

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 29, 2023

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
H-405, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
2426 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 defense appropriations bill, we request your strong bipartisan support for our undersea capabilities and industrial base. To that end, we ask full support for the budget requests for the Virginia-class attack submarine, the Columbia-class sea-based deterrence submarine, and the national submarine industrial base.

Virginia-class Submarine

Attack submarine capabilities remain one of our most distinct national security advantages, and Congress has strongly supported and defended the consistent two-a-year procurement rate of Virginia-class attack submarines since 2011. A steady procurement profile of two submarines per year is critical for the submarine industrial base to provide consistent demand signals, allow shipyards to make investments in workforce and supplier components, reduce shipbuilding costs, and expand capacity for their facilities.

Preserving a consistent production schedule is essential for shipyard and industrial base stability, and to meet the Navy's operational requirements. Sustainable production of the Virginia-class program, and the development of a follow-on attack submarine program, is key to maintaining our undersea advantage in the years ahead. **To that end, we respectfully request that you fully support the budget for procurement of two Virginia-class submarines, advance procurement for four ships in future years, and the budget request for research and development efforts for future undersea capabilities and the follow-on SSN(X) program.**

Columbia-class Submarine

The replacement for the aging Ohio-class submarine program—which has faithfully deterred our adversaries for over 40 years—represents a critical component of our nation's nuclear triad and will carry nearly 70 percent of the nation's deployed nuclear arsenal. Since 2013, the Navy has consistently identified the Columbia-class program as the service's top priority. Successive defense strategies have reaffirmed the central role that our sea-based deterrent will play in the coming decades.

Shipbuilders and suppliers from across the country are hard at work to ensure the Columbia-class submarine, our nation's top defense acquisition priority, delivers successfully. In 2020, with strong support from Congress, the Navy awarded a contract for the construction of the first two

Columbia class submarines, allowing full-scale construction to begin in October 2020 after more than a decade of preparation. The program remains on a razor thin schedule with little margin for absorbing delays resulting from technical challenges or funding-related issues.

The sustainment of our sea-based strategic deterrent is a requirement supported on a bipartisan basis and is validated by our guiding national defense and nuclear posture strategies. Continued strong support from Congress will ensure that this program remains on track and on schedule. **To this end, we urge your support for fully funding the Columbia-class program for the first two increments of funding for the second boat in the class, and research and development for the boat's propulsion and combat system technologies.**

Submarine Industrial Base

The submarine construction industrial base includes thousands of supplier firms, as well as laboratories and research facilities, across all 50 states. Much of the total material procured from supplier firms for the construction of submarines is acquired through sole-source suppliers. The impact of a strained submarine industrial base, including the supplier base, workforce, and shipyard infrastructure, has negative consequences for the timely execution and delivery of submarine design and construction.

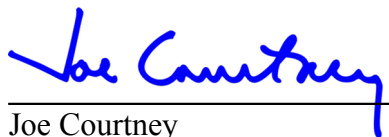
At the same time, the submarine industrial base – at shipyards and throughout the supply chain – faces challenges with recruiting, hiring, and sustaining the workforce needed to meet the ramp up in submarine production.

Under the bipartisan leadership of your subcommittee, and working alongside colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee, Congress has provided steady funding since 2018 to address this critical problem. The FY23 Consolidated Appropriations Act provided an unprecedented \$751 million dollars to the Navy and Department of Defense (DOD) to expand workforce pipelines, increase capacity for critical suppliers, mature technology opportunities at Naval foundries, explore opportunities for outsourcing components, and develop shipyard infrastructure necessary for the construction of submarines.

The FY24 President's Budget Request is a continuation of robust funding for the submarine industrial base and submarine supplier expansion, including \$647 million between the Navy and DOD's Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment program for multiple lines of effort across the submarine industrial base. This effort is critical to meet future requirements of the Navy and support AUKUS in providing Australia with a nuclear-powered, conventionally-armed submarine program of their own. **To this end, we respectfully request that the FY24 defense appropriations bill fully supports this effort to expand industrial base capacity to meet the Navy's future requirements.**

Thank you, as always, for your leadership in support of our undersea priorities.

