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NABTU President Sean McGarvey Statement on Protecting Construction Workers’ Health, Safety and Jobs in Partnership with Responsible Owners and Contractors

WASHINGTON – March 18, 2020 – Today, North America’s Building Trades Unions (NABTU) issued the following statement from President Sean McGarvey on protecting construction workers’ health, safety and jobs in partnership with responsible owners and contractors:

“The health and safety of our members and their families is always job number one. By working together with great owners and contractors around North America, we can lead by example and keep the construction industry safely operating without exposing our members to health risks in this dangerous moment.

“According to the Center for Construction Research and Training, essential safety measures include (1) Keeping at least six feet between workers by staggering crews to make sure there is no droplet spread on jobs; (2) Providing soap and running water so workers can frequently wash hands; and (3) Cleaning and disinfecting high touch areas like handrails, doorknobs, and portable toilets on a frequent and regular basis. Lastly, construction workers are now entitled to paid sick leave. We strongly encourage workers to use this safeguard when they feel ill.

“It is crucial that once proper safety precautions are taken that our members continue to work and provide for their families. They depend on projects like the 270 Park JP Morgan Chase headquarters redevelopment in New York City to provide health care and contributions back into pension funds that have been battered by market losses and volatility. This Tishman Speyer worksite (and many others) have implemented important safety protocols and will employ 1,500 union men and women on a $370 million project.

“Together with responsible owners and contractors, we can provide a vital lifeline to our economy and our members to secure their place in the middle class, especially at a moment of great economic fear and uncertainty.”

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About NABTU: North America’s Building Trades Unions is an alliance of 14 national and international unions in the building and construction industry that collectively represent over 3 million skilled craft professionals in the United States and Canada. Each year, our unions and our signatory contractor partners invest over $1 billion in private-sector money to fund and operate over 1,900 apprenticeship training and education facilities across North America that produce the safest, most highly trained, and productive, skilled craft workers found anywhere in the world. NABTU is dedicated to creating economic security and employment opportunities for its construction workers by safeguarding wage and benefits standards, promoting responsible private capital investments, investing in renowned apprenticeship and training, and creating pathways to the middle class for women, communities of color and military veterans in the construction industry. http://www.nabtu.org/