

MOBILE – The U.S. Navy’s decision to purchase ten littoral combat ships from Austal USA in Mobile along with ten from competitor Marinette Marine-Lockheed Martin is welcome news, said Congressman Jo Bonner, R-Alabama. Congressman Bonner noted Wednesday that while the Navy’s strategy is not yet a done deal, Mobile’s Austal USA is well positioned to capture the contract should the Navy revert to a single LCS design.

“Secretary Ray Mabus informed me of the Navy’s decision to select both LCS designs due to lower anticipated costs for each ship and advantages of having more than one manufacturer,” Congressman Bonner said. “The Navy’s new LCS purchase plan would be a tremendous boost to the Mobile area economy since Austal has indicated it will double its local workforce of 1,800 should it land a ten-ship contract.

“The Navy’s dual procurement strategy must first be approved by Congress. If Congress does not act in time, the Navy has signaled they would proceed and select only one winner in the competition. I continue to strongly believe Austal USA offers a superior LCS design for the best price and feel Mobile would still win a head-to-head competition should it come to that.

“In January, the Navy commissioned the Austal-built U.S.S. Independence (LCS-2) in Mobile, launching a new type of warship of cutting edge design, both fast and highly maneuverable. Austal’s state-of-the-art module manufacturing facility, prominent on the Mobile waterfront, has symbolized Mobile’s rebirth as a Navy ship building city. The Navy decision to buy the Austal LCS reinforces Mobile’s new ship-building role.

“Regardless of the procurement strategy, Mobile is well positioned in the LCS competition and I will continue to give my full support to Austal USA’s efforts to win this significant contract award,” Congressman Bonner said.