

November 19, 2008: Congressman Wittman Statement on Navy Announcement

(WASHINGTON, DC) -I am deeply concerned with the announcement of the Secretary of the Navy's preference to create a second East Coast homeport for a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in Mayport, FL. Economic conditions and national security requirements are not being given the attention they deserve in the midst of the financial and strategic challenges facing our nation today.

Our Navy's force structure, to include the number of aircraft carriers, has been reduced progressively since the end of the Cold War, and the last two Department of Defense strategic reviews-the Quadrennial Defense Review and the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure round-did not even consider homeporting additional ships in Mayport, FL. On any given day our nation's aircraft carriers are strategically dispersed around the world fulfilling their peacetime requirements and wartime missions. To relocate an aircraft carrier from Norfolk, VA to Mayport, FL would disrupt families, cause financially irresponsible redundancy in facilities and personnel, and increase the security demands on our over-burdened fleet. A decision to construct a nuclear-capable harbor in Mayport, FL could cost as much as \$750 million in infrastructure improvements alone, and such a decision is not supported by sound economic fundamentals.

Before issuing a Record of Decision, the Secretary of the Navy must consider if homeporting a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in Mayport, FL is in the best interest of the Navy and the nation given today's budget, economic, and strategic realities.