Resolution in Support of the J-1 and H-2B Visa Exchange Visitor Programs

WHEREAS the Town of Nags Head, its residents, local businesses, and tourists depend on and value the students who participate in the J-1 and H-2B Visa Exchange Visitor Programs - Summer Work Travel Programs to meet the demands of visiting tourists during the summer season; and

WHEREAS the Presidential Proclamation issued on June 22, 2020, suspended the Summer Work Travel Programs through December 31, 2020, with the possibility of extension; and

WHEREAS during the 2019 season there were approximately 400 Summer Work Travel participants employed within the Town of Nags Head, while during the 2020 season no more than 40 were employed within the Town; and

WHEREAS due to the suspension and loss of Summer Work Travel Program participants, Summer Work Travel Host Employers have needed to reduce services and operating hours, close off portions of their facilities, and turn away customers; and

WHEREAS Town of Nags Head Ocean Rescue, which has relied on Summer Work Travel Program participants in seasons' past, has also been impacted, having approximately 20 fewer lifeguards, resulting in the reduction of lifeguard stands from 15 to 10 and negatively impacting this critical service; and

WHEREAS a recent survey of Summer Work Travel Host Employers found the average employer laid off or furloughed 13 employees each, and lost on average $250,000 in revenues, because of the loss of Summer Work Travel participants; and

WHEREAS the Town of Nags Head is committed to ensuring American employees are protected during these difficult economic times, but that not nearly enough Americans are applying for the seasonal jobs offered in Nags Head, and certainly not enough to replace the lost Summer Work Travel Program participants; and

WHEREAS the Presidential Proclamation 10014 of June 22, 2020, as amended by the Presidential Proclamation of 22 June 2020 has a specific provision for periodically reviewing the suspension of programs like the Summer Work Travel program from the Proclamation's suspension, such as the 30 and 60 day reviews directed by the modifications to Section 4 of the Presidential Proclamation 10014; and

WHEREAS Section 3(b)(iv) the Presidential Proclamation of June 22, 2020 provides that the Secretaries of State and/or the Secretary of Homeland Security can determine which groups, like Summer Work Travel, can be exempted from the suspension because their entry would be in the national interest of the United States; and

WHEREAS Section 4(a)(i) of the Presidential Proclamation of June 22, 2020 further directs those Secretaries, along with the Secretary of Labor, to define categories like the Summer Work Travel program to be exempted per the procedures of Section 3(b)(iv) who can facilitate the immediate and continued economic recovery of the United States can determine which groups, like Summer Work Travel, can be exempted from the suspension because their entry would be in the national interest of the United States; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Nags Head determines the immediate resumption of the Summer Work Travel Program is necessary to the immediate and continuing economic recovery of businesses within the Town of Nags Head, wholeheartedly endorses the State Department's Summer Work Travel program, and:

1. Petitions the White House and Trump Administration to issue a National Interest Exemption for Economic Recovery during the next 60-Day Review, concluding on September 22, 2020, as provided by Section 3(b)(iv) and 4(a)(i) of the Presidential Proclamation of June 22, 2020;

2. Asks the federal Congressional delegation for the Town of Nags Head to engage the White House in support of this National Interest Exemption;

3. Directs the Clerk of the Town to send a copy of this Resolution to the President and all federal Congressional Members representing Nags Head;

4. Encourages all Town residents to participate in events and initiatives that will raise the overall awareness of the need for the resumption of the Summer Work Travel Program and to engage their Congressional Representatives asking them to support this program as well; and

5. Supports the Outer Banks International Student Outreach Program (ISOP) and Summer Work Travel Program sponsors as they help our Town resume this program.

Adopted at the Town of Nags Head, North Carolina this 2nd day of September 2020.

As amended to include the H-2B Visa Exchange Visitor Program via Board consensus approval on this 8th day of September 2020.

Benjamin Cahoon, Mayor
Town of Nags Head

ATTEST:

Carolyn F. Morris, Town Clerk