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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CONSTRUCTION WORKERS SUPPORT ‘WORKER SAFETY AND ENERGY SECURITY ACT’**

#### ***SB 386/AB 426 Protect Workers On The Job And Free Speech***

(MADISON, Wis.) – Wisconsin construction workers are uniting around workplace safety and are calling on state legislators to pass the “Worker Safety and Energy Security Act” (SB 386, AB 426). The companion bills add petroleum, renewable fuel, chemical and water infrastructure to the existing statutes protecting electric and natural gas infrastructure from trespassing and damage.

The Wisconsin Operating Engineers Local 139, the Wisconsin Laborers’ District Council and the Wisconsin Pipe Trades Association, representing more than 28,000 skilled-trades men and women, fully support the effort to protect their workers.

“In recent years, critical infrastructure worksites in the Midwest have seen millions of dollars of construction equipment set on fire, hydraulic lines punctured, and other property vandalized,” said Terry McGowan, president and business manager of the Wisconsin Operating Engineers Local 139. “This is dangerous not only for the hard-working men and women on the job site, but also demonstrators and the environment. It is only a matter of time before a serious environmental disaster occurs in Wisconsin from these actions.”

“Construction work is already inherently dangerous,” said John Schmitt, president and business manager of the Wisconsin Laborers’ District Council. “Our members should not also have to fear physical and verbal assaults by people who oppose a project. By adding petroleum, renewable fuel, chemical and water infrastructure to the list of critical infrastructure protected by Wisconsin law, our members will have equal protections regardless of the type of energy project they are working on.”

“We strongly defend the rights of all Americans to oppose projects and peacefully demonstrate their opposition,” said Terry Hayden, president of the Wisconsin Pipe Trades Association. “The Worker Safety and Energy Security Act unequivocally preserves the rights to protest, organize, and demonstrate. What is not, and should not be, protected under the Act is criminal behavior that threatens lives and the environment.”

We support the passage of SB 386/AB 426.

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