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News Release

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Unions Express Support for BP Refinery Modernization

Indianapolis, IN – It should come as no surprise that Indiana’s construction workers support BP’s plan to invest more than \$3 billion to modernize the Whiting refinery; it will mean 2,500 construction jobs for Northwest Indiana. What is surprising to Ben Ramsey, executive director of the Indiana State Building and Construction Trades Council, is that the media and the general public don’t realize the extent to which the building trades unions follow the permitting processes to ensure that economic development projects do not have a negative impact on the air their members breathe and water they consume.

According to Ramsey, “The construction workers in Northwest Indiana are in a unique situation in that although they benefit from construction jobs, they would also suffer the consequences of any environmental pollution.” As a result, the Building Trades have carefully followed the BP permitting processes since the projects inception.

The permits necessary for the Whiting modernization are compliant with the federal Clean Water Act, exceed all standards developed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, and require BP to follow state and federal laws to ensure the protection of human health, aquatic life, and the environment.

“Although the general public and the media are just becoming aware of the project, we have been seen first hand how the Daniels administration has held BP’s feet to the fire over the last two years, requiring BP to go far beyond the minimum requirements for permitting,” said

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Ramsey. “IDEM showed it is possible to be tough with environmental regulations and still help businesses to create jobs. It would be a shame to lose those jobs.”

No new refinery has been built in this country in more than thirty years and a lack of refining capacity is a leading cause of skyrocketing gasoline prices which hurt working Hoosiers. The building trades now fear that all the negative media attention may lead to the demise of the Whiting project, a project now facing the very same obstacles that have stifled expansion of America’s refining capacity.

According to Ramsey, “BP’s modernization could create 2,500 good paying construction jobs, but the projects demise could also mean that 2,500 highly-skilled workers sit on the bench for some time to come. This project is a once in a lifetime project for Indiana.”

The building trades are hopeful that federal, state, and local officials will review the science behind the permitting before BP pulls the plug on the Whiting modernization project.

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The Indiana State Building & Construction Trades Council is an independent, umbrella organization, affiliated with the Indiana AFL-CIO, representing over 75,000 working men and women in 15 construction unions across Indiana.
