

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4602

May 23, 2011

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Gates:

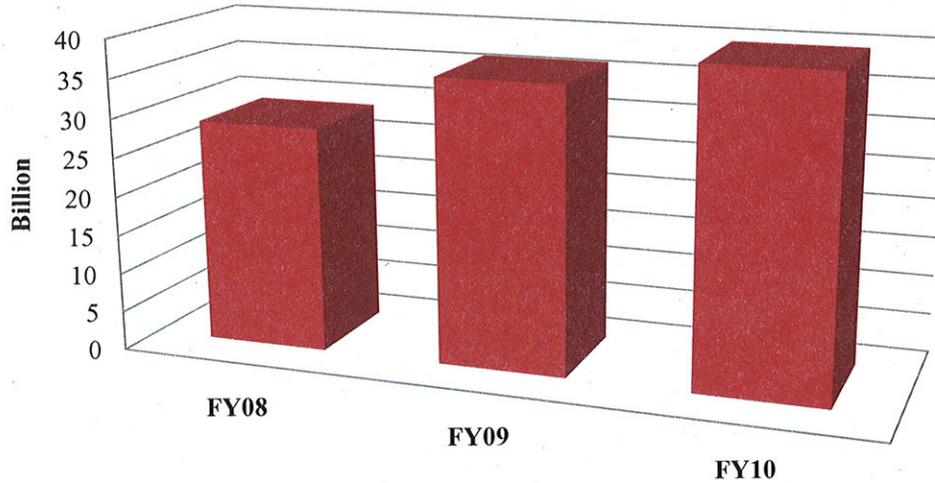
As you review the Department of Defense budget to find \$400 billion in efficiencies and savings, I once again request that you remove funding for the plan to homeport a CVN at Naval Station Mayport. Taking into account the planned initial costs of \$589.7 million in military construction and personnel, the total cost of this plan could easily exceed \$1 billion dollars in funds the military does not have. It is fiscally irresponsible to consider this action when we are facing so many unfunded, critical requirements for shipbuilding, aircraft procurement, and maintenance of ships and shore installations.

In addition to those critical needs, the Navy faces a shortfall of tactical aircraft. The numbers of F/A-18 strike-fighter aircraft are being reduced in fleet squadrons, and those squadrons are obliged to “cross deck” to deploying aircraft carriers to round out their air wings. A recent Congressional Budget Office report challenges the Navy’s ability to build a 313-ship fleet with the budget now proposed, owing to its well-demonstrated and repeated failures to control cost growth in shipbuilding programs.

In fact, according to Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, the Navy will need roughly \$14 billion in shipbuilding investments per year through 2020 to support the service’s goal of a 313-ship fleet through 2025. In addition, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead described the industrial base supporting the Navy as “fragile.” He said, “The industrial base today, particularly as it applies to shipbuilding, is probably as fragile as it has ever been.” I could not agree more. Instead of spending \$1 billion on a venture that would result in a de minimis strategic threat reduction, the Navy should redirect those funds for meeting its real and immediate needs.

The facts are clear: the Navy is not maintaining its existing naval shipyards properly. The Navy had a \$3 billion shortfall in its requirements to fund necessary modernization and repair projects at our four naval shipyards at the end of FY09. The shortfall is \$39.2 billion across the Navy’s entire shore infrastructure as of FY10. Before investing in redundant facilities, the Navy should properly maintain its existing facilities. Increasingly antiquated and poorly maintained facilities pose real safety risks, greatly diminish workforce productivity, and degrade the quality of life in the workplace for sailors and civilian employees.

Navy Shoreline Infrastructure Backlog



	FY08	FY09	FY10
■ Billion	28.8	36.2	39.6

In addition, homeporting a CVN at NS Mayport would result in an additional annual recurring cost of \$25.5 million in constant calendar year 2010 (CY10) dollars. According to the Navy, this cost is based on an approximate yearly recurring cost of Base Operating Support (BOS) and Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization (SRM) at \$8.3 million, Operations at \$0.8 million, travel/per-diem for transitory maintenance labor which occur two of every three 32-month operating cycles but annualized at \$12.9 million, permanent on-site labor at \$5 million and bi-annual maintenance dredging to maintain the depth necessary for unrestricted carrier access averaged out to \$0.1 million per year.

As you know, the FY2010 budget provided \$46.3 million in MILCON funding for channel dredging at Mayport to support the ability of a CVN to enter Mayport on a temporary basis. The conference report (H.Rept. 111-288 of October 7, 2009) on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (H.R. 2647/P.L. 111-84 of October 28, 2009) stated:

The conference agreement includes authorization for \$46.3 million for channel and turning basin dredging at Naval Station (NS) Mayport, Florida. The Navy requested this project in order to allow a nuclear aircraft carrier to enter Naval Station Mayport on a temporary basis with an embarked air wing, full stores, and under any tidal conditions. The conferees authorize funding for this project based on the Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations' assurances that the dredging is needed for current operational considerations to permit the use of

Mayport as a transient dock and is “required irrespective of the final decision on aircraft carrier homeporting at Mayport.”

On May 11, 2011, the House Armed Services Committee marked up H.R. 1540, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, and struck funding for continuation of the homeporting scheme. Members of the Armed Services Committee uphold that the rationale given for homeporting a CVN at NS Mayport does not meet budgetary scrutiny and should easily be considered a “want” and not a “need”.

Therefore, I request that you remove any and all funding for architectural and engineering services and construction design of any military construction project necessary to establish a homeport for a nuclear powered aircraft carrier at NS Mayport. For every dollar we save today, one less is added to the debt which currently stands at \$14 trillion—a problem that Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen decried as the greatest threat to national security. I appreciate your consideration of my request, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Scott Rigell
Member of Congress