Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 23, 2025

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) 2026 defense appropriations bill, we request your strong bipartisan support for our undersea capabilities and maritime industrial base.

Virginia-class Submarine

The Virginia-class attack submarine capability continues as one of the United States' primary asymmetric national security advantages. Following the appropriation of only one Virginia-class submarine for FY25, we strongly urge a reversal of this trend and request the full funding for procurement of two Virginia-class submarines for FY26. In recent years, Congress received consistent and alarming testimony about Russia, China, and North Korea's growing submarine-launched capabilities and increased undersea activity.

In testimony to the House Armed Services Committee in April 2025, Admiral Paparo, Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, stated that the United States benefits from "a generational advantage from a submarine standpoint against our adversaries and this is key, critical, and indispensable to our ability to prevail." However, China is still outperforming us in submarine production cadence and Russia continues to invest in its undersea fleet in the Pacific to increase its presence with modernized and capable attack and ballistic submarines in the region. Returning to a two-boat procurement cadence provides the critical asset our combatant commanders need to deter our adversaries and sustain our asymmetric advantage in the undersea domain.

Preserving a consistent production schedule is essential for shipyard and industrial base stability and for meeting the Navy's operational requirements. Admiral Paparo further testified that "continued investments in [the] defense industrial base, liberalizing the long-lead time supply chains, and giving a steady flow of funding" are requirements to match China's submarine building efforts. This is exactly why Congress strongly supported and defended the consistent two-per-year build rate of Virginia Class attack submarines since 2011.

The continuing resolution signed into law in December 2024 (P.L. 118-158) made substantial investments into the submarine workforce, and the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4) included funding for Advance Procurement of Virginia-class submarines, including critical long-lead time material. However, other than consistent procurement of two Virginia-class submarines, there is no alternative to address the global security environment, meet the Navy's operational requirements, and stabilize supply chains. **To that end, we respectfully request you support highest possible funding for the procurement of two Virginia-class submarines in FY26.**

Columbia-class Submarine

The replacement for the aging Ohio-class submarine program—that 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 its top acquisition priority. Successive National Defense Strategies reaffirmed the central role that our sea-based deterrent will play in the coming decades, but 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 requires support on a bipartisan basis and is validated by our guiding national defense and nuclear posture strategies. Continued strong support from Congress ensures that this program delivers the most survivable leg of our nuclear triad. **To this end, we urge your support for fully funding the Columbia-class program procurement cost of the third boat in this class in FY26.**

Submarine Industrial Base

The submarine construction industrial base includes thousands of supplier firms 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, negatively impacts the timely execution and delivery of submarine design and construction.

Under the bipartisan leadership of your subcommittee and your colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee, Congress has provided steady funding since 2018 addressing this critical problem. Most recently, the December 2024 Continuing Resolution for FY25 provided funding specifically for the wage improvements of non-executive shipyard workers, addressing the critical attribute of the submarine industrial base: the workforce. Further, the robust funding of the submarine industrial base, especially in FY24 and FY25, enabled expanded workforce pipelines, increased capacity for critical suppliers, supported mature technology opportunities at Naval foundries, and was key to developing shipyard infrastructure necessary for the construction of submarines.
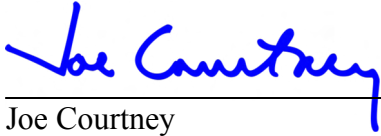
This critical effort meets future Navy requirements and supports the AUKUS security agreement by providing Australia with their own nuclear-powered, conventionally-armed submarine program. This agreement ensures joint submarine base access to the Indian Ocean with faster response times to the South China Sea, as well as additional allied boats in the water. These security advantages are driven by Australia's direct $3 billion investment into the U.S. submarine industrial base. **To this end, we respectfully request the FY26 defense appropriations bill fully supports this effort to expand industrial base capacity to meet the Navy's future requirements by fully funding the Columbia Advanced Procurement line.**

Subsea and Seabed Warfare (SSW) Program

The Modified Virginia-class Subsea and Seabed Warfare (SSW) platform uniquely provides a capability focused on combating Russian and Chinese efforts to challenge U.S. undersea dominance. The Navy continues to mature the design and conduct advanced prototyping and testing of unique modifications to this single, one-off Virginia-class submarine to host SSW capabilities. This platform, which was authorized and funded by Congress in FY25, is the culmination of many years of progress towards maintaining undersea primacy. This funding continues the implementation of design efforts, material procurement, prototyping, and subcontracted component development for this platform, ultimately delivering vital national security imperatives. **To this end, we urge your support for an additional $225 million above the FY26 budget request for the Subsea and Seabed Warfare program.**

