

PRESS-TELEGRAM/SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, 1994



**JAMES R.
CARROLL**

Shipyard in L.B. may get work

WASHINGTON — Now the Long Beach Naval Shipyard has to wait and see.

A new package of seven U.S. Navy ships to be leased to other nations has been given final approval by Congress and signed into law by President Bill Clinton.

A major provision of the lease package, inserted by Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Huntington Beach, requires that when the ships are overhauled before being transferred to foreign navies, the work must be performed by American shipyards, including naval shipyards.

The intent of that provision is to give the Long Beach Naval Shipyard a shot at some more repair work. The yard has been doing such work for ships going to the Taiwanese navy.

The Navy originally had proposed leasing 17 ships, but Congress contended that some of the vessels were still needed in our forces. The final number of ships was cut down to seven.

The leasing agreements can begin as soon as the Navy can negotiate them. The Navy is still working on lease agreements with a variety of countries on an earlier package of 25 ships.

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