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Contact: Jacob Hay, 202-445-4788

Statement of Terence M. O'Sullivan, General President of LIUNA, On the President's State of the Union Address

America Needs Sustainable Economic Stimulus

Washington, D.C. (January 28, 2008) – Tonight the President will tout short-term economic stimulus that will help ease the pain of many working Americans, but it will not cure what is afflicting workers and our economy.

America's workers are facing growing insecurity as the housing market crisis deepens and joblessness increases. In the construction industry alone – a powerhouse of the economy with 10 million workers who produce 5 percent of the nation's economic output – 195,000 jobs were lost in 2007. While job losses were initially in the residential construction sector, December's job report showed losses spilling over into commercial construction as the economy weakens.

Quickly putting money in the pockets of consumers will provide a short-term, modest stimulus, but it will not create good jobs or meet our nation's needs in the way true investment can.

We need comprehensive and sustainable economic stimulus that primes the economy, creates 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 good jobs are created. The need for jobs is clear, as is the need for investing in America: 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 the basics. For America to continue competing in the global economy, we must do the same and strengthen our infrastructure.

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With a half-million collective bargaining members, LIUNA – the Laborers' International Union of North America – is the fastest-growing union of construction workers and one of the most significant unions of public service employees.