PRESS STATEMENT OF NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION’S DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS, TERRY HATCH

The National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) is proud to stand here today, side by side with leaders from private industries and organized labor, to join with President Obama in calling upon Congress to pass HR 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

NECA is the voice of our nation’s electrical contracting industry. It composes a critical component of our national small business sector and will be an integral leader for moving our nation toward a new energy economy. Our association’s history dates back to 1901, when a group of electrical contractors met at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, NY to understand the then new major display of electric power that had been installed. Today, NECA’s membership represents a $130 billion industry that installs electrical power lines, broadband systems, renewable energy projects, and light sources across the country. And, our members employ over 750,000 workers annually to bring power to America.

The renewable energy and energy efficiency provisions the stimulus legislation invests in would provide our nation’s electrical contractors with the ability to not only rewire, but truly revitalize our public infrastructure. Electrical contractors are playing an increasingly important role in ensuring that the technologies built in the lab will work in the field. These technologies are already beginning to transform our nation’s infrastructure and expand green jobs industries, and there is more technology to come.

Only by harnessing the power of these technologies and the potential green job growth they bring, are we able to both expand and grow our economy. From retrofitting schools and hospitals to make them green buildings, to modernizing light-rail and mass transit stations, and helping to construct a smart energy grid to service all of our energy usage, NECA and our members are ready to flip the switch and make this country run more efficiently.

NECA’s contractors, along with our partners at IBEW, have made the investment in training our workforce to meet the demands of today with the energy technologies of tomorrow by committing $100 million annually to a Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee program has provided job training to hundreds of thousands of electrical contracting employees, working in all 50 states. Our contractors believe clean, renewable forms of energy generation can not only be a source of national prosperity that is capable of powering our homes and businesses, but also a source of energy security that will drive the United States toward achieving its goal of energy independence.

The electrical contracting industry has not been immune to the reverberating shock the economy has suffered; our would be customers need the assurance that investments in green technologies will continue to produce profit and long-term energy savings.
We are encouraged that Congress has shaped a policy that prioritizes renewable energies and energy efficiency investments; and our contractors are poised to lead in making these projects achievable. But Congress must act swiftly to reinvigorate the business climate for these technologies by taking bold leadership and investing in their long-term demand with needed tax incentives. NECA’s contractors can help provide the light toward change, but Congress must give us the power to do so by passing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

*NECA is the voice of the $130 billion electrical construction industry that brings power, light, and communication technology to buildings and communities across the U.S. NECA’s national office and 119 local chapters advance the industry through advocacy, education, research and standards development. For more information, visit* [www.necanet.org](http://www.necanet.org).