

---

## Taylor Declares First Shipbuilding Caucus Meeting 'A Huge Success'

WASHINGTON, DC (March 2, 2005) - Congressman Gene Taylor (D-MS) and Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis (R-VA) convened the first meeting of the Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus today. Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Vern Clark, was the first guest speaker at the closed session.

WASHINGTON, DC (March 2, 2005) - Congressman Gene Taylor (D-MS) and Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis (R-VA) convened the first meeting of the Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus today. Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Vern Clark, was the first guest speaker at the closed session.

In comments during the Caucus meeting, Taylor expressed his worry that the current 290-ship fleet is well-below the Navy's recommended requirements. "If enacted, the proposed FY06 Navy shipbuilding budget doesn't fix the situation. In fact, this budget would only undercut our ability to fight the Global War on Terror and meet the national security challenges of the future," said Taylor.

Taylor also conveyed his great concern over the Navy's recent announcement to re-open the competition for the DD(X) destroyer. Northrop Grumman was scheduled to build the first three ships of the class at its shipyard in Pascagoula, with Maine's Bath Iron Works shipyard building two. Changes to the Navy shipbuilding budget may force the Navy to cut its ship production plans from seven destroyers to five over the next five years.

Taylor added, "This decision will force Northrop Grumman into competition with Bath Iron Works and could effectively reduce the number of shipyards. We don't need fewer shipyards. We need more ships."

Taylor continued, "Let me be clear. This is not only a problem for the shipyard employees in Mississippi and Maine. This is a national problem. If we continue to allow the down-sizing of the U.S. shipbuilding industry, we will soon find ourselves reliant on foreign sources for our warships."

After the meeting, Taylor said, "We had a very substantive and successful first meeting. There was frank and honest discussion about the potentially devastating effects that the FY06 budget may have on

the nation's ability to build ships. I'd like to thank Admiral Clark for his directness and making himself available to address the Shipbuilding Caucus."

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

There are currently 60 members of the Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus. The Caucus is scheduled to meet again in early April.