**Expert Opinion Letter (Confidential)**

**Analysis of Positional Requirements for O-1A**

Author: Prof. Joshua Ebrahim

Author Info: Long Island University + Roc Nation School of Sports

# AREAS OF EXPERTISE

* Business Management, Strategy and Planning
* Entrepreneurship
* Sports Management
* Supply Chain Management
* Strategic Sourcing
* Purchasing and Logistics

# EMPLOYMENT

Adjunct Professor, Long Island University + Roc Nation School of Sports, 2023 to present

Founder and CEO, ProFit X, 2019-2023

Adjunct Professor, Monroe College, 2016 to 2022

Certified NBA Player Agent, Rosenhaus Sports Representation, 2015 to 2019

Contract Manager, L-3 Communications, 2011 to 2014

# EDUCATION

* Bachelor of Arts in Computer Technology in Computer Technology Washington State University
* Master of Business in Contract and Acquisitions Management in Business Webster University

Dear USCIS,

It is my pleasure to support Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's petition for O-1A in the United States. He is an outstanding athlete with a proven track record of excellence in skimboarding. His expertise in competitive sports and mentorship makes him a valuable asset to any organization. His contributions have not only advanced the field of skimboarding but also inspired and mentored the next generation of athletes. As he embarks on this new chapter in his career, I have full confidence in his ability to continue driving innovation and excellence within the action sports domain.

To brieﬂy introduce myself, I am an Adjunct Professor at Long Island University + Roc Nation School of Sports. My academic credentials include a Bachelor’s Degree in Computer Technology and a Master of Business in Contract and Acquisitions Management from Webster University. My professional opinions have been widely accepted in all areas of computer information systems, business, entrepreneurship, sports management, supply chain, and related areas.

In preparation for this expert opinion letter, I have thoroughly reviewed the following documents related to Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s work and qualifications:

* Resume
* Criteria of Evidence
  + Membership
  + Published materials
  + Tour Schedules
  + Letters of Recommendation

**PETITIONER’S PROFILE SUMMARY**

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones is an accomplished athlete known for his exceptional achievements in skimboarding. His consistent top finishes in major competitions highlight his expertise and dedication to the sport. His skills and passion have led to his recognition as a prominent figure in the skimboarding community, including the release of a pro model skimboard under his name.

**Sustained National or International Acclaim**

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones has garnered significant national and international recognition through his consistent success in skimboarding, earning top placements in renowned competitions like the United Skim Tour (UST) and Skim USA. His first-place finishes and a signature pro-model skimboard released by Zap Skimboards are key markers of his influence. Yahir's impact extends beyond competition, as he also plays a vital role in mentoring emerging athletes and judging major events. His leadership and contributions have earned him testimonials from industry leaders, establishing his prominence in the sport.

In comparison to his peers, he stands out for his consistent high rankings and ability to inspire others. His top finishes in highly competitive events, including a second-place overall finish on the UST tour across multiple seasons, set him apart as one of the most accomplished athletes in the sport. Esteemed figures in the skimboarding industry have publicly recognized his talent, emphasizing not only his competitive skills but also his mentorship and leadership qualities. The fact that a major brand like Zap Skimboards created a pro-model board in his name further underscores his exceptional standing in the industry.

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s sustained influence in skimboarding is reflected in the ongoing recognition he receives from experts and the broader sporting community. Industry testimonials highlight his continuous contributions to advancing the sport and inspiring the next generation of skimboarders. His role as a mentor and judge, combined with the numerous accolades he has accumulated, shows that his recognition is not fleeting but rather built on years of consistent success. This long-term recognition places him among the elite professionals in skimboarding, affirming his extraordinary abilities and supporting his eligibility for the O-1A visa.

