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**TESTIMONY TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS**

**“THE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM REQUIREMENT  
FOR CERTAIN NEW YORK CITY  
CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS”**

**SUBMITTED BY**

**HENRY C. KITA, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT**

**APRIL 28, 2008**

Good morning.

I want to thank the Chair and the members of the New York City Council's Committee on Contracts for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

My name is Henry Kita and I am the Senior Vice President of the Building Trades Employers' Association of New York City (BTEA). The BTEA is an organization representing 27 union trade contractor associations and 1,200 construction management firms, general contractors and specialty subcontractors building here in New York City. The BTEA employs the approximately 100,000 tradesmen/women of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York (BCTC). The BTEA has over the past 10 years been joined in a partnership to advance the cause of union construction with the BCTC.

Pursuant to authority granted to the City of New York under State Labor Law 816-B, City agencies must comply with the requirement that construction contractors maintain apprenticeship agreements with programs registered with, and approved by, the New York State Department of Labor. Under a directive issued by the Mayor's Office of Contract Services in January of 2007, city agencies were instructed to comply with the state apprenticeship requirements. Specifically, the city agencies were instructed that the state apprenticeship requirements apply to individual construction contracts over \$1 million on a capital project with an overall value of more than \$5 million, and to individual construction contracts over \$3 million on a capital project with an overall value of less than \$5 million. Furthermore, if a prime contract is subject to the apprenticeship requirements, any subcontracts over \$1 million are also covered by the directive.

I am here today to tell you that the BTEA supports the various elements of these city and state directives regarding apprenticeship programs for public work and urges that the City Council and City Administration do everything within their power to monitor and enforce compliance with these requirements. Compliance with these requirements is a “win-win” proposition for the city, its residents and our contractors and labor force.

The union construction industry as represented by the BTEA and BCTC has these registered apprentice programs and can provide quality construction for both public and private development in New York City. It is certainly no secret that one of major elements of union construction is our apprenticeship system. The point of our union apprenticeship program is to have a highly trained workforce that is needed for some of the most complex construction projects anywhere. Through our apprenticeship programs, we are able train a construction workforce whose skills are next to none and who are taught all of the tenets of construction safety. At the same time, our apprentice programs provide residents living in the New York City area who want to pursue a career in construction with the opportunity for a fulfilling economic and professional career.

Our union apprenticeship programs are funded by both management and labor. No public funding is required for these programs. Both BTEA and BCTC members invest over \$50 million dollars annually in our apprenticeship programs. In addition, our union construction apprenticeship programs represent the mosaic of demographic diversity that is New York City. In spite of the misrepresentations of those who seek to denigrate the union construction

movement here in New York City, I am pleased to report today that 62% of the current building trades apprentices are African-American, Latino, Asian and Women.

One of our industry's major programs to recruit New Yorkers into the union construction trades is the Edward J. Malloy Initiative for Construction Skills. The Construction Skills initiative has recruited for and placed into our apprenticeship programs approximately 1,000 New York City residents from public high schools and public housing. Our Construction Skills Initiative serves as a beacon of hope especially for the youth of our City who want to better themselves by pursuing a career in the construction trades.

In addition, the BTEA and BCTC working in concert with the Mayor's Commission on Construction Opportunities, have agreed with the city to reserve 15% of our apprenticeship slots to be set aside for graduates of Department of Education high schools, 10% for returning veterans, 10% for women and 5% of the apprenticeship slots for economically disadvantaged individuals. Also, on significant development projects, contractors and developers have committed to provide mentoring and training programs to minority and women owned businesses.

The apprenticeship programs we offer, give New Yorkers the opportunity to pursue a career for those who are struggling to obtain the chances to do so. On behalf of the members of the BTEA, I urge this Committee on Contracts, the general membership of the City Council and the City Administration to not only follow the previously mentioned directives on apprenticeship programs, but to also embrace future legislative initiatives that promote these programs thus

ensuring that future construction in New York City will be provided in a highly skilled and safe manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.