

(Washington D.C.) - Congressman Rob Wittman (R-VA) today offered his praise to the U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration following the successful sale of the *Bayamon*,

a trailership in the James River Reserve Fleet. It will be the 66<sup>th</sup>

ship to depart the fleet since January of 2001.

"I am pleased that we are witnessing a turning point in the disposal of the James River Fleet. For years, the U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration was forced to spend millions to dispose of ships that had been decommissioned. It is a welcome change that we are able to sell these ships to interested parties as a result of the demand for scrap metal," said Wittman.

"More importantly though, we are able to continue our disposal operations, which is an important step to reducing the potential environmental hazards these ships may pose to the region. With the threat of hurricanes and other weather related problems, the fleet has the potential to release oil and other hazardous materials into the James River, something none of us wish to see."

"I will continue to work for increased funding for the removal of the ghost fleet from the James River and will continue to encourage potential buyers to purchase these ships from the Maritime Administration so that we reduce the need to spend additional federal dollars on this project in the future."