**Substantial Benefits to the United States**

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones brings substantial benefits to the United States through his expertise in skimboarding, a rapidly growing sport that has garnered significant interest in coastal regions of the country. As a top-ranked athlete with a proven track record in international competitions, Yahir’s presence aligns with the U.S.'s need for skilled athletes who can promote tourism, sports, and youth engagement. His role as a mentor and ambassador for the sport, combined with his ability to attract attention through media and competitions, positions him to contribute to the cultural and economic landscape of the U.S. coastal regions where the sport is most popular.

His work has the potential to create jobs and generate revenue within the skimboarding and broader action sports industry. His participation in events such as the United Skim Tour and Skim USA attracts competitors, tourists, and spectators, fueling local economies through hotel bookings, restaurant visits, and other tourism-related spending. Additionally, Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s association with Zap Skimboards and other sponsors contributes to increased sales of skimboarding equipment, further boosting industry growth. Data from similar sports industries suggest that action sports can generate millions of dollars annually in related tourism and product sales, providing a significant opportunity for economic development in regions hosting these events. According to an article by the Sports Conflict Institute, the sports industry in the United States accounts for roughly $14.3 billion in direct earnings each year, with an average salary of $39,000 per job (of around 456,000 jobs). This highlights the significant economic impact that sports, including action sports, have on the U.S. economy.

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s long-term presence in the U.S. will provide ongoing benefits by promoting and expanding skimboarding. His innovative work, including the design of his pro model with Zap Skimboards, can potentially influence broader sports equipment manufacturing sectors. The action sports industry, valued at $14.1 billion in 2020, is projected to grow significantly by 2027. With North America holding 40% of the market share and contributing over $15 billion annually (Zipdo Education Report, 2024), his leadership in this growing industry will benefit the U.S. economically and culturally.

1. **Documentation of receipt of nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence in the field of endeavor.**

In January 2024, Erick Yahir Valencia Morones received first place in the El Rey De Lovers competition in Cabo San Lucas, an award granted by the event organizers for excellence in skimboarding. This competition attracts top-tier athletes from around the world, making it an internationally recognized event in the skimboarding community. To secure the win, athletes are judged on technical skills, creativity, and performance, making this award prestigious due to its exclusivity and competitiveness.

The El Rey De Lovers competition is considered one of the leading events in the field, with only a select few athletes able to compete at this level each year. His achievement not only highlights his extraordinary ability but also solidifies his position as a top athlete in skimboarding. This award reflects his dedication, innovation, and leadership within the sport.

Receiving first place in this competition signifies Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s extraordinary ability and leadership in skimboarding. It demonstrates his innovation and consistency in a highly competitive field, placing him among the top athletes in the world. This award not only highlights Yahir’s individual talent but also underscores his critical role in advancing the sport globally, further cementing his position as a leading figure in professional skimboarding.

1. **Documentation of the beneficiary’s membership in associations in the field.**

The Skim USA Association is a renowned organization that plays a pivotal role in the world of skimboarding by providing opportunities for both amateur and professional athletes to compete and grow in the sport. With a mission centered on developing lifelong skills for young athletes, the association organizes major competitions and fosters a global community of skimboarders. Erick Yahir Valencia Morones is a distinguished member of this organization, having maintained his membership in good standing since 2022. His participation in various competitions, combined with his role in supporting the growth of the sport, showcases his dedication to skimboarding. In 2024, his talents were further recognized with the release of his own professional model skimboard, a significant achievement in his career.

The criteria for attaining membership at this level are rigorous, requiring not only competitive success but also contributions to the sport’s development. Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s membership reflects his outstanding accomplishments, including his numerous first-place finishes in competitions such as the Melaque Magia Skim Competition, where he won in the Professional Men’s Division. Additionally, his expertise was sought after to judge various divisions, demonstrating his deep understanding and mastery of the sport. Such responsibilities are entrusted to only the most qualified individuals, underscoring the level of respect and recognition he has earned from his peers and experts within the skimboarding community.

