

# The NHLA Goes to Washington



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MIAMI, Fla. – The [National Hispanic Landscape Alliance \(NHLA\)](#), will join the [National Association of Landscape Professionals \(NALP\)](#), in honoring American veterans during the country's largest industry [Day of Service](#) event at [Arlington National Cemetery](#). Participants will also be visiting their members of Congress to advocate for the issues that are most affecting the industry today. The events will take place July 19-21, 2015.

## **Renewal & Remembrance**

NALP's Renewal and Remembrance is a nationally recognized event which draws hundreds of landscape and lawn care professionals from across the country. The lawn care professionals take part in mulching, cabling and installing lightning protection for trees, pruning, planting and liming and aerating more than 200 acres. This is the third year that NHLA members participate in the beautification project.

"It is such an honor to come together as an industry to pay our respects to the many veterans who served our country bravely and beautify Arlington National Cemetery. The NHLA is proud to volunteer its time, skills and resources for this initiative," said NHLA President Juan Torres.

A number of board members will be leading the NHLA delegation this year, including NHLA president Juan Torres ([Next Step Solutions](#), Connecticut), president-elect Pam Berrios ([Alexandria Lawn Services Inc., Virginia](#)), treasurer Domenic Chiarella ([7 of 7 Best Business & Life Strategies, Connecticut](#)), immediate past president Raul Berrios ([Rulyscapes Inc., Virginia](#)), director Mari Medrano ([CoCal](#), Colorado) and director Ken Taylor ([John Deere](#), North Carolina). The organization's executive director Ralph Egues and other staff will also participate.

## **Legislative Days on the Hill**

During their visit to Washington, D.C., NHLA leadership will be meeting with

legislators and congressional staff on Capitol Hill to discuss issues that are affecting the industry at large, including the continued push by the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) to restrict turfgrass use across the country through model codes and green building standards. They will also be discussing the [Department of Labor's \(DOL\)](#) burdening of the H-2B visas program which is critical for reputable landscape services companies seeking to meet peak-season labor needs.

"The NHLA has and continues to shed light on critical issues that are threatening reputable companies across the nation and engage elected and appointed officials in making sure that our industry's concerns are not only voiced, but also heard," said Ralph Egues, executive director of the NHLA.

The NHLA advocates against turf limitations that the EPA continues to advance without scientific basis to developers of model building codes and green building systems for nationwide implementation. The NHLA stresses that failure to recognize the significant environmental benefits of turfgrass can be seriously detrimental to the health and wellbeing of our communities. Turfgrass is a high-performing ground cover solution that greatly reduces stormwater runoff and erosion, while producing oxygen and sequestering carbon at impressive rates. Decisions to limit turfgrass use also adversely impact the livelihood of millions of individuals nationwide, many of which are Hispanic.

Furthermore, the organization has been working tirelessly to save the H-2B visa program for foreign seasonal workers, which benefits American laborers who work with, supervise, and otherwise support H-2B workers. Reputable U.S. companies with labor needs that fluctuate by season, such as those in the landscape industry, have long relied on the H-2B visa program. It is imperative to the growth of these businesses that the DOL stop burdening the program with rules that make it a more costly, arduous, unpredictable and riskier solution. These businesses would otherwise be thriving and adding full-time, year-round jobs that U.S. workers want and that many U.S. Hispanics are especially qualified to fill by virtue of their industry knowledge and their linguistic and cultural competencies.