

TESTIMONY OF

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President of Jay Peak Resort

Jay, Vermont

Hearing on:

Reauthorizing the EB-5 Regional Center Program:
Promoting Job Creation and Economic Development
in American Communities

Before the

Senate Committee on the Judiciary
United State Senate

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday
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Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Bill Stenger and I am President and co-owner of Jay Peak Resort located in Jay, Vermont.

I am very appreciative of this opportunity to meet with you today and share with you my perspective on the significant value the EB-5 foreign investor, Regional Center Program represents to my employees, my community, and the State of Vermont and why I urge Congress to make this program permanent.

My company, Jay Peak Resort, was founded in 1955 as a winter ski resort. It is located in Orleans County three miles from the Canadian Border. George Aiken, one of Vermont's most revered U.S. Senators, called the northern region of Vermont the "Northeast Kingdom," because of its beauty and authentic hardworking people.

Orleans County is a place of great rural agricultural character, with beautiful mountains, streams and lakes, but it also has the most significant unemployment and economic challenge of any region in Vermont.

However, despite these facts I am very optimistic about the economic future of our community and its citizens. We are seeing at our facilities the significant creation of the biggest positive life changer a person needs, a job. A job that will sustain them and their families with

benefits, and a future that inspires and rewards their economic and human spirit. We are seeing this employment creation at Jay Peak and our surrounding communities in this terribly troubled economy solely because of the EB-5 foreign investor program.

In 1997, I had the opportunity to work with you, Mr. Chairman and then Governor of Vermont Howard Dean to create the Vermont Regional Center and see Jay Peak become its first EB-5 Pilot Project. In 2004, because of improved C.I.S. efforts and the renewed commitment by our State officials led by Governor Jim Douglas, the EB-5 program became truly functional from our perspective in Vermont.

Since 2005 Jay Peak has developed several EB-5 projects at the resort creating over 2,000 jobs in our region and over the next two years will create that number of jobs again.

The EB-5 Program has provided us the most important tool we need to build our business and create economic energy, Affordable Equity Capital.

Affordable capital is almost non-existent in this marketplace. However, through the EB-5 Regional Center Pilot Program, Jay Peak has raised over \$250 million of equity capital by welcoming over 500 investors from 56 countries. This capital has helped us build year-round facilities that we desperately need in order to be competitive, but

also helps us create full-time job opportunities for so many citizens throughout Northern Vermont's highest unemployment communities.

The EB-5 Program is a win-win-win program for all involved. Jay Peak is gaining access to equity capital to create facilities it needs and by doing so scores of quality year-round jobs are created in a rural, high unemployment area where our government wants to see job creation. In exchange for the job creating equity capital investment, the foreign investor benefits from a green card for themselves and immediate family members. I've met personally almost every investor participating in the Jay Peak Program and they are a group of wonderful people, so appreciative of the opportunity to live in, and contribute to, our society. I can tell you, that their equity investment is changing our region in a profound and positive way. Once in the United States, they have continued to contribute as everyone of them are well-educated, successful people, who have brought their family values and capital with them.

The success of Jay Peak's EB-5 Program has now led to other important job creating projects in our community. Ariel Quiros, my partner in Jay Peak, and I have created AnC Bio Vermont, a biotech research company that will employ 200 people and will be open in 2012-13. EB-5 investment has made this possible. We are also working on additional Orleans County commercial facilities, affordable housing and infrastructure programs, all scheduled for 2012 and 2013, resulting in several thousand more job opportunities. All EB-5 funded, all with overwhelming community support and significant economic

impact. However, unless this program is extended none will be possible.

I'd like to close by mentioning a few things that can make the EB-5 Program better for all concerned.

- Congress must make this program permanent so Regional Centers can concentrate on developing quality, long-term job creating programs. Short term extensions cripple the effectiveness because the projects can't plan correctly and potential investors won't have confidence to stick with a program because of its uncertainty.
- U.S.C.I.S. should make every effort to be as efficient as possible with swift EB-5 case processing so that predictability can become a program asset and not a program concern.

The current leadership at U.S.C.I.S. administering the EB-5 Program is interested and supportive of the EB-5 investor programs and see its economic benefit to the nation. Making this program permanent will send a clear message to all involved to embrace making the EB-5 Program even more impactful for all Regional Centers around the country so that the fullest positive economic benefits can be realized across the country.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Committee Members, the small business community in this country needs all the equity investment it can get right now. The EB-5 Program is a wonderful example of an

economic stimulus requiring no tax dollars, is not a burden to anyone and has nothing but good benefits for all involved.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today. I urge the Senate to make the EB-5 Regional Center Program permanent.

William J. Stenger
President & CEO
Jay Peak Resort