available visas will likely be exhausted within a matter of days—last year, USCIS received so many applications that it stopped accepting them within the first week of the application period. Demand for these visas is very high, but the current H-1B visa cap does not reflect the market reality.

The figure below shows when the annual H-1B visa cap was reached for fiscal years 2001 through 2014. While the cap is not always reached in a matter of days, it has been exhausted every year since FY 2004, when the cap was lowered to its current level from 195,000 visas.



A 195,000 visa cap is very high, and it would be difficult to meet in many years. But satisfying demand, even if there are large numbers of unused visas, is more efficient than artificially restricting the number of skilled foreign workers available.

Increasing the H-1B cap would have far-reaching effects on the U.S. economy. A 2013 study by Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI) found that increasing the number of visas available to levels recommended by

last year's Senate Gang of 8 immigration bill (115,000-180,000, plus another 25,000 for workers with advanced degrees) would create 227,000 jobs in the first year. By 2045, more than 1.3 million jobs will be created. GDP and personal income would also increase—in the first year under the increased cap, GDP would increase by \$22 billion and personal income would increase by \$13.7 billion. A 2011 study by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) shows similar positive economic impact. A mere 10 percent increase in the number of H-1B workers would result in a 0.11 percent increase in the native employment rate. From 2001-10, this would have meant an extra 183 jobs for U.S. workers for every 100 H-1B jobs.

It is clear that highly skilled foreign workers can help drive job creation in the U.S. and contribute to economic growth. Increasing H-1B visas is a smart reform to our immigration system that will quickly pay dividends in the labor market and our economy.