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Statement of the Laborers' International Union of North America On The President's Economic Stimulus Proposals

Washington, D.C. (January 18, 2008) – With national unemployment reaching 5%, 49,000 construction jobs lost in December, 195,000 construction jobs lost in 2007, a housing and mortgage crisis that puts millions at risk of foreclosure and an economy that continues to spiral into recession, the Laborers' International Union of North America – LIUNA – calls on the President and the Congress to put forward an economic stimulus package that creates jobs and relieves the mounting financial burdens for low income and middle class Americans.

As expected, President Bush's proposals for an economic stimulus package focus on extending tax cuts that are designed to disproportionately help the wealthy. Instead of more tax breaks for the rich, we should be working to create family supporting jobs for people in need. We need sustainable stimulus that puts people to work, and tax cuts for the rich have never done that.

Instead of once again looking out for those on top, the President should use his final months in office to address the needs of the working men and women he has for so long ignored.

We are not opposed to an immediate stimulus that puts money in the pockets of struggling Americans. That will help ease the pain, but it will not solve the problem.

To solve the problems we need comprehensive economic stimulus that primes the economy, creates sustainable jobs and builds our country. One piece of that must be a commitment to rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure.

For every billion dollars in federal infrastructure spending, 48,000 jobs can be created. These jobs allow construction workers to earn a family-supporting pay with pension and healthcare benefits. Infrastructure investments not only create jobs, but also leave behind a better America that everyone can enjoy.

The need for infrastructure investment is obvious: 27 percent of America's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete; the number of unsafe dams has risen by more than 33 percent in the last ten years; 34 percent of our major roads are in a less than satisfactory condition; and traffic congestion costs American drivers \$63.2 billion a year in wasted time and fuel costs.

All over the globe, countries competing with the U.S. are investing in their infrastructure. For America to continue competing in the global economy, we must strengthen our infrastructure.

Tax breaks for the wealthy never built a bridge, they never made life more livable by easing traffic congestion, they never made flood-prone areas safer, and they never put people back to work with good jobs that rebuild our dams, schools and transportation systems.

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