Thank you, as always, for your continuing leadership and support of our undersea priorities.
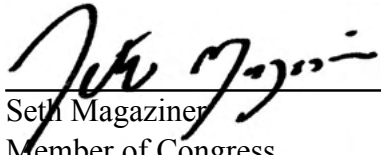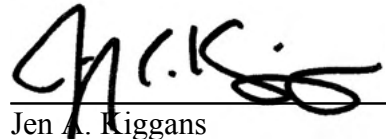
Sincerely,

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress

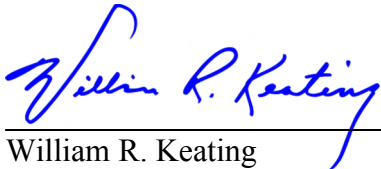Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress

Jen A. Kiggans
Member of Congress
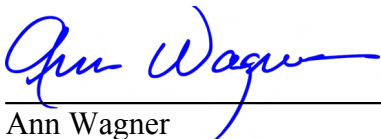
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

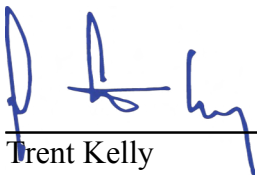William R. Keating
Member of Congress
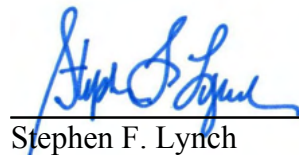
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

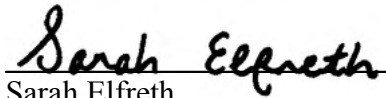Ann Wagner
Member of Congress

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Trent Kelly
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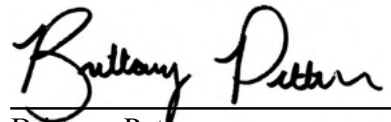
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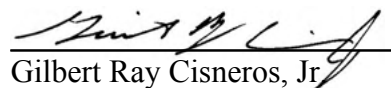
John J. McGuire III
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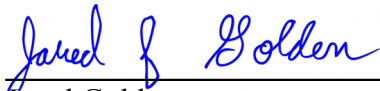
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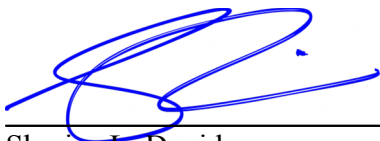
Jared Golden
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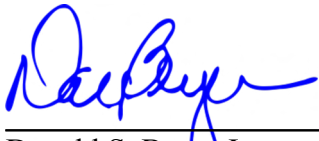
Morgan Luttrell
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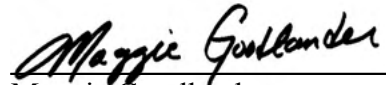
Jahana Hayes
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Gabe Amo
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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Jill Tokuda
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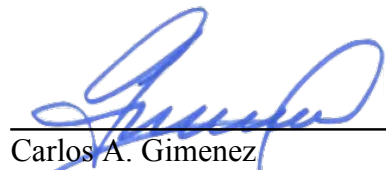
Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress

Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress
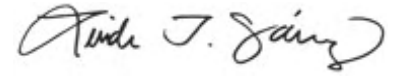
André Carson
Member of Congress

Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress
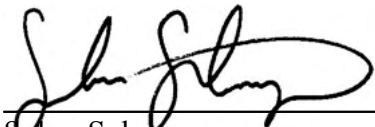
Linda T. Sánchez
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Robert Garcia
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress
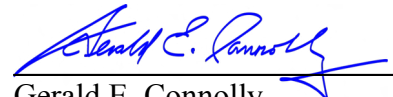
Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress

Dave Min
Member of Congress
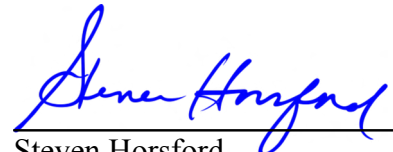
Lori Trahan
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Gerald E. Connolly
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Steven Horsford
Member of Congress
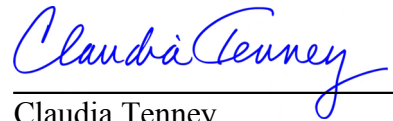
Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress
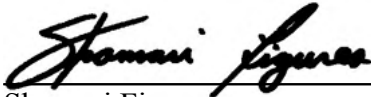
Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress
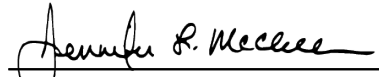
Mike Ezell
Member of Congress
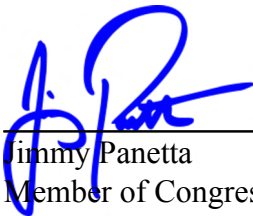
Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress

Shomari Figures
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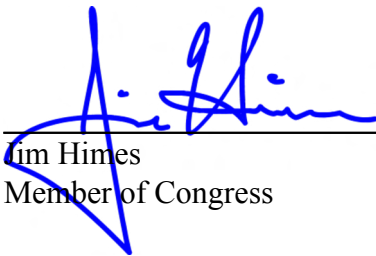
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress
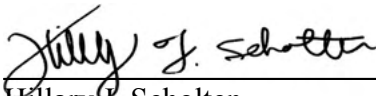
Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress

Jim Himes
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

Hillary J. Scholten
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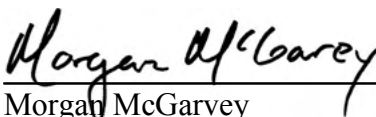
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress

Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress

Barry Moore
Member of Congress

Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress

Max L. Miller
Member of Congress

Nicholas A. Langworthy
Member of Congress
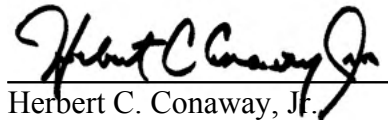
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress
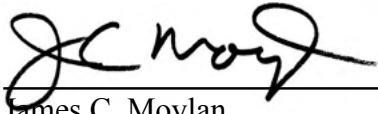
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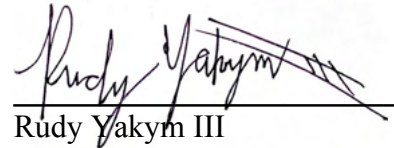
Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress

James C. Moylan
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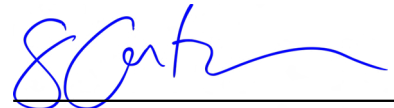
Rudy Yakym III
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress
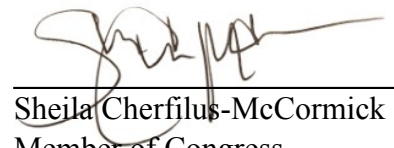
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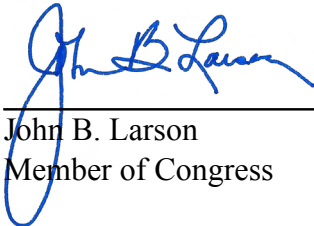
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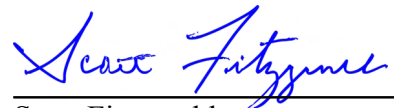
Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

Scott Fitzgerald
Member of Congress

Ronny L. Jackson
Member of Congress
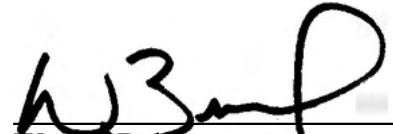
Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress

Nellie Pou
Member of Congress

Wesley Bell
Member of Congress

Dan Meuser
Member of Congress
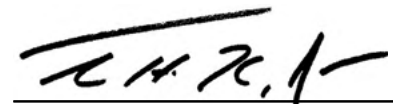
Robert F. Onder, Jr.
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Bill Foster
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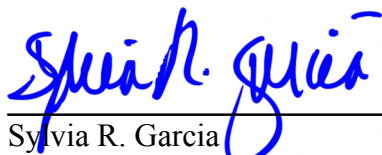
Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Member of Congress

Aumua Amata Coleman
Radewagen
Member of Congress

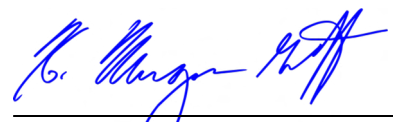Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

Robert J. Menendez
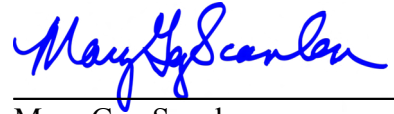Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

H. Morgan Griffith
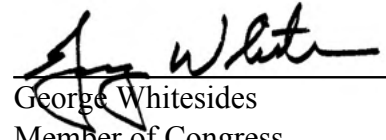Member of Congress

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

Carol D. Miller
Member of Congress

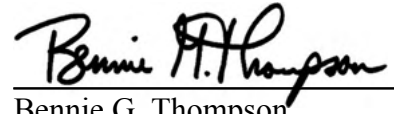George Whitesides
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

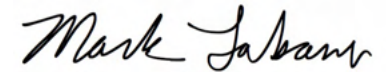Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

Don Bacon
Member of Congress

MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress