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Joe Courtney

Congress of the United States

2nd District, Connecticut

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The Honorable Thomas B. Modly
Acting Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Dear Acting Secretary Modly:

Thank you for meeting with me yesterday. I wanted to follow up on one of our topics of discussion: the 2021 budget request for the Navy and, specifically, the Virginia Class submarine program.

As you know, the attack submarine fleet faces the largest and most sustained delta between force structure requirements and inventory of any platform over the next three decades. At current levels, the submarine force can only meet about half of our combatant commanders needs and will decline from a fleet of 51 today to just 42 in 2027 – a nearly 20 percent reduction from current fleet levels. This is a deeply troubling trend given what we have heard from our military leaders and intelligence officials in public sessions and classified briefings *as recently as this week* regarding the undersea threats and challenges posed by our competitors around the globe.

That is why Congress has consistently supported the sustained two-a-year build rate of the Virginia-class submarine, as reflected in the FY2019 and FY2020 30-year shipbuilding plans, and consistent with the National Defense Strategy, to ensure that the nation has the most advanced and capable undersea fleet available to meet these challenges. I would note specifically that the House-Senate conference report for the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (PL116-92) clearly states Congress' expectation that *"the Navy fully preserves a plan to procure 10 Virginia-class attack submarines, nine of which include the VPM"* and *"to budget accordingly in their fiscal year 2021 budget submission."*

As Chairman of the subcommittee that will lead the bipartisan evaluation of the Navy's 2021 budget request, I look forward to receiving a plan that reflects the clear intention of Congress to continue sustained investment in the future of our attack submarine platforms and capabilities.

Sincerely,

JOE COURTNEY

Chairman

House Seapower and

Projection Forces Subcommittee