

**Christening of the PCU NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**General Dynamics Electric Boat**  
**Groton, Connecticut**  
**June 21, 2008**

**JOHN CASEY, PRESIDENT OF ELECTRIC BOAT:** It is now my honor to introduce one of the most effective supporters in Washington and a true friend of Electric Boat, Congressman Joe Courtney of Connecticut's Second District.

Still in his first term, Congressman Courtney has led the way in the effort to increase submarine construction to two ships per year. His work, and his personal approach, has gotten the notice of his colleagues.

One influential member of the House Armed Services Committee went on at some length to tell me how easy Joe is to work with and how his manner and approachability have increased his effectiveness.

Another member of the committee joked that he needed to keep a close eye on Joe, and explained that Joe had achieved so much in less than one term, that it's hard to imagine what he might accomplish in the future.

He is energetic, informed, and able to master and influence the intricacies of the submarine acquisition process. We appreciate all he's done to maintain Electric Boat's irreplaceable design and construction capabilities.

Please join me in welcoming Congressman Joe Courtney.

*(Applause)*

**CONGRESSMAN JOE COURTNEY:** Thank you, John. It is a privilege today to represent the State of Connecticut and particularly the people of Eastern Connecticut this morning and welcome you all to Groton - America's center for submarine excellence.

It is also an honor and a privilege to welcome our special guests: the ship's sponsor Cheryl McGuinness, Admirals (John) Donnelly, (Paul) Sullivan, (William) Hilarides, (Bruce) Grooms, (Cecil) Haney, Secretary (Allison) Stiller, and my colleague and good friend from the House Armed Services Committee, New Hampshire's Congresswoman Carol Shea Porter.

But I also want to particularly thank Admiral Kirk Donald for taking the time to come today. Last year he and I had the chance to spend a couple days under the Arctic Ocean with the USS ALEXANDRIA, and there is not a finer person or a more competent leader in our government.

Recently, at the request of Secretary Robert Gates he took on a thankless and challenging task of reviewing the air force system of nuclear security, and he did so diligently and honestly, letting the chips fall where they may. And, believe me, some chips truly fell.

As difficult as that task was, that is exactly the kind of accountability our country needs to retain the trust of our citizenry, and to function as a democracy. I want to publicly thank him for the example that he has given to all of us who serve in government.

*(Applause)*

We are here today to celebrate the completion of the USS NEW HAMPSHIRE, a technical marvel that both shipyards in Connecticut and Virginia, and the Navy, built ahead of schedule using the knowledge and experience, and hard work of the designers, engineers, and production workers who have built four prior Virginia-class submarines.

Secretary Stiller and Admiral Sullivan have had their hands full moving our country forward toward our national goal of a 313 ship Navy. But one thing is for sure: the Virginia class program is leading the way in American shipbuilding, and their strong support for the efforts of the men and women who build these subs, and those of us in Congress who staunchly support a strong submarine fleet, is clearly paying off.

As John (Casey) and Mike (Petters) have said, the NEW HAMPSHIRE is the first Virginia class submarine built to a dramatically shortened schedule that delivers the ship to the fleet in 72 months down from 84—which means that she and her predecessors will get to the fleet faster.

This achievement could not have happened without the close partnership between the Navy, Northrop Grumman and Electric Boat. It is this unique relationship that has made the Virginia class program a model of how shipbuilding can and should be done.

I had a chance to see that partnership at work at EB, on my first trip to the shipyard as a newly elected member of Congress, in January of 2007. What would become the NEW HAMPSHIRE was little more than a hodge podge of parts and modules strewn around the assembly building.

Just this past February, I was amazed to visit Electric Boat with Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead and see the assembled ship. That was the day we turned the valve to float the ship out of dry dock, and I was standing there with everybody watching thinking, ‘Alright, loosey lefty, tighty righty,’ and had a mind freeze. So luckily Admiral Roughead was there to make sure we turned it in the right direction.

But in any case, we’re here today with PCU NEW HAMPSHIRE, and its more than just hardware, she is a living, breathing entity that will provide a home for her crew and one day play a key role in the defense of our nation.

Congratulations to the happiest people here on the dock today, Captains Stevens and his crew. The people of Eastern Connecticut are proud to be your home. Thank you, and congratulations to Electric Boat, Northrop Grumman, the Navy, and the State of New Hampshire.