Membership in the Skim USA Association is considered highly prestigious, as it is an organization that brings together top athletes from around the world. The association's national and international competitions draw elite participants, and its focus on both competitive excellence and community building makes it a significant player in the field. Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s position within this organization reflects not just his athletic prowess but also his leadership and commitment to the sport’s future. His membership in Skim USA, reserved for individuals who demonstrate exceptional skill and contributions, stands as a testament to his extraordinary ability in the sport of skimboarding.

1. **Published material in professional or major trade publications or major media about the beneficiary, relating to the beneficiary's work in the field for which classification is sought.**

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones has garnered significant attention from various professional and major trade publications that recognize his extraordinary achievements in skimboarding. These publications emphasize his contributions to the sport, showcasing his skill, dedication, and impact on the skimboarding community. The materials provided reflect a comprehensive collection of articles and media coverage documenting his performances and victories in key competitions.

One notable publication, titled **"Yahir Valencia Wins El Rey De Lovers"**, was published on the Zap Skimboards Blog on January 2024. This article, authored by Zap Skimboards, offers detailed coverage of his first-place win in the El Rey De Lovers competition, a highly prestigious event in the skimboarding world. The piece provides an in-depth look at his performance, highlighting his technical prowess and strategic approach to the event. The article notes how he dominated the professional men’s division, further solidifying his position as a top competitor in the sport. This publication is significant as Zap Skimboards is a major media outlet in the skimboarding industry, with a wide readership among professionals and enthusiasts alike.

Another example is **"Season Recap with Yahir Valencia"**, published on the same platform. This article, also authored by Zap Skimboards, summarizes his achievements over the course of the year, documenting his multiple wins and top finishes in major tournaments. The recap includes quotes from him and other key figures in the sport, praising his consistency and leadership in the competitive skimboarding scene. This type of comprehensive coverage reflects his role as a standout athlete and demonstrates why his work continues to attract substantial media attention.

The publication of these articles on major platforms like Zap Skimboards, which serves as a go-to resource for skimboarding professionals and fans, is evidence of Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s extraordinary ability in the field. The visibility and influence of these media outlets ensure that his achievements are recognized at both national and international levels, further enhancing his reputation and solidifying his place among the elite athletes in the sport. These articles demonstrate the breadth and impact of his contributions to skimboarding and serve as a testament to his exceptional talent.

1. **Evidence of the participation on a panel, or individually, as a judge of the work of others in the same or in an allied field of specialization for which classification is sought.**

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones participated as a judge in several significant skimboarding competitions, particularly under the Skim USA Association. His expertise was sought to judge the Semi-Professional, Junior Men, and Men's Divisions during key tour stops, including the Melaque Magia Skim Competition in 2024. His role involved evaluating the technical performances and style of competitors, showcasing his deep knowledge of the sport. His appointment as a judge highlights his standing and respect in the field, demonstrating his capacity to influence the sport beyond competing.

The Skim USA Association, a recognized entity in the skimboarding community, specifically requested Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s expertise due to his extensive experience and accomplishments. His role was instrumental in ensuring fair and accurate judging during the competitions, a task that requires an in-depth understanding of the sport’s techniques and performance standards. This judging responsibility reflects the trust placed in Yahir by the organization and solidifies his role as a leader within the sport.

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s judging duties are directly aligned with his specialization in skimboarding, further reinforcing his extraordinary ability and recognition in the field. His involvement in reviewing and evaluating the work of other athletes at a professional level demonstrates his leadership and expertise, as well as his influence on the sport’s continued development. This judging experience underscores his qualifications for the O-1A visa, reflecting both his personal achievements and his broader contributions to the sport.

1. **Evidence of the beneficiary's original scientific, scholarly, or business-related contributions of major significance in the field.**

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones has made significant contributions to the sport of skimboarding, showcasing original talent that has been widely recognized within the skimboarding community. His achievements include the development of the Yahir Valencia Pro Model skimboard, released by Zap Skimboards in January 2024. This model, named the Cazador V2 Changito Pro, is a testament to his skill and influence in the sport, as only the most accomplished athletes have signature models developed in their name. His consistent high-level performance, which includes numerous first-place finishes in international competitions, further emphasizes his role as a leader in pushing the boundaries of professional skimboarding.

