

Bollinger ready to vie for US, Canada, Finland icebreaker contracts

Description



The first prototype unit is cut for the U.S. Coast Guard's Polar Security Cutter at Bollinger Shipyard, (Petty Officer 2nd Class Ronald Hodges/US Coast Guard)

Bollinger Shipyards announced Thursday that its Pascagoula Mississippi shipyard now exceeds 1,000 employees, touting the milestone as it gears up to make the first heavy icebreaker in the U.S. in more

than 50 years – vessels Washington is keen to produce more of as it partners with Canada and Finland in a pact to bolster icebreaker fleets.

The three countries announced the Icebreaker Collaboration Effort, or ICE Pact, in a joint statement during the NATO summit in Washington on Thursday. The trilateral agreement aims to build “best-in-class Arctic and polar icebreakers and other Arctic and polar capabilities in each of our respective countries by sharing expertise, information, and capabilities.”

The pact aims to “leverage shipyards” in all three countries to build the icebreakers by collaborating on information sharing and workforce development while encouraging allies and partners to buy the vessels from those states.

“We are seeing an increasing need for those icebreakers from partners around the world who want to operate in both the Arctic and the Antarctic region and can operate there with greater freedom than before because of the impacts of climate change,” said National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan.

“There are authoritarian nations that are offering icebreakers to the world who want to corner the icebreaker market. We’re determined to have democracies in the lead and producing icebreaker capabilities.”

Sullivan noted that “both Canada and Finland have considerable experience in shipyards and producing icebreakers.”

The U.S. operates two Polar icebreakers, both of which are nearing the end of their usable life.

“The U.S. is currently producing icebreakers for our Coast Guard, but we would like to expand that to include building icebreakers here in the United States – American-made, American-jobs to sell to countries around the world as well,” said Sullivan. “We then will have the industrial base for a capability that has economic and strategic purposes.”

The Coast Guard is already working with Bollinger to build the first Polar Security Cutters.

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