

**Remarks of Terence M. O'Sullivan
General President, Laborers' International Union of North America
Americans for Transportation Mobility, FasterBetterSafer Launch
June 23, 2008
National Press Club**

Thank you, Tom Donohue for the introduction and for your leadership on this issue.

You know that when LIUNA and the Chamber are on the same side of an issue, something important is happening.

I want to acknowledge Pete Ruane of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association and all the ATM Management Committee members here today.

I'm proud, on behalf of the half-million men and women of LIUNA who go to work every day building America, to be a part of Americans for Transportation Mobility and launch of the FasterBetterSafer campaign.

At no other time that I can remember have so many diverse individuals and organizations united around the need to build America.

We all are arriving at this point from different perspectives. From business, from labor and non-profit organizations and certainly from different political views. But we are here as Americans first, who believe that the next President and the next Congress must finally demonstrate the leadership and the courage to take care of our country's transportation system that working people, their families and businesses rely on every day.

If we truly set out to build America so America works... faster, better and safer... we're going to need to continue building coalitions. Continue building a political movement that isn't Republican or Democrat, right wing or left wing, not big city or small town, not East Coast or West Coast. But a movement that is practical enough, big enough and smart enough to get the job done and redirect resources to make sure our country has the best transportation system in the world.

At LIUNA building America is an urgent priority for us as Americans ... and building America is exactly what we do.

The image of the I-35 Bridge collapse in Minneapolis last summer is seared in America's memory and in the memory of our organization.

LIUNA members were on that bridge, some simply crossing the Mississippi River as millions do every day, while others were working on a repaving crew.

I can tell you that every one of those members would rather have been fixing that bridge instead of just patching it.

There were numerous warnings about the I-35 Bridge dating back to the 1990s. But even after its deadly collapse there remain today more than 150,000 bridges across this great country that are still in need of repair.

We hear statistics every day –

3,500 unsafe dams;

27% of our bridges are structurally insufficient;

Dilapidated roads cost 2.9 billion gallons in wasted gas and 4.2 billion hours in time lost.

The American Society of Civil Engineers gives our infrastructure a “D” grade and estimates that 1.6 trillion is needed over the next five years to bring America's basics back to an acceptable condition. We are not even coming close to fixing the problem. We have a \$60 billion annual shortfall in what's needed for highway investment.

But Building America and its transportation system is about more than just numbers. It's about ensuring the quality of daily life; it's about saving lives, keeping the U.S. competitive. And it's about fighting for our country and living up to the American Dream.

It's time that we helped America's leaders understand how urgent a priority it is that we repair, rebuild and renew the basics in our country rather than using band-aid approaches and fixes.

In the short-term, we must make sure that the Highway Trust Fund is solvent and explore new resources for investment.

Over the long-term, we must create a bigger vision of how we take care of America.

We must tell the truth that far too often our politics makes our vision too small.

Our country needs a new American Marshall plan to tackle this crisis and a new way to think about and invest in the basics of America. That is how we became the only country to land on the moon, to lay claim to the tallest buildings, to build the Golden Gate Bridge and the Hoover Dam, to win the Cold War and become the beacon of hope and promise around the globe. We can build America so America works again.

Despite what Washington sometimes thinks, money does not grow on trees. That means that we must choose to build America, to make it a priority and redirect the resources to get the job done.

In 1964, the federal government spent about one-half of one percent of the GDP on non-defense investment for states and localities. Today it is less than one-half of one-tenth of one percent.

We, as a country, have choices to make. We must choose to Renew and rebuild America. Unions, corporations, the Chamber of Commerce and elected officials willing to lead must unite together behind a new vision.

For LIUNA this is a uniquely working family issue. Building America is what our members, and millions like them, do. It is what they are proud to do. And in a time when our country needs to rebuild, and our economy needs good, sustainable jobs, we say, let's get on with the job of building America.

America is eager for a bigger solution and vision and LIUNA is tired of patching bridges that we could proudly fix or build.

Together we're going to fight for our country and for candidates who are willing to join us. We'll reach out to the public and we will engage our members like never before.

Together we are going to create the movement we need to build America.

Every day we wait the situation only gets worse.

Now is the time to commit to our country.

Now is the time to create jobs, strengthen our economy, save lives, improve our quality of life and make America the country it needs to be.

Now is the time to build America ...faster, better, safer... so America works.

It's an honor for me to introduce a partner in our effort, Pete Ruane of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association.

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