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United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada

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The UA Extends Its Support for U.S. Nuclear Energy Industry

ANNAPOLIS, MD — The United Association (UA), representing over 340,000 workers in the plumbing and pipe fitting industry in the U.S. and Canada, including workers employed in the construction and maintenance involving the safe operation of existing nuclear power plants, today reaffirms its full support of the U.S. nuclear energy industry.

On behalf of the United Association, General President William P. Hite extends his deepest sympathies to the people of Japan as they struggle with the devastating aftereffects of the earthquake and tsunami that struck March 11th. He also wants to express the UA's gratitude to the brave individuals in Japan who are working to contain the incident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant and all those assisting them.

General President Hite also offered his unequivocal and continuing support for the U.S. nuclear industry, which he stated “must remain a vital and essential part of America’s overall energy program.” As he explained, “the United Association agrees with President Obama that while we should obviously seek to learn any and all potential lessons from this incident, we must also recognize that nuclear energy in the U.S. has proven to be a safe, efficient and totally clean source of power to meet our nation’s growing energy needs. And given its exemplary safety record in the U.S., there is no question that nuclear power should continue to be a key component for building a clean energy economy in the 21st century.”

As one of the leading trades that specializes in the construction and maintenance of nuclear power plants, the United Association believes that worker safety and public safety must be the first and foremost priority with respect to all aspects of U.S. nuclear energy policy. Accordingly, as General President Hite noted: “the UA completely endorses new plans by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to conduct thorough reviews of all existing nuclear power plants in our country to obtain 100% verification of their continued safety and of their capabilities to adequately respond to any exigency that might occur at these plants.”

Mr. Hite also stated that “as we are seeking to learn from Japan’s crisis, it’s important to recognize key differences in America’s nuclear power program. First, nuclear plants in the U.S., which now provide twenty percent of our electricity, have been designed and tested to withstand both natural and man-made disasters particular to the areas where the plants are located. Second, in the fifty-plus years we have been using nuclear power, there has not been a single radiation related fatality. Third, the next generation of nuclear plants in development will use highly-sophisticated technology with more-enhanced safety features, further guaranteeing the safety of these facilities.”





General President Hite stressed the critical role nuclear power plays in producing clean energy: “Nuclear power is one of the cleanest, most economical forms of energy available. Twenty percent of our electricity is from nuclear energy that is produced without releasing any carbon dioxide or other harmful pollutants into the air. Due to these substantial benefits, nuclear energy should remain a key component of our future energy strategy. At this time of tragedy, we must learn what we can from events at the Fukushima plant, but we must also not lose sight of the long, successful track record that nuclear energy has had in the U.S. and the positive impact it can have for us well into the future.”