

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Rob Wittman attended the 75th departure of a ship from the James River Reserve Fleet this morning at Ft. Eustis.

"Salvaging ships from the James River Reserve Fleet has provided local businesses like Bay Bridge Enterprises the opportunity to grow and create local jobs, while at the same time lessening the negative ecological potential and improving the fragile environment of the Chesapeake Bay," said Wittman.

Wittman's predecessor, Jo Ann Davis, was the first to secure money for removing ships the James River Fleet. This year, Congressman Wittman requested \$17 million for the Maritime Administration ship scrapping program for FY09 and continues to work to ensure that the project receives funding.

"Thanks to effective partnerships between federal, state and local governments and small businesses, the overall National Defense Reserve Fleet has reduced from a peak size of 2277 ships in 1950 to 190 ships today, and there are only 30 ships left on the disposal list here in the James River Fleet," said Wittman.

Wittman attended today's event with Maritime Administrator Sean T. Connaughton. The Maritime Administration keeps ships at National Defense Reserve Fleet sites, which include the James River, to support U.S. armed forces movements and to respond to national emergencies.