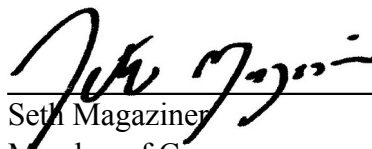
Sincerely,



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



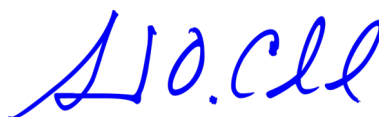
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Salud Carbajal
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Bill Posey
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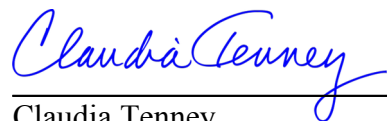
Paul D. Tonko
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Madeleine Dean
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Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



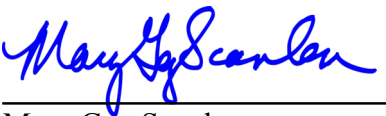
Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



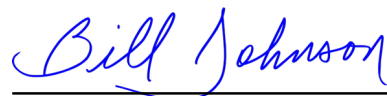
Brittany Pettersen
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Terri A. Sewell
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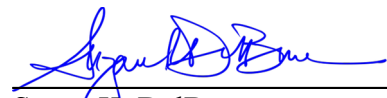
Daniel Meuser
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Mike Gallagher
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James P. McGovern
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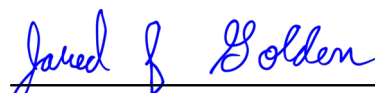
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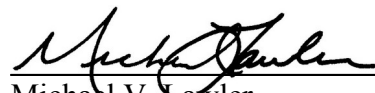
Steven Horsford
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Dina Titus
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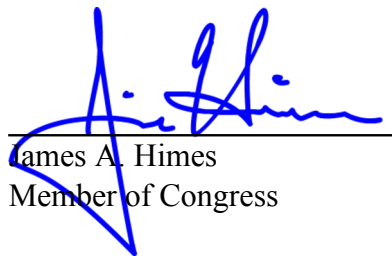
Michael V. Lawler
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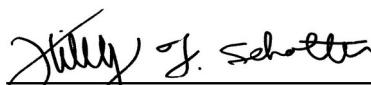
Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



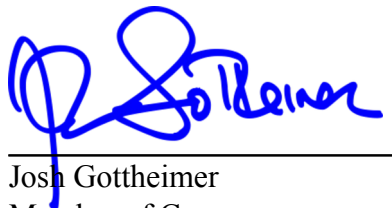
Mike Ezell
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James A. Himes
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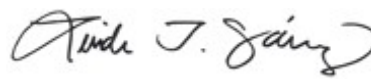
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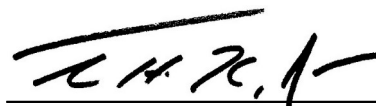
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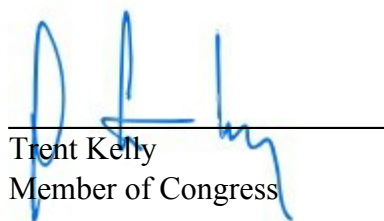
Lori Trahan
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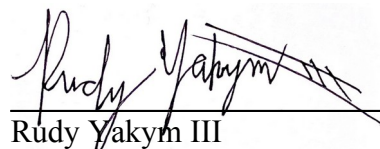
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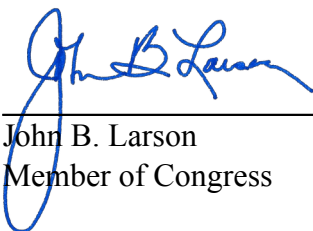
Marilyn Strickland
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Trent Kelly
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Rudy Yakym III
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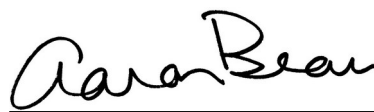
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Larry Bucshon, M.D.
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Aaron Bean
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Bill Foster
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Jen A. Kiggans
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André Carson
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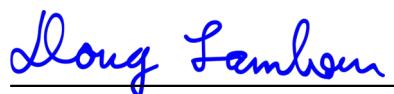
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Jim Banks
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Donald G. Davis
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H. Morgan Griffith
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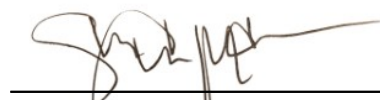
Brandon Williams
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Bradley Scott Schneider
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Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



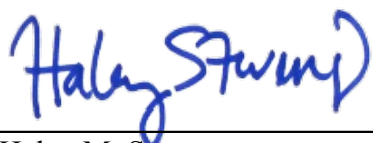
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Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz
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Marcus J. Molinaro
Member of Congress



David Rouzer
Member of Congress



Nick LaLota
Member of Congress



Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress