

Virginia Ship Repair Association

Norfolk, Virginia

For Immediate Release: Contact: Malcolm Branch (757) 233-7034
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PRESS RELEASE

Norfolk, VA –

As President Obama signs the massive Recovery Bill to stimulate the US economy and create or preserve some 3.5 million jobs, the ship repair industry in Hampton Roads is facing large funding shortfalls in Navy surface ship maintenance. The money shortage is known to be well over \$100 million. Contract funding for future surface ship repair work that was planned for this year has been suspended by the Navy. While the industry is being told the suspension is temporary, ship repair companies are preparing for the worst, with loss of jobs probable if funding is not quickly restored.

There are no provisions in the Recovery Bill for job preservation money to flow to Navy ship repair. This industry employs an estimated 29,000 people in Hampton Roads and generates an additional 30,000 jobs for the regional economy. These are highly skilled jobs with wages and benefits well above the regional average. As a partner with the Navy in preserving vital National defense ships, our skilled jobs must be preserved. Should jobs be eliminated from our industry companies, even temporarily, skilled workers might be forced to look to other industries receiving stimulus money. The industrial base necessary for our National defense could be severely harmed.

The Virginia Ship Repair Association is working closely with the Navy, as well as our elected representatives, to restore funding quickly and secure the money necessary to maintain our Navy's surface ships. We all realize that if the current fleet is not properly maintained, our Navy will never have the number of fully operational and deployable ships necessary to support our National and world defense commitments.

The Virginia Ship Repair Association is a regional trade association representing 192 member companies engaged in, or supporting, the ship repair industry in Virginia and the Mid-Atlantic region. The mission is to focus and coordinate member resources on issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the ship repair industry in Virginia and across the nation.