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Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA)
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Introduction

Good Morning Chairwoman Boxer and Members of the Environment and Public Works Committee. Thank you for having me here today to speak on behalf of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) about green jobs and the potential for putting people to work weatherizing homes. LIUNA is a proud union of 500,000 construction workers who do the hard work of building America's infrastructure. Our members have traditionally built roads, bridges, airports, railways, subways, schools, power plants, and pipelines including oil and natural gas lines in the Northwest. In the past decade, our work has expanded to include construction of wind turbines, solar fields, and biofuel plants.

My name is Dave Johnson and I am the Organizing Director for LIUNA's Eastern Region. I have had the pleasure of working with Laborers' Locals 10 and 55, locals set up for our members who weatherize homes in New York City, Long Island, New Jersey, and Delaware. In the past three months our region's training funds graduated nearly 50 new union members who are ready to do skilled weatherization work in Delaware and New York alone.

A Clean Energy Economy Benefits Our Members

LIUNA supports the extraordinary work being done both by Chairwoman Boxer and Senator Kerry and this Committee, and by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. We support cap and trade as an effective way to force reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. A strong climate change bill will not only dramatically reduce carbon emissions, but also put millions of Americans back to work on the installation of wind and solar power generation capacity; the modernization of our electrical grid and transportation systems; and the retrofitting of tens of millions of energy-inefficient buildings.

LIUNA is proud to be working in partnership with business, community, and environmental organizations. LIUNA and its partners share a vision and commitment to ensuring that good quality jobs are created as our government transitions to a clean energy economy that will benefit our members, our children and our communities. Our partners include the Sierra Club, the Blue Green Alliance, the Clean Economy Network, Green for All, and the Apollo Alliance among others.

LIUNA is a Stakeholder in Clean Energy Industries

Since 2003, LIUNA has been working with contractors in 17 states to help build wind farms. In addition, LIUNA members are prepared to expand the building of solar farms and to help modernize our inefficient and outdated electrical grid. According to the Center for American Progress, $1 billion invested in these clean energy projects could create 20,000 jobs over 2 years.[i]

While we look ahead to the expansion of wind, solar and biofuels, the Laborers also call on Congress to ease the transition for our traditional energy sources by investing in new technologies. LIUNA members see the job potential not only in weatherization and energy efficiency industries but also in wide scale use of carbon capture sequestration techniques, advances in natural gas technologies and the use of nuclear power as a necessary way to meet carbon emissions reductions.

LIUNA's Role in the Weatherization Recovery Ramp-Up

I'd like to take a moment to tell the members of this Committee about the Laborers successes in working with community action programs, state governments and our union's training fund to put Laborers into jobs weatherizing homes.

Weatherizing homes, which account for 22 percent of America's energy consumption,[ii] can reduce our dependence on foreign oil and create hundreds of thousands of family-supporting jobs. LIUNA trains workers in weatherization that substantially reduces a building's energy use, putting people back to work in their communities and equipping them with skills for the future. Every million homes weatherized supports 78,000 jobs[iii] and the U.S. Department of Energy estimates a $2.73 return in benefits for each $1 invested in weatherization.[iv]

When the Obama Administration made weatherization a priority by injecting stimulus money into its Weatherization Assistance Program earlier this year, Laborer's Local 55 in Newark was already working with the Garden State Alliance for a New Economy to provide weatherization training for unemployed, local residents in Newark, New Jersey. Both organizations were committed to ensuring that green jobs were also good jobs that paid family supporting wages, provided health benefits, and provided career opportunities.

In January 2009, a crew of 22 LIUNA members performed energy audits, sealed air leaks with caulking, applied weather stripping around doors, wrapped pipes and hot water heaters and installed fiberglass insulation in 30 Newark homes to demonstrate the program's potential to create jobs and deliver energy savings to homeowners. Three months later, twenty three Newark residents graduated from LIUNA's pilot weatherization training program.

Since then, the "Newark model" has caught fire in our region. State officials in Delaware and New Jersey have established new weatherization training standards and career

pipelines, and have asked LIUNA to help contractors meet the new requirements. The largest provider in New York City, Community Environmental Center, has signed with LIUNA to train and represent its weatherization workforce. Nearly 80 low-income community residents in New Jersey have been trained as LIUNA installers and hundreds more have come to informational meetings seeking to participate in the program. We'll be able to deliver. Our training center recently won a bid to train 600 workers for the NJ Department of Labor over 18 months. The state hopes to place 90% of the trainees in jobs. Demand for the program is high because all LIUNA weatherization workers earn family-supporting wages and receive employer-paid family health coverage.

Building on its success in the Eastern Region, LIUNA has launched a breakthrough, nationwide program to train new workers in residential construction and weatherization work. LIUNA's 70+ training centers around the country are equipped to provide local, unemployed workers with training as Technician/Installers, Weatherization Supervisors and Energy Auditors, as well as access to a network of future employment connections. Outside the Eastern Region, training programs have been launched in Denver, Colorado; Jackson, Mississippi; Las Vegas, Nevada; Portland, Oregon; Seattle; Washington; and the District of Columbia, with many more coming online soon. LIUNA will also be promoting DOE's national weatherization day this week and next in Washington State, Rhode Island and Mississippi.

Commitment to Growing a High-Quality Residential Energy Efficiency Industry

LIUNA has also developed a market-building approach that brings together state and local government, industry, labor, and community groups to build awareness, capacity, and ultimately robust demand for residential energy efficiency services. Along with entrepreneurs from the Clean Economy Network and Sierra Club, LIUNA and the Change to Win labor federation have sponsored a national "retrofit roadshow" that is bringing together local and state stakeholders to take residential efficiency programs to scale in states like Colorado, Ohio, and Maine.

We believe these programs will contribute to upgrading millions of poorly insulated homes and help put more money back into people's pockets instead of paying utility companies for wasted energy. Our goal is to train and represent at least 50,000 weatherization workers nationwide within five years – increasing production capacity by nearly a million homes a year. This new capacity will be critically important if we are to make effective use of the residential efficiency programs and funding streams created by the Senate climate and energy bills.

Combined with LIUNA's commitment to training residents of low-income communities, these training programs help to rebuild America's middle class and economy.

As a part of our commitment to support the emerging energy efficiency industry, LIUNA also supports the development of national standards for all residential energy efficiency programs. Such standards are in line with the recently released *Recovery through Retrofit* White House report that identifies a skilled and certified workforce as one of three

barriers to a successful national energy efficiency ramp-up. The standards would help to ensure the quality and efficacy of the work, protect homeowners, build confidence, and maximize the return on public investments through the qualification of residential efficiency contractors.

A Strong Climate Bill Can Mean Quality Jobs for America's Workers

LIUNA applauds your bill, S. 1733, the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act, as a strong step forward in this legislative process. Particularly, LIUNA is pleased to see incentives for deployment of Carbon Capture Sequestration, and the inclusion of the Retrofits for Energy and Environmental Performance (REEP) program, the Green Construction Careers Demonstration Project, and emphasis on water and building retrofits. We also applaud the inclusion of grants for renewable energy deployment in the states and for research and development in advanced natural gas technologies.

A strong worker training component is critical to a successful climate change bill. The Committee's inclusion of the Green Jobs Act is a big help to get unemployed workers into green jobs. The Laborers have invested heavily in developing the curriculum and the training instructor pool necessary to bring workers into future weatherization jobs. LIUNA would also urge the Committee to take steps to make sure that training and job opportunities are open for residents of low income communities.

LIUNA asks the Committee to continue the work of the House, having passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act, and report out a bill that will invest federal resources in the creation of green jobs that come with prevailing wages, quality skills training and career pathways. We urge the Committee to ensure that provisions are included that direct public investment in programs that will advance the goals of zero and low carbon energy generation while creating quality jobs.

LIUNA, along with our partners in the environmental community, want to help Congress and the Administration put America on a path to preserve a livable climate and create a clean energy economy. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this Committee today, LIUNA looks forward to working with you all to pass legislation that will provide a road map of federal policy to move our country toward building a sustainable clean energy economy that works for all Americans.

Thank you.

[i] Pollin, Robert, Heidi Garrett-Peltier, James Heintz, and Helen Schaber. *Green Recovery: A Program to Create Good Jobs and Start Building a Low-Carbon Economy*. Center for American Progress and Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts, September 2008. http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/09/pdf/green_recovery.pdf

[ii] Energy Information Administration. Annual Energy Outlook 2009. http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/aeo/pdf /0383(2009).pdf.

[iii] Wald, Matthew L. "Focus on Weatherization is Shift on Energy Cost." *The New York Times*. December 29, 2008.

[iv] Weatherization Assistance Program. "2009 Recovery Act — Frequently Asked Questions about Weatherization." http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/weatherization/recovery_act_faqs.cfm. August 2009.