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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mark H. Ayers, President of the Building and Construction Trades Department, released the following statement upon the announcement by the U.S. Department of State that it is formally withdrawing the application for the Keystone XL pipeline

WASHINGTON, DC -- Today, the words "We Can't Wait" truly ring hollow for skilled craft construction professionals across this nation. Those are the words that have been uttered by President Obama time and time again as he states he will work around an obstructionist U.S. Congress to take action to address our nation's continuing unemployment crisis. One clear opportunity to demonstrate his commitment to unemployed Americans was the approval of the construction permit for the Keystone XL pipeline.

With a national unemployment rate in construction at 16% nationally, it is beyond disappointing that President Obama placed a higher priority on politics rather than our nation's number one challenge: jobs.

Environmental activists who are not saddled with the economic and psychological scars that accompany long-term unemployment will applaud the fact that they successfully induced the White House to block this project. Meanwhile, thousands of proud Americans throughout the heartland will once again be faced with the terrifying prospect of losing their homes and their livelihoods as they struggle to find work.

Jobs remain at the top of the list of voters' concerns heading into the 2012 elections. Our members had anxiously embraced the hopeful rhetoric of "We Can't Wait" in response to an unproductive Congress that seems incapable of acting on meaningful job creation initiatives, only to be disappointed by an Administration unwilling to take its own words to heart and approve this vital project.

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The Building and Construction Trades Department is an alliance of 13 national and international unions that collectively represent over 2 million skilled craft professionals in the United States and Canada

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