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Unchain Nation’s March Toward Complete Energy Independence, LIUNA Says In Testimony Before Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

Laborers’ International Union of North America Calls for Permitting Reform to Stop Projects From Being Used As Pawns in Game That Destroys Blue Collar Jobs

Washington, D.C. (Feb. 19, 2025) — LIUNA General President Brent Booker told a U.S. Senate Committee today that “frivolous litigation” and distortion of the regulatory process is costing thousands of good blue collar jobs and blocking the U.S. drive for energy independence.

“Our nation’s boom in energy production has provided significant work hours and jobs for our membership as we march toward complete energy independence and global competitiveness with a determination unmatched by any other world nation,” Booker testified before the Environment and Public Works Committee. “We are sick and tired of frivolous litigation tactics ... taking food off the tables of our members’ families.”

The hearing was called by Committee Chairman Shelley Moore Capito and Ranking Member Sheldon Whitehouse to explore ways to improve federal environmental review and regulatory processes.

LIUNA’s more than 530,000 members, who work predominantly in the construction industry, are the labor behind building virtually every energy project, including, solar, wind, oil, natural gas, hydropower and nuclear power.

Booker told the committee that unnecessary delays wreak havoc. “A project can be permitted, fully funded and ready to go one day, then on the next day, out of nowhere, it gets hit with a lawsuit,” he testified. “When a LIUNA member asks when they will be able to get back on that job, we are forced to tell them we don’t know ... you try delivering that message to someone who has a mortgage payment due or has to buy school supplies for their kids.”

Because construction crafts workers move from job to job, stringing together projects that allow them to create a construction career, timing and project predictability are crucial. “Unpredictability equates to unemployment,” Booker told the committee.

Booker said that projects across the construction industry are taking longer to earn approval. “Nowhere is this more prevalent than in the energy sector Wrongfully manipulating the regulatory review process that gives agencies the ability to miss critical deadlines without any ramifications needs to end now.”

Booker pointed to needless delays in construction of wind energy projects. Offshore wind production has been a tremendous contributor of jobs since the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, he said.

“Between harbor and port buildouts, to turbine construction, to the installation of turbines, LIUNA members are building offshore wind projects at a rate like never before,” said Booker. “Yet, the administration’s halt on offshore lease sales has upended the wind production market ... costing LIUNA members their jobs.”

He cited several projects that have been halted or risk shutdown since the arrival of the new administration, including factory construction in Massachusetts to supply undersea cables as well as a variety of offshore wind projects off both coasts.

“This isn’t a political game for our members. It’s real-life consequences,” Booker said in closing. “It’s about putting our members to work, allowing them access to a middle-class way of life and the ability to retire with dignity. Because even to this day, that is still the American Dream.”

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The more than a half-million members of LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – are on the forefront of the construction industry, a powerhouse of workers who are proud to build the United States and Canada.