

Statement on Keystone XL Pipeline Decision

“Job-Killers, 2; American Workers, 0” President’s Reported Denial of Keystone XL Permit a Political Decision at a Time When Workers Are Desperate for Jobs and Need Leaders with Courage Washington, D.C. (January 18, 2012) – LIUNA – the Laborers’ International Union of North America – called the reported decision by the Obama Administration today to block permitting for Keystone XL pipeline “politics at its worst.”

Last fall the Administration delayed consideration of a permit for the pipeline until after the 2012 elections. Today, in response to Congressional legislation requiring a 60-day decision, the Administration reportedly denied a permit.

“The score is Job-Killers, two; American workers, zero. We are completely and totally disappointed. This is politics at its worst,” LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan said. “Once again the President has sided with environmentalists instead of blue collar construction workers – even though environmental concerns were more than adequately addressed. Blue collar construction workers across the U.S. will not forget this.”

The project would create thousands of good jobs at a time when unemployment in the construction industry is 16% with 1.3 million men and women jobless.

Environmental groups have used the Keystone XL as a disingenuous proxy for arguments about global warming. The pipeline would carry up to 900,000 barrels of oil a day from Canada’s Tar Sands to the U.S., reducing reliance on oil from hostile nations. While environmental groups decry Tar Sands development, the Canadian government and Trans-Canada, the company developing the Tar Sands, have made clear the oil will be developed – and possibly sold to China – regardless of whether Keystone XL is built.

In addition, experts believe the project would be the safest ever constructed. Design included 21,000 sensors, monitored by satellites to immediately detect leaks and automatically stop the flow of oil. In addition, a revised route alleviated concerns in Nebraska over the project crossing water resources. Overall, the pipeline has undergone more than 1,100 days of governmental review. “The Administration and environmentalists have blown the whistle on workers trying to feed their families and keep a roof over their heads,” said O’Sullivan. “Instead of celebrating their victory by hugging a tree they should hug a jobless construction worker because they’re the ones who are going to need it.”