

Navy Concerned About Labor Strike at Bath Iron Works

ARLINGTON, Va. – The decision of shipyard workers at General Dynamics Bath Iron Works (BIW) in Bath, Maine, to go on strike has U.S. Navy officials concerned about slowed delivery of new-construction guided-missile destroyers (DDGs).

With shipbuilding and ship repair troubles exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting supplier base disruption, as well as earlier budget shortfalls, the strike piles on the Navy at a bad time.

“We’re very concerned with the dispute up at BIW,” said James F. Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition, said in a June 22 teleconference with reporters. “The Navy’s expectations are that the leaders of General Dynamics Bath Iron Works and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers work very diligently and with a sense of urgency to come to agreement so that we can keep our ship construction on track. We are very dependent on Bath Iron Works for their production and support of our ships for our Sailors. My expectation is both sides will work aggressively and a sense of urgency so that we can get these programs to continue to execute.

The shipyard workers voted to strike on June 21 at BIW, a General Dynamics company. BIW is one of two shipyards that builds the Arleigh Burke-class DDGs, the other being Huntington Ingalls in Pascagoula, Mississippi. BIW is the sole builder of the Zumwalt-class DDG, the last of which is still at the shipyard and yet to be delivered to the Navy.

In a teleconference last week, Geurts said the Navy still has a pending contract award to make in 2020 for a DDG.