

Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus to President: Navy DD(X) Proposal Wrong for the Nation

WASHINGTON, DC (March 16, 2005) - The Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus, co-chaired by U.S. Congressman Gene Taylor of Mississippi and Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis of Virginia, sent a letter to the President of the United States expressing the Caucus' concern over a Navy proposal to reopen the construction bidding for next generation destroyer DD(X) to a winner-take-all competition.

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In the letter, the Caucus spells out the long-term negative effects that the Navy's revised construction strategy could have on shipyards and Navy force structure. The Caucus also urges the President to execute the DD(X) program as outlined in his FY2006 budget request, with Northrop Grumman and Bath Iron Works splitting work in design and ship construction.

Chief among the Caucus members' misgivings is the threat to the U.S. industrial shipbuilding capacity, which has already suffered major reductions in employment from the anemic shipbuilding budgets of recent years.

Citing the potential negative impact on U.S. national security, the Caucus warns the President that the Navy proposal will lead to a single shipyard building our nation's surface combatants, which will forever limit the ability of the U.S to construct destroyers and cruisers at any significant rate.

The letter also outlines the unintended consequences of pursuing the re-bidding strategy, mentioning delays in the program and increased costs.

Under the President's FY2006 budget request, Northrop Grumman was scheduled to build the first three DD(X) destroyers at its shipyard in Pascagoula, with Maine's Bath Iron Works shipyard building two

additional ships. However, changes to the shipbuilding budget have triggered the Navy to explore a revised bidding process that will create a winner-take-all competition between Northrop Grumman and Bath Iron Works.

Congressman Taylor and Congresswoman Davis founded the Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus in January 2005 as a forum for members of Congress to discuss the shipbuilding issues that impact their districts. The Caucus enables members to work together in a unified effort to support increased shipbuilding efforts for a strong Navy capable of protecting America's vital national interests for years to come.

The following forty-three members of the Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus signed the letter to the President:

Jo Ann Davis (R-VA), Co-Chair

Gene Taylor (D-MS), Co-Chair

Gary Ackerman (D-NY)

Rodney Alexander (D-LA)

Tom Allen (D-ME)

Jo Bonner (D-AL)

Dan Boren (D-OK)

Robert Brady (D-PA)

Sherrod Brown (D-OH)

G.K. Butterfield (D-NC)

Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R-CA)

Susan Davis (D-CA)

Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)

Thelma Drake (R-VA)

Bob Filner (D-CA)

Bart Gordon (D-TN)

Gene Green (D-TX)

Maurice Hinchey (D-NY)

David Hobson (R-OH)

Steve Israel (D-NY)

William Jefferson (D-LA)

Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH)

Patrick J. Kennedy (D-RI)

Jim Langevin (D-RI)

Rick Larsen (D-WA)

John Larson (D-CT)

Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ)

Stephen Lynch (D-MA)

Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI)

James P. McGovern (D-MA)

Mike McIntyre (D-NC)

Charlie Melancon (D-LA)

Michael H. Michaud (D-ME)

Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA)

Charles "Chip" Pickering (R-MS)

Mike Ross (D-AR)

Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD)

Tim Ryan (D-OH)

Bobby Scott (D-VA)

Rob Simmons (R-CT)

Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ)

Bennie Thompson (D-MS)

Roger Wicker (R-MS)