One of his key original contributions is his approach to wave riding, which is characterized by high-speed maneuvers and technical precision. His participation in and victories at major competitions, such as the United Skim Tour (UST) and Skim USA events, demonstrate his ability to consistently innovate and excel. For example, his win at the 2024 Melaque Magia Skim Competition and his strong presence in the UST rankings, where he currently holds the top position, highlight his groundbreaking approach to skimboarding. His success is further evidenced by invitations to prestigious events such as the OBX Skim Jam and the Zap Pro/Am World Championships, where he competes against the best athletes in the field.

The recommendation and support letters for Erick Yahir Valencia Morones provide strong and convincing evidence of his exceptional success and leadership in shaping key projects within the skimboarding industry. These endorsements, written by peers, team managers, and industry experts, emphasize his expertise, innovative techniques, and significant contributions to the sport. They highlight his achievements not only as a top-ranked competitor but also as a mentor and judge, showcasing his influence in advancing the sport and developing future generations of athletes.

***Letter from Toby S. West, Executive Director, Skim USA Association:***

In this letter, Toby S. West confirms Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's invitation to the 2024 Skim USA Tour Stops, highlighting his consistent top rankings, including first-place finishes in prestigious competitions. Toby S. West emphasizes Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's importance in showcasing his skills and his growing recognition in the U.S. skimboarding scene.

***Letter from David Haefele, President, United Skim Tour (UST):***

David Haefele's letter highlights Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's standing as one of the top athletes in professional skimboarding. Erick Yahir Valencia Morones ranked first in the UST 2024 rankings and placed second overall in 2023 and 2022, out of 100 professional skimboarders, underlining his consistent performance and key role in the sport.

***Letter from Wendy Caputo, Executive Team, Skim USA Association:***

Wendy Caputo underscores Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's participation in the Skim USA tour as a mentor and judge for multiple divisions. She highlights his instrumental role in providing expertise and fair judging in key competitions, reflecting his leadership and standing within the sport.

***Letter from Edgar Gerardo Valencia Morones, Professional Skimboarding Athlete:***

In this letter, Edgar Gerardo Valencia Morones praises Erick Yahir Valencia Morones as one of the most accomplished skimboarding athletes of recent years, frequently ranking in top positions at world competitions. Edgar Gerardo Valencia also highlights Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's discipline and ability to inspire those around him.

***Letter from Andrés Álvarez, Owner, Barra Surf Rentals:***

Andrés Álvarez describes Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's role as both an exceptional skimboarding athlete and an influential instructor. He commends Yahir’s technique and style, noting that his performance and dedication make him a valuable asset to any organization.

***Letter from Iraís Ibarra, Owner, Natural Skimboards:***

Iraís Ibarra highlights Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's talent, dedication, and positive attitude, emphasizing his contributions to the sport. Iraís Ibarra commends Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's unique style and constant pursuit of improvement, making him a standout athlete.

***Letter from Jason Wilson, Team Manager, Zap Skimboards:***

Jason Wilson highlights Erick Yahir Valencia Morones as the top athlete on the Zap Skimboards team, commending his high-speed, innovative approach to skimboarding. Jason Wilson emphasizes Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's mentorship role, inspiring young athletes and contributing to the development of the sport.

***Letter from Moises Miranda, Restaurant Owner, Rustik Melaque:***

Moises Miranda praises Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's work ethic, leadership, and natural talent. He highlights Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's ability to balance a demanding training schedule with professional responsibilities, underscoring his discipline and potential as a professional athlete.

