



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

July 15, 2009

Senator Carl Levin
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator John McCain
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Levin and Ranking Member McCain:

I want to thank you for your strong leadership on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and specifically for ensuring that language to continue the necessary upgrades to Jacksonville's Naval Station Mayport is included as part of the National Defense Authorization Act currently being considered on the Senate floor. The dredging of the Mayport channel is a critical step for the eventual homeporting of a nuclear carrier at Mayport.

As you may be aware, on June 16, 2009, during the House Armed Services Committee mark-up of the National Defense Authorization Act, Representative Glenn Nye of Virginia offered an amendment, which was later adopted, stripping \$46 million that was allocated for dredging of the Mayport Channel at Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville, Florida.

I am concerned that the House language, if enacted as part of the final conference report, will stall the current upgrades underway at Mayport and jeopardize Mayport's chances of acquiring a nuclear carrier in the future. This would be in direct contrast to the stated long-term goals of the U.S. Navy.

As you know, in January of this year the U.S. Navy announced its Record of Decision to locate a nuclear aircraft carrier at Naval Station Mayport. This decision, based on the results of several studies, reduces the risk to the Fleet in the event of natural disasters, manmade calamities, and attacks by foreign nations or terrorists as it adheres to the principal of strategic dispersal of assets. I agree with the Navy's assessment that the consolidation of carriers in any single location places the fleet, the industrial support facilities, and the people who operate and maintain these facilities at unnecessary risk.

President Obama has also stated that Naval Station Mayport is a viable alternative for the homeporting of a nuclear carrier and essential to our homeland security. In addition, the Secretary of the Navy has testified that he has concerns about having only one nuclear-capable port on the East Coast. Furthermore, Defense Secretary Gates included funding for dredging of the Mayport Channel in the Department of Defense FY2010 budget.

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Again, I thank you for your leadership, and look forward to working with you as the National Defense Authorization Act progresses to conference to ensure that the future viability of a nuclear carrier at Jacksonville's Mayport is not jeopardized.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Crist". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charlie Crist