May 1, 2024

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Defense  
H-307 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 defense appropriations bill, we request your strong bipartisan support for our undersea capabilities and industrial base.

**Virginia Class Submarine**

We are deeply concerned with the proposal to procure just one Virginia Class submarine in the President’s proposed FY 2025 budget. In recent years, Congress has heard consistent and alarming testimony about the growing capabilities and increased undersea activity of competitors like Russia and China. For example, in the last month, the House Armed Services Committee heard from the Commanders of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Northern Command that their requirements for attack submarine missions extend beyond the current inventory of submarines available in the U.S. Navy’s inventory. Similarly, Russia continues to invest in its undersea fleet in the Pacific to increase its presence with more modernized and capable attack and ballistic submarines in the region.

Despite these challenges, attack submarine capabilities remain one of our most distinct national security advantages. In particular, the Virginia Class submarine continues to be a critical asset for combatant commanders to deter our adversaries and sustain our asymmetric advantage in the undersea domain. Unfortunately, our attack submarine fleet experiences significant shortfalls and is projected to decline to just 47 boats in 2030 – a 19 boat deficit from the 66 attack submarine requirement.

Preserving a consistent production schedule is essential for shipyard and industrial base stability, and to meet the Navy’s operational requirements. This is exactly why Congress has strongly supported and defended the consistent two-per-year build rate of Virginia Class attack submarines since 2011. Congress has also already allocated nearly $1 billion to in Advance Procurement to support a second FY 2025, including critical long-lead time material. While the FY25 budget request includes substantial investments in the nationwide submarine industrial base, there is no alternative to stabilize the supply chain other than consistent procurement of two Virginia Class submarines in FY 2025.

The proposal to request one attack submarine is contrary to the Department of Defense’s National Defense Industrial Strategy, which cites procurement instability as a systemic challenge. This proposal is also an alarming deviation from the Virginia Class procurement profile in the FY 2024 Future Years Defense Plan and 30 Year Shipbuilding Plan. 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 restore procurement for two Virginia Class submarines in FY 2025.**
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. The FY 2024 defense appropriations bill, with strong support from Congress, provided the first increment of funding to begin construction on the second boat in the program. The program remains on a razor thin schedule with little margin for absorbing delays resulting from technical challenges or funding-related issues.

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 delivers to support the most survivable leg of our nuclear triad. To this end, we urge your support for full funding the Columbia Class program for second increment of funding for the second boat in the class, and research and development for the boat’s propulsion and combat system technologies.

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

Jen A. Kiggans
Member of Congress

Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress
Nick LaLota
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress

Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

Andy Kim
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress
Scott Fitzgerald  
Member of Congress

Bill Posey  
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress

Morgan McCarvey  
Member of Congress

Bill Huizenga  
Member of Congress

Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress

Thomas H. Kean, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress
Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress

Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Dan Meuser
Member of Congress

Pete Sessions
Member of Congress

Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress

Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress
Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress

James A. Himes  
Member of Congress

Mark Alford  
Member of Congress

Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress

Gabe Amo  
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress

Blaine Luetkemeyer  
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress

Andre Carson  
Member of Congress
Andrew R. Garbarino  
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

Marcus J. Molinaro  
Member of Congress

Jared Moskowitz  
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

Colin Z. Allred  
Member of Congress

Frank J. Mrvan  
Member of Congress

Larry Bucshon, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

Rudy Yakym III  
Member of Congress
Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress

Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

Greg Landsman  
Member of Congress

Nicholas A. Langworthy  
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

Nancy Mace  
Member of Congress

Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress

Rich McCormick, MD, MBA  
Member of Congress

Robert J. Menendez  
Member of Congress

Carol D. Miller  
Member of Congress
Max L. Miller
Member of Congress

Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

James C. Moylan
Member of Congress

Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

Katie Porter
Member of Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress

Jill Tokuda
Member of Congress
Ann Wagner
Member of Congress

Michael Waltz
Member of Congress

Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.
Member of Congress

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

Brandon Williams
Member of Congress

Jim Banks
Member of Congress