

DoD Acts to Shore Up Shipbuilding Industrial Base Amid Pandemic



Austal USA's shipyard in Mobile, Alabama. AUSTAL ARLINGTON, Va. – The Defense Department is taking more actions to shore up the shipbuilding industrial base, among other industrial sectors, the department said in a June 18 release.

The actions, made under the Defense Production Act Title III, are designed to “help sustain and strengthen essential domestic industrial base capabilities and defense-critical workforce in shipbuilding, aircraft manufacturing, and clothing and textiles,” said Lt. Col. Mike Andrews, Defense Department spokesman, in the release. “These actions will help to retain critical workforce capabilities throughout the disruption caused by COVID-19 and to restore some jobs lost because of the pandemic.”

DoD made a \$50 million agreement with Austal USA, a shipbuilder in Mobile, Alabama, “to maintain, protect, and expand critical domestic shipbuilding and maintenance capacity. These investments will have long-term benefits for U.S. Navy shipbuilding while accelerating pandemic recovery efforts in the Gulf Coast region,” the release said.

Austal is the builder of the Navy's Independence-class littoral combat ships and Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport ships.

In addition, DoD entered into a \$55 million agreement with W International, based in Goose Creek, South Carolina, “to maintain, protect and expand critical domestic industrial base capability for the U.S. Navy nuclear shipbuilding industry.

These investments will have long-term benefits for Navy shipbuilding while accelerating pandemic recovery efforts in the South East region of the United States,” the release said.

W international is a fabrication corporation “that provides manufacturing, custom fabrication, project management, tooling and engineering services to clients in the aerospace, defense, automotive, energy and commercial industries,” according to the company’s website.

In both cases, the DoD actions are being taken to “ensure critical capabilities are retained in support of U.S. Navy operational readiness,” Andrews said.