worker availability) whether specific able, willing, eligible and qualified replacement U.S. workers are available or can be reasonably expected to be present at the employer's establishment within 72 hours from the date the employer's request was received. The CO will expeditiously, but in no case later than 72 hours after the time a complete request (including the signed statement included in paragraph (b) of this section) is received, make a determination on the request. An employer may appeal a denial of such a determination in accordance with the procedures contained in §655.171.

(b) Unavailability of U.S. workers. The employer's request for a new determination must be made directly to the CO by telephone or electronic mail, and must be confirmed by the employer in writing as required by this paragraph. If the employer telephonically or via electronic mail requests the new determination by asserting solely that U.S. workers have become unavailable, the employer must submit to the CO a signed statement confirming such assertion. If such signed statement is not received by the CO within 72 hours of the CO's receipt of the request for a new determination, the CO will deny the request.

(c) Notification of determination. If the CO determines that U.S. workers have become unavailable and cannot identify sufficient available U.S. workers who are able, willing, eligible, and qualified or who are likely to become available, the CO will grant the employer's request for a new determination. However, this does not preclude an employer from submitting subsequent requests for new determinations, if warranted, based on subsequent facts concerning purported nonavailability of U.S. workers or referred workers not being eligible workers or not able, willing, or qualified because of lawful job-related reasons.

§ 655.167 Document retention requirements.

(a) Entitles required to retain documents. All employers filing an Application for Temporary Employment Certification requesting H-2A agricultural workers under this subpart are required to retain the documents and records proving compliance with this subpart.

(b) Period of required retention. Records and documents must be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of certification of the Application for Temporary Employment Certification or from the date of determination if the Application for Temporary Employment Certification is denied or withdrawn.

(c) Documents and records to be retained by all applicants. (1) Proof of recruitment efforts, including:

(i) Job order placement as specified in §655.121;

(ii) Advertising as specified in §655.152, or, if used, professional, trade, or ethnic publications;

(iii) Contact with former U.S. workers as specified in §655.153; or

(iv) Additional positive recruitment efforts (as specified in §655.154).

(2) Substantiation of information submitted in the recruitment report prepared in accordance with §655.156, such as evidence of nonapplicability of contact of former employees as specified in §655.153.

(3) The final recruitment report and any supporting resumes and contact information as specified in §655.156(b).

(4) Proof of workers' compensation insurance or State law coverage as specified in §655.122(e).

(5) Records of each worker's earnings as specified in §655.122(j).

(6) The work contract or a copy of the Application for Temporary Employment Certification as defined in 29 CFR 501.10 and specified in §655.122(q).

(d) Additional retention requirement for associations filing Application for Temporary Employment Certification. In addition to the documents specified in paragraph (c) above, Associations must retain documentation substantiating their status as an employer or agent, as specified in §655.131.

§ 655.170 Extensions.

An employer may apply for extensions of the period of employment in the following circumstances.

(a) Short-term extension. Employers seeking extensions of 2 weeks or less of the certified Application for Temporary
Employment Certification must apply directly to DHS for approval. If granted, the Application for Temporary Employment Certification will be deemed extended for such period as is approved by DHS.

(b) Long-term extension. Employers seeking extensions of more than 2 weeks may apply to the CO. Such requests must be related to weather conditions or other factors beyond the control of the employer (which may include unforeseen changes in market conditions). Such requests must be supported in writing, with documentation showing that the extension is needed and that the need could not have been reasonably foreseen by the employer. The CO will notify the employer of the decision in writing, if time allows, or will otherwise notify the employer of the decision. The CO will not grant an extension where the total work contract period under that Application for Temporary Employment Certification and extensions would be 12 months or more, except in extraordinary circumstances. The employer may appeal a denial of a request for an extension by following the procedures in §655.171.

(c) Disclosure. The employer must provide to the workers a copy of any approved extension in accordance with §655.122(q), as soon as practicable.

§ 655.171 Appeals.

Where authorized in this subpart, employers may request an administrative review or de novo hearing before an ALJ of a decision by the CO. In such cases, the CO will send a copy of the OFLC administrative file to the Chief ALJ by means normally assuring next-day delivery. The Chief ALJ will immediately assign an ALJ (which may be a panel of such persons designated by the Chief ALJ from the Board of Alien Labor Certification Appeals (BALCA)).

(a) Administrative review. Where the employer has requested administrative review, within 5 business days after receipt of the ETA administrative file the ALJ will, on the basis of the written record and after due consideration of any written submissions (which may not include new evidence) from the parties involved or amici curiae, either affirm, reverse, or modify the CO’s decision, or remand to the CO for further action. The decision of the ALJ must specify the reasons for the action taken and must be immediately provided to the employer, the CO, the OFLC Administrator and DHS by means normally assuring next-day delivery. The ALJ’s decision is the final decision of the Secretary.

(b) De novo hearing—(1) Conduct of hearing. Where the employer has requested a de novo hearing the procedures in 29 CFR part 18 apply to such hearings, except that:

(i) The appeal will not be considered to be a complaint to which an answer is required;

(ii) The ALJ will ensure that the hearing is scheduled to take place within 5 business days after the ALJ’s receipt of the OFLC administrative file, if the employer so requests, and will allow for the introduction of new evidence; and

(iii) The ALJ’s decision must be rendered within 10 calendar days after the hearing.

(2) Decision. After a de novo hearing, the ALJ must affirm, reverse, or modify the CO’s determination, or remand to the CO for further action. The decision of the ALJ must specify the reasons for the action taken and must be immediately provided to the employer, CO, OFLC Administrator and DHS by means normally assuring next-day delivery. The ALJ’s decision is the final decision of the Secretary.

§ 655.172 Withdrawal of job order and application for temporary employment certification.

(a) Employers may withdraw a job order from intrastate posting if the employer no longer plans to file an Application for Temporary Employment Certification. However, a withdrawal of a job order does not nullify existing obligations to those workers recruited in connection with the placement of a job order pursuant to this subpart or the filing of an Application for Temporary Employment Certification.

(b) Employers may withdraw an Application for Temporary Employment Certification once it has been formally accepted by the NPC. However, the employer is still obligated to comply with the terms and conditions of employment contained in the Application for