

WASHINGTON, DC –“ Congressman Joe Courtney today hailed the start of design work on the Ohio-class replacement submarine as a major step forward in a process he helped kick start four years ago. The U.S. Navy announced today that the program achieved Milestone A status on January 10, and has begun the design and technology-development phase of production.

“Today’s news is an important and tangible milestone for the Navy, our submarine program, Electric Boat and our region’s economic future,” said Courtney. “The Navy has underscored repeatedly their long-term dedication to designing and building submarines in Connecticut, where our talented workforce has a proven track record of completing submarines ahead of schedule and under budget. As the Ohio Replacement Program moves into this next critical phase, I am confident that the men and women of Electric Boat will apply those important skills toward providing our nation with an affordable and superior new submarine.”

In part because of Electric Boat’s efficiency, the Navy also announced that it is able to produce the Ohio-class replacement at a significantly lower cost than was initially estimated. Early estimates of the cost for Ohio replacements were approximately \$7 billion, but the Defense Acquisition Board’s most recent estimate established an average unit cost goal of \$4.9 billion. The Defense Acquisition Board endorsed replacing the current 14 Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines as they reach the end of their service life with 12 Ohio replacement submarines.

“I am delighted by this announcement, which is critical to the success of Electric Boat and our employees,” said Electric Boat President John P. Casey. “We have been supporting the Navy for a long time, and it’s very rewarding to see the Ohio Replacement recognized as an official Department of Defense program, which is critical to our national security.”

When Congressman Courtney took office in 2007, Electric Boat was not designing the next generation submarine for the first time in 50 years, risking the viability and stability of the highly specialized design and engineering workforce. With a drawdown in design work on the Virginia-class and work on the Ohio-class SSBN replacement not set to begin until 2014, the design workforce faced a significant design gap for at least five years or more.

In his first term, Congressman Courtney secured \$8.2 million to provide the initial seed money necessary to begin the concept and development work on the SSBN replacement, known as SSBN(x). In 2009, Courtney helped to support and pass the Administration’s FY10 budget request of \$495 million for expanded research, development and conceptual studies for the program. This funding was used to develop the new missile compartment and nuclear propulsion system, and as a result Electric Boat began hiring hundreds of engineers and designers to support the program. Additional design and engineering work at EB also directly led to the company’s expansion into Pfizer’s New London complex in June of 2010.

Congressman Courtney is the co-chairman of the Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus, and is the only member of the Connecticut Congressional Delegation to serve on the House Armed Services Committee.