Additionally, he received a job offer letter from:

***Letter from Max Smetts, Vice President of Operations, at GlasPro Inc.:***

In this letter, Max Smetts offers Erick Yahir Valencia Morones a full-time position as a professional skimboard athlete for GlasPro Inc., effective August 1, 2024, contingent on his O-1 Visa approval. Max Smetts highlights Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's essential role in representing Zap Skimboards, a brand under GlasPro, through marketing, competition participation, photo shoots, and promotional events. The letter includes a financial commitment of an annual salary of $40,000, along with benefits such as medical insurance and retirement savings, demonstrating GlasPro's investment in Erick Yahir Valencia Morones's talent.

1. **Evidence that the beneficiary has been employed in a critical or essential capacity for organizations and establishments that have a distinguished reputation.**

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones has played a critical role as a professional athlete for Zap Skimboards, a renowned organization in the skimboarding industry. As one of the top athletes on their professional team, he has been instrumental in elevating the brand’s reputation through his exceptional performances in international competitions. His contributions include not only competitive achievements but also representing the brand in all facets of marketing, conducting clinics, and serving as a mentor to aspiring athletes. His impact on the brand is evident in the release of his signature skimboard model, the Cazador V2 Changito Pro, which has been a significant success in the market, further boosting Zap Skimboards’ prominence.

Zap Skimboards is widely recognized as a leader in the skimboarding world, holding a distinguished reputation due to its high-quality products and long-standing presence in the sport. The company sponsors some of the most talented athletes globally, and its involvement in major competitions, such as the United Skim Tour (UST) and Skim USA, underscores its international recognition. Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s role as a key athlete for Zap Skimboards has been essential in maintaining the brand’s standing in the competitive landscape, with his victories and high rankings contributing directly to the company’s visibility and prestige.

Supporting letters from industry leaders, such as Zap Skimboards’ management, further validate Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s essential role within the organization. Testimonials describe him as the “best athlete” on the team and an inspiration to younger skimboarders, emphasizing his influence both in and out of the water. His leadership, dedication to mentoring others, and his performance as an elite athlete have been integral to the organization’s success, demonstrating that his role is not only critical but also essential in sustaining and enhancing the distinguished reputation of Zap Skimboards on the global stage.

**CONCLUSION**

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones has achieved extraordinary success in the field of skimboarding, as demonstrated by his numerous first-place finishes in top competitions, including the United Skim Tour and Skim USA. His pro-model skimboard with Zap Skimboards and his mentoring of young athletes reflect his impact on both the sport and its future development. These contributions highlight his exceptional talent and leadership.

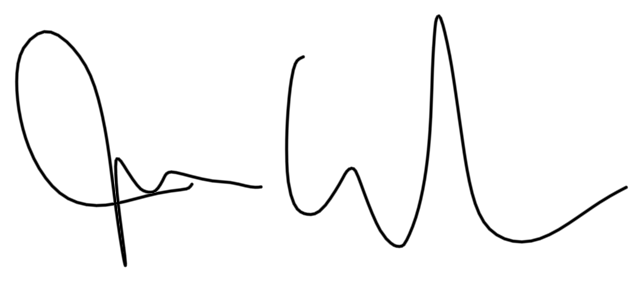
Compared to his peers, Erick Yahir Valencia Morones consistently ranks at the top of the sport, distinguishing himself through his competitive achievements, innovation, and role as a judge in key events. His expertise in evaluating others’ performances at professional competitions further emphasizes his standing and influence within the community. His contributions extend beyond athletic performance, influencing the sport’s trajectory and promoting its growth.

Erick Yahir Valencia Morones’s accomplishments qualify him for the O-1A visa, as his work embodies extraordinary ability in the sport of skimboarding. His leadership, innovation, and judging responsibilities demonstrate his critical role in the sport’s advancement, making his continued presence in the U.S. essential to both the industry’s growth and the cultural enrichment of action sports. His sustained contributions merit full support for his O-1A visa petition.

To the best of my knowledge, I have no reason to doubt the authenticity and accuracy of these documents.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Joshua Ebrahim

Long Island University

Adjunct Professor

October 17, 2024

